

A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Event of September 11, 2001 in American and Syrian Print Media Discourse

Biook Behnam¹

Mohammad Reza Khodadust

Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran

Aiming at highlighting the important role of print media discourse in the implicit transfer of the dominant ideology of discourse context, the present data-driven paper demonstrates how the lexical features of repetition and synonymy as well as the structural and thematic features of passivization, nominalization and predicated theme were utilized by the discourse producers to mediate between their own underlying ideology and the target readers' understanding of the events of September 11, 2001. Through a comparative statistical analysis of the print media discourse of the data for the study written in two ideologically opposing contexts of Syria and America, we have tried to explicate how the discourse producers utilized various lexical and thematic strategies to produce different impressions of the event and implicitly impose the underlying ideology on the readers.

Keywords: September 11, 2001, Thematization, Passivization, Nominalization, Synonymy, CDA

One of the goals of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an unbiased analysis of oral and written discourse to highlight its underlying social power and reveal explicit and implicit power influences on the reader, not to find faults with it, as the term "*critical*" may literally imply (Bloor and Bloor, 2007; Rogers, 2004; Paltridge, 2006). Neither is the goal to accuse any writer or authority or power of intentional deception. According to Paltridge

¹ Corresponding author. E-mail: behnam_biook@yahoo.com

(2006), CDA connects the use of language to the social and political context in which it occurs.

September 11 attacks on New York's Twin Towers of World Trade Center and the Pentagon were one of the most tragic events that shocked all nations around the globe, triggering great changes in world affairs, the effects of which persist until today like Afghanistan war. As Freedman (2005) states, " the so- called Al-Qa'ida's attack on the United States of America on September 11, 2001, had a defining impact on the (US) administration." We used the phrase "so-called" here since according to the results of World Public Opinion Organization poll of 17 nations published in September 10, 2008, on average, 46 percent said that Al-Qa'ida was behind the attacks while 15 percent chose the US government, 7 percent Israel, and 7 percent other perpetrators as the agents behind the attacks. No consensus on the agency issue of the event existed. Some explicitly attributed the events to the American government. Thierry Meyssan (2002), for instance, at a presentation in Zayed Center , Abu Dhabi, explicates the exact reasons and puts forward some evidence in this regard supporting the claims of World Public Opinion Organization in saying that the responsibility , " cannot be attributed to foreign terrorists from Arab-Muslim world – even if some of those involved might have been Muslims." As endorsed by Brown (2005), the world of Muslims sympathized with American nation by condemning the tragic attacks. This was even witnessed in Iran and Syria known as nations with anti-American policies. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and continuing violence between Palestine and Israel, to name a few, are some evident by-products of the event, justified by the great social hatred, fear and shock across the world in general and in the United States, in particular. Media discourse on "terror" and "terrorism" was coined and developed, paving the way for ruling powers to justify their subsequent policies in the world. A discourse of prejudice was developed. The words "terrorist" and "fundamentalist" were widely used. The original association of the

word" fundamentalist" with the words "*Christian, Bible, Literal*" pointed their negative implications towards "Islam, Islamic, and Muslim" (Bloor and Bloor 2007). As such, the media in Islamic world reacted to this trend by writing on the issue and blaming Israel and USA for the events.

Review of the Related Literature

After the introduction of discourse analysis by Zellig Harris in 1952, in late 1970's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) came to the fore by Roger Fowler, as a way of studying the link between language and social meanings. In fact, during 1980's and 1990's, a need was felt for the addition of a critical component to the field of discourse analysis (Van Dijk 2004). CDA, according to Flowerdew (2008), views language as a form of social practice. "CDA includes not only a description and interpretation of discourse in context, but also offers an explanation of why and how discourse works." (Rogers 2004, p.2 cited in Paltridge 2008, p.185). As such, theories of language should be related to theories of society. CDA has now turned into a truly international ethical practice with its own clear-cut boundaries. Therefore, Critical Discourse Analysis can be used for unveiling the hidden deep level ideologies embodied in print media discourse. Paltridge (2008) speaks of doing CDA at three levels of discourse or genre, sentence and word or phrase. At the level of discourse or genre, issues like framing, foregrounding and back grounding, and the attitudes and points of view of the text are discussed. At sentence level, issues like topicalization and agent-patient relationships are under focus. At word and phrase levels, word connotations, degree of formality-informality and technicality are discussed. Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics proved so handy in CDA, helping the critical discourse analyst, according to Brooks (1995) to "*uncover how language works to construct meanings that signify people, objects and events in the world in specific ways*" (p.462, emphasis ours). The meanings that he refers to may be hidden or implicit for an untrained common reader, as an indirect discourse participant. CDA serves as a link between discourse, oral or written, and the social setting of its production.

As endorsed by Fowler (1991), the news stories produced in particular social settings reflect the underlying values in that society. Media genre of discourse is a true reflection of the world perspectives of discourse producers embedded intentionally or unintentionally in the discourse serving the purpose of both informing and controlling. Hodge and Kress (1993) refer to the importance of language "as an instrument of control and communication" (p.6). It is a communication between the writer and the reader as encoders and decoders of discourse (Behnam 2002), utilizing linguistic strategies like passivization, and nominalization that are related to the assignment of semantic roles in discourse (Johnston 2008). Media discourse can be a tool of exercising power through the medium of ideology for "foregrounding" or backgrounding ideas (Paltridge, 2008). Ideologies also serve as "background knowledge" in the society, in Fairclough's (2005) terms, and as a basis on which new events are interpreted or new perspectives are produced. Ideologies are social manifestations of beliefs. Therefore, they pose readers in situations to interpret new social changes in particular ways entailing specific reactions to them as well.

Terrorism or threatening other people's lives was originally linked to countries other than Islamic ones, mainly associated with drug trafficking groups. After September 11'th attacks in America by the so-called Al-Qaida backed by Islamic fundamentalists, the use of the word "terrorism" and "fundamentalism" came to be associated with Muslim radicals, creating a marred vision of the world of Islam, and Islamic countries, justifying the counteractions by American government. On the spur of the new situation, new media discourse was coined and later developed due to the appearance of new forms of terrorism and violence (Kleinfield 2007). Media entered a psychological war. According to Sakiamasaki (2009), BBC and CNN irresponsibly aired over and over again the pictures of "Palestinians celebrating the terrorist attack", aiming "to exaggerate the Islamic threat and the fear of ruthless terrorists" (p.1). To sum up, ideologies may be reflected and distributed among the readers as discourse participants through the use of media discourse. In Reath's terms (1998), written print

discourse both gives information and captures "the ideological stance of the reader"(p.50). This is intentionally done so implicitly and indirectly that a usual reader accepts them as taken for granted as unquestionable pieces of facts, as expected by the *elite* in power, as Van Dijk's (2004) calls them. They shape and control the reproduction of print media discourse, and thus determine the way it would be understood and interpreted by common powerless readers. In this sense, Johnstone (2008) considers power as "institutionally" defined like the power of a president who acquires the power to declare war. Media genre of discourse provides a tool for indirect power enactment.

The purpose of the present study is to investigate how print media discourse used the tools of language to account for the mentioned events, following the lines offered by their respective ruling systems and the social sensations of the people living in the two ideologically divergent societies. We aim to present a CDA of two print media discourse on the events of September 11, 2001 mainly based on the notions of agency and goal/affected in systemic functional linguistics originally proposed by Halliday. In this view, language is conceived as a source for communication and making meanings rather than as a formal system. Linguistic structures are viewed as interrelated systems available for the expression of meaning in situational context. (Flowerdew, 2008). Syria's print media discourse was randomly chosen as the token of Muslim print media context while American print media context was chosen as the center and the target of the attacks. Due to divergent reactions to the mentioned event in the two contexts, the following research question was formulated:

How do ideological differences between Syria and USA are reflected in print media discourse on the events of September 11, 2001?

To answer the raised question, five news items from Syrian print media contexts on the events of September 11, 2001 and a piece from the website of "New York Times" on September 12, 2001 from American media context were randomly selected.

Method

The present study was conducted based on the ideological context of the sequence of events following the shocking event of September 11, 2001, using a news item from US-based *The New York Times* which was retrieved from the website of New York Times for the purpose of Critical Discourse Analysis of the event. The paragraphs from both contexts have been numbered for ease of reference. (Appendix A). Moreover, 5 news pieces reflecting the stance of Syrian government, namely *Syria Times*, *Syria Times Online*, and *Al-Thawrah*, published in October, November, and September, 2001 were also adopted for analysis. (Appendix B).

One of the most prominent theorists of text and context relationship regarding the development of CDA has been M. A. K. Halliday, who delineated several functions for any language, one of which is the "ideational function" of the language. Transitivity, mood, and theme are interrelated notions in his general framework of linguistic systems. Halliday (1985) suggested an analysis of text in terms of participants and processes. That means asking about agency and the affected participants or the people or the things that are affected or benefit from the process. Various syntactic mechanisms are employed to give a sense of how the action is performed, by whom and on what. Thus, print media discourse can convey different ideologies of the media workers to the media users. Based on this discussion, transitivity is a fundamental concept in Hallidayan linguistics which could be used in the analysis of representation in the text. As such, the method used here involves disclosing the agency relationships utilized by discourse producers in producing each piece of written media discourse.

The data for this study from two ideologically different Syrian and American contexts have been analyzed using the principles of CDA in terms of the textual lexical devices and structural devices. A content analysis of the news texts in the mentioned two contexts on the same topic, namely the attacks of September 11, 2001, seemed to be a logical way of understanding

the underlying ideology of the text producers on the mentioned dimensions.

To focus the specific scope of the study, the semiotic features of the texts or macrostructure of the texts under study were disregarded. Paragraph arrangements and the accompanying pictures were ignored as requiring another form of study looking at the issue from another angle. The present paper focused on a micro-study of the text to unravel the differential representation of people, processes, and ideologies through the use of different textual strategies. Specifically, what we pursued in this paper is the analysis of ways of representing agency, affected, and beneficiary through the use of structural devices, and the use of some lexical cohesive devices including repetition and synonyms to create certain impressions or feelings. Analyzing the structural strategies is based on a study of passivation and nominalization according to Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar. A study of repetition as a lexical cohesive device is done based on Paltridge (2008).

Data Analysis and Discussion

As mentioned before, the data for the present study comprises five news items from Syrian print media contexts on the events of September 11, 2001 and a piece from the website of *New York Times* written by Serge Schemann on September 12, 2001; the paragraphs are numbered as 1 to 7 for ease of discussion. The texts were randomly selected from a pool of data available on the topic. The two texts are analyzed in terms of cohesive device of repetition and synonymy following Paltridge (2008), the structural thematization devices of passivization, nominalization and predicated theme based on Halliday (1985) and Thompson (1996).

Repetition and Synonymy as Cohesive Devices

Repetition is a lexical cohesive device in which some words are repeated in a text. According to Paltridge (2008), "In English it is not good style to continuously repeat the same word in a text." (p.134). Of course the deliberate repetition of some items may be

intently utilized for putting a special emphasis on something or implicit creation of a special effect on the readers' minds.

In the text from the American context, the following patterns were discerned which were aimed at enlarging the magnitude and the depth of the shocking event that *victimized* the American nation generally but, at the same time, the effects of it was neutralized and kept to minimum by the *hero* America. In other words, an attempt was made to depict a picture of both a victim and a hero out of USA concerning the event.

1. The word *hijacker* and the related words like *hijacked*, or *hijack* were repeated 5 times that implicitly indicate the wrong theft of U.S. property (planes here).

2. The word *plane* or other closely related words like *jetliner* and *Flight Number* were repeated 9 times in the American data depicting a picture of innocent ordinary passengers as the medium and as one of the targets of the attacks which could easily condemned in the eyes of the public.

3. The words and phrases *world Trade Center, tower(s), and building* were repeated 10 times to put the target of the attacks and their unwarlike nature to the public eye trying to unconsciously arouse the sympathy of the ordinary media reader by drawing an affected picture out of the buildings and the place they are located in, namely **New York** which by itself has been repeated two times.

4. Exaggeration with numbers through the repetitive use of expressions like *24000, 266, several scores, numerous, hundreds, thousands, several, horrendous numbers, thousands and thousands, as many as, no official count, the worst, very high and highest state of alert*. The greater the statistics, the more likely the reader is inclined to accept the facts implied by them. Reference to exaggerated numbers is made 14 times throughout the text.

5. The use of special vocabulary, mostly verbs that give a dramatic image of the tragic event having more lasting impressions on the reader and arousing them emotionally. The use of special emotionally loaded lexicon like *rammed, topple, crash, damage, aflame, perish, plow into, victim, calamity, attack, disaster, hit, lost, collapsed, broken bone, dead, killed, injured, ash-choked, survivors* that give the notion of damaging and hurting that are

mostly associated with deep emotional connotations. A simple frequency count showed 24 cases of this special use of lexical items.

6. The use of vocabulary usually associated with terror and killing like *armed with, knife, box cutter*. This has occurred 7 times throughout the text.

7. The use of words indicating a picture of a hero for America and the people dealing with the case aiming to soothe public pain by trying to indicate that, despite the great magnitude of the event, the nation has dealt admirably and cleverly with the issue. This is mainly done in paragraph 6 of the text. The following 9 cases may be termed as the manifestations of this use:

- > *...guard unit called out.....*
- > *....attacks carefully coordinated.... (to show the severity of the event)*
- > *All buildings evacuated except situation room where vice president, Chenny remains in charge.*
- > *...hijackers failed in.....*
- > *The planes were gorged with fuel (to show the severity of the event)*
- > *Barbara Managed to reach her husband ...*
- > *....medical examiner officers were ready*
- > *Firefighters, police officers, rescue workers*
- > *Rescuers had been able to*

Table 1 and Figure 1 summarize the frequency for each category mentioned above:

Table 1
Frequency and Percentage of the Patterns of Repetition and Synonymy in American Data

Pattern	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Frequency	5	9	10	14	24	7	9	78
percentage	6.41	11.53	12.82	17.94	30.69	8.97	11.53	100

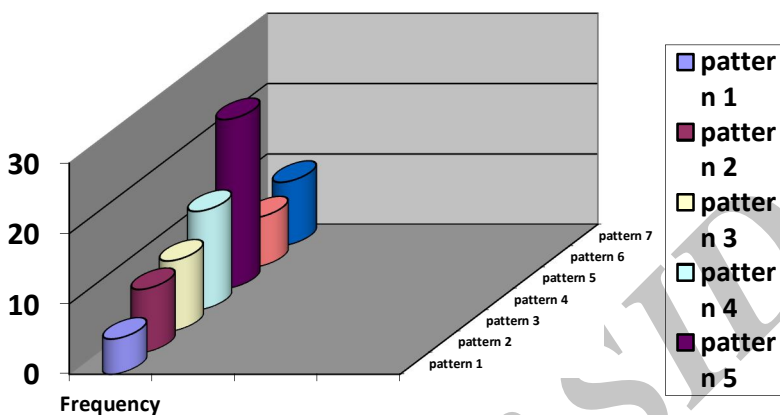


Figure 1. Bar graph for the frequency of seven patterns of repetition and synonymy in American data

As seen in the data for the study, the most frequent pattern is 5, amounting to 24 cases, in which the writer has intentionally tried to depict an innocent picture of America which has been unfairly attacked and damaged by outsiders, the name of which has not been mentioned. They can be inferred from the context of situation by exphoric reference. By the use of the repetition and synonymy devices above, the writer manages to create a dramatic effect. The use of exaggerated numbers ranks the second. Generally, greater quantities have greater effects. The writer has successfully used the mentioned technique to create a bigger and more serious picture of the attacks by Muslim extremist group (implicitly).

Analyzing the text from the other side of the spectrum, namely texts from Syria, the following patterns are discerned:

1. Although the text from the American context made no mention of the other side of the battle, the data from the Syrian sources in one way or another referred to Israel and

America using different words namely, *Israel, Israeli, Mosad, Zionist, Terroris Number One*” and “*USA, Pentagon, Americans, uncle Sam*” On the whole, the words about Israel were mentioned 22 times. Also the USA-related words were repeated 10 times. This contradicts sharply with the writing strategy of the American writer that only, by implication, the reader was led to infer through the context and exphoric reference who the writer is talking about. The predominant mention of Israel puts it at the conscious center of attacks. It may probably be the reflection of the cultural differences in the ways of understanding and expressing the issue.

2. The word *Uncle Sam* is used intertextually three times, in reference to American government to indicate its hegemonic nature. Repetition, if used redundantly, may carry connotative meanings.
3. The writers from the Syrian context try to create a picture of victim from the Muslim nations rather than the American nation that has been attacked. They use the words *defenseless, poor nation, Afghanistan* and *Palestine*” to get this meaning across. Four cases of such use of synonymous words were detected in the data for the study.
4. The writers from the Syrian context use the name of the target of attacks in a way that the fault is not directed at Muslims. For example, they use words like **destructive attacks on World Trade Center, Pentagon, White House, and Washington, New York**. These are usually used in sentences in which the name of Israel is mentioned in one way or another to put the blames for the universally disgusting event on them. There were 9 cases of repetition or synonymy related to this pattern.
5. There has been the use of the words **seem, assume, make false ...** in four cases implying that the writers do not accept the accusations against the Moslems, implicitly rejecting it through the use of sentences like:
 - *Everyone assumes that Islamic terrorists are to blame for.....*

- This might seem strange but what is more significant is the deliberate ignorance by the Israeli government of the reason for the arrests.
- Everyone is assuming that the dangers we face is from Islamic terrorists.

Table (2) and Figure (2) below summarize the categories of different sorts of repetition and synonymy in statistical form:

Table 2
Frequency and Percentage of Repetition and Synonymy in Syrian Data

Pattern	1	2	3	4	5	Total
frequency	22	3	4	9	4	42
percentage	52.38	7.14	9.52	21.42	9.52	100

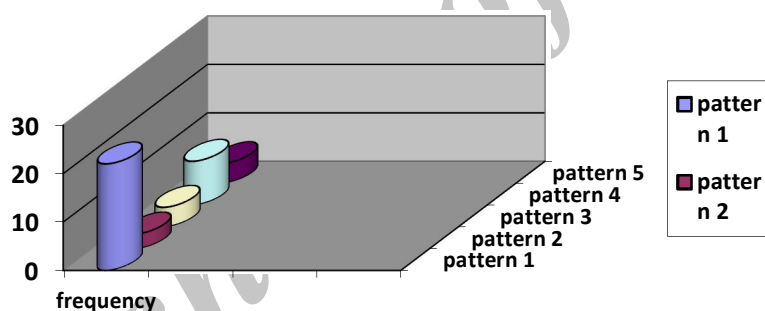


Figure 2. Frequency of repetition and synonymy in Syrian data

A comparison of the results given in Table (1) and Table (2) reveals that the number of cases for the use of repetition and synonymy in the Syrian text is less than that of the American text. However, the exact-word repetition of 52.38 percent for the Syrian text is much higher than the American context amounting to only 6.41 percent. Also with the American context, 30.69 percent of exaggerative reference to events and numbers was detected while with the Syrian text, no exaggeration was found.

Thematization

Speakers and writers in any language construct their messages in a way that makes them fit smoothly into the new events (Thompson, 1996). In addition to giving new information to listeners or readers, they occasionally try to signal to them how their present point is related to the previous ones. To do so they use *thematization* strategies; they sequence their theme-rheme relationship in a way that the flow of information would logically be plausible and based on the interlocutors' shared negotiated meanings. Data analysis revealed the use of *passivization*, *nominalization* and *predicated theme* as the tools utilized by the writers of the media discourse to sequence theme-rheme related information.

A. Passivization

Bias in the media discourse is reflected in syntactic structures of sentences such as the use of active or passive constructions, which allow the print media producers to foreground or background the agents, with the purpose of establishing agent/affected relationships in the readers' mind. Indeed, the passive participants do not act upon others. Media producers use this feature in assigning a less important role to real instigators of an event. By the use of passive construction, the writer gives the actors in the event a less attention-grabbing role, and in so doing they background the role of the actors in the event.

According to Thompson (1997, p.130), "passivisation" is a thematizing device that moves a constituent into theme position. Sometimes, the agent or the doer of the action is explicitly mentioned after the preposition *by*. As Thompson (1997) endorses, "it enables the writer to maintain the starting point" (p.131). The use of active/passive structures is a tool for highlighting the agent or the goal/ recipient(s) of an action in the readers' mind. This is done in implicit ways without the reader's conscious awareness since the reader naturally treats the information in the theme position as the new or more important information while the use of passive structure backgrounds or de-thematizes the real instigator of an action.

The following examples indicate how the two sides in the argument utilized active sentences to focus attention on the agents or doers of actions and the goals or the recipients of the action of the verb:

- Hijackers rammed jetliners into each of New York's World Trade Center.
- a third jetliner crashed into the Pentagon in Virginia.
- American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the north tower.
- United Airlines Flight 175 plowed into the south tower.
- American Airlines Boeing 757 Flight 77 hit the western part of the Pentagon.
- United Airlines Flight 93 crashed near Pittsburgh.
- The collapse of the towers caused another World Trade Center building to fall.

In the above sentences from the American text, the writer has deliberately included the agents by direct reference as in the first sentence or has used exophoric reference to refer to the instigators of the event the blame for which was put on the Islamic extremist group Al-Qaeda. The departure of *jetliner* and the *flights* or the *collapse* of the towers in the last example could not happen by themselves. An agent was needed to instigate it, which through exophoric reference was any of the members of the Islamic Al-Qaeda militia group. Contrarily, the texts from the Syrian context used the following active sentences to put the blame for the event on USA and Israel:

- An Israeli government spokesman reported the news of
- The Israelis did not even mention the reason.
- the American Administration accuse others.
- The Israeli government may find pretexts to get its subjects.
- Israelis have been practicing the ugliest acts of terrorism against the defenseless Palestinian people.

- Uncle Sam shouldn't have connived with the Israeli terrorist acts.
- They, the Zionists, want to silence us.
- Ariel Sharon who wants to divert attention away from his aggressive plot.

In the sentences mentioned above, adopted from the Syrian context, the point of allegations has swung mostly towards Israel and, in some cases, to America by outright direct reference to the mentioned countries. Thematizing *Israel* and *USA* psychologically cajoles the reader to consider Israel and America as the agents of the terrible event.

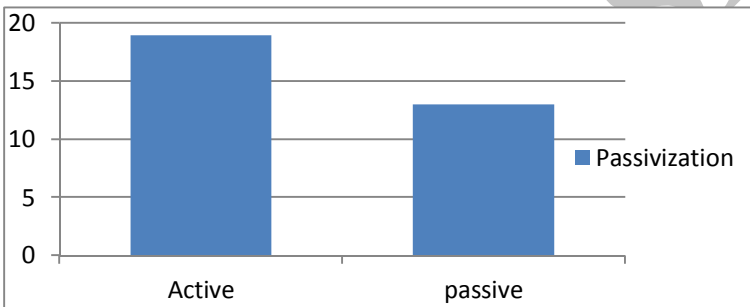


Figure 3. Frequency of the use of active/passive in American data

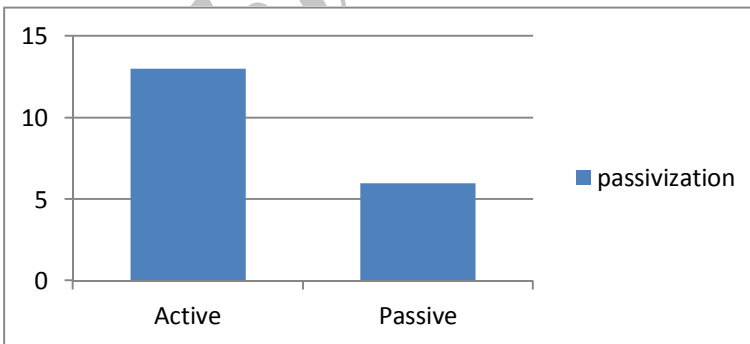


Figure 4. Frequency of the use of active/passive in Syrian data

As shown in figure (3) and figure (4) below, the analysis of the two sets of data for the study revealed 19 active sentences and

13 passive sentences for the American text. Also 13 active and 6 passive structures were identified in the Syrian text.

Now we turn to the use of passivization techniques in both contexts to emphasize the event itself or those who are affected by the event rather than the agent. The text from the American context used the following cases of passivization serving as a thematizing technique in order to give greater prominence to the goals of actions or those affected by the event described in the verb:

- *The calamity was already being ranked the worst and most audacious terror attack in American history.*
- *The attacks seemed carefully coordinated.*
- *Several score more were known dead.*
- *Numerous firefighters, police officers and other rescue workers were killed or injured.*
- *Hundreds were treated for cuts, broken bones, burns, and smoke inhalation.*
- *The real carnage was concealed for now by the twisted, smoking, ash-choked burns and smoke inhalation carcasses of the twin towers.*
- *Several other buildings in the area were damaged.*
- *Rescuers were stymied by other buildings.*
- *Two Port Authority police officers had been pulled from the ruins.*
- *The military was put on the highest state of alert.*
- *National Guard units were called out.*
- *two aircraft carriers were dispatched.*
- *The White House, the Pentagon and the Capitol were evacuated.*

In the examples reproduced above from American context, it seems that the writer has used passivization as a technique to show both the depth of the audacious tragic event like the first to the 10th sentence above, and the ability of the government to deal with the issue very quickly like sentences 10 to 15.

The following sentences from the Syrian sample also indicate the attempt of the writers in the other side of the ideological spectrum to thematize certain elements to highlight them in the readers' minds:

- *A big quantity of the Anthrax germ was held with the Israelis when they were arrested.*
- *New York Trade Center and eight charts of the Pentagon building which were attacked on September 11th.*
- *The charts (which were) found with the Israelis.*
- *The documents and the deadly germ (which were) found with them are sufficient to place them in the dock as terrorist Number One.*
- *Fingers are immediately pointed at Arabs and Islam, as if those who accuse us were already mobilized to do so.*

In the first, third, and the fourth sentences above, the writer has deliberately used clues that put the Israeli detainees at guilt about similar September 11 related crimes in theme position. In the last example, the writer puts the word **fingers** in the initial position to serve as the theme delaying the appearance of the words, "Arabs and Islam" to a later position. In the second example, "New York Trade Center and eight charts of the Pentagon building" have been thematized to sympathize with the people about the event, and at the same time, clearing the Moslems or the Arabs of the accusations.

B. Nominalization

In some structures, verbs and adjectives can be identified syntactically as nouns. This process of making nouns from verbs and adjectives is called *nominalization*. Thompson (1996) defines it as "the use of a nominal form to express a process meaning" (p.167). By this definition, one of the striking features of nominalization is that it allows for the elision of both actor and goal of the process. In other words, nominalization is a strategy that the writer cuts off the process from here-and-now and much of

the information is intently omitted for producing a certain effect desired by discourse producers. The absence of verb makes no point of curiosity for the reader about the actors. Nominalization serves as a tool for both thematization and “meaning-condensation” (Thompson, 1996, p.171)

The tendency to use nominal groups rather than verbal processes has a number of major effects on texts. It is a means whereby all references to people can be omitted. As such, nominalization is one of the crucial linguistic resources utilized in print media discourse. But it can be exploited or abused, i.e. there is not an obvious answer to the questions like "who is to blame?" A sort of suspense is created in the readers' minds as to the agent of the action.

Upon analyzing the American sample of the data for the present study, the following cases of nominalization were discerned:

- *Their departures were spaced within an hour and 40 minutes.*
- *The collapse of the towers caused another World Trade Center building to fall.*
- *hope existed that*
- *Before finally setting down in Washington at 7 p.m.*

The Syrian text being analyzed revealed the following cases of nominalization:

- *the news of arresting*
- *the deliberate ignorance*
- *the accusation of others*
- *This is not in defense of others.*
- *logical analysis of realities*
- *Experience has been different.*
- *Mossad may have a hand in planning the destructive attacks.*
- *said he did not rule out an Israeli role in the US bombings.*

- *We as Arabs, Muslims, Christians, are not terrorists accusations against us.*

C. Predicated Theme

According to Thompson (1996), "Predicated themes group more than one element of the message into a single clause constituent which then can function as themes "(p.128). They were traditionally called as *cleft sentences* which serve the function of focusing the readers' attention on the theme introduced by the structure by singling out an element. The American text yielded no cases of predicated themes while the Syrian data revealed the following use of predicated theme.

- It is Zionism and Zionist organizations in the western world who are making false.

To put the finishing notes to the discussion, we observed how the lexical and structural/thematic devices were used in the data for the study from both American and Syrian contexts to put the blame of the event on the other side in explicit and implicit ways. In doing so, it seemed that the Syrian writers used more explicit reference to the other side as the people at fault for the event. The American data, on the other hand, revealed more implicit indirect reference to the instigators of the event through means like exphoric reference, nominalization and thematization. Both texts equally used textual devices available for media discourse writers to put across their deep intended meanings about the event.

Conclusion

Although the present study suffered from some limitations like the availability of the needed data and the effect of unwanted unconscious biases on the part of writers due to their social context of living, there was an attempt to reduce them to minimum through adopting a systematic procedure. Through a contrastive critical discourse analysis of two written media discourse pieces on the

event of September 11, 2001, an attempt was made to illustrate how print media discourse producers in two ideologically different contexts deployed the lexical devices of repetition and synonymy to bring out the dramatic effect on the readers' mind about the depth and agents of the events. This was verified by actual examples from the data of the study. Later the syntactic features of passivisation, nominalization and predicated themes were studied as thematization techniques to foreground some agents or actors involved in the event and background some others, as required by the ruling ideology of their social context of living. Although in the data from *New York Times*, the writer, explicitly doesn't refer to the agents in the event, his attitudes can be easily understood through exophoric reference accompanied by the prevailing public opinion following the event which later served as a justification for the so called war on terrorism. Moreover, the attempt of discourse producers in the two contexts to thematize or de-thematize the clauses was explicated with examples. It was found that the Syrian context discourse producers used the mentioned techniques to highlight the role of US and Israeli governments in the event of September 11, 2001. We illustrated how the choice of active structure can focus the attention of the reader on the actor, present a particular picture of an individual or group and emphasize the actions in which one side of the conflict does something to another. Such actions may clearly have political or ideological functions as indeed they had in the examples analyzed here. As a result, there are differences in these two printed media's treatment of the same event which could be called bias in media discourse.

The Authors

Biok Behnam is Associate Professor in Applied Linguistics in Islamic Azad University, Tabriz branch, Iran. His current research interests cover Discourse Analysis, ELT and Translation Studies. He has been involved in a wide range of projects in the area of Applied Linguistics and Discourse Analysis as a project director, consultant and researcher. He has widely presented papers to national and international conferences in North America,

Australia, Europe, China, India and South East Asia. Relevant publication includes *Discourse of Advertising: A comparative study* (2006), with H. Piadeh, *A Critical Study of Selected Political Elites in English*, with L. Moghtadi and a sociolinguistic study of SMS Exchanges of Iranian Festive/Mourning Occasions, with M.R. Khodadust.

Mohammad Reza Khodadust is a Ph.D. candidate of TEFL. His research interests include Discourse Analysis, Contrastive Analysis, Feedback and translation Studies. He has been practicing his career as an English instructor in some Iranian colleges, universities and the Educational Complex of Iranian Embassy in Baku for 16 years. He has published some papers in Iranian Journals on TEFL, has edited two university-level ESP textbooks and presented two papers at international conferences as the co-author.

References

- Behnam, B. (2001). Beyond words, our thoughts: a discourse analysis of some texts in Iranian presidential elections. *Journal of the Faculty of Letters of Tabriz University*, Iran, 44, 178-179.
- Bloor, M. & Bloor, T. (2007). *The Practice of critical discourse analysis: An introduction*. Great Britain: Hodder Arnold.
- Brookes, J. H. (1995). The ideological construction of Africa: a critical discourse analysis of news on Africa in the British press. *Discourse and society*, 6, p. 461-494.
- Brown, C. S. (2005). The shot seen around the world: the Middle East reacts to September 11th. *Middle East Review of International affairs*, 5 (4). 69-89.
- Fairclough, N. (2005). *Critical discourse analysis*. Retrieved March 26, 2011 from <http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/staff/norman/critdiscanalysis.doc>
- Flowerdew, J. (2008). Toward critical genre analysis. In Bhatia, V., J. Flowerdew, & R. H. Jones (Eds). *Advances in discourse studies* (pp. 166-167). New York: Routledge.
- Fowler, R. (1991). *Language in the news: Discourse and ideology in the press*. New York: Routledge.

- Freedman, R. O. (2005). The Bush administration and the Arab-Israeli conflict: the record of its first four years. *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 9 (1).
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *An introduction to functional grammar*. Great Britain: Arnold.
- Hodge, R. & Kress, G. (1993). *Language as ideology*. (2nded.). New York: Routledge.
- Johnstone, B. (2008). *Discourse Analysis*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Schemann R. (2001). *Hijacked Jets Destroy Twin Towers and Hit Pentagon*. New York Times. Retrieved March 27, 2011 from http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/s/sept_11_2001/index.html
- Masaki, S. (2009). *Japan's media discourse after September 11*. Retrieved March 27, 2011 from <http://en.parc-jp.org/about/key-statements/japans-media-discourse-after-september-11>.
- Meysan T. (2002). *Who was behind the September 11th Attacks?* A transcribed presentation at Zayed Center in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Retrieved June 18th 2012 from <http://search.yahoo.com/search?p=Meysan+T.+%282002%29.+Who+was+behind+the+September+11th+Attacks%3F+A+transcribed+%09presentation+at+Zayed+Center+in+Abu+Dhabi%2C+United+Arab+Emirates>.
- Paltridge, B. (2008). *Discourse Analysis*. London: MPG Books Ltd.
- Reath, D. (1998). *The language of newspapers*. USA: Routledge
- Thompson, G. (1996). *Introducing functional grammar*. London: Arnold Publishers.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (2004). *From text grammar to critical discourse analysis*. Retrieved March, 7 2011 from <http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/From%20text%20grammar%20to%20critical%20discourse%20analysis.pdf>.
- World Public Opinion Organization, (2008). International Poll: No Consensus on who was behind 9/11, Retrieved March 27, 2011 from http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/international_security_bt/535.php?ni.

Yaghoobi, Mahdi (2009). A critical discourse analysis of the selected Iranian and American printed media on the representations of Hizbullah-Israel war. *Journal of International Communication*. 21.

Appendix A

By SERGE SCHMEMANN

Published: September 12, 2001

1) Hijackers rammed jetliners into each of New York's World Trade Center, toppling both in a hellish storm of ash, glass, smoke and leaping victims, while a third jetliner crashed into the Pentagon in Virginia. There was no official count, but President Bush said thousands had perished, and in the immediate aftermath the calamity was already being ranked the worst and most audacious terror attack in American history.

2) The attacks seemed carefully coordinated. The hijacked planes were all en route to California, and therefore gorged with fuel, and their departures were spaced within an hour and 40 minutes. The first, American Airlines Flight 11, a Boeing out of Boston for Los Angeles, crashed into the north tower at 8:48 a.m. N 767..

3) Eighteen minutes later, United Airlines Flight 175, also headed from Boston to Los Angeles, plowed into the south tower. Then an American Airlines Boeing 757 Flight 77, left Washington's Dulles International Airport bound for Los Angeles but instead hit the western part of the Pentagon, the military headquarters where 24,000 people work, at 9:40 a.m. Finally, United Airlines Flight 93, a Boeing 757 flying from Newark to San Francisco, crashed near Pittsburgh, raising the possibility that its hijackers had failed in whatever their mission was. There were indications that the hijackers on at least two of the planes were armed with knives. Attorney General John Ashcroft told reporters in the evening that the suspects on Flight 11 were armed that way. And Barbara Olson, television commentator who was traveling on American Flight 77, managed to reach her husband, Solicitor

General Theodore Olson, by cell phone and to tell him that the hijackers were armed with knives and a box cutter.

4) In all, 266 people perished in the four planes and several score more were known dead elsewhere. Numerous firefighters, police officers and other rescue workers who responded to the initial disaster in Lower Manhattan were killed or injured when the buildings collapsed. Hundreds were treated for cuts, broken bones, burns, and smoke inhalation. But the real carnage was concealed for now by the twisted, smoking, ash-choked burns and smoke inhalation carcasses of the twin towers, in which thousands of people used to work on a weekday. The collapse of the towers caused another World Trade Center building to fall 10 hours later, and several other buildings in the area were damaged or aflame. ,

"5) I have a sense it's a horrendous number of lives lost," said Mayor Rudolph W Giuliani. "Right now we have to focus on saving as many lives as possible .The mayor warned that "the numbers are going to be very, very high . He added that the medical examiner's office will be ready "to deal with thousands and thousands of bodies if they have to for hours after the attacks, rescuers were stymied by other buildings that threatened to topple. But by 11 p.m., rescuers had been able to begin serious efforts to locate and remove survivors. Mr. Giuliani said two Port Authority police officers had been pulled from the ruins, and he said hope existed that more people could be saved Earlier, police officer volunteers using dogs had found four bodies in the smoldering, stories-high pile of rubble where the towers had once stood and had taken them to a makeshift morgue in the lobby of an office building at Vesey and West Streets.

6) Within an hour of the attacks, the United States was on a war footing. The military was put on the highest state of alert, National Guard units were called out in Washington and New York and two aircraft carriers were dispatched to New secretive route and making only brief stopovers at Air Force bases in Louisiana and Nebraska before finally setting down in Washington at 7 p.m.

7) The White House, the Pentagon and the Capitol were evacuated, except for the Situation Room in the White House where Vice President Cheney remained in charge.

Appendix B

- (1) An Israeli government spokesman reported a few days ago the news of arresting a number of Israelis by the US intelligence bodies in Florida. This might seem strange but what is more significant is the deliberate ignorance by the Israeli government of the reason for the arrests. The Israelis did not even mention the reason or the case for which their subjects were detained. The point is that a big quantity of the Anthrax germ was held with the Israelis when they were arrested. Moreover, the detainees had 15 charts of the New York Trade Center and eight charts of the Pentagon building which were attacked on September 11th. This is in addition to other six charts of the White House, which was among the would-be targets of the September 11th attacks. According to discreet US reports, the charts found with the Israelis had accurately drawn the Pentagon building and the World Trade Center and defined their geometric projections, as well as, precisely depicted the many floors. Further, some data included in the charts define the itineraries of civil passenger planes and their destinations!!! The question is: Why does the American Administration accuse others of the September 11th attacks even there is no evidence that proves the accusation of others? This is not in defence of others, but a logical analysis of realities. The Israeli government may find pretexts to get its subjects out of the circle of suspicion despite the fact that the documents and the deadly germ found with them are sufficient to place them in the dock as terrorist Number One, who have the ability to carry out attacks such as those of New York and Washington. It would be easy to accuse others since the Zionists have a tremendous influence in the US decision-making circles, but the Americans shouldn't have taken the

easy way to launch war against a poor nation under the pretext of terrorism at a time when the Israelis have been practising the ugliest acts of terrorism against the defenceless Palestinian people. Uncle Sam shouldn't have connived with the Israeli terrorist acts, particularly that they have documents relevant to the attacks. We just ask Uncle Sam to face reality not to fight windmills in Afghanistan or elsewhere!"

- *Syria Times*, Syrian newspaper, November 14, 2001, by M. Agha

- (2) Everyone is assuming that Islamic terrorists are to blame for the Boca Raton Anthrax incident. We believe that the terrorists are actually Zionists . . . The envelope sent to the Boca Raton news service with the "Star of David" charm appears to also come [from] Zionists. They, the Zionists, want to silence us because they do not like what we write. Everyone is assuming that the dangers we face is from Islamic terrorists, but our experience has been different. We fear Zionist terrorists more."

- *Syria Times online*, Syrian newspaper, October 16, 2001, reprinting an article under the headline, "Anthrax Terrorists May be Zionists," by Hector Carreon, head of the Nation of Aztlan, a fringe California-based Hispanic nationalist organization that has published several anti-Semitic articles in the past year in its online publication, La Voz de Aztlan.

- (3) Ex-chief of the Egyptian Intelligence Service Amin Hweidi said the Israeli Mossad may have a hand in planning the destructive attacks in New York and Washington. . . Hweidi said he did not rule out an Israeli role in the US bombings whether by the Mossad or other Israeli intelligence services because Israel is the only beneficiary of all what has taken place."

- *Syrian Times online*, Syrian newspaper, September 27, 2001

- (4) "Why not suspect Mossad of having sought to shake the United States and the world, upon directives from (Israeli

Prime Minister) Ariel Sharon who wants to divert attention away from his aggressive plot, and link the attacks to the Arabs, the Muslims, and Osama bin Laden. If Osama bin Laden really had at his disposal such fantastic capabilities, sophisticated electronic talents and a meticulous organisation, as they (the Americans) claim, he would have directed all that against Israel for the simple reason that it is closer."

- *Ath-Thawra*, Syrian government newspaper, September 19, 2001
(AFP, September 19, 2001)

- (5) It is Zionism and Zionist organisations in the western world who are making false accusations against Muslims and Islam. Then fingers are immediately pointed at Arabs and Islam, as if those who accuse us were already mobilized to do so. We as Arabs, Muslims, Christians, are not terrorists. It is the Zionists who committed the attacks. Then fingers are immediately pointed at Arabs and Islam, as if those who accuse us were already mobilized to do so. We as Arabs, Muslims, Christians, are not terrorists. It is the Zionists who committed the attacks against us."

- *Ath-Thawra*, Syrian government newspaper, September 13, 2001
(AFP, September 13, 2001)

Archive of SID

تحلیل نقادانه گفتمان رویداد 11 سپتامبر 2001 در گفتمان مطبوعاتی

امریکا و سوریه

بیوک بهنام

محمد رضا خدادوست

دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی واحد تبریز

با هدف نشان دادن نقش مهم گفتمان مطبوعات نوشتاری در انتقال ضمنی ایدئولوژی غالب بر بافت گفتمان، تحقیق داده-محور حاضر تلاش کرده است مشخص کند که چطور تولید کنندگان گفتمان ویژگی‌های واژگانی تکرار و هم‌معنائی و ویژگی‌های دستوری و موضوعی مجهول‌سازی، اسم‌سازی و موضوع بندی مسندی راجهت انتقال طرز تفکر خاص جامعه خود به خوانندگان هدف به کار برده اند تا درک و برداشت مورد نظر خود از حادثه 11 سپتامبر 2001 را به آنها القاء کنند. با استفاده از روش تحلیل آماری مقایسه ای گفتمان مطبوعاتی نوشتاری داده‌های تحقیق از دو بافت امریکائی و سوری که از لحاظ ایدئولوژی حاکم بر جامعه در دو قطب مخالف قرار دارند، تلاش بر این شد که مشخص شود چطور تولید کنندگان گفتمان رویکردهای موضوعی و واژگانی مختلف را به کار گرفته اند تا تصاویر و برداشت‌های کاملاً متفاوت از حادثه را در اذهان خواننده‌ها متبادر کنند و به صورت ضمنی ایدئولوژی حاکم بر جامعه خود را بر ذهن آنها غالب کنند.

کلید واژه‌ها: 11 سپتامبر 2001، موضوع بندی، مجهول‌سازی، اسم‌سازی، هم‌معنائی، تحلیل گفتمان انتقادی