

Arab Revolutions and the Representation of Demonstrators and Demonstrations by the Washington Post and the Guardian during the Arab Spring: A Critical Discourse Analysis

الثورات العربية وتمثيل المتظاهرين والمظاهرات في صحف واشنطن بوست والجاردريان
في فترة الربيع العربي: تحليل نقدي للخطاب

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Received: 16/03/2021

Accepted: 01/05/2021

Published: 30/06/2021

DOI: [10.37654/aujll.2021.171110](https://doi.org/10.37654/aujll.2021.171110)

Abstract

The Arab spring changed the political landscape of the Middle East. Leaders from Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen were forced out of power through unprecedented public agitations. The protracted struggle for change and power caused mass displacement of ordinary people leading to a big refugee crisis. This paper explores the media portrayal of these events and the people who were affected by the political unrest. Specifically, it focuses on narratives of two English dailies, the Washington Post and the Guardian, and uses micro- and macro-linguistic strategies to study the discursive representation of the protestors and the refugees.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, micro- and macro-linguistic strategies, Discursive Representation.

Introduction

The term “Arab spring” refers to the revolutions or uprisings that occurred in various Arab countries between 2010 and 2011 whose citizens viewed their government as having taken their rights and extorted their lives as human beings. The regime changes and ongoing civil wars that resulted from the uprisings are thus considered a political turning point in the affected countries, though the final outcome of the revolution is still unclear. Touted as the unprecedented event in the Arab world, the coverage the uprisings received, both internationally and locally, is believed to have been elicited

not only due to the uprising itself, but as a force that encouraged and inflamed the uprising. Political affiliates, ordinary citizens and researchers in the affected countries have questioned whether the media was used to promote agendas favored by any particular government party, officials, and even foreign players. The significance of this question necessitates an

analysis of the role the mass media, especially the newspapers, played in the demonstrations.

We, thus, begin with the assertion that the newspapers' portrayal of the events established in minds of the readers the overwhelming feeling of impending doom and threat to life from the fall of the regimes as well as an irresistible feeling of better life that awaited them. We try to investigate whether this assertion holds by analyzing the discursive representations of two widely read English newspapers, the Washington Post and the Guardian. By discursive representations, we are referring to the micro- and macro-linguistic practices that are used by newspaper editorial writers to portray events and people. Some of the micro-linguistic practices include naming, referencing, semantic coding, and macro-strategies include perspectivisation, a "functional-communicative procedure which can be used to realize complex observations and different point-of-view relations" (Schäffner, 1997: 61). It also presents the positive self-representation and negative representation of others (Van Dijk, 2001). To enable examination of differential representation and its ability to influence readers, we explore the media coverage of uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, where the uprisings lead to ousting of the established regimes without descending into civil wars, and leave out Syria and Yemen, where the civil war is ongoing. Making use of the micro- and macro-linguistic strategies to analyze the discourse presented in the Washington Post and the Guardian, our research is uniquely designed to investigate the role that international newspapers played in the Tunisian and the Egyptian revolutions.

Previous researchers have investigated the discourse of immigrants and asylum seekers in a context other than the media role. Such as through socio-political studies (Van Dijk, 1987, 1993a), (Wodak, 1990, 1996, 1997), while other studies have focused on discursive strategies within immigration discourse (KhosraviNik, 2008, 2009, and 2010). Studies have also investigated anti-asylum discourse, misrepresentation, and the concept of "belonging" (Khan, 2008, 2012b, and 2012a), (Smart et al, 2007). Studies on racism against immigrants and asylum seekers have also been conducted (Van Dijk, 1984, 1993a). Lynn and Lea (2003) have studied the social construction of asylum seekers and racial segregation in the UK. More recently, Taylor (2014) has used corpus linguistic tools to investigate the "representation of migrants in the British and Italian press quantitatively". However, no study has been conducted to examine the representation of the demonstrators and the demonstrations. Hence, our study is unique in investigating the representation of the demonstrators and the demonstrations in articles published in the English language newspapers at various points of time during the Arab spring.

2. Methodology

The research uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) to analyze the Washington Post and the Guardian newspaper's coverage of the Arab Spring. The CDA method includes the discourse-historical approach (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001, 2009). These approaches have previously been proven to be appropriate for the analysis of discourses on demonstrators, immigration and asylum seekers (see also KhosraviNik, 2009).

The principles of the discourse-historical approach (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001, 2009) are based on the following questions:

- (1) How are persons named and referred to linguistically?
- (2) What traits, characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to them?
- (3) Through what arguments and argumentation schemes do specific persons or social groups try to justify and legitimize the exclusion, discrimination, suppression and exploitation of others?
- (4) From what perspectives or points of view are these identifications, attributions and arguments expressed?
- (5) Are the respective discriminating ideas articulated overtly? Are they intensified or are they mitigated?

Articles from the Washington Post and the Guardian on the Arab demonstrators, asylum seekers and immigrants are selected based on their relevance to the Arab Spring. The Washington Post is chosen for its representation of US foreign policy towards the Arab Spring, whereas the Guardian is selected because its focus on asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants in general. In all we found 20 relevant articles that covered in detail the climax of the Arab Spring and included socio-political ideologies. From among those, we selected articles only on Tunisia and Egypt. For each event, within the Arab countries of the Arab Spring (Tunisia, Egypt); there are two articles from the Washington Post and the Guardian. Then, those selected articles are analyzed according to the approaches above to demonstrate the type of representation and the stance of these newspapers towards those events.

The main events (demonstrations and uprisings) of the Arab spring that are included in the current study are:

1. Tunisia - December 2010
2. Egypt - January 25/2011

2.1. Research Questions

1. How are demonstrators and refugees represented by Western newspapers (the Washington Post, the Guardian)?
2. To what extent have events of the Arab Spring (demonstrations, uprisings) been affected by their portrayal in Western newspapers?

3. What type of ideology does the Washington Post and the Guardian promote in their coverage of those demonstrations?

2.2. The Scope of the Study

This study is limited to the revolutions of the Arab Spring that ended in the removal of regimes without civil war. Those revolutions are the Tunisian December 2010, and the Egyptian January 25/2011.

2.3. The Importance of the Study

The present study's values lie in its investigation to reveal the Western media's depiction of the Arab Spring, and any biases or ideologies that were intentionally or unintentionally promoted or framed in discourses which had the potential to reach a very large audience.

3. Arab Spring

The Arab Spring is a term used by the Western media to denote the anti-government uprisings and demonstrations that occurred in various Arab countries namely, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Syria. This term was a reference to similar agitations that happened in Eastern Europe in 1989, where a large Communist bloc broke up into smaller division with new political systems. On the other hand, according to Source Watch ([http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Arab Spring](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Arab_Spring)), the term is used for the first time in March 2005 by numerous media commentators to "suggest that a spin-off benefit of the invasion of Iraq would be the flowering of Western-friendly Middle East democracies."

The motivations for Arab Spring uprisings are comparable in nature to uprisings in countries that have suffered similarly from dictatorship, humiliation, corruption, unemployment, and rising prices. Therefore, to some extent, similar slogans, chants, and posters were used to carry the people's demands

These uprisings evidently had different consequences. In Tunisia, where the first uprising occurred, the result was the removal of the president and the establishment of a new political system. While the civil war was the result of the uprisings in Libya, Yemen, and Syria. In Egypt, the removal of the regime, which was followed by an elected government, ended in a coup, which brought people back to the streets in revolt against it. The question that is still unanswered is whether the Arab Spring succeeded or failed.

It is to be noted that other demonstrations that some consider being a part of the Arab Spring, such as those in Jordan, Bahrain, and Morocco where people called for reformation under the same regimes, are excluded from the present study because the demonstrations resulted neither in regime change nor civil war.

4. Critical discourse analysis

The CDA is an interdisciplinary field (Meyer, 2001:15) of linguistics, focusing mainly on the relationships between language or discourse and power and ideology, and analysis of those relationships (van Dijk, 1987, 2001; Fairclough, 2001), (Fowler, 1991). It is useful in investigating “how language use may be affirming and indeed reproducing the perspectives, values and ways of talking about the powerful” (O’ Halloran, 2011:445), either it is used against or not in the favor of the powerless through “discursive strategies” (Van Dijk, 1993b:254) in the language.

Van Dijk defines CDA as discourse analysis “with an attitude” (Van Dijk, 2001:96). The word “critical” is used to mean how “structures, strategies, or other properties of text, talk, verbal interactions” (Van Dijk, 1993a:250) – affect reproduction of “dominance and inequality” in discourse language (O’ Halloran, 2011: 445). Therefore, criticality is a major characteristic of CDA analysis, and is used in “identification of a social problem,” “data selection” and “methods of analysis” (KhosraviNik, 2008:5). This view of the word ‘criticality’ by KhosraviNik is drawn from Woyak’s explanation of the word ‘critical’ in CDA as describing and theorizing the social structures and processes for individuals’ “meanings in their interaction with texts” (Wodak, 1997:2-3). According to Jaworski & Coupland (1999), it means “a recognizable collection of statements which cohere together.” As such, CDA as a field of linguistics is used to analyze media discourse for its “socio-political outlook” (Hakam, 2009:36), and is used to study the discourse of biases to reveal prejudice and discrimination.

Concepts such as perspectivization, intensification, referential strategies (Wodak, 2001) and metaphorical references, argumentative strategies, foregrounding/backgrounding, suppression, collectivization, individualization, and impersonalization (Van Leeuwen, 1996) are all common features of CDA that are applied to investigate different patterns of media discourse.

On the other hand, KhosraviNik (2010:58-9) demonstrates that a study conducted on discourse surrounding immigration would require a set of grand categories proposed by Van Dijk and Wodak (2000:29), based on two major dimensions:

Global structures and strategies (macro level):

- Topic (macro propositions)
- Positive self-presentation
- Legitimation

Local structures and moves (micro levels):

- Actor descriptions (Us vs. Them: categorization, description, attributes)
 - Rhetorical devices – metaphors, hyperboles, euphemisms
 - Indirectness, implicitness, presuppositions
 - Argumentation (topoi, fallacies, counterfactuals, causal attributes)

Those two levels (micro and macro) can be linked together in the investigation of immigrant and asylum seekers representation in media discourse.

5. CDA and Research on Revolutions and Immigrations

The CDA approach has been used to investigate the concept of asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants in different discourses and in different times. The early research on immigration can be traced back to the 1970s by Hartmann and Husband (1974), while Toe (2000) cited by KhosraviNik (2009: 480) proposes a study on the representation of immigrants in Australian newspapers.

On the other hand, some researchers have taken other perspectives on the study of asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants. Lynn and Lea (2003) study the social belonging of asylum seekers in the UK. They conclude that asylum seekers find themselves in a peculiar contrast in society, where they need to reposition themselves to become integrated. There have been similar studies conducted by Dryzek and Kanra (2014) on the integration of Muslims and Arabs in Australian society. They questioned the identity and the concepts of belonging in Australia, and how Muslims are viewed in the eyes of non-Muslims. While Manning (2003) in an earlier work investigates the representation of Muslims in Sydney's daily newspapers, showing that Muslims are portrayed as being violent. They are mostly associated with terrorism and described as terrorists. While Arabs, 'especially young men', are seen as 'threatening'. He maintains that Muslim asylum seekers or immigrants from the Middle East are portrayed as 'tricky', 'ungrateful', 'undeserving', 'disgusting' and 'barely human'.

Finally, the most recent works by Khan (2012a, 2012b, 2013) are considered to be a comprehensive approach to studying the concept of immigrants' integration in the UK and the process of identity-building using CDA. He explores "the endeavor by the UK government to tackle negative representation in order to manage multiculturalism and social cohesion" for those immigrants (Khan, 2012a:285).

6. Data Analysis of Each Event

6.1. Tunisia December 2010

The Tunisian revolution is considered to be the spark for the Arab Spring. It ended in the removal of Ben Ali, the then Tunisian president, who was considered by Tunisians as a corrupt, tyrannical. It started with a small demonstration after a 24-year-old vendor set himself on fire after being humiliated by local police who prevented him selling goods in a small cart. The uprising was characterized by peaceful demonstrations that led to the regime's removal, and was comparatively less violent than the other Arab Spring revolutions. Though there was displacement of people, most Tunisians did not have to leave their homes. Therefore, discourses focusing mainly on demonstrations are found in newspapers. The following are analyses of the Washington Post and the Guardian's portrayal of the Tunisian revolution by both the Macro and Micro levels as follows.

The Washington Post

- **Macro Linguistic Features**

Macro-level analysis according to Ifversen (2003) is "where many texts are studied in order to make wide-ranging claims about a certain period or a certain society" (Eghlidi, 2016:57).

The Washington Post shows sympathy towards the Tunisian revolution, depicting in detail the events and the misery of the Tunisians taking to the streets. It presents them as victims of the Ben Ali regime, not only during the uprising but also during the 23 years of suffering. By drawing on the main reasons for the uprising, the Washington Post (24 Jan 2011a) expresses the Tunisian people's feelings after a long life of suppression by a despotic regime:

"Many are voicing their thoughts and ideas after living for nearly a **quarter of a century in fear**".

While in some cases, the Post indirectly implies that the West supports Ben Ali, showing that it is more convenient for the US to have Ben Ali as the regime's head. The West considered Tunisia under Ben Ali's rule to be a model country for all other Arab countries, especially considering it as a US ally. An example is the Washington Post article (24 Jan 2011b):

"Under Ben Ali, Tunisia was perceived by the West as a model nation in the Arab world – moderate, relatively prosperous and secular. The autocratic leader, who seized power in 1987, stamped down on Islamic radicalism; he was a US ally and collaborated with the West".

The quote above directs its readers to the concept of Arab leaders' loyalty to the West, especially the US. It shows the West keenness to select Arab leaders they favored. It implicitly makes the reader think there are

divisions of Arab countries and leaders, some which are friends with the West and some which are not. In this case, Tunisia under Ben Ali was the West's friend, and the West supported the Ben Ali's rule despite its oppressiveness.

- Legitimation

There has been a focus legitimizing the reason the Tunisians demanded the removal of Ben Ali (24 Jan 2011a).

"**They stole the nation's money.** They were a mafia. Our company is a little example of what was wrong with Tunisia. Said Sofiyan Abu Sami, one of the workers who walked off the job the other day".

The Post pictured this issue by presenting sign posters written by those demonstrators:

"No to corruption."

- Local Structures (Micro Level)

Eghlidi (2016:57) states that "the micro-level of critical discourse analysis looks at the actual articulations of the text, and the linguistic features and devices to depict the given idea".

The Tunisian demonstrators (actors) are represented and described as hopeless and helpless, seeking their basic rights through peaceful demonstrations. They are viewed as being happy about the ousting of the Ben Ali regime through metaphorical expressions (24Jan 2011a):

"Tunisian are experiencing a blossoming of freedoms after a popular uprising ousted President Ben Ali".

On the other hand, this image is contradicted entirely by another bleak view in the same article:

"The happiness is tempered by unease, for their future is still uncertain".

The Guardian

- Macro Linguistic Features

The Guardian takes the perspective of a spectator, focusing on the process and the reasons why people have outburst against the government. It gives an image of the first spark of the revolution, while also calling it the first Arab revolution. The following two examples are titles from the Guardian (28 Dec 2010, 16 Jan 2011), showing these themes respectively:

"How a man setting fire to him sparked an uprising in Tunisia."

"Tunisia: the first Arab revolution."

On the other hand, the Guardian blames the regime for the agitation that the Tunisians are causing by rioting against the government and asking for its removal (28 Dec 2010):

“So, what we are seeing, firstly, is the failure of a system constructed by the regime over many years to prevent people from organizing, communicating and agitating”.

“Secondly, we are seeing relatively large numbers of people casting off their fear of the regime. Despite the very real risk of arrest and torture, they are refusing to be intimidated”.

The theme, the regimes’ failure, is widely presented by the Guardian not only through its coverage of the Tunisian events but also through the depiction of the Arab Spring in general.

The Guardian in its article on 16 Jan 2011 predicts what will happen in other Arab countries, by explaining that Tunisian revolution is an imminent threat to them:

“If every Arab leader has watched Tunisia in fear, then every **Arab citizen has watched in hope** because it was neither Islamists – long used by our leaders to scare many into acquiescence – nor foreign troops that toppled the dictator: it was ordinary and very fed up people”.

Media coverage of Tunisia, especially by the Guardian, connects other Arab countries to similar imminent revolutions, such as Gaddafi’s fear for himself and Libya:

“Gaddafi’s Libya has had its protests over the past few days. Nothing on the scale of Tunisia, but enough that his speech to Tunisians could be summarized thus: **I am scared witless by what happened in your country**”.

- **Local Structures (Micro Level)**

The Guardian by encouraging expression of enthusiasm instead of exasperation maintains the point of view that Tunisia is an inspirational leader for all other Arab countries seeking to rebel against dictatorship and suppression for a better future (16 Jan 2011):

“It’s the first time Arabs have toppled one of their dictators, so you’ll understand why, despite the reports of chaos, looting and musical chairs of caretaker leaders, I’m still celebrating. Let’s have no whining about how those pesky Tunisians who risked their lives in their thousands to face down a despot ruined the idyllic package-holiday-in-a-police-state for so many European tourists”.

A **metaphorical expression** is used to emphasize the correlation between the regimes’ failure and the uprising against it as the excerpt from the Guardian shows below (28 Dec 2010):

“The regime also seems to have overdone its **trumpeting of Tunisia’s** economic progress”.

6.2. Egypt January 25/2011

The Egyptian revolution was inspired by the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia. The Egyptian people organized following an activists' call on social media to march in Tahrir square, which is located in the middle of the capital Cairo, to protest against Hosni Mubarak's regime. This call then spread throughout the whole country. Egyptians called for Mubarak to step down as they viewed his regime as a corrupt dictatorship. They marched and demonstrated throughout main cities in Egypt. However, the Mubarak's regime crushed the protests, and the state media described the protesters as foreign agents

(http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Arab_Spring#Egypt).

Foreign media, such as the Guardian, however, depicted the demonstrations in the downtown Cairo as a "war zone" (ibid), referring to the clashes between the protesters and the regime's force used to crack down on them. This is an example of the mass media in arousing the people and encouraging the protests. The analysis presented below portrays the stance taken by the Washington Post and the Guardian.

The Washington Post**- Macro Level**

The Washington Post talks about oppression and victimization in the Egyptian revolution by narrating stories from demonstrators in the Tahrir square. It expresses its astonishment as to what is going on in Cairo, Egypt as if it wants to say that what you Egyptians are doing should bring your regime to justice, and you should never stop your demonstrations until you get those corrupted figures to doomsday. The Washington Post appears ambivalent in its stance about Egyptian uprising, sometimes supporting it and sometimes dismissing it. In its support for the uprising, it shows sympathy towards people's lives. It reports demonstrators' speeches about the oppression. In doing so, the Washington Post shows it stands with the Egyptian people. Some of its reports is not only pro-democracy but can be seen also as an incitement, such as the following examples, some of which are taken from arguments given by demonstrators from inside Tahrir square(1 Feb 2011):

"We demand his ouster and sentencing," said Mahmoud Ibrahim.

He said, **"They are putting our minds in chains."**

The Post expressed astonishment of the demonstrators over what is going on in Egypt, and is sympathetic to the idea that after living under the oppressive regime of the Egyptian government for decades, the people had the courage and strength to demonstrate:

"But the mood at times seemed to be one of surprise as much as anything else- surprise that they could do this".

The Washington Post also supports people's emotion and their expression of true feelings by reporting (1 Feb 2011):

"While others waved shoes in the air, a traditional Arab sign of disrespect".

- **Positive Self- Representation**

The Post stands alongside the Egyptian revolution by reporting supportive speeches and warning given by U.S. State officials which affirm consolidate positive self-representation of the US supports, such as democracy and freedom (3 Feb 2011):

"In Washington, White House spokesman Robert Gibbs called the violence **"outrageous and deplorable"** and warned that if any of it was **"instigated by the government, it should stop immediately."**

- **Local Structures (Micro Level)**

- Actor description

Demonstrations were depicted with positive quotations as being, for example, a turning point in the history of Egypt (1 Feb 2011)

"In Tahrir Square, Egyptians sense they are part of a turning point in history".

The Post described the demonstrators as people who are revolutionaries and no longer afraid since they have nothing more to lose.

"He feels no fear now. "What's the worst that can happen? I'd rather lose my life than go on living this way," he said".

They are represented as being finally united against their government, and unwilling to withdraw their demands for the removal of the president. The following example from the Post shows the protestors' persistence in maintaining the demonstrations: (1 Feb 2011)

"So families brought children, people shared pastries and dried dates; everyone took everyone else's picture".

- **Metaphor and References to Large Quantities**

The Post in its coverage of the demonstrations frequently portrayed the demonstrators as physical quantities, metaphorically or through hyperbole. This use is considered to be intensification, meaning to refer to the huge amount of people supporting the demonstrations. The micro-structure of the metaphoric expressions has great value toward pinpointing the revolutionary aspect of the protests where the people can no longer tolerate their government (1 Feb 2011):

"And more people kept pouring in throughout the day; it was clear that a contagion had set in".

.... **Spilled over** onto the streets that flow into it, the chants and signs were about their desire to be rid of President Hosni Mubarak.

The hyperbolic expression is also similarly used to denote the huge size of those attending the demonstrations. (1 Feb 2011):

“As thousands upon thousands of demonstrators converged Tuesday on Tahrir Square “

- **The Guardian**
- **Macro Level (topics argumentation)**

The Guardian in its coverage of the Egyptian revolution emphasized the essence and origins of the revolution that led to the dismissal of the Egyptian presidents. This included the depiction of the iron-fist strict rules, the news blackout and the regime politicization by Hosni Mubarak. The Egyptian president, associated with events that occurred prior to the latest demonstrations. Such as the Palestinian Intifada in 2000, followed by the war on Iraq 2003, as well as tracing the development from other demonstrations that occurred only on a small scale. Egyptians were afraid to protest against the regime, until the revolution that set Egyptians free from, as the Guardian says, “their tyrant leader”. The Guardian’s coverage of the Egyptian revolutions seems to be instigative against the regime; it gives examples of how the regime repressed these demonstrations using the verb ‘quell.’

Here is an example quoted from the Guardian (2 March 2011), showing the sequence of the events covered by it which emphasize its leading role in the latest revolution:

“The Egyptian revolution, rather than coming out of the blue on 25 January 2011, **is a result of a process that has been brewing over the previous decade** - a chain reaction to the autumn 2000 protests in solidarity with the **Palestinian intifada**”.

The example above is used to show that the Guardian is focusing on the evolution of the latest revolution as a result of recurrent repressions by the regime, and not as a newly-created phenomenon. It can be construed that the Guardian in its coverage is implying that there is a connection between the latest revolution and previous ones. This could also be seen as the Guardian trying to incite Egyptians and remind them of the regime cruelty against their requests for freedom. Other examples of subsequent revolutionary-like events are shown below:

“I recall the first time I heard protestors en masse chanting against the president in April 2002 ... **protestors were chanting in Arabic**: “Hosni Mubarak is just like [Ariel]

Sharon.” (the Israeli prime minister)”.

The example above shows how the Guardian paves the way for events leading to the revolution that could bring about change, by presenting and narrating stories of events that connect the past with present events.

- **Local Structures (Micro Level)**

- Actor description

Just like the Post, the Guardian tends to be objective only sometimes and for very few occasions in narrating and recounting the events and incidents that occur during the Egyptian revolution. It portrays the clashes that happened between pro-democracy supporters and pro-Mubarak supporters in an unbiased way, as the following example shows (2 Feb 2011):

“Guardian journalists in the square – close to both sides – witnessed pitched battles that turned the square into a war zone as anti-Mubarak protesters tried desperately to hold their ground and both sides tore up to use as weapons”.

Here the Guardian only narrates what does it see on the field without being biased to anyone.

- **Argumentation**

In general, the Guardian demonstrates its complete support of the Egyptian revolution, by showing its sympathy to the years of Egyptians suffering under the regime. It also, through the emphasis it gives to both the mood of the British government and the Obama administration, demonstrates an alignment with their ideological position. The following example is given to support this image: (2 Feb 2011):

“The violence was immediately condemned by David Cameron, the Obama ... The White House warned that if any of the violence was instigated by the government, it should stop immediately, and also strongly criticized the beating local and foreign journalists, including a CNN reporter”.

It is seen that the Guardian adheres to the ideology of the pro-democracy protestors by focusing its coverage of the Egyptian uprising, and shows sympathy towards demonstrators by focusing its coverage on their previous and current sufferings under the regime.

6. Conclusion

The Washington Post and the Guardian coverage of the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions are meant to carry an ideology that either stands with or against the revolutions. Their coverage plays a role in agitating the demonstrator and portraying them as innocent and suffering from persecution and oppression of their regimes.

The impact of the discourse on revolution can be said to be consistent in shedding some light on not only the period when the revolutions occur but also the chronological order or events that led to the revolution. For example, the Guardian appears to be suggesting that the revolutions are the result of longstanding oppression, which people can no longer tolerate or accept.

Regarding the Post coverage, it focuses on the concept of victimization and oppression in both the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions. The Post views the Tunisian revolution as a healthy route towards democracy and liberation. But, in some cases when it echoes the state officials, it implies the West desires to keep Ben Ali, the president, in office, as they view him as their ally. This conclusion can also be seen with the Egyptian revolution. The Post seems inconsistent in their ideology towards the Egyptians, where sometimes it is considered to be pro-democracy, and sometimes not. This might be attributed to the fact that the West sees Mubarak as their old ally, in whom they invested a lot in the past. It is also similar to the Tunisian revolution, in which the Post depicts the misery of Tunisians under the rule of the regime. Conversely, the Guardian coverage shows its complete support of the Egyptian revolution at one hand, and on the other as a follower of the demonstrations, focusing on the events and the causes that led to it. The study also shows that the Guardian promotes the ideologies of the British officials where they asked for the removal of Hosni Mubarak.

This concludes that the topic of the macro level can provide an interpretation also on the micro-linguistics level. Therefore, interpretation of those social actors, demonstrators, can provide meanings to the descriptions found in language.

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