

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Arabic Internet Memes

تحليل خطاب نقدي للرسوم الكارتونية العربية على الانترنت

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Abstract

The present paper aims to analyse multimodal discourse i.e., Arabic internet memes according to van Dijk's categories of ideological discourse analysis. It is noteworthy that no previous study tackled Arabic internet memes from this perspective. Moreover, Arabic internet memes are filled with implications that are to be analysed critically. It also aims at finding out how Arabic internet memes reflect society, showing how ideologies are represented in Arabic internet memes, investigating the role of context (i.e., background, mutual, and historical knowledge) in analysing data, and showing the way cartoonists employ ideological

polarization. To accomplish these aims, samples of two Arabic internet memes are selected and analysed according to van Dijk's ideological square and categories of ideological discourse analysis. The selected data are taken from twitter and online books and it tackles different social and political issues. The findings of this paper suggest that ideology has a role in the representations of events and discourses are ideologically based; people tend to positively represent their own ideologies and practices and negatively represent the ideologies of other groups. In- and out- groups (ideological polarization) is, therefore, always evident in multimodal discourse.

Key Words

CDA, memes, internet memes, cartoons, caricatures, ideology, ideological discourse analysis.

1. Introduction

This study relies on the field of critical discourse analysis which appears between the mid-1980s and early 1990s and it aims to analyse and reduce social inequalities like racism, class, dominance, power abuse, ideology, hegemony, gender, ethnicity and cultural difference (Bloor and Bloor, 2013; Given, 2008; van Dijk, 2015). Similarly, Weiss and Wodak (2003), van Leeuwen (2006), and van Dijk (1993) point out that CDA studies the role of discourse in the production and legitimization of power, social inequality, discrimination and control. van Dijk (2006a) adds that discourse is ideologically loaded and people utilise discourse to positively represent their ideologies and negatively represents the ideologies of outgroups.

Generally, this paper aims to analyse internet memes (Arabic cartoons as examples) with respect to CDA and to find out how cartoons resemble the political, social, economic and ideological issues in a society. Specifically, it relies on van Dijk's

ideological square to ideologically analyse two Arabic cartoons. Additionally, it aims to find out how the cartoonist and his personality, beliefs, affiliation, and attitudes are representative in cartoons and how ideological polarization takes place. This study suggests that discourse reveals the ideologies of a group of people and ideological polarization is always involved when we talk about others.

2. Terminology

2.1. Memes and Internet Memes

The concept of meme is coined by the biologist Richard Dawkins in his book "the Selfish Gene" where he emphasizes George C. William's theory "adaptation and natural selection". This theory entails that organisms survive and reproduce successfully when they are adapted to the surrounding environment. Dawkins (1989) uses the term "survival of the fittest" to describe the process of natural selection; creatures change over time to be suitable to the environment and thus survive and reproduce.

Dawkins describes organisms as 'survival machines' that are controlled by genes. As computers are programmed by human beings, organisms and their behaviors are programmed by genes i.e., genes provide organisms with instructions to survive and reproduce in a specific environment, except human

beings who can counteract their genes when they decide not to reproduce. (Dawkins, 1989).

Dawkins (1989) aims to reveal the idea that replication takes place not only at the genetic level i.e. when genes are passed on from one generation to the next through sexual reproduction but also at the cultural level i.e., humans replicate ideas, behaviors, etc. via cultural transmission or 'memes'. So, we have genetic as well as cultural evolution where organisms and ideas change over time to be fit to the surrounding environment and culture. In this respect, Dawkins (1989: 192) says "cultural transmission is analogous to genetic transmission in that, although conservative, it can give rise to a form of evolution". He adds "just as genes propagate themselves in a gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs... memes propagate themselves in a meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation". The concept of meme is defined as "a unit of cultural transmission or a unit of imitation" and examples of memes include catch-phrases, ideas, tunes, fashions, ways of building arches or making pots (ibid.). Memes are also described as "instruction for carrying out behaviour, stored in brains (or other

objects) and passed on by imitation" and a meme "is whatever it is that is passed on by imitation" (Blackmore, 1999:43).

It is noteworthy that there is a genre of memes called internet memes which is defined by Shifman (2014:41) as "a group of digital items sharing common characteristics of content, form, and/or stance, which were created with awareness of each other, and were circulated, imitated, and/or transformed via the Internet by many users". Besides, Denisova (2019:10) points out that internet memes are the means for "meaning-making, emotion-sharing and attention grabbing in the oversaturated Internet environment". In addition, internet users utilise internet memes to give their opinions about and discuss different personal and societal issues. Examples of internet memes are "an expressive image with a tag line, a catchy tweet, an interesting comment, a YouTube video".

2.2. Cartoons and Caricatures

Since internet memes are defined as digital items that are transmitted via the internet, cartoons and caricatures that are produced and transmitted via internet can be considered as examples of internet memes. In this regard, Attardo (2014:112) defines cartoons as "a simplified drawing

intended to represent a more detailed object or idea... refers to an intended end product, one that incorporates humor that is often directed at the subject depicted". Cartoons serve a set of functions like humour, criticism, satire, irony and the like. Cartoons also employ figures of speech like metonymy, metaphor, synecdoche which play a significant role to communicate ideas. Metaphor, which is a defining feature of cartoon discourse, creates new ways of understanding political affairs. People are metaphorically compared to snakes and spiders to convey evilness and compared to lion to convey courage (Edward, 1997).

Attardo (2014: 112) adds that cartoons include a variety of professional graphic arts and expressions that can be found in today's multimodal and visual discourse like "graphic novels, comic stripes, and comic books". Cartoons are divided into two types i.e., panel and political cartoons. The former refers to "a drawing intended to amuse and provoke a laugh... the familiar entertainment features of newspapers, magazines and social media... may address political topics" whereas the latter " is a special feature of news commentary" (ibid.:113). In this respect, Edward (1997:30) adds that panel cartoons are apparently humorous but offer

implicit and indirect commentary whereas political cartoons primarily provide commentary on scenes be it political or cultural though they can be entertaining and satirical. Moreover, political cartoons regularly use strategies like satire, irony, and humor to lampoon and criticize a social or political situation. They, however, can be serious and poignant.

Additionally, knowledge of the social affairs of a society is essential to understand the cartoons produced in that society: "cartoonist relies upon social knowledge that allows readers to understand the created references... cartoonist must tap into familiar images and symbols or meaning will be obscured " (Edward, 1997: 30).

Edward (1997: 20) highlights the difference between the concepts of caricature and political cartoon. Caricature "employs graphic exaggerated representations of a subject which is characteristically negative and debunking in function" whereas political cartoon "is value-neutral and may employ debunking or elevating functions". He, however, acknowledges that the distinction between them is not completely apparent and the two terms can be used interchangeably. He also adds that the history of ridiculing caricature can be traced back to the time of ancient Egypt

when the uncomplimentary portraits of Cleopatra are discovered. Attardo (2014: 103) maintains that caricature:

is a term derived from the Vulgar Latin word *carricare*, the Italian word *caricature* meaning act of loading, burdening, or exaggerating and that is derived from the Gual word *karros* meaning "cart". Caricatures are a genre of drawings, cartoons, and prints that include images of human faces and physiques that are grossly distorted and exaggerated for the purposes of a satirical or comic effect.

Humor is essential in caricature as well; caricaturist uses parody, sarcasm, satire, biting, and witticism to influence and change the public opinions concerning authority and public figures and the political, social and economic status. Caricature is traced back to the social life and art of the Middle Ages where, in carnivals and festivals, peasants wear masks, do clowning and behave excessively to mock the upper class "where the sacred elite became the subject of obscene". Besides, this reversal of the social status of a person is essential in the creation of caricature i.e., "it is an art form that can turn the glorified into ugliness and also where ugliness can be glorified". To create a comic effects, the caricaturist relies on the social knowledge of a community to communicate a joke; "techniques used for a comic effect include exaggerating the scale of the human body by making features larger or

smaller, fat or skinny, and hybridization, the combining of human body forms with animal or plant form" (Attardo, 2014: 103, 104).

3. Data Collection and Method of Analysis

This study analyses two Arabic internet memes (cartoons); one cartoon is drawn by Emad Hajjaj (a Jordanian cartoonist) whereas the other cartoon is drawn by Naji Al Ali (1937-1987) (a famous Palestinian cartoonist because his cartoons have been a strict criticism of America, Israel and Arabic regimes).

The researcher selects these cartoons because they are good examples of ideological discourse i.e., they tackles controversial issues like occupation, racism and discrimination. People, in fact, have contrasting opinions and attitudes toward these issues. The selected cartoons, therefore, can be analysed in relation to van Dijk's terms of ideological discourse analysis. For the search of these cartoons, the researcher used online books and personal accounts on twitter. The search period started on March, 2020 and ended in August, 2020 and a smart phone (HUAWEI nova 3i) was used to collect the cartoons. Furthermore, the researcher checked several websites, online articles and videos, and asked specialists in

history in order to gain a good background knowledge that help in doing the analysis.

Methodologically, this study draws both on van Dijk's sociocognitive theory and ideological square and his categories of ideological DA. The method of analysis is thus a composition of both. The researcher believes that van Dijk's theory and his terms of ideological discourse analysis are suitable for analysing multimodal discourse i.e., memes (cartoons) because van Dijk's concepts like semantic and mental modal, actor description, metaphor, presupposition, authority, evidentiality, polarization, normexpression, etc. can easily be determined in each selected internet meme. Besides, the researcher reads articles of CDA like Mental modal theory as a model for analysing visual and multimodal discourse by Ahmed Abdul Raheem (2019) which indicate the suitability of this approach in analysing multimodal discourse. It is noteworthy that his analysis gives the researcher a deep insight into how to critically analyse multimodal discourse. Additionally, van Dijk (2011) points out that his ideological square can be applied to multimodal text. In a chapter on the sociocognitive approach, van Dijk (2009) analyses multimodal text i.e., election billboard.. It is worth mentioning that the analysis is not

strictly linguistic, rather, the researcher analyses the memes ideologically. Besides, most of the memes have no concrete linguistic text that is why the researcher depends on the appearance of the characters, their facial expressions, colors and the simple captions contained in the selected memes to conduct a critical and ideological discourse analysis.

van Dijk (2006a: 730) points out that discourses of social groups can be controlled by their ideologies i.e., discourses are ideologically based and people tend to positively represent their own ideologies and negatively represent the ideologies of other groups. In van Dijk's words "many of the mental structures of ideologies and ideological practices are polarized on the basis of ingroup-outgroup differentiation".

Ideological discourse , therefore, displays various forms of polarization like the four strategies of van Dijk's ideological square i.e., the macro level of analysis which consists of four aspects (emphasize our good things, emphasize their bad things, de-emphasize our bad things and de-emphasize their good things) and the micro level of analysis which consists of the following twenty seven strategies. In order to construct ideological discourse analysis, van Dijk (2006a) proposes

a set of rhetorical discursive strategies:

1. **Actor Description:** aims to provide a detailed description of the entities (place, person, thing) of discourse. The producer of discourse tends to describe his group positively and mitigate its negative practices whereas the outgroup is negatively described and its negative practices are emphasized.

2. **Authority:** whereby the speaker supports his ideas and claims via mentioning authorities like experts, global organization, leaders and the like.

3. **Burden** (Topos); refers to the loss of a group be it human or financial. At the same time, it is directed to victimize a group of people for example argumentation against immigration is based topoi like "asylum seekers are a financial 'burden' for 'us' " (ibid., 735).

4. **Categorization:** whereby speakers/writers tend to categorize people according to their ideological orientations, political and religious opinion, attitudes and the like.

5. **Comparison:** means that speaker aims to compare the members of ingroup positively whereas he compares the outgroup negatively. For example, it occurs when talking about minorities.

6. **Consensus:** is used "to claim or insist on cross-party or national consensus" for example, politicians

agree that immigration threatens their country.

7. **Counterfactual:** is used to gain persuasion and empathy and its typical expression is "what would happen, if...". It thus highlights what would happen if certain situations occur or not.

8. **Disclaimer:** means that the speaker saves face via mentioning his positive attributes and then focus on the negative characteristics of the outgroup. In other words, speaker mentions the positive characteristics of something then he denies these characteristics by using conjunctions like but, however and yet.

9. **Euphemism:** generally means using inoffensive expression in place of unpleasant one. In van Dijk's terms, it is used to achieve politeness and ingroup protection i.e., it is used to mitigate the negative acts of the ingroup.

10. **Evidentiality:** whereby the speaker mentions evidences for his opinions, beliefs and information via referring to authorities. This strategy makes the speaker's claims more convincing.

11. **Example/Illustration:** whereby the argumentation becomes more convincing, plausible and memorized by mentioning concrete stories.

12. **Generalization:** in contrast to Example/Illustration, speaker tends to form generalization. In van Dijk's

words "in racist discourse typically used to formulate prejudices about generalized negative characteristics of immigrants" (p. 737).

13. **Hyperbole:** means the exaggeration of meaning. van Dijk defines Hyperbole as "a semantic rhetorical device for the enhancement of meaning". In ideological discourse, the outgroup is described in exaggerated terms. An example of Hyperbole is the use of metaphor "opening the floodgate" to refer to the arrival of asylum seekers.

14. **Implication:** refers to the situation where "speakers do not say everything they know or believe". Since discourse is an iceberg; large part of it is implicit, audience needs to rely on their shared general knowledge to make inferences.

15. **Irony:** is used in language to mean the opposite of what is said. For example, the phrase "suddenly discover" can be used when talking about asylum seekers to mean the opposite i.e., they already know that they come to stay.

16. **Lexicalization:** means that speakers express their underlying beliefs by using lexical items. For example, negative expressions that denote immigrants achieve the strategy of negative other-presentation like 'bogus asylum seekers'.

17. **Metaphor:** refers to the comparison that occurs between two different entities to assign the attributes of one to the other. In van Dijk's terms, metaphor is persuasive and makes abstract and new meanings more concrete. For example, immigration is flood in which we drown.

18. **National self-glorification:** is contained in parliamentary speeches about immigration. It is a form of positive self-presentation in which speakers make "positive references to or praise for one's own country, its principle, history and traditions". (ibid.: 738).

19. **Negative other-presentation:** means that speakers categorize people into ingroup and outgroup. This categorization, in van Dijk's terms, "is not value-free, but imbued with ideologically based application of norms and values" (ibid.: 738). The outgroup is always described negatively.

20. **Norm expression:** means that discourse like anti-racist discourse is normative because it denounces and stands against discrimination of whatever type it is. The speaker tells people what they should or should not do.

21. **Number Game:** means that speakers emphasize objectivity by mentioning statistics in arguments. For example, the number of arrived

immigrants is contained in press reports.

22. **Polarization:** refers to the categorization of people into ingroup and outgroup. Besides, assigning the positive traits to the ingroup and the negative traits to the outgroup and these representations are governed by the underlying ideologies and attitudes of the speaker.

23. **Populism:** is a political strategy whereby a politician gains more popularity by expressing his ideas and policies; "the basic strategy is to claim that 'the people' (or 'everybody') does not support further immigration" (ibid.: 738).

24. **Positive self-presentation:** means that in group-talk and at the individual level (use of disclaimer), speakers emphasize the positive characteristics of their group, country, party etc. It is also ideological because it is "based on

the positive self-schema that defines the ideology of a group".

25. **Presupposition:** means that discourse is an iceberg i.e., the large part of it is not explicitly stated. The speaker presupposes that his audience depends on the shared sociocultural knowledge to make inferences and thus understand discourse.

26. **Vagueness:** means that texts have vague expressions with no definite reference like 'few', 'a lot', 'very', 'thing', 'high', 'low', etc.

27. **Victimization:** means that discourses on immigration is characterized by "the binary us-them pair of ingroups and outgroups". For example, immigrants are the outgroup whose bad nature is emphasized; "people may tell horrible stories about poor nationals" whereas the ingroup is the victim. (ibid.: 739).

4. Data Analysis

4.1. Sample analysis (1)

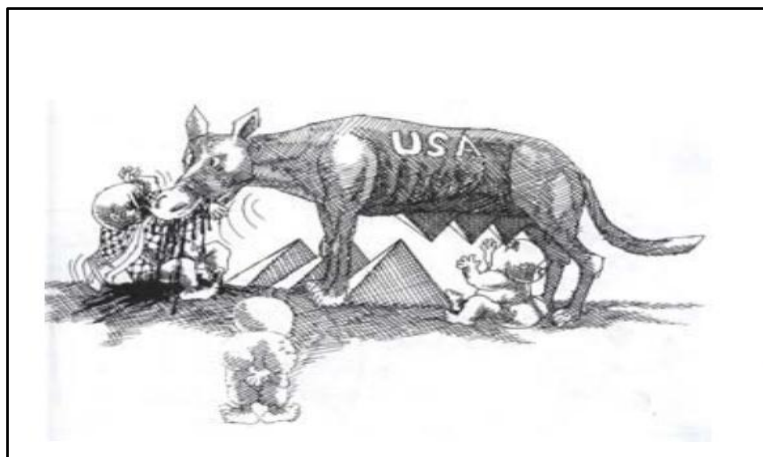


Figure (1)

A meme by Naji Al Ali.

Source: Mohammed, A. K. (2009). *Political Development in Naji Al Ali's Cartoons*

4.1.1. Overview

Al Ali shows his hatred toward America because America supports the Israeli occupation; America is the first to accept and support the establishment of an Israeli land in Palestine. The Israeli officials, in turn, succeed to persuade the United State that Israel is the only force that can defend and preserve the US strategic interests in various vital regions including the Arab-Gulf region which is rich with oil and this is what US cares about. Since US and Israel have interests in the Arab world, they decide to support each other i.e., due to its expansionist nature, Israel needs a strong support from a powerful state like the US. The US, therefore, provides Israel

with military aid as well as contributes to supply the Israeli army with weapons. Israel, in turn, protects the American interests in the Arab world. Moreover, terrorism and brutality are an inherent and integral part of the practices of the United States. Portraying Israel as a baby puppy is an invitation to Arabs to fight against Israel before it becomes powerful like America. The cartoon implies sadness; the wolf continues snapping the Palestinian child and no one stops it; a criticism directed to Arabs who do not fight with Palestinians against America and Israel. The Palestinian child wears a Palestinian man scarf (known as /kufiya/) and it symbolizes and stands for resistance and unity (an

example of metonymy). The cartoon emerges as a reaction to Camp David Accord in which America plays a fundamental role to stop the Israeli- Egyptian fight and to conclude a peace accord. To do so, America sends forces to see whether or not the peace accord takes place. The American-Israeli presence in Egypt is of a great benefit since they control the oil-fields in Sinaa (implication made by Pyramid-like breast).

4.1.2. van Dijk's Strategies

As for Actor Description, we have seen how USA is portrayed as a huge wolf, Israel as a little child (a puppy), Palestine as a bleeding child, and Egypt (resembled by Pyramids) as a breast which Israel suckles to get their interests (oil fields). This description implies that Egyptians and Palestinians are victims whereas America and Israel are occupiers and criminals. Another strategy is Categorization where Al Ali, in figure (1), categorizes characters according to their nationality; Arabs (represented by Palestine and Egypt) and foreigners or outsiders (represented by America and Israel). This categorization leads to the emergence of ingroup (Arabs) and outgroup (foreigners) which refers to another strategy i.e., Polarization us vs them.

A third strategy is Comparison where, on the one hand, America is

negatively compared to a savage wolf, Israel is negatively compared to a puppy who suckles the wolf's breast (Israel gets its beliefs and practices from USA) (we have another strategy here i.e., negative other-presentation. On the other hand, Palestine is compared to a bleeding child and Egypt to breast (they are victims and are both exploited by foreigners) (positive self-presentation).

Consensus is employed here as well; Arab citizens are in a complete agreement that America and Israel are their enemies. Hyperbole is used too; the largest type of wolves is known as *Canis lupus* (gray or grey wolf) and it averaging 37- 40 kg and measure 105- 160 cm in length. This implies that it can be as large as (or smaller than) human adult. In figure (1), USA (as a wolf) is so huge that it is even bigger than Pyramids which measure 138 metres in height. This is obviously an example of Hyperbole or exaggeration and it implies the power and the dominant role of America in the Arab world.

Metaphor is also used in figure (1) where America is metaphorically represented as a savage animal (a huge wolf; a mom) and Israel is metaphorically portrayed as a little child (a puppy) who suckles the breast that is in the form of Pyramids. Besides, the wolf mercilessly snaps a little Palestinian

child. This metaphorical image implies that America is the first supporter of Israel (like a mom supporting her child with the possible things she has). Metaphor used in this meme thus leads to Implication i.e., America and Israel are cruel, brutal, and terrorist.

Example/Illustration is recognizable because the cartoonist indirectly refers to Camp David accord that allows the American-Israeli presence in Egypt. They, therefore, control and exploit oil field there.

Presupposition is also utilized in figure (1); the cartoonist presupposes that the audience have background knowledge about American and Israel (their role in Palestine and other Arabic countries) that helps them to understand the message. That's how discourse is like an iceberg (a little knowledge is asserted and previous accumulated knowledge is necessary to get the point).

Norm-expression is employed too where Al Ali's cartoons are always normative; he always encourage people that they should be united and fight against Israel and America. He also denounces discrimination

whether it is based on people's religious beliefs or their nationality. Being normative means that his cartoons always show what is just or unjust in his society.

Section (4.1.2) leads to two parts of van Dijk's ideological square; he portrays two groups of people in different ways. Since Naji considers himself as a member of Arab citizens who devote and suffer for the sake of their country, he emphasize the positive characteristics of this group (i.e., Palestine and Egypt are victims and are deprived from their rights). On the contrary, his cartoons make his negative attitude towards America and Israel more obvious. He thus emphasizes the negative characteristics of the outgroup (America is a wolf and Israel is its puppy and both exploit the wealth of the Arabic countries for their sake).

The strategies that do not take place here are Authority, Burden (topos), Counterfactual, Disclaimer, Euphemism, Evidentiality, Generalisation, Irony, Lexicalisation, National self-glorification, Number Game, Populism, Vagueness and Victimization.

4.2. Sample Analysis (2)



Figure (2)

A meme by Emad Hajjaj, Retrieved from:

<https://twitter.com/EmadHajjaj/status/1268084454536380416?s=09>

January, 30, 2020.

4.2.1. Overview

This tweet is accompanied with a caption reads "black lives matter... Palestinian lives matter, George Floyd... Iyad Al Hallaq.. No to the American Zionist racial strangulation.. Stop that same shit". The cartoon refers to two incidents that happened recently. The one on the left takes place in May, 30, 2020 and it resembles a Palestinian autistic young man named Iyad Al hallaq. The scarf on his shoulder is symbolic since it symbolizes Palestine. The incident goes as follow; Iyad and his teacher were going to a school "Al Bakria" which is located in the old city of Jerusalem and specialized for people with disabilities. On their way, they

daily approach a police check point in Bab Al asbat. One day, Iyad carries a home garbage bag to be disposed of on his way to the school. On that day, he puts his hand in his pocket to check his mobile phone but the police officers suspect that he was carrying a gun and start screaming at him and order him to stop. Iyad does not understand their orders due to a disability and run away to hide himself in a litter room. Israeli soldiers shot him intensively despite the fact that Iyad's teacher tries to tell them that he is a guy with disabilities. Whereas the one on the right takes place in May, 25, 2020 and refers to an African American man named George Floyd who is arrested after his alleged attempt to

use a counterfeit twenty dollars at a grocery store. One of Minneapolis white police officers pressed his knee on Floyd's neck for nearly nine minutes. The official necropsy found out that Floyd died due to cardiac arrest caused by being restrained (BBC, 2020a; BBC, 2020b). The cartoonist presupposes that the audience knows both events well so they can understand what is meant by the cartoon.

Even though the two men are killed in different ways, the cartoon portrays them as being killed in the same way to imply that Israel and America are two faces of the same coin i.e., both of them are racist. They kill innocent people just for being different (different in colour or nationality). The two soldiers' legs metaphorically represent the face of an angry soldier which resembles their strict policies (discrimination and racism). Metonymy is also used here: the legs and boots stand for the two soldiers and for American and Israeli regimes as a whole. This is the mental model i.e., the cartoonist's evaluation of the two events.

4.2.2. van Dijk's Strategies

With regard to Actor Description, there are four characters in meme figure (2); George Floyd (the black man) and Iyad Hallaq (the one with a Palestinian scarf) face the same racial act; they are killed just for

being different. The other two characters (America and Israel) are represented as legs that press the neck of George and Iyad. At the top, the legs form a face of an angry soldier who is half Israeli and half American. In addition, the American and Israeli flags, which appear on the combat or battle helmet, are both blue to emphasize their mutual racist policies. These descriptions imply that America and Israel have the same policies of discrimination and racism; they kill people because they belong to different nationalities and races. Citizens are treated unjustly by regimes. Metaphor is also used here; the two legs metaphorically represent an angry soldier who has illogical hatred towards people of different affiliations.

Categorization is obvious here; the characters are classified, according to their nationality, into American, Israeli and Palestinians. According to their roles, they are classified into citizens and regimes. The tweet's caption (the cartoonist's words) clearly shows that he is against what the Israeli and American soldiers do and he represents them as racist regimes that are two sides of the same coin. The cartoonist thus negatively represents both regimes and considers them as the outgroup. Civilians whether African American or Palestinians do not have the same rights as others and are treated badly

for no reason (they are oppressed; the ingroup with whom the cartoonist shows a solidarity). Two groups (citizens and regimes) with different ideologies accomplish Polarization. Besides, two more strategies take place; the cartoonist positively represents the ingroup (citizens) because they are treated differently just for being different. Conversely, he negatively represents the outgroup (the American and Israeli regimes) because they are racist and have criminal practices against civilians with different regions

Consensus is recognizable too; black African Americans and Palestinians agree that American and Israeli regimes have cruel and criminal practices against people who are from different nationality, region, and race.

The cartoonist mentions the stories of two different men with the same destiny to make his ideas about and the negative representation of America and Israel more plausible and persuasive. This refers to a strategy known as Example/Illustration.

The strategy Norm-expression is used too because the cartoon in figure (2) is an example of anti-racist discourse. The cartoonist decries racist practices of the American and Israeli regimes and invites organizations and people to stop

such practices. Moreover, people should have equal rights and treated justly regardless of their affiliation. The cartoonist presupposes that his audience knows the stories of George Floyd and Iyad Al Hallaq and they therefore could easily get his message.

Regarding ideological square, America and Israel are considered enemies and they are negatively represented (their negative practices are emphasizes) i.e., the two regimes have no mercy and do not treat people equally (treat people according to their colour, race, origin, nationality). Whereas the two men are portrayed as victims and the cartoonist shows his solidarity with them and his positive attitude. The cartoonist thus emphasizes polarization by drawing a line between ingroup (civilians) and outgroup (regimes).

A number of strategies like Authority, Burden (Topos), Comparison, Counterfactual, Disclaimer, Euphemism, Evidentiality, Generalisation, Hyperbole, Irony, Lexicalisation, National self-glorification, Number Game, Populism, Vagueness, and Victimization are not clear in this cartoon.

5. Conclusions

As far as the aims are concerned; the selected internet memes are the suitable environment to accomplish

the objectives of the study. This study adopts van Dijk's ideological square to analyse multimodal discourse and it is a study that has not been conducted before. Besides, Arabic internet memes are successful reflections of society in almost all its aspects. For instance, they reflect political issues like the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Moreover, ideologies are integral part of internet memes; the cartoonist's ideologies are always involved in creating internet memes. As a way of illustration, in Figure (2), racist ideologies of the American regimes and the anti-racist ideologies of the cartoonist are both evident. The role of context is also essential in analysing the selected data. Therefore, a detailed overview is provided for each internet meme. The analyst needs to highlight the events that create the internet memes. In addition, the cartoonists of the analysed internet memes always draw a line between in- and out-groups where he assigns the positive traits to ingroups and the negative traits to the outgroup. For instance, in Figure (1), Palestinians are positively compared to an innocent child and Israel is negatively compared to a puppy. Therefore, van Dijk's ideological square, in its two layers i.e., macro and micro level of analysis, is appropriate to analyse multimodal

discourse because the macro level of analysis is available in all the selected internet memes; when others are involved in discourse, speakers tend to emphasize positive things about their own group and emphasize the negative things about others. For example, in both cartoons Palestinians wear a scarf (alkufiya) which symbolises their patriotism, sacrifice and love for their country whereas America and Israel are portrayed as having a racist policy because they kill people who have different affiliations and colours. Besides, they are occupiers, criminals, terrorist and brutal since America in figure (1) is portrayed as a huge wolf that mercilessly snaps a little Palestinian child and Israel is portrayed as its puppy. Regarding the macro level of analysis, only two aspects are accomplished (emphasize our good things and emphasize their bad things) because the analysed cartoons are highly normative; they show what is right and what is wrong in society without distorting reality. Regarding the micro level of analysis, eleven strategies take place in both cartoons; actor description, categorization, consensus, example/illustration, implication, metaphor, negative other-presentation, norm-expression, positive self-presentation, polarization, and presupposition. It is noteworthy that the contents and

topics that both cartoons tackle do not allow the occurrence of the rest of the strategies. For example, counterfactual, as a category, requires a special sentence form (what would happen if) where the selected cartoons are not the suitable environment for its occurrence. Burden (topos), which is a type of fallacy where speaker gives

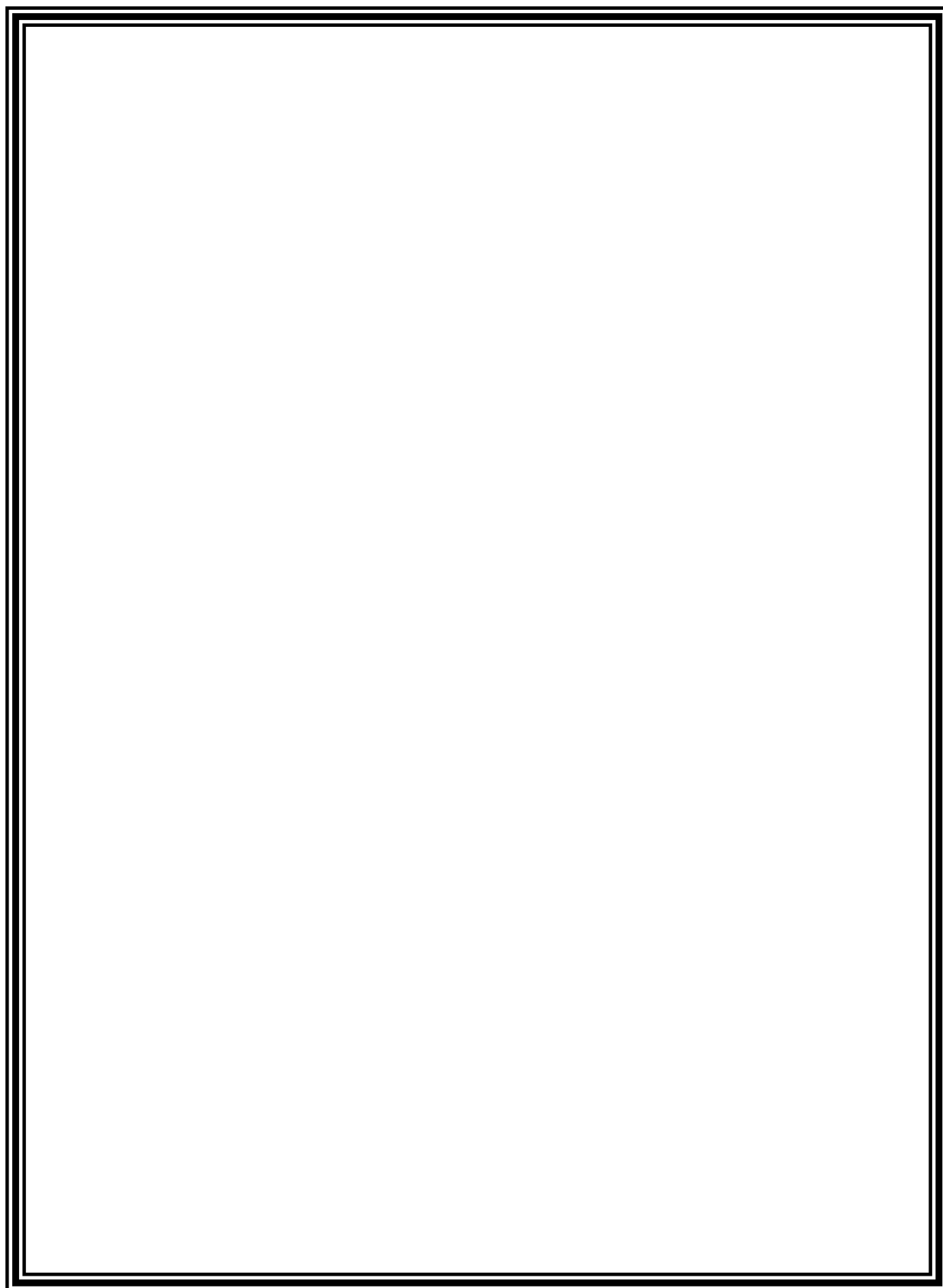
conclusions without reasonable evidence, does not take place because the overview of each cartoon shows the reasons and events that lead to the positive and negative representations of groups. Moreover, Euphemism did not take place because cartoonists do not flatter politicians and cartoons are generally offending.

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