

US Media Depiction of Muslims in Animated TV Series

Fatima Hassan Ali

fatima.hassan@s.uokerbala.edu.iq

Asst. Prf. Tawfeeq Majeed Ahmed

University of Kerbala – College of Education

المستخلص

تقدم هذه الدراسة (تحليل خطاب نقدي CDA للمسلمين في رسوم متحركة أمريكية مختارة) وتسعى الى تحديد كيفية تمثيل المسلمين في المشاهد الأمريكية للرسوم المتحركة. وتهدف هذه الدراسة يمجملها الى الاجابة على الأسئلة التالية:

1. كيف يتم توظيف الاستراتيجيات المختلفة لتمثيل المسلمين؟
2. وما هي الايديولوجية الخفية المستخدمة وراء تلك الاستراتيجيات؟

لتحقيق الاهداف، يوظف الباحث نموذجًا من نظرية فان ليويين (Van Leeuwen 2008) عن تمثيل الممثل الاجتماعي لتحليل العينات المختارة. أظهرت النتائج أن المشاهد المُختارة تصوّر المسلمين على أنهم غير مرحب بهم في منطقتهم لأنهم يشكلون تهديدًا للحضارة الأمريكية. ومع ذلك، فقد نقلوا نواياهم الطيبة كدولة مضيفة باستخدام اللغة الايجابية.

Abstract

The current study examines how Muslims are portrayed in a few selected American animated television programs through critical discourse analysis. Its goal is to reveal how Muslims are portrayed in American media. The present study attempts to answer the following questions: 1. How are the sociological categories employed to describe Muslims as social actors in American animation TV shows? 2. What is the ideology behind the representation of Muslims in American animation shows?

To examine the data, the researcher applies Van Leeuwen's (2008) theory of the representation of the social actor. Based on the findings, the study indicate that the

selected shows depict Muslims as unwelcome in their neighborhood because of their perceived threat to American civilization. They did, however, convey their good intentions as the host nation by using some positive language

Keywords: Media, Animation, Islamophobia, Critical Discourse Analysis, Social Actor.

1. Introduction

Media is considered a platform to present facts and truth and a mediator that helps shape a particular worldview. The media only shows the image of an "agreed reality" (a stereotype) that can change public thinking, feelings, and attitudes. A stereotype is shaped by personal information incorporated into "common knowledge" or schemes from specific groups (Arendt, 2013, p.830). Compared to other media types such as radio and television, the film is the audio-visual form that is more effective and has the best communication medium.

As a form of mainstream mass media, television can depict mass culture. Those who are interested in political information can access political information from television. Television also has advantages because news programs with special reports can show current events or calamities, which may support national solidarity (Wang & Charles, 2017). As people spend so much of their time on television, the media has a continual influence on people without even their realization. They follow their television-watching routines day after day and therefore this medium has a tremendous influence on how viewers think, what they think and believe, and how they act while some of this influence is easy to notice, most of it shapes their mental codes unconsciously. Many people have a habitual use of media, they turn on the television or radio as soon as they get up in the morning, or reach home after work in the evening. Television is used more than other mass media.

Meanwhile, internet use is the second-highest, followed by radio and newspaper (Lubis, 2019). Television shows condense the message and depict a modern lifestyle different from the audience's life (Yuliantari, 2020). It is impossible to overstate the

significance of media in the modern world. The discourse in the media has recently affected most individuals (Macdonald, 2003; Talbot, 2007).

The words animation, animated, and animator come from the Latin verb animate, which means to give life to. Thus, a manually created movie, picture by frame, that produces an Animation is the feeling of movement even when it hasn't been explicitly captured in a traditional photographic sense. Animation TV shows come in different forms. Celluloid animations, 2D and 3D animations, stop-motion and motion graphics animations, classical animations, computer animations, and so on are a few examples of these. The most sophisticated computer animations are employed these days.

In the conventional animation approach, multiple unique paintings are photographed and then composited into successive frames of film to create the illusion of movement (Halas & Manwell, 1968).

Animation TV shows are distributed globally by big studios like Walt Disney Animation Studios, and are watched by a large group of people that includes both adults and children. According to Azad (2009), animated movies may make any story more enjoyable to watch by showcasing vibrant visuals and capturing the imagination of the audience. However, research over the years has shown that animated movies are not as clean or safe as they initially seem to be. The researcher is interested in studying animated films since they usually feature ideological themes including racism, sarcasm, bullying and so forth.

Scholars have been studying and debating TV productions that depict Islam and Muslims in the United States throughout the past few decades. Studies reveal that these kinds of television dramas and films contribute to the creation of a climate in which American media may envisage a variety of hybrid depictions of Islam and Muslims.

Stereotypes and prejudices about Muslims are widely spread by the media's constant depiction of them in Western news and entertainment. The media, a potent rhetorical and persuasive instrument, is crucial in influencing how the general public views

marginalised groups. For example, Muslims are frequently depicted as "terrorists," "barbarians," "savages," or "alien-like" people (Wagner et al., 2012). Islamophobia is an amalgamation of racism and xenophobia directed toward anyone who identifies or is perceived as Muslim and has proliferated in the years following the attacks that unfolded on September 11, 2001 (Kaplan, 2006).

Critical discourse analysis, also known as CDA, was applied in almost all of these studies to examine how the media represented this minority group in the Western and Eastern world. This is because CDA "aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, legitimized, and so on by language use" (Wodak, 2001, p.2). Thus, the representation of Muslims in American animation will be critically examined in this study. The study's data is limited to a few selected American television shows, including Family Guy, The Simpsons, and American Dad.

The study question

1. How are the sociological categories like (exclusion, role allocation, assimilation, association, etc.) employed to describe Muslims as social actors in American animation TV shows?
2. What is the ideology behind the representation of Muslims?

Study Goals

The purpose of this study is to:

1. To reveal the sociological categories aforementioned that are utilized in the depiction of Muslims.
2. To reveal the ideology behind their use.

2. Literature Review

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Providing definitions, goals, principles, certain vocabulary relevant to the study of CDA, and techniques are just a few of the components of the discipline that are intended to be covered in this part. According to Wodak (2001), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) may be traced back to a conference that took place in Amsterdam in

January 1991. Several prominent scholars, such as Norman Fairclough, Teun Van Dijk, Theo Van Leeuwen, Gunther Kress, and Ruth Wodak, have had a substantial impact on CDA. The use of different methodologies by various researchers in the field of critical discourse analysis (CDA) demonstrates the lack of conceptual and methodological coherence in the discipline.

Critical linguistics, an emerging discipline within the science of linguistics, serves as the foundation for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The definition of CDA is as the following: The goal of CDA, or discourse analysis, aims to methodically look into the frequently ambiguous causal and determination relationships between (a) discursive practices, events, and texts; and (b) larger social and cultural structures, relations, and processes. It also examines how power struggles and other power relations ideologically shape these practices, events, and texts. It also investigates how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is a factor in maintaining power and hegemony (Fairclough 1993, p.135).

Van Dijk (2001, p.352) argues that experts in this domain must adopt a clear perspective to comprehend, elucidate, and challenge societal disparities and instances of power abuse, or to detect any hidden language ideology. Furthermore, CDA seeks to emphasize the ways in which social power is perpetuated, managed, enforced, or misused.

Aims of CDA

In order to make discriminatory systems, demagoguery, and propaganda obvious, critical discourse analysis seeks to expose and clarify particular social actions. CDA seeks to assist people in examining and understanding the reasons behind the way that reality is produced (Wodak, 1989). Widdowson (2000) shows how CDA aims to reveal ideological biases and thus impose power in texts by exposing hidden ideologies.

As per Wodak (2001, p. 32), "CDA focuses on the context of language use as a central dimension that addresses the relationship between language, power, and

ideology". As a result, CDA claims the role of social, cultural, and economic elements in forming and maintaining ideological power relations and representations. Furthermore, this portrays discourse language as "a form of social practice" that impacts others and compels them to modify their attitudes, viewpoints, and posture. CDA is "concerned with the ways in which discourse's power relations are perpetuated and/or challenged through texts and the activities that impact their creation, reception, and dissemination." (Locke, 2004, p.38). Richardson (2007, p.1) believes that "CDA uses interdisciplinary theories and methods to examine how individuals and institutions use language to hide their ideologies and agendas". According to Crystal (2008, p.123), CDA investigates the link between discourse occurrences and sociopolitical and cultural variables, particularly how discourse is ideologically impacted by and may alter societal power relations.

Wodak (2001, p.32) asserts that "CDA analyzes the relationship between language, power, and ideology by focusing on the context of language usage as a crucial feature. CDA emphasizes the social, cultural, and economic factors contributing to developing and maintaining ideological power structures and representations". CDA is "a form of social practice" that illustrates how discourse language can compel people to alter their opinions, convictions, or stances (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258).

Ultimately, analysts describe language as a social action that is employed within a broader social, psychological, and cultural context. To identify the differences in power dynamics and representations created and maintained by people, organizations, and nations, analysts should look at these kinds of social contexts.

Principles of CDA

The fundamental concepts of the subject, which yet spark intense debate, have been attempted to be articulated by academics who use CDA techniques to advance and enhance understanding of language usage in society.

Mayr (2004, p. 9) claims that CDA establishes a set of social theory principles and findings that aid in the identification and interpretation of spoken and written texts by attempting to address more general social concerns and issues like ideology, power, inequality, representation, and so forth. This is founded on the notion that "language and conversation play a critical role in sustaining and legitimizing inequality, injustice, and oppression in society" (Van Leeuwen, 2004, p.169).

CDA principles can be summarized according to Fairclough and Wodak (1997, pp. 80-271) as the following:

- CDA addresses social problems
- Power relations are discursive.
- Discourse constitutes culture and society.
- Discourse is historical.
- The link between society and text is mediated.
- Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory.
- Discourse is a form of social action.
- Discourse does ideological work.

2.1.4 Pillars of CDA: Discourse, Ideology, and Power

Anyone who conducts critical discourse research will probably meet concepts like discourse and ideology. The pillars of CDA, as Weiss and Wodak (2003) present three principles: discourse, ideology, and power, they are all explained in the following subsections.

Discourse

Despite being often used, the term "discourse" in current linguistics is vague and open to several interpretations. Different researchers have interpreted the concept of discourse in a variety of ways.

Van Dijk (1998a: p.98) defines discourse as "language in use or performance," whereas texts are "abstract theoretical units" which include nouns, sentences...etc. Weiss and Wodak (2003, p. 9) assert that language involves the construction of

reality representations that “are never just readings of a pre-existing reality but contribute to the building of reality.” It is true that meanings and representations are real and can be observed, but only through discourse can they be given meaning. This does not rule out the existence of reality. Unlike an “anything else” text, speech should be understood as a “component of a network of power and identity.” Aside from understanding the hidden meaning, discourse should not be understood as “part of the ongoing injustices, struggle, and discrimination in society to achieve power via knowledge.” (Matheson, 2005, p.9).

Language, according to Simpson and Mayr (2009), is an “immaterial set of structures and laws that interact at various levels (e.g., syntactic, semantic, phonological, and pragmatic). On the other hand, discourse is the true embodiment of these structures via everyday language. As a result, discourse acts beyond the grammatical and semantic level to describe what happens in various political, social, and cultural areas when certain language kinds are utilised (Simpson & Mayr, 2009).

In conclusion, discourse can illuminate this study because the primary objective is to investigate the nature of minorities’ representation in some media outlets and how media discourse seems to portray Muslims by constructing their image and representation in the minds of the masses.

Ideology

The conception of ideology is typically ambiguous (Van Dijk, 2006a). Consequently, an abundance of books and articles were created with the express intent of comprehending the concept of ideology and its various manifestations.

Ideological comprehension can be divided into two categories in general (Mayr, 2008). He goes on to say that the first category defines ideology as a collection of beliefs, practices, and dogmas.

According to Van Dijk (1998a), ideology is the interface between "fundamental properties (e.g., desires, goals) of social groups and their members' shared, social cognitions" (p.313). Ideology, according to Simpson and Mayr (2009, p. 4), is defined as "the opinions, views, and value systems of an individual converge with the larger social and political structures of the society in which they reside." It is linked to how power is perceived. "Ideology is ultimately generated by the different political views and sociocultural behaviors that form daily discourse (spoken or written). Therefore, it is vital to analyze discourse linguistically to examine the various ideologies embedded in discourse and examine the functions of their integration.

The second intellectual category is based on Marxist ideology, which describes it as a hegemonic instrument used to serve the interests of the elite and the powerful. Therefore, ideology is not just an abstract belief system but also an instrument of dominance that affects the frame of thought of the population by enforcing the "right way of thinking" accepted by a wide variety of people in a society (Macdonald, 2003, p.28).

Power

Power is a central element of CDA and an entwined notion of ideology and discourse in general. Possessing power enables powerful social groups to subjugate the weaker people. This is crucial for CDA, given its tendency to adopt the perspective of those who suffer and critically evaluate the language usage of authority (Wodak, 2001). It is significant to realize that language is unsuccessful on its own; rather, it "gains power through the use made by dominant individuals." (Weiss & Wodak, 2003, p. 14). As a result, language is associated with power, as it transfers power, demonstrates power, and is also used to resist power.

Hence, power is not unquestionable but can be contested and subverted. Effective speech can transform how individuals characterize phenomena in terms of their values, understandings, and perspectives and their understanding of

society. Ideology is the mental component of this sort of control when it can mobilize the populace's minds. This is because ideologies “supply the ideals upon which certain forms of power abuse might be justified, legitimized, tolerated, or welcomed” (Van Dijk, 2000, p.35).

Eventually, discourse serves as the primary vehicle via which discourse producers transfer authority that underpins ideology's principles. According to Simpson and Mayr (2009), power is perceived in two distinct dimensions: “mainstream” and “second-stream.” The mainstream dimension is related to the belief that power originates within the state and its numerous organizations, churches, and companies. This aspect of power as domination “concentrates on the multiple roles of actors, such as the judiciary and penal agencies, to ensure that others follow, even in the face of opposition or revolt” (Simpson & Mayr, 2009, p.2).

The second dimension is power which studied in this investigation to see how influential media outlets depict Muslims. It is more appropriate because this study's interpretation of CDA is based on Wodak's (2001) definition, which states that CDA analyzes “explicit hierarchical relationships of discrimination, domination, power, and control expressed in language” (p.2). Thus, CDA elucidates the relationship between discourse and power by critically analyzing the social discrepancies that are justified, implied, legitimized, and so forth through language.

Van Leeuwen's (2008) Representation of Social Actors Approach

This method holds that discourses do more than merely explain "what is going"; they also assess, interpret, rationalize, and so on (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 6). The significance of representational characteristics lies in their potential to surpass real social action in terms of prominence. An essential component of Van Leeuwen's worldview is the importance of analyzing English representations of social actors. Van Leeuwen emphasizes the significance of examining the socio-semantic repertoire

of potential depictions of social actors and determining the sociological and critical significance of the various categories that will subsequently be investigated with their linguistic portrayal (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.23).

This CDA analysis method is based on language's lack of distinctiveness and cultural significance. The initial manifestation might be observed within the social framework of agency. The agency is a key sociological tool in CDA. In addition to linguistics, prepositional phrases and possessive pronouns have the capacity to convey social agency. The lack of systematic connection between sociological and linguistic categories poses a challenge for critical discourse analysis. If this approach becomes too closely tied to specific linguistic operations or categories, it may result in the oversight of relevant examples of agency (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.24).

The second reason is that meaning cannot be associated with any specific semiotics, as it is derived from the notion that meaning is determined by culture rather than language. Van Leeuwen (2008) proposes pan-semiotic categories as a priority for CDA analysts, implying that each culture has its own distinctive array and proper semiotic modes for verbal and visual expression (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.25).

The theory's many rhetorical and linguistic processes are unified by the idea of a "social actor" instead of linguistic categories (Van Leeuwen, 2008). As a result, the theory emphasizes sociological categories such as role allocation, which pertains to the assignment of active or passive roles to social actors in speech, rather than depending on language categories such as transitivity, which pertains to verbs that can take direct objects.

Sociological Categories of Discourse

Social actors are represented in spoken language systems in different ways. Van Leeuwen's method offers a wide range of sociological categories that may be used to analyze the expression of social actors in speech.

The corpora for this study will be analyzed using the following categories:

1) Exclusion: It refers to the intentional suppression or marginalization of social actors from participating in a certain action. Discourse makers employ this discourse strategy to fulfill their objectives as well as the objectives of the readers to whom the discourse is targeted. The objective of suppression is to eliminate any social agents from the text. Backgrounding is based on the premise that social actors are mentioned elsewhere in the text, even if they are not explicitly linked to a specific action (Van Leeuwen, 2008). Grammatical suppression can take the form of nominalizations (like "*their response was stunning*"), non-finite clauses that act as participants (like "*keeping peace in the camp is difficult*"), and passive agent deletion (like "*the families were transported to another site*"). Backgrounding and suppression are grammatically realized in a similar manner. The sole differentiation lies in the fact that social actors are mentioned in other parts of the text.

2) Role allocation: This field of research explores the diverse roles that individuals assume throughout a discussion or communication. It highlights that the assigned linguistic role may not always correspond to the social actor's actual purpose. During role allocation, social actors exhibit either an active or passive demeanor. Activation refers to the process in which a social actor is assigned a dynamic and active role in an activity. More specifically, these kinds of shows that incorrectly depict the Muslim community as terrorists, violent, backward, and essentially a threat to our freedom, will perpetuate the negative sentiment and a misunderstanding of the people." Activation may also be linguistically accomplished by circumstantialization, which involves using the terms "by" and "from" to establish a connection with the subject matter. In addition, the process of modifying nouns before or after nominalizations can also indicate activation.

Passivization occurs when social actors are either committed to action or get benefits. The former represents social players as entities, as shown by the term Muslims. On the other hand, the latter portrays individuals who are impacted, either favorably or badly, by social activity, such as "terrorists or invaders".

The concept of role allocation is analyzed using Halliday's systemic functional grammar, with a particular focus on transitivity. Critical discourse analysis utilizes transitivity to analyze the semantic organization of sentences, specifically focusing on the relationships between the subject, object, and verb, as well as how actions are performed (Simpson & Mayr, 2009, p.65). This study will examine material, mental, relational, and linguistic processes. Material processes embody a quantum of variation in the flow of events resulting from an input of energy (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.179). Material processes are employed in abstract expressions, such as "his motivation has diminished," and in metaphorical formulations, such as "she completely defeated her rivals." Actor, purpose, and patient are all examples of material processes. The mental processes mirror the fluctuations in the sequence of events occurring inside our consciousness (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.197).

- 3) **Genericization and Specification:** Social actors are assigned a wide or limited frame of reference within this category. While a specific reference identifies and differentiates each social actor specifically, a generic reference groups social actors into a general category. A generic reference can be conveyed by the use of many unarticled nouns, however, a specific citation discloses the exact recognition of the social participant.
- 4) **Assimilation:** In this style of study, social actors are shown either as individuals or as a collective. Aggregation and collectivization are distinct methods of incorporating or integrating. Aggregation involves the measurement and presentation of social actors as statistical data, while collectivization does not. Aggregation has significance for CDA analysts since it enables discourse makers to exert influence over practice and shape collective viewpoints, even when it may seem like they are merely recording factual information (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.37).

- 5) **Association:** This component pertains to scenarios when a collective of individuals are shown as participating in a unified action or having a mutual interest.
- 6) **Indetermination and Differentiation:** When social actors are portrayed as invisible entities, speech becomes unclear. When one social actor or group of social actors is set apart from another social actor or group of social actors, differentiation takes place.
- 7) **Nomination and Categorization:** Social actors are demonstrated in this component by either clearly identifying their unique identities (nomination) or by distinguishing the identities and roles that they share with other social actors (categorization).
- 8) **Functionalization and Identification:** Functionalization is the term used to describe how social actors are portrayed based on their activities or performances. This category comprises nouns that are formed from verbs by adding suffixes such as –ant (applicant), -ee (employee), -ion (information) -ment (argument), -er (singer), -or (actor) as well as nouns that are intimately linked to an action through the use of suffixes like -ist (pianist) and –eer (engineer). Additionally, it contains nouns that are derived from verbs by adding suffixes such as "man," "woman," "person," and similar forms.

According to Van Leeuwen (2008, p.42), social actors are considered to be recognized based on their inherent characteristics rather than their actions. Identification can be represented by speech, categorization, relational identification, and physical identification. Social actors are categorized based on their salient distinguishing characteristics, such as race, age, socioeconomic status, religion, and so on. Social actors are shown by means of relational identification, which is established by their specific familial and occupational connections, such as siblings, colleagues, and the like. Physical identity pertains to the observable characteristics of individuals, including attributes like eye color and hair color, as well as descriptive

modifiers and adjectives, such as "a corpulent man of tall stature" and "an attractive woman".

9) Personalization and impersonalization: Personalized social agents can be presented in either a human-like form or in an impersonal manner. When abstract or physical words are used to denote social actors, the inherent meaning of "human" is eliminated. Abstraction and objectification are used to depersonalize social actors. According to Van Leeuwen (2008, p.46), objectivation occurs when social actors are shown in a way that firmly connects them to a specific location or thing that is closely tied to their identity or the action they are involved in.

10) Overdetermination: refers to the occurrence of social actors engaging in several social practices. Symbolization, distillation, inversion, and connotation can all be used to illustrate the idea of overdetermination. Inversion occurs when social actors assume several roles simultaneously. Symbolization occurs when "a "fictional" social actor or group of social actors stands in for actors or groups in nonfictional social activities" (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.48). According to Wright (1975, cited by Van Leeuwen, 2008), real-life people like scientists, doctors, and other professionals are symbolized by characters in Western films. Connotation is the indication of classification and use by a specific designation (name, physical property, etc.). Distillation is used to link "social actors to several social practices by abstracting the same feature from the social actors involved in these several practices" (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.48).

These diverse discourse analysis categories will reveal the writer's ideology to understand their main purpose. "In-depth linguistic analysis can assist us in understanding how ideology becomes deeply rooted in language and, consequently, enable us to recognize how the expressions of 'dominant' or 'mainstream' ideologies are maintained through written practices," state Simpson and Mayr (2009, p.4).

Methodology

A qualitative method is used in this study. As stated by Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p.2), qualitative research involves examining phenomena in their natural environments and interpreting them based on the meanings attributed to them by individuals. Qualitative research is perceived as a multi-method approach that adopts an interpretive and naturalistic perspective towards its subject matter. Furthermore, according to Neuman (2011, p.17), qualitative research is "situationally constrained," indicating that the social context is crucial since it influences the interpretation of social actions.

The present study provides an overview of the methodologies and criteria employed for data collection and selection. As per IMDb, some of the most well-liked animated TV series in America are The Simpsons, Family Guy, and American Dad. The researcher has chosen such shows to study particular episodes that depict Islam and Muslims in a satirical sense.

Analytical Procedures

The analysis method involves several steps that must be performed to complete the current investigation. The processes are as follows:

- 1- Identifying and choosing scripts from three distinct animated shows according to the criteria outlined earlier.
- 2- Playing the video recordings of the scenes again and comparing them to their scripts is a method to verify the accuracy of the scripts and enhance the reliability of the resource.
- 3- Priming the reader intellectually by summarizing the contextual aspects, including the setting, participants, and other elements of Hymes' SPEAKING paradigm, before analyzing the hostile scene.

4- To avoid repetition and unnecessary length, three popular American animated shows in the US are analyzed based on their viewership frequencies and percentages.

5- The data analysis for this study will be qualitative. The study involves analyzing the contextual elements of each extract. The investigation assesses the portrayal of Muslims in the data and the use of Van Leeuwen's (2008) Social Actor Representation Theory.

Data Analysis

1- FAMILY GUY (1998)

Scene One: Santa is killed by Muslims

Stewie: daddy where's Santa? was he killed by Muslims?

Mother: oh my God poor Stewie he's so disappointed

Role allocation: In the scene above, Muslims are activated in speech. They are treated as being the doer of the action in a (material process). Muslims are depicted in this scene as killers who know nothing but murder, to the extent that they may even murder Santa Clause, who is a fictional character.

Genericization: According to Van Leeuwen (2008), the genericization strategy is a means of symbolically separating social actors from the readers' firsthand experience by depicting them as far-off "others" as opposed to real-life people. The information can be found on page 36. In the scene above, Muslims are put into a group, general reference without an article.

In the “Family Guy” scene, van Leeuwen’s social actor representation strategies can be analyzed as follows:

Assimilation: The characters are not assimilated; they are represented as individual family members with distinct roles.

Association: Stewie categorizes Santa as a victim and Muslims as potential aggressors, reflecting societal stereotypes and associating killing people with Muslims.

This scene uses humor to reflect on post-9/11 attitudes and the impact of such events on societal perceptions, even affecting a child's innocent questions.

Scene 2 (Peter becoming A muslim)

Mahmoud: "I have to say peter I am impressed by how much you have committed yourself to islam "

Peter: "are you kidding it's awesome I even started wearing leather sandals with way too long toenails see how the big ones are getting yellow "

Mhoumoud: "ah yes very muslim "

Activation: Peter is depicted as an active social actor who is engaging with a new religious identity.

Passivation: Mahmoud is passive in this interaction, responding to Peter's actions with a humorous affirmation.

Specification: Peter's individual actions and choices are highlighted, particularly his personal interpretation of Muslim practices.

Association: The actual practices of Islam are impersonalized and stereotyped through Peter's actions.

The scene uses humor to address the theme of cultural assimilation and the sometimes superficial ways individuals may attempt to adopt new cultural practices. It also reflects the show's characteristic use of exaggeration and stereotype to elicit laughter.

2-THE SIMPSONS

Scene 1

A: "let me wrap this wet towel around your head cool you off"

Police Man: "Stop him. He is expressing his faith".

Van Leeuwen's Social Actor Representation

Using van Leeuwen's social actor representation categories, we can analyze the scene from "The Simpsons" as follows:

Assimilation: The characters are not assimilated into a group; they are represented as individuals within the scene.

Personalization: The person offering the towel and the person objecting are personalized through their actions and speech.

Identification: The objecting person identifies the act of wrapping the towel and ululating as an expression of faith, which may reflect broader societal categorisations of religious practices.

This analysis helps us understand how the characters are constructed and how their actions and interactions are represented in relation to social and cultural factors.

Scene 2

A: "it's more than I deserve ma'am now which way is mecca cause I gotta do a little praying"

Mrs. Simpsons: "ah mecca!"

Van Leeuwen Social Actor Representation

Assimilation: The characters are not assimilated into a group; they are represented as individuals within the scene.

Identification: Character A is identified by his religious practice of praying towards Mecca, and Mrs. Simpson is individualized by her response to his request.

Functionalization: Character A's function is as practicing Muslim rituals in an satirical and mocking manner, while Mrs. Simpson's function is as a host responding to the needs of her guest.

3-AMERICAN DAD

Scene 1

Muslim Man addressing his wife: "I like this it fits without a hip, twenty-something lifestyle. Oh for Allah's sake, put some clothes on, now how about a beer?"

Van Leeuwen's Social Actor Representation

Theo van Leeuwen's sociological categories provide a framework for analyzing the representation of social actors in discourse.

Exclusion: Certain social actors or actions may be excluded from the discourse to serve a particular narrative or ideological purpose. In the scene, the focus is on the male character's perspective, potentially excluding alternative viewpoints.

Activation: Characters are assigned specific roles or identities, such as the husband's traditional role and the wife's expected modesty, reflecting societal expectations.

Assimilation: Assimilation: The husband's behavior is being absorbed to symbolize the actions of all Muslims and serve as their defining characteristic, reflecting their individual perspective.

The categories provided aid in analyzing the intricate manner in which the animated series portrays cultural disparities and societal norms through the actions and relationships of its characters. The scenario employs humor and satire to provide commentary and criticism on these sociological structures.

Scene 2

Francine in prison: "hi barb Hanson exposition Realty. mind if I borrow one of your napkins? Thanks "

Muslim Prisoner. سرقت الكافرة منديلي (The infidel stole my napkin)

Muslim Peisoner2: سنقطع يديها الجميلتين (We'll cut off her nice hands)

Van Leeuwen's Social Actor Representation

Applying Theo van Leeuwen's sociological categories to the American Dad! prison scene, we can analyze how the social actors are represented:

Activation: The scene focuses on Francineas being subjected to the act of hand-cutting by the Muslim prisoners, and the Muslim prisoners are potentially activating as being ready to perform the hand-cutting act of extreminst Muslims, excluding other perspectives or reactions from the prison environment.

Specification vs. Assimilation: While Francine is specified through her actions and dialogue, the Muslim prisoners may be assimilated into a group identity, represented by their collective response.

These categories help us understand how the show constructs its characters and the interactions between them, often using satire to comment on societal norms and cultural differences. The scene uses humor to exaggerate and critique these representations, reflecting the show's broader themes.

Conclusions

The findings presented in this study show how Muslims are characterized in terms of their actions, movements, population, impact on host nations, and challenges they encounter. Muslim stereotypes are negative, according to the role allocation study. In certain unfavorable aspects, they become active. For example, in Family Guy, they are associated with verbs like "going to jail," "bombing places," and "being terrorists" in American Dad. Nonetheless, Muslims in the United States commit these atrocious crimes against Americans. This aims to show that Americans are more vulnerable to the harm that Muslims could bring.

References

- Azad, S. B. (2009). *Lights, Camera, Accent: Examining dialect performance in recent children's animated films* [Master's thesis, Georgetown University]
- Crystal, D. (2008). *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics*. Blackwell publishing Ltd.
- Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). Introduction: Entering the field of qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp.1-18). USA: Sage publications.
- Fairclough, N. (1993). Critical discourse analysis and the marketization of public discourse: The universities. *Discourse & Society*, 4(2), 133–168.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926593004002002>
- Halas, J., & Manwell R. (1968). *The technique of film animation*. Hastings House.
- Halliday, M., & Matthiessen, C. (2004). *An introduction to functional grammar*. UK: Arnold.
- Kaplan, J. (2006). Islamophobia in America?: September 11 and Islamophobic hate crime. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 18(1), 1–33.
- Locke, T. (2004). *Critical discourse analysis*. London Continuum.
- Lubis, M. (2019). Optimizing communication and marketing strategy with nielsen total audience. Retrieved from <https://www.nielsen.com/id/en/press-releases/2019/optimizing-communication-andmarketing-strategy-with-nielsen-totalaudience/>
- Macdonald, M. (2003). *Exploring media discourse*. Arnold.
- Macdonald, M. (2003). *Exploring Media Discourse*. Bloomsbury USA.
- Matheson, D. (2005). *Media discourses: Analyzing media texts*. Open University Press.
- Mayr, A. (2004). *Prison discourse: Language as a means of control and resistance*. Palgrave Macmillan Ltd.
- Richardson, J. (2007). *Analyzing newspapers: An approach from critical discourse analysis*. Palgrave.
- Simpson, P., & Mayr, A. (2009). *Language and power: A resource book for students*. UK: Routledge.
- Van Dijk, J. (2000). Widening information gaps and policies of prevention. In Hacker, K., & Van Dijk, J. (eds.), *Digital democracy: Issues of theory and practice*. Sage.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446218891.n10>
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Critical discourse analysis. In D. Tannen, D. Schiffrin, & H. Hamilton (Eds.), *Handbook of discourse analysis* (pp.352-371). Blackwell.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2006a). Politics, ideology, and discourse. In K. Brown (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Language & Linguistics* (pp. 728-740). USA: Elsevier.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (1998a). *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. UK: Sage Publication.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2004). *Introducing social semiotics: An introductory textbook*. Routledge.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2008). *Discourse and Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wang, Y. (Victor), & Louis-Charles, H. M. (2017). Empirical examination of the theory of disaster marathon: A case study of the local television coverage following the 2014 Ludian, China earthquake. *Communication Review*, 20(4), 246–276.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10714421.2017.1377950>
- Weiss, G. & Wodak, R. (2003). *Critical discourse analysis: Theory and interdisciplinarity*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Widdowson, H. (2000). Critical practices: On representation and the interpretation of text. In S. Sarangi & Malcolm Coulthard (Eds.), *Discourse and social life*. Pearson Education.
- Wodak, R. (1989). *Language, power and ideology*. John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam, Philadelphia.
- Wodak, R. (2001). The discourse-historical approach. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp.63-93). UK: Sage.
- Yuliantari, A. P. (2020). Technoscapes and mediascapes influence on village and city relations in Manggarai, East Nusa Tenggara. *Simulacra*, 3(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.21107/sml.v3i1.7112>