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Discourse and Ideology Variation: A Critical Functional Approach To Mina Stampede News Reports

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Abstract

This paper takes a critical look at the news reports of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia on Mina stampede. Previous studies have indicated that media discourse contributes to public opinion and ideology. Little, however, has been mentioned on how variation in media discourse affects the process. This study analyzed 24 news reports from the two countries from 24 to 31 September 2015 using the components of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The results indicate differences in the reports from the two countries in using variation patterns which in turn have the potential of changing and monitoring readers` ideologies through influencing their opinions on the nature of power relations and interactional structures. The paper tries to contribute to the area of research on media discourse and ideology construction by arguing that discourse variation has not been sufficiently theorized. An attempt will also be made to offer a tentative theorization of such variation.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis; Discourse variation; Iran; Mina stampede; Saudi Arabia; Systemic functional linguistics

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1. Introduction

Mina stampede, from the early hours of its happening, received widespread media coverage in Iran; live reports from the stampede location and interviews with eyewitnesses, in addition to providing descriptions of the event, tried to show that it was serious enough to be explored further, as it caused the loss of thousands pilgrims' lives. Saudi Arabia's immediate response, however, was to downplay the severity of the situation by downsizing the number of causalities, a mere 800, which was much less than what was mentioned in Iranian media (at least 4700 dead). Having referred to similar crushes in previous years, Saudi Arabia also tended to relate it to destiny (Al-Arabiya, 2015).

Later in the week, both countries showed some semantic and linguistic changes in their discourses on the stampede, which did not appear to mean little. That is, reflections of Mina stampede in the news reports of the Islamic republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia, despite showing different political orientations which may be explainable in terms of their different national identities, shared the commonality of discourse variation even in the early days of the crush. At the semantic level, they changed their areas of focus. Iran moved from the mere description of the so-called Mina tragedy through its potential cause(s) to the way it reflected the ideology of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, resorted to discourse highlighting Saudi Arabia`s kindness and responsiveness to the stampede victims` immediate needs, and continued to deny Iran's political allegations over the stampede and moved to reports which pictured its concern for the survivors. Apart from these dialectical changes, certain diatypic variations (Hasan, 2004) were also found in the structures of the news. Iran`s reports showed more divergence from the main titles of the news and implied an obvious focus on Saudi Arabia actions even where the primary meanings of the texts were not much related to that. Variation at the linguistic or structural levels shows that words used in texts were not pre-specified in advance, as each word implied a different kind of value and meaning. Variation at the level of semantics, however, showed the overall changes in the perspectives of both countries which can influence the viewpoints of the readers. Fowler et al. (1979) pointing to the close connection

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between language and ideology, consider language a medium of ideology realization and believe that it controls values conveyance and distortion. Hasan (2004) also maintains that discourse as the building block of the social and cultural practices may be the subject of variation, and this variation in turn, after getting the community`s approval, leads to legitimate ideologies. Therefore, it seems clear that there is a relationship between discourse variation and variation in the ideology of a society. This study aims at exploring discursive variations manifested in the news reports of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia on Mina stampede and the effects they may have on ideologies of their readers.

Previous research has confirmed the influence of media discourse on public opinion and ideology. Lihua (2009) focused on China Daily editorials in order to reveal the ways through which they contribute to the readers` ideologies. Having analyzed their attitudinal, necessity and obligation modalities, he concluded that the higher number of obligation modalities at the end of their texts results in a powerful discourse which in turn encourages taking a powerful ideological stance. Li (2009) compared intertextuality across two daily newspapers in China and U.S which focused on the political crisis of the U.S and China relations. He argues that their difference in using intertextual resources means different understanding of public opinion and using different strategies for its construction. Li (2010) also explored the representations of NATO bombing of the China embassy in Yugoslavia in 1999, through the principles of CDA and Halliday's SFG and asserted that the clause structure (textual metafunction) and content (ideational metafunction) and their specific uses of coherence choices and vocabulary show the ideological stances of NATO toward the bombardment. In a relevant study, Atwaneh (2008) mentions that the higher number of threat speech acts in Israeli newspapers lead to the development of aggressive attitudes, while the higher number of appeals by Palestinian display a weaker and defensive discourse.

Bahramzadeh (2012) in her thesis, explored different discursive strategies of two American and Israeli newspapers in reflecting the assassinations of five Iranian

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nuclear scientists and the ways this affects ideology construction. Having analyzed the data based on van Dijk`s and Wodak`s approaches of CDA, she argues that both actively used the strategies of positive self- representation and negative other-representation and in this way tried to manipulate the minds of people. Nikukalam (2007) investigated the headlines of two Iranian newspapers on Iran`s nuclear program, which were characterized by different political orientations. Given that they did not reflect the same reality in the same way and their selection of words and syntactic categories were not identical, the researcher concluded that they developed different attitudes in their readers. Moradi (2010) identified discursive and non-discursive strategies of ideology construction of seven Iranian newspapers through the principles of CDA, and presented generalization, normalization and themetaization as subcategories of discursive strategies and graphics, photographs and color as non-discursive tools of ideology construction.

This study aims at exploring discursive variations in the Islamic republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia in their news reports of Mina stampede and their potential effects on the readers` ideologies. In addition, we will argue that the issue of discourse variation has not sufficiently been theorized. The paper tries to contribute to the area of media discourse and ideology construction by linking Systemic Functional Linguistics to Critical Discourse Analysis.

2. Method

This study aimed at investigating variations in media discourses of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia on Mina stampede. The formal news agencies of the two countries (Irna and Al-Arabiya respectively) were visited, and their news reports on the crush within the first week (24 September to 31 September) were selected. A cursory look at the two websites revealed that Iran had much more news on the crush, which signaled the significance of the issue for Iran. Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, had only 12 news reports on the crush within that time span. In order to have an equal number of reports from the two countries, all news coverage by Al-Arabiya and 12 reports (1 or 2 randomly selected news for each day) by Iran were taken for further analysis, a total of 24 reports. In the next stage,

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the news reports were arranged chronologically and subjected to analysis based on SFL and CDA. The SFL analysis explored different types of discourse variations the reports contained. The paper, then, compared the types of discourse variations the two websites mainly relied on, and investigated the possible effects of such ways of using variations on ideology construction. In what follows the theoretical framework will be presented.

2.1. Theoretical framework

This paper draws upon the close theoretical and practical connections between Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and their simultaneous employment that equip the researchers to deal with the gap between lexical and social analyses in exploring such issues as discourse variation, which according to Hasan (2004) requires investigating both the linguistic and the social aspects of discourse. Hasan (2004) maintains that understanding discourse variation requires answering two main questions: How is it manifested in discourse? And, what are its products? The former question shows the effects of linguistic choices news reports apply in conveying their meanings, while the latter sheds light, specifically here, on the relevance of discourse variation to the possible changes in public ideology (Fairclough, 1992). Therefore, it can be implied that getting the aim of the study requires using a combination of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which regards discourse as the process of using language with respect to the context of interaction, and critical discourse analysis (CDA), characterized by the focus on the values individuals, institutions and groups expressed through language (Kress, 1990).

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

Hasan (2004) defines discourse as the process of using language in different social contexts and believes that discourse variation can be better understood in relation to the notions of "normality" and "consistency" in using language. Discourse variations are the one-shot linguistic productions of language users, which differ

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from their typical and/or consistent ways of using language, and receive enough instantiation over (a short period of) time. After the time interval, however, these variations become normal and consistent ways of using language. That is, variations evolve into consistency, over time and by receiving enough instantiation. Therefore, studying discourse variation entails paying attention to its starting point and recording its realizations over a proper length of time.

Hasan`s (2004) comprehensive model of analyzing discourse variation is characterized by taking into account Halliday`s notions of register analysis as well as a number of sociolinguistics definitions of variation (e.g., Hymes, 1986; Labov, 1966). The model makes a distinction between diatypic and dialectic variations, which in turn lead to further social variations and changes. It defines variation in relation to both users and uses of language. Halliday`s (1972) statement that different users of language belong to different social classes and groups, in Hasan`s (2004) framework is referred to as dialectical variation. This shows that the definition of the term dialect is not, here, the same as that in sociolinguistics. Its meaning has changed from saying the same thing in different ways, implying that these different ways of saying do not result in different meanings, into the view that language is meaning potential and these different meanings reflect different perspectives on reality. Alongside dialectical variation, there exists another kind of variation by use. Different uses of language denote different configurations of discourse in relation to different contexts. This type of variation whose definition is almost the same as Halliday`s register, is called diatypic variation.

Central to diatypic variation are the notions of "structure" and "texture". Both of them can be loci of variation. The notion of structure, which is the shortened form of structure potential, shows a range of possible structures associated with a given variety of text (e.g., news report) within which each instance of news report moves. This suggests the notions of obligatory and optional elements within the syntagmatic sequence. Consistency in structure is manifested by using the obligatory elements of the news report variety and having them in their fixed places in sequence. Any such instance of the news report that shows this quality can be regarded as the criteria for the given variety. Variation in structure,

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however, is manifested by using optional elements (e.g., having a picture of the writer) and orders of sequence. This presents the criteria for the sub-varieties of news reports. That is, a news report that uses optional elements and orders is regarded as a sub-variety of the genre. Texture has to do with the semantic connectivity of texts which is achieved by their coherence and cohesion. Like structure it can show both consistency and variation. The difference is that it shows the range of the meanings which texts are supposed to convey. Consistency and variation in texture can be realized by the way language is used to perform certain functions with respect to a related activity. The more a news report is recognized as the criteria for the given variety, the more it has to select the meanings that are essential for realizing the obligatory elements. A sub-variety of news report, however, has to realize the elaborative meanings of optional elements from a range of semantic potential that are specified for the genre. Returning to our example, the news report may only manifest the function of conveying facts and viewpoints related to a certain event (texture consistency) and/or representing discourses of the rival side in an explicitly negative or even positive manner (texture variation). Paradigmatic description of the news report depends on the degree to which its contextual confirmation shows delicacy. A variety of news report shows less delicacy than a sub-variety. The following table summarizes what we mean by consistency and variation in diatypic variation (Young & Harrison, 2004).

Table 1

Elements of consistency and variation in diatypic variation and their realizations

	Consistency	Variation
Structure	Obligatory elements, fixed order of sequence	Optional elements, optional order of sequence
Texture	Essential meanings	Elaborative meanings

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As far as changes in structure and texture are concerned, Hasan (2004) considers them elements of changing ideological stances of those that are directly or indirectly involved in texts. She maintains that such changes are used intentionally and because the interactants` (here, writers and readers) characteristics are reciprocal; changes in writers` identities in response to contextual configuration change their readers` ideologies as well. In our data, therefore, changes in texture of both countries` reports, which were manifested by criticizing and challenging each other, are considered intentional moves to influence readers` perception.

What diatypic variation does not capture is the semantic orientations of texts which show that interactants belong to different social groups, and, are, therefore, different in interpreting contexts and using language. Halliday (1972) argues that different groups display differences at semantic level, and sematic systems are not identical across groups and cultures. He also remarks that language meaning is what makes speakers capable of performing social acts, and, therefore, social conditions of speakers are related to their meaning making actions. People from different social classes develop different orders of relevance between practices and meanings. In sum, differences between classes draw on their ideological stances or the way they orient themselves to meanings. Dominated and dominating groups, for example, display different manifestations of contexts followed by different framings of discourse. Different semantic orientations, i.e. dialectical variation, also contributes to the legitimate ways of playing with language; how they approach power relations and inequalities and control relations between social groups and structures. You will recall from the introduction section that I regarded Iran and Saudi Arabia`s changes in areas of focus, followed by changing their discursive tones, as dialectical variation. Iran, for example, quickly moved from the mere description of the Mina tragedy through its potential cause(s) to the way it reflected the ideology of Saudi Arabia. And, in doing that it changed its initially neutral discourse into a very strong one which challenged Saudi`s position and actions repeatedly.

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The point which has been overlooked in Hasan`s (2004) framework is the way changes in semantic orientations should be treated. Dialectical variation shows changes in attitude towards others` positions, ideologies and discourses, and, thus, is very influential in investigating discourse variation. It was mentioned previously that texts` semantic orientations are the clear signs of the ideologies they encourage. Therefore, we may reason that changes in semantic orientations, like diatypic variations cause changing and monitoring ideologies of the intended groups. And, intensification of these changes depends on such factors as the continuance in the usage of the new discourse and the ways in which previous discourses are treated. That is, the more the new discourse is used and the more it diverges from its previous semantic orientation, the deeper the changes in ideology will be.

The distinction between these two types of variation provides researchers with an accurate understanding of the ways a text can be manipulated (either at the local or global structure) to include influential properties of attitude conveyance and control. Despite that, it does not show the real and practical effects of such ways of text manipulation. That is, it just provides a descriptive account of text elements, structure and tone, whereas knowing about how they might affect public opinion is equally important, and that is where CDA comes in.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Van Dijk (2006) considers discourse analysis an approach of ideology analysis and believes that discourse can be expressed through various forms and structures including its nonverbal realizations such as pictures and signs. Ideology is also embedded in other forms of communication, and is reproduced in institutional and organizational contexts. Hence, ideology of a country can be expressed in its media and be enacted in its nationalized actions and practices. Van Dijk`s (1993b) theory of ideology, central to which is the premise that ideologies are constructed within

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the triangle of society, social cognition and social discourse, elaborates more on his view on ideology construction and negotiation. Based on this theory, ideologies are the basic tools of organizing social cognition and a linkage between social cognitions and social actions. That is, shared ideologies construct shared and social cognition and because they are enacted in institutionalized discourses too, they function as the connecting point between social cognition and practices. Social cognition for Van Dijk means the mental representation system, which is affected by the shared sociocultural knowledge and evaluative values and beliefs of the members of a society. Such mental representation is acquired through the complex process of socialization that entails social processing of information.

Ideologies of a group are formed by the systems of principles they adhere to. As these systems constitute social cognition of the group, ideologies control the minds of its members. Ideologies are also in most of the cases serving the groups that adopt them. They represent the relationships between these groups and others in terms of *us* verses *them* and associate positive characteristics to *us* and represent *them* negatively (Van Dijk, 1993b).

Variation in discourse, either in its surface or deep structure, signals changed views on a special event. That is, discourse variation attributes specific meanings or values to events and thus contributes to the way they are interpreted. Variation may signify or deemphasize beliefs and interests of other groups. It can also be the place of social conflicts and inequalities and the ideological differences that capture the efforts to control the minds of language users. Therefore, studying discourse variation will shed light on changes in ideological stances.

3. Results

At the beginning of the analysis, the difference between the two news websites in terms of the number of reports they had on Mina stampede attracted my attention The higher number of the news reports in Iran can be considered a sign of the significance of the issue for Iran, while Saudi Arabia tended to avoid the issue. It

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paid little attention to the crush and in this way tried to reduce its importance. Other signs of its risk avoiding discourse were using protective statements and avoiding pictures which could put it in a dangerous position, which will be elaborated on later in this part.

In what follows some examples of the realization of each type of variation in the news discourses of each country are investigated. The article continues, then, with comparing the two websites in terms of the type of variation they mainly relied on, and finally, a discussion of such ways of using variation will be provided.

News report 1: Al Arabiya News, 26 September 2015

Hajj: More than 700 dead in Mina stampede



An ambulance evacuates victims following a crush caused by large numbers of people pushing at Mina, outside the Muslim holy city of Makkah September 24, 2015. (Reuters)

By Staff writer Al Arabiya News Saturday, 26 September 2015

01 Saudi Arabia's civil defense has said at least 717 pilgrims died and 863 others were injured on Thursday when a stampede broke out

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02 in the tent city of Mina as pilgrims were on their way to perform a Hajj ritual.

03 The stampede began during a morning surge of pilgrims at an intersection between Streets 204 and 223, as the faithful were making 04 their way toward a large structure overlooking the columns, according to the civil defense directorate.

05 The tragedy was the deadliest to strike the annual Hajj pilgrimage since 1990, where 1,426 Muslim pilgrims were trampled to death.

06 The multi-story structure, known as Jamarat Bridge, is designed to ease the pressure of the crowds and prevent pilgrims from being 07.trampled.

08. Al Arabiya News Channel's correspondent Abdulrahman al-Osaimi, who was reporting from the Mina emergency hospital said the
09. stampede happened near entrance of the Jamarat Vridge near Street 204, and not inside of the Jamarat area where the stoning pillars 10 are situated as some media reports earlier said.

11. At a press conference before sunset prayers, Saudi Interior Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Mansour al-Turki told reporters that the
12. street at which the stampede took place "witnessed unprecedented high number of pilgrims" compared to previous years.

13.Pilgrims were on their way towards Jamarat, an area which holds three stone pillars that represent the devil where pilgrims
14. symbolically throw small stones at as one of their last major Hajj rites.

15."Street number 204 is a road leading from the camps to the Jamarat Bridge. What happened was that a group of pilgrims on busses 16.were allowed to descend onto the pathways that lead to the Jamarat Bridge at a time that wasn't allocated to them," Al Arabiya News 17.Channel's correspondent in Mina, Saad Al-Matrafi said.

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18."As they neared the area, they converged with an existing group of people who were already in the area, which pushed the area to 19.overcapacity".

News report 1 is an example of the Saudi Arabia discourse on the crush on 24 September. Its analysis based on the realization of diatypic variation showed that it contained several important issues. Table 2 below shows that the news report can be divided in to eight segments or fragments of discourse used to realize the main aim of the news report. Division into segments is based on the completion of the meaning each group of lines aimed to convey.

Table 2

Diatypic variation of news report 1 (taken from Al-Arabiya)

Segment 1	Lines 1-2	Causalities
Segment 2	Lines 2-4	Crash location
Segment 3	Line 5	Casualties the of previous crashes
Segment 4	Lines 6-7	Location (Jamarat)
Segment 5	Lines 8-10	Crash Location
Segment 6	Lines 11-12	Crash description or reason
Segment 7	Lines 13-14	Event description
Segment 8	Lines 15-19	Event description and reason

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Table 2 shows that all segments in this piece of discourse contribute to the progression of the overall meaning Saudi Arabia wanted to convey on that specific time. Segment 4, for example, describes Mina site and thus facilitates the process of depicting the crush in general. Segments 6 and 8 in the same way, try to provide a reason for it and contribute to the headline '*Hajj: More than 700 dead in Mina stampede'***.** Segment 3 also, although it might be regarded as a sub-text, contributes to the realization of the primary meaning**.** Hasan (2004) believes that in such cases all segments perform their facilitative function. They are used in the discourse in order to satisfy the readers' presuppositions with regard to text completion.

Moreover, the agentive role that Saudi Arabia took in this piece of discourse is that of just a narrator. It merely described the crush and did not go beyond that to mention the possible actions it did when the crush happened or preventative measures taken after previous crushes. Another possible implication of this way of reporting could be Saudi Arabia`s tendency to minimize the distance between itself and the readers; it does not say that it has the power and experience of controlling the Hajj rituals; the event came as a complete surprise and Saudi Arabia just like all other countries was not ready for it. Segments 6-8 of this news report are explanations and justifications on the side of the Saudi Arabia with regard to the event. Quotation from Saudi Interior Ministry spokesman tries to convince the readers that lines 11-19 were from the speech of an authority that personally witnessed the crush. They aim at making positive interpersonal relationships with the readers so that they see the reality from the same perspective Saudi Arabia sees. It seems, then, that the above mentioned segments have fulfilled the intended positive tone-setting (Hasan, 2004) function.

The structural part of the diatypic variation analysis reveals that the news does not show any explicit divergence from the structure of an ordinary news report readers may have in their minds. All it contains are the common elements of a news report arranged in a typical way. It started with a headline and then, another part of its discourse (picture, text) were used.

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As far as manifestation of the dialectical variation in this news report is concerned, it is clear that it does not have any element of power and dominance. It focused on the material and tangible aspect of the crush; where, when and how (in Saudi Arabia`s view) the crush happened. In almost all other reports taken form Al-Arabiya, the same orientation was found. Saudi reports in general focused on context explanation and used a defensive discourse implying that it was not to blame. Saudi government tried to prove its innocence and show its responsiveness to the immediate needs of the survivors. The subtitle (explanation) of the following news report, for example, implies that Saudi forces cared about pilgrims and did their best to help them.

White House: Hajj stampede 'heartbreaking'



A pilgrim being escorted after deadly stampede. (Essa Al-Dobisi/Al Arabiya)

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Returning to my claim at the beginning of the analysis section, it would be clear that this picture along with other pictures Saudi Arabia used show its intentional avoidance of reporting casualties, their dead bodies, and all the pains the survivors and those hurt experienced. Then, one can reason that Saudi Arabia tended to run away from the crush and all the things might put it in a dangerous position.

My analysis revealed that almost all Saudi Arabia`s news reports displayed the same orientations in terms of both diatypic and dialectical variations. That is, in terms of diatypic variation they mainly focused on creating texts included the minimum amount of linguistic divergence from the main points; almost all statements in news reports followed the progression and completing the overall messages. They also used the ordinary structure of news report and all the components had a typical arrangement. In terms of dialectical variation also almost all news reports avoided depicting a dominant position and using a powerful discourse. There seemed to be an obvious and intentional avoidance of taking a power position in news related to the crush, except where it came to responding to Iran's criticism of its mismanagement of the Hajj rituals. In fact, this was the one and only example of Saudi Arabia`s strong discourse which had been made on Sunday, 27 September 2015. It reacted to the criticism of Iran and refused its` demand for an inquiry into the crush reason. It also accused Iran of playing with the tragedy to make it a political issue, and continued with asking it to get away from its` political view to the event and in this way shows more respect to those had been killed. Having referred to the challenging statements of Iran's president Hassan Rowhani at the U.N general assembly, the news used a quotation from Saudi Arabia foreign minister Adel al-Jubair confirmed by John Kerry to convince the readers that Saudi Arabia has a bright history of caring for pilgrims to ensure their successful pilgrimage and therefore, Iran's statements and allegations were not logical. Such a semantic variation shows that Saudi Arabia extended its risk avoidance strategy to the news reports texts. It used a strong discourse when being challenged by Iran and used quotations from authorities as protective statements. The news report reflects what it considers the legitimate ways of doing and saying

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when being criticized; changing discourse tone, countering challenge and providing supportive statements from authorities. This strong discourse, however, did not have any continuance and based on my assumption in the theoretical framework section, could not have much effect on the ideologies of the readers.

With regard to the news reports of Iran we found some different orientations. As for the diatypic variation, it was found that almost all Iranian reports displayed it to some extent. Analysis of the following news report taken from Irna on 24 September would make the point clearer.

News report 2: Irna, 24 September 2015
Iran declares 3-day nat'l mourning over Mecca deaths

01. Tehran, Sept 24, IRNA -- Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei declared three days 02.of national mourning following the deaths of several hundred Hajj pilgrims, including Iranians, in the holy city of 03.Mecca.



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04.“Offering condolences to the bereaved families of the killed pilgrims, I declare three days of national mourning in 05.the country,” Ayatollah Khamenei said in a message on Thursday.

06.'The Saudi government is obliged to accept its heavy responsibility in this bitter incident and meet its obligations 07.in compliance with the rule of righteousness and fairness; mismanagement and improper measures that were behind 08.this tragedy should not be undermined,” the Leader said.

09. Earlier today, Head of Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization Saeed Ohadi said that in Hajj stampede in Mena as many 10.as 90 Iranian pilgrims have been confirmed dead with 150 others injured.

11. Speaking to IRNA, Ohadi said that according to statistics released by Saudi officials, 1,000 pilgrims have lost their 12.lives and a similar number have been injured.

13. Following the deadly incident during Hajj rituals, 200 medical teams were dispatched to the scene to help those 14.injured, Ohadi said.

15. He said that Saudi hospitals have difficulty for accepting the injured pilgrims and do not allow Iranian doctors to 16.enter and help. Table 3 below describes the internal structure of this news report.

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Table 3

Diatypic variation of news report 2 (taken from Irna)

Segment 1	Lines 1-3	Mourning declaration
Segment 2	Lines 4-5	Mourning declaration
Segment 3	Lines 6-8	Saudi mismanagement
Segment 4	Lines 9-12	causalities
Segment 6	Lines 13-14	Iran medical actions
Segment 7	Lines 15-16	Saudi Arabia refusal

Regarding the headline *'Iran declares 3-day nat'l mourning over Mecca deaths'* it seems that all parts of the text, but the last two segments, are in line with the message was intended to covey. The number of medical teams have been dispatched to Mecca and the quotation form Ohadi on Saudi Arabia refusal of receiving help do not seem to be in direct relation with national mourning in Iran. In another news report entitled *"Saudi gov`t mismanagement in Mina stampede is evident: Veep"* (25 September), also at least three segments were not found much related to the title which was supposed to be fully followed by some evidence of Saudi's mismanagement. Hasan (2004) regards such segments as enclosed texts whose boundaries cannot permeate the primary meaning. Their patterns of harmony in terms of cohesion are isolated from the rest of the texts, and, therefore do not make much functional contribution to the primary message. The primary function of such segments is positive tone setting, as they are used to strengthen the trust between government and people and put the relation with Saudi Arabia under threat. Such texts are also regarded as complex texts within which diatypic variation is used intentionally to integrate different functions. Structural analysis of the news, however, shows it avoidance of atypical elements and patterns of writing an ordinary report.

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The overall semantic orientation of Irna news reports, as can be seen in this news too, is that of challenging Saudi Arabia and trying to show its inefficacy in controlling Hajj rituals. And, because such discourse usage had more continuance, it can have deeper effects on readers` ideologies. It also shows the way Iran considers the legitimate way of criticizing a responsible agent for a human disaster. Iran, despite the Saudi Arabia, seems to focus on the risk, rather than avoiding it. It changed its neutral stance with regard to the Saudi Arabia within the first two days of the event and continually demanded investigating the cause of the tragedy. According to Hasan (2004), the fact that individuals and institutions reveal different aspects of an objective reality shows that they are different in terms of social positioning and ideological stances. A group may display a weaker realization of context and therefore a weaker version of discourse, while the stronger group tries to protect its stronger boundaries and use a stronger form of discourse.

4. Conclusion

Focusing on the reasons and the results of dialectical and diatypic variations, Hasan (2004) argues that understanding the role of discourse in social changes requires understanding what produces discursive variation and what the variation itself produces. Using the distinction she made between the two types of variations, I analyzed discourse variation at both micro and macro levels of the news reports of the Islamic republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia on Mina stampede. The linguistic part of the analyses showed that while no sign of diatypic variation (either at the level of structure or texture) was found in the news reports of the Saudi Arabia, Iranian news reports` texture showed much variation; at least one part of each news report was devoted to Saudi government and its officials` actions even though they did not have much to do with its primary meaning. It seems that Iran used each news report to complete the puzzle of Saudi government`s inefficacy in the minds of its readers. Both countries, however, changed the semantic orientations of their discourses and got a stronger one at some point. The difference is that Iran`s semantic variation had more frequency and length which strengthens its effects.

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It was mentioned earlier that diatypic variation is used intentionally and has to with changes in their interactants` ideologies. Given that, the higher usage of diatypic variation by Iran can be an important source of evidence for the claim that it can powerfully change the ideologies of the news reports` addressees. The question, now, is how it is done.

Van Dijk (2006) believes that discourse variation has the cognitive function of making, monitoring and changing social attitudes. These changed attitudes will in turn be the basis of a socially shared mentality based on which members of a community construct realizations of concrete incidents. That is, discourse variation changes discourse structures through influencing their ideologies. The new ideology functions as the guidelines of behavior in relation to the focused event and the similar ones through being produced and reproduced in their social interactions and discourses. Users of the new ideology speak as members of a unified ***we*** and construct identical ideologically based mental models of the events from the texts and contexts of their communication. Van Dijk (2006) also believes that depending on the type of the new ideology (e.g., political and religious) and whether it is produced explicitly or not, it may be acquired relatively fast or slowly. The new political ideology that Iranian news reports have expressed explicitly, therefore, is acquired relatively fast by the readers.

The new ideology can also legitimate resistance to power relations and encourage domination. Those who use the newly changed patterns of interaction feel entitled to challenge their interlocutors or treat them as an inferior group. Discourse variation can contribute to taking negative meta-comments about their speeches as well. And, in doing so, users may be influenced by their personal cognition too. Language users are not only members of social groups, but also individuals with their own beliefs, experiences and motivations. Therefore, we may reason that the new ideology Iranian news reports encourage can have more effects on the stampede survivors who personally experienced that situation and those who have taken a poor view of Saudi Arabia.

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Discourse variation users may further experience changes in their social identities, values and norms. The new discourse can illustrate a national and even a cross border identity, which resists oppressive and indifferent views to such disasters and asks for differential treatments to them. The new identity, in turn, values a more humanistic view to the people`s lives. That is, the unified ***we*** of such newly developed ideology can turn into a regional and/or global ***we*** which struggles hegemonic discourses, ideologies, actions and norms of their opponents.

In sum, Iran, with its higher usage of diatypic variation, is going to influence the ideologies of the readers more than Saudi Arabia. And, it is done by affecting their mentalities on power relations, changing their social identities and encouraging a negative view on the discourses of Saudi Arabia which in turn changes the structure of their interactions.

This study has some implications for applied linguistics. Diatypic variation signals the side by side evolution of language and society, as each of them is a resource for the other one. This study shows that diatypic variation reflects the changes in the social attitudes, which usually origin from the discourses of dominating groups, and is influenced by them. Such powerful discourses privilege specific variations governed by a social and logical rule based on which dominant ideas come from dominating classes. This brings the questions into the mind that how these discourses of power grow, what factors nurture them, how they do that and what are the expected and unexpected results of such ways of acting (Hasan, 1999b). Dialectical variation, on the other hand, is often related to such issues as inequalities in terms of power and controlling. The study implies that social structures are the linking elements of language and speech that shape individuals minds and their ideological stances. Social structures are the active producers of dialectical variations; they produce the condition of their reproduction by influencing the production of forms (Bernstein, 1990). This study also shows that, with regard to this specific event, discourse and ideology variation in media happened in a top-down form and reflected the views of dominating and higher classes of society. The process will be accelerated if the views and personal experiences of other classes are in line with those of the dominants.

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At the end, it should be mentioned that this qualitative research which followed the principles of CDA is not without limitations. First, interpretation of news reports as with any other kind of qualitative research may be subjective. Therefore, using such methods of validation as inter-researchers agreement can confirm the current findings. Second, criticisms leveled against CDA may be applicable to this study too. That is, working and analyzing texts selectively and having some pre-specified assumptions and looking for their manifestations in texts, which are among the innate properties of CDA, might affect validity of the results. Therefore, analyzing the two countries' discourses based on other frameworks is recommended.

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