

Intertextuality in Selected English Newspapers in the Middle East Countries: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

This paper discusses intertextuality as a process of text production in the English newspapers in the Middle East countries. It employs the principles of critical discourse analysis and its qualitative methodology to investigate intertextuality and its ideological relevance in the data retrieved from online edition of three English-speaking newspapers in the Middle East region. The research findings indicate that the intertextuality is universal phenomenon that allows newspaper text-producers to incorporate multiple voices from various texts to achieve ideological purposes by forming their discourse to convey a suited interpretation to form the reader's mind in a special way.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis; ideology; interdiscursivity, intertextuality; metadiscourse

1. Introduction

Newspaper production involves structural construction and organization. These allow newspaper text producers to craft the texture of their news stories by blending prior texts with their ideas in new ways to fit their specific communicative purposes (Wodak, 2005). Such procedure in newspaper production is what Mikhail Bakhtin (1986) dubbed as intertextuality (Fairclough, 2003). Intertextuality refers to connecting discourse to other discourses which were produced earlier and harmonized them in a single text. The concept of intertextuality points to the productivity of text in mixed grill manner that contains multiple voices (i.e., multiple ways of presenting points of views, and things to say) which is usually built on other texts and discourses (Bakhtin, 1986). Bakhtin (1981) builds his intertextuality assumption on the primacy that all meaning in text or discourse is achieved through struggle in a relation of simultaneity with the others.

As intertextuality in discourse relates to the productivity of text from existing texts, it allows producer of a text to switch between two or more texts and mix them 'peacefully' (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999 p. 199). These processes of interacting in text offer ideological perspectives as the convention of discourse production involves snatching from the prior texts. In this regard, the interest of the present research is to investigate the intertextuality as phenomenon in the English newspapers in the Middle East region from theoretical principles of critical discourse analysis (CDA) to bring out the ideological relevance of intertextuality in the English-speaking newspaper discourse in the region from not only discourse as social discursive but social practice dimension of the CDA framework.

Apart from this introduction, the paper is segmented into three parts with first part providing Bakhtin's accounts of intertextuality in Newspaper discourse composition to provide proper overview and background information for reader to follow the discussions in the paper. The second section of the paper reviews relevant literature on the topic and followed by information about the CDA Theory adopted to discuss the intertextuality in English newspaper in the Middle East countries to be followed by a brief explanation about data generation for the research. The fourth part presents CDA accounts of the ideological relevance of intertextuality as phenomena in the English-speaking newspaper discourse in the Middle East region. The concluding part contains recap of the major findings of the study and recommendations.

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2. Literature Review

Bedu (2017) asserts that “Newspaper discourse is a multidimensional and multi-perspective genre as its style of content is dialogic in the sense of Russian linguist Mikhail Bakhtin (1981; 1986)” (p. 18). The intertextuality makes the order of discourse in newspaper to assume a characteristic of hybridity in which a discourse about a specific topic can find its starting point within one field of action and proceed through another one (Schiffrin et. al., 2000). News editorials of newspaper in United Kingdom exhibit intertextual mixture as illustrated below:

1. The Guardian view on David Cameron’s migration speech: we have been here before

The prime minister did not pander to Ukip

This time but there were few signs that his speech will hold the line better than its predecessors. Immigration has always been a big, important and often difficult issue for Britain. The same is true of our membership of the European Union. David Cameron’s long-term and long-self created political difficulty, which today’s important speech in Staffordshire did little to dispel, is that, under pressure from the rise of Ukip, he has allowed the one issue to colonise the other. The test of much anticipated speech will be whether it helps to reverse that process and allows a more honest debate about the national interest on both. The prime minister did not pander Ukip this time. But it is hard to be optimistic that new mood will last.

This week, new official statistic showed that net long-term migration to the UK in the year was 260,000. Three and half years ago, Mr. Cameron had promised to get that figure down to under 100,000. The new figures therefore made a mockery of the pledge,..... (The Guardian UK November 28, 2014).

The Guardian editorial extracts in one illustrates the dialogic nature of the newspaper editorial especially the way it has been constructed using different discourses in a single text. The above extract centered on Cameron’s speech in Staffordshire on immigration and its associated problems to UK overlaps with the headline of the editorial. However, the discourse is related to the immigration problem not only for Britain but to all membership of the European Union as a typical example of intertextuality.

Furthermore, the writer swiftly moves his argument back with different text (as underlined in italic) on new statistical figures on net population of long-term migration, then ties it to Cameron’s three-and-half-year-ago promises concerning the solution of the immigration problems that ended in a complete failure. This is another good example of intertextuality.

The intertwining of these issues in the above excerpted newspaper editorials constitutes what Fairclough (1992) names as ‘manifest intertextuality’ or ‘heteroglossia’ of discourse in the sense of Bakhtin (1981 p. 291). The study takes on this intersect of various ideas in a variety of ways in English newspapers in the Middle East region and analyzes their socially typified form of intertextuality in the editorial discourse during the data parsing.

3. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Framework

The CDA is a multi-disciplinary approach which was transformed from contemporary linguistic studies of the 1970s and 1980s known as ‘Critical Linguistics’. It primarily studies the relationship between language and power as well as how ideological strategies are enacted, reproduced and resisted in the use of language. In this regard, advocates of this research agenda see language as a form of social practice and that the context of language use is very crucial in its analysis (Fairclough 1995; Wodak 2005). They also view critical discourse analysis as neither a theoretical framework nor a method of inquiry, but ‘a critical perspective in doing scholarship’ by conveying critical knowledge that will enable human beings emancipate themselves from form of domination through discourse (van Dijk 2005 p. 96). The framework draws its insights from the critical social theory of Karl Marx and his critique of capitalist ideology, his followers Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser and Michel Pecheux (Bedu, 2017).

The CDA focuses on the local micro-level linguistic features in text; this includes cohesion and coherence, topical markers and semantic principles that connect textual patterns. It also explores less ‘explanatory’ and ‘evaluative’ of the macro socio-cultural dimensions of discursive practices (Fitch & Sanders 2005p. 253). Under the macro-level, the CDA attempts to answer the following questions:

- i. why certain discourses are structured to dominate others; how language is used and abused in the service of the powerful in society;

- ii. how language can be structured to become a veritable instrument of propaganda, manipulation, marginalization, oppression, under-representation and misrepresentation among others.
- iii. how discourse buttresses ideological formations of social institutions and why even those who suffer as a consequence, fail to realize how things appear to be non-natural and normal at all.

The CDA and its various approaches are aimed at producing ‘enlightenment and emancipation’ by seeking to describe and explain different concepts of ideology in discourse. In nutshell, the methodological approach of CDA is to create awareness among the language consumer to prioritize their own needs and interests from what they consume from discourse.

The Critical discourse analysis scholars believe that language use in all forms can be instrumental to the institutionalization of ideology and dominance. And at same time, language can also be used to subvert them. Fairclough (1998) stresses the need to question all textual representations, in our textually-mediated contemporary society, to determine whose representations they are, who benefits from them and what social relations they draw us into.

4. Method of Data Collection and their Analysis

The data for this research is nine news reports that are retrieved from online editions of three English-speaking newspapers in the Middle East region namely: Iraqi News, Arab News of Saudi Arabia, and Iran News daily. The study adopts traditional content analysis of a corpus of news discourse (types of media discourse) using the critical analysis paradigm to ascertain their ideological relevance of intertextuality in the newspaper discourse production in the Arab nations.

5. Data Presentation and Analysis

The concept of intertextuality points to the productivity of texts, in terms of how texts can transform prior texts and restructure existing convention of discourse to generate new ones. Unlimited access to many texts coupled within the limited space of newspaper for textual innovation implies a tie between intertextuality and hegemony in which power relations and domination embed intertextual relation on why certain intertextualities not others are considered in the text; hence the intertextual processes in editorial text production encode power relations due to the hegemonic struggle in the sphere of discourse.

Due to the said hegemonic struggle, the study conceptualizes that the ideological purpose plays in selecting prior texts/discourses to be blended in the text. Typical of such ideological motive for intertextuality includes indicating source of information for face value in which the text draws statement or issue from another source as authoritative and then repeats that authoritative information or statement for the purpose of the new text. English newspapers in the Middle East nations largely utilize the intertextuality for face value ideology. Consider the following excerpt from Iraqi News:

2. IS member, who created online pages to incite against security troops, arrested in Mosul

An Islamic State member, who created online pages to incite against security troops, has been arrested in Mosul, the military intelligence announced. In a statement on Monday, the department said a militant was arrested in Hawi al-Kanisah region in Mosul. “He used to work within the so-called Nineveh State. He is one of the founder of tens of accounts, that he used to ignite protests and confrontation against security troops in Central and southern regions.” The militant, according to the statement, “has several hideouts to shelter the militants”.

In the above excerpted news report of Iraqi news, the text producer contextualizes the ‘authoritative institution as the source by using phrases such as “the military intelligence announced.”, “In a statement on Monday ...”, “the department said.”, “The militant, according to the statement ...” as well as using direct quotation among others. The use of these attributed elements in intertextual representation tends to give face value as means to convince the readers. Furthermore, the writer strongly indicate endorsement of the outside text as obtained to justify the authenticity of the news content by clearly indicating his proximity to the idea recontextualized in the text being produced. Such ‘manifested intertextuality’ therefore illustrates that intertextuality is ideologically inclined and represents social reality how text producers position authority as not only intertextual source but as power source of reference to all related issues or topic as seen in the process of recontextualization which this concurred with what Teo (2000 p. 18) explains that

“The use of quotation becomes a gate-keeping device that admits only those, in position of power, influence and shut out the opinion and perspectives of those deemed by society to be powerless.”

Another type of productive mixed form of intertextuality in the data is where the text writer explicitly incorporates another text to provide background information to support or contrast with the existing issues in the current discourse. A substantial proportion of the media output not only in the Middle East region including Western press subscribe this form of intertextuality for ideological purpose which Bedu (2017 p. 167) dubbed as ‘tied-back’ as illustrated in the following extracts below:

3. UN official: Palestinian refugee issue can’t be washed away

The head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees suggested that the US slashed his budget early this year to punish the Palestinians for their criticism of the American recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, but he warned that the Palestinian refugee issue will not go away.

The comments by Pierre Kraehenbuehl came amid sign that the US with Israeli support, is aiming to abolish UNRWA in an apparent attempt to remove one of the most contentious issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from negotiation agenda.....

In January the US, the largest donor to the agency in a statement announced that it would slash some \$300 million from its annual contribution to UNRWA. This is what Kraehenbuehl called an unprecedented financial crisis. (Arab News August 24, 2018)

4. European Commission adopts support package for Iran

The European Commission today adopted a first package of €18 million for projects in support of sustainable economic and social development in Iran, including €8 million assistance to the private sector. The announcement was made in a press release by European Commission on Thursday.

According to the report, today’s projects are the first of a wider package of €50 million for Iran, aiming to support the country to address key economic and social challenges. They are part of the renewed cooperation and engagement between the European Union and Iran following the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

“Since the renewal of the EU-Iran relations as a result of the Iran nuclear deal, cooperation has developed in many sectors. EU nations in their resolutions committed to sustain it and this new package will widen economic and sectoral relations in areas that are of direct benefit to our citizens.” High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini said.....

The move comes as US President Donald Trump withdrew from the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement on May 8, and reinstated sanctions, including extraterritorial ones, against Tehran. US’ unilateral and unlawful pullout from the nuclear agreement prompted the EU to come up with a package of proposals to encourage Iran to stay committed to the JCPOA despite US sanctions.(Iran News daily August 24, 2018)

The excerpts in three and four above illustrate the mixed (hybrid) writing style conventions in the newspaper discourse process in which the news reports are ideologically structured and sandwiched with another to provide background information to convince the text consumer about the representation in the newspaper reports. In excerpt three, the text producer coopts a previous text issued by US as largest donor to the agency “In January the US, the largest donor to the agency in a statement announced that it would slash some \$300 million from its annual contribution to UNRWA” to justify assertion made by the UNRWA Envoy in order to provoke quick action, mediation and intervention.

Apart from mixed writing style conventions seen in the two excerpts, the extract in (4) depicts how newspaper discourse is open hybrids with different topic-related discourses or news subtopics that are created for many points of discourse practices with Fairclough (1995 p. 88) dubbed as “interdiscursivity” and still hold the discourse in the news story as single entity . In the data of the Iranian newspapers, the two paragraphs illustrate how the news report writer switch-over to another related topic to justify why support package is not only timely for Iran as a nation but a minus to US imposed sanction on Iran. Consider the two paragraphs in (5) below:

5. “Since the renewal of the EU-Iran relations as a result of the Iran nuclear deal, cooperation has developed in many sectors. EU nations in their resolutions committed to sustain it and this new package will widen economic and sectoral relations in areas that are of direct benefit to our citizens, “and The move comes as US President Donald Trump withdrew from the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement on May 8, and reinstated sanctions, including extraterritorial ones, against Tehran. US’ unilateral and unlawful pullout from the nuclear agreement prompted the EU to come up with a package of proposals to encourage Iran to stay committed to the JCPOA despite US sanctions.

Although the relation each text has to the texts surrounding it, is well defined by employing linguistic resources especially the cohesive devices such as metadiscourse markers (i.e., additives, contrastive, code gloss etc), and quotation (direct, indirect and free indirect) to achieve intertextuality in the newspaper discourse production. Consider the following table one below:

Table 1: Illustration of intertextuality process in Middle East newspapers

| Medium | News content | Process of intertextuality |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Iraqi News Aug 23, 2018 | “Security troops manage to kill five Islamic State members as they were booby-trapping the road which links Wadi al-Qathf to the kilo 160 region in Rutba town, west of Anbar,” Col. Fadel al-Eissawy, a commander of al-Hashd al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilization Forces) of Ameriyat al-Somoud region told Almmaalomah website | Direct Discourse quotation |
| Iraqi News Aug 14, 2018 | Speaking at joint press conference with Turkish President RecepTayyip Erdogan, Abadi said that the Iraqi government “reject the lunch of any assault towards Turkey from inside Iraqi territory” | Free Indirect Discourse quotation |
| Arab News Aug 24, 2018 | Saudi Foreign Minister Adl Al-Juber declared that Beijing was a political, security and economic partner and that the crises and challenges that China and Arab world have experienced are identical. | Indirect Discourse quotation |
| Arab News Aug 24, 2018 | For instance since Beijing announced its economic strategy, the relationship between China and several Arab states has witnessed an acceleration in both the breadth and depth ties..... | Metadiscourse marker (code gloss) |
| Iran News Daily Aug 22. 2018 | <p style="text-align: center;">Australia vows to maintain ties with Iran amid US sanctions</p> <p>An official at Australia’s foreign affairs and trade ministry, while criticizing US for violating the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, stressed Melbourne’s resolve to maintain trade transactions with Tehran despite US sanctions.</p> <p>Justin Lee, First Assistant Secretary of Australian Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry’s Multilateral Policy Division, made the remarks in a meeting with head of Iran-Australia’s Friendship Parliamentary Group, Mahmoud Sadeghi, in Tehran on Wednesday.</p> <p>US President Donald Trump pulled US out of the 2015 nuclear deal in May and reinstated sanctions against Iran which had been lifted under the international agreement.</p> <p>Meanwhile, EU has been working toward saving the nuclear deal by guaranteeing Iran’s economic interests within certain proposed mechanisms.</p> | Metadiscourse Marker (additive) |

The significance in such macro-variation analysis is not the contrast between Direct Discourse, Indirect Discourse and Free Indirect Discourse quotations but bringing out where there is explicit demarcation between the ‘voice’ of the newspaper and the ‘voice’ added from outside the text. They do encode ‘ideologically loaded textual features’ as who the intertextual processes favor i.e., elites/ruling, political class and multi-national companies as in who gets to be quoted or heard as reference in the newspaper reports and to what extent ordinary people or less influential voice/sources are integrated in the newspaper texts.

6. Conclusion

It is a known from the discussions in this paper that CDA is concerned with the discursive constructions and ideology that are embedded in text as information that are less readily available to reader’s consciousness (Locke, 2004).

The analyses of intertextuality in English newspaper texts in the Middle East region enable us to comprehend the inter-woven and organization nature of events in the newspapers discourse in the Arab world. The findings in the research indicate that newspaper discourses involve complex configuration in form of overlapping of various texts within a single text. It also discovers that 'intertextuality' is a universal feature in which texts are produced from existing texts including English newspapers in the Middle East region (Bakhtin, 1986; Kristeva, 1986). The study reveals that despite the ideological inclination in intertextual processes, English-speaking newspapers discourses in the Middle East nations hold and sound as one unit of communication otherwise known as text. They equally reveal how text-producers utilize intertextual processes not only for textual but for achieving ideological purpose to form the discourse to convey a suited interpretation of that text among various other possible interpretations and consequently to form the readers mind in a special way.

As advanced in Bedu (2017), intertextuality and interdiscursivity manifestations in the data have ideological undertone indicating that text- producers do position themselves in the construction of social reality though their relationship to intertextual source in which power dominance takes a center stage (Teo, 2000). Furthermore, the intertextuality and interdiscursivity in the data revealed how diverse and hybrid the newspaper discourse is, as the data exhibited the overlapping nature and recontextualization of interrelated discourses, topics, genres and texts within a single newspaper text.

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