

Covert Ideologies and Sign Manipulation: a Functional Semiotic Analysis of Western vs. Arabic News Coverage of New Zealand 2019 Mosque Carnage

Waleed Alsoufi^{1*}, Naser N. Albzour²

¹Ministry of Education, Amman, Jordan, ²English Department, Al Albayt University, AABU, Mafraq/Jordan

Corresponding Author: Waleed Alsoufi, E-mail: waleedalsoufiizz@yahoo.com

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received: August 27, 2021

Accepted: October 22, 2021

Published: November 30, 2021

Volume: 10 Issue: 6

Advance access: November 2021

Conflicts of interest: None

Funding: None

ABSTRACT

The primary concern of this comparative study is to explore sign manipulation in front page photographs and headlines in both Western and Arabic news reports in a humble attempt to determine how visual and verbal signs are purposefully presented to the target audience. The researchers precisely try to scrutinize and analyze covert ideological biases of such news reports not only as expressed verbally but also visually. This study exclusively hinges on the event of the New Zealand Mosque Massacre which took place during Friday Prayers on 15 March 2019 in Christchurch City, where an Australian terrorist opened fire on innocent Muslim worshippers and brutally killed fifty of them. The heinous crime has left the world in a state of mourning and utter shock. Media coverage of this attack overwhelmed the Western and the Arab newspapers as well as social media worldwide. Unfortunately, the Christchurch massacre has not been headlined as a terrorist attack by several Western news reports unlike Arabic ones. The source of the data in question mainly relies on 10 popular newspapers: five Western newspapers and five Arabic ones: Daily Mirror, The New York Times, Daily Mail, The Guardian, The Sun, Addustour, Al-Jazirah, Al-Anba, Al-Quds Al-Arabi and AL-Sharq, respectively. The data represent a random sample, so the content does not necessarily represent attitudes or perspectives of all Western and Arabic newspapers. Following the Peircean semiotic triadic model, this study tries to unveil basic ideological features and manipulative strategies that clearly depict the Australian terrorist in some Western newspapers. In addition, it bluntly and objectively shows covert racial prejudice against Muslims in western newspapers. The findings show the significance of both verbal and visual signs in news story because they enable the reporters to express their perspectives towards major events such as New Zealand mosque carnage more effectively. As a result, the use of visual images in front page headlines does not merely serve to represent the reality of that horrible event in a visual form; rather, it is an essential tool of persuasion and tampering with the public opinion by means of insinuating some seriously embedded ideologies.

Key words: Codes, Ideologies, New Zealand Massacre, Semiotic Analysis, Sign Manipulation, Verbal Signs, Visual Signs, Terrorism

INTRODUCTION

New Zealand is an island country located in the southwestern Pacific Ocean. The original people of New Zealand are Maori. Christianity is the predominant religion in New Zealand, although its society is among the most secular in the world and a country with freedom of religion choice, an extremist attacked Muslims on their religious ceremony. New Zealand mosque massacre took place during Friday Prayer on 15 March 2019 in Christchurch city where an Australian terrorist who opened fire on Muslims and killed 50 of them, Brenton Tarrant, a 28-year-old Australian man with no previous criminal history, who was active on extreme-right internet forums, entered the Al Noor mosque, a Muslim place of worship, in Christchurch where he shot dead 42 people. Exiting the mosque, he shot another person on the pavement

before driving the short distance to Linwood mosque in Christchurch where he continued his killing spree. Despite this all being true, some western media newspapers refuse to label Brenton Tarrant as a “real terrorist”, and couldn’t see the truly vicious and heinous nature of this man and his actions. The New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern described the incident as a “terrorist attack”. In her speech, the prime minister also mentioned that “the 15th of March will now forever be a day etched in our collective memories. (Jacinda, 2019). The purpose of this study is to analyze front page photographs and headlines to determine how visual and verbal signs are represented in ten different newspapers.

The purpose of this study is to analyze front page photographs and headlines to determine how visual and verbal signs are represented in ten different newspapers. Reporters and journalists write the news story with certain styles,

structure, and point of views. Accordingly, readers fail to understand the encoded messages written by the reporter or journalists and thus the decoded messages may only partially reveal the encoded messages and depict the intention or ideology of the reporters. Therefore, lacking of examination in the language and image of media, only the surface of the conception will be understood. The horrific event has left the world in mourning and sheer shock. Media coverage of New Zealand mosque attack is overwhelmed in the western and Arab newspapers as well as social media. New Zealand mosque carnage has not been headlined as a terrorist attack by several western news reports.

News is defined as “information about recent events that are of interest to a large group, or that may touch the lives of a sufficiently large group” (Reah, 2002: 1). A large number of audiences are attracted by news media, such as radio, television and newspapers (Breen 2007). Unlike face-to-face mass communication and mass media in particular have the advantages of accessibility and availability (Bell, 1991). The language of the news is accessible by large numbers of readers and hearers. The progressive technology of the twenty-first century that includes the World Wide Web and the international news broadcasting on television through satellites has made it very easy to access the latest news at anytime and anywhere in the world (Breen, 2007). Moreover, news discourse whether written or spoken offers a good quality of recorded language (Bell, 1991).

Newspapers play a crucial role and a critical function in presenting a selection of the events of day to their communities, and every day’s news presents a set of basic perspectives of the most significant happenings to their publics (Utt & Pasternack, 2003). The most crucial location to find such representations of society’s most critical events is a newspaper’s front page. What attracts the attention of readers is front page of the newspaper and thus, editors mainly focus much energy in determining and deciding which story elements should be placed on front page. (McQuail, 2010; Singer, 2001).

Newspapers provide shared common symbolic anchors, collective experiences, and representations of society to its publics (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2002). They present a display of typographic, codes, linguistic, and graphic that provides readers with information of the world (Carter, 2000). The front page of the newspaper is the most significant page of the publication and underlines the day’s most critical stories (Reisner, 1992). Newspaper front page is considered to function as a way to set the reader’s agenda and inform readers (Pasternack & Utt, 1986, p. 29). The front page of newspaper visually suggests to the audience what a newspaper organization considers to be the most crucial stories or events of the day (Reisner, 1992). Hence, news readers tend to concentrate more on front-page stories rather than on stories published elsewhere in the paper (Min-Mid Publications, 1984).

METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

The study focuses on front page photographs and headlines in 10 quality newspapers: 5 Western newspapers and

5 Arabic newspapers. These include The New York Times, Daily Mail, Daily Mirror, The Guardian, The Sun, Addustour, Al-Quds Al-Arabi and Al-Anba, AlSharq and AL-Jazera published in the first day on 16 March 2019. A total of 10 photos and their accompanying news story were collected from these dailies. The collected data are not considered to be generalized, yet have random newspapers. However, the images in this study should be acknowledged as a random sample that was selected according to unbiased criteria. Therefore, the data are not necessarily representing attitudes or perspectives of all Western and Arabic newspapers. Moreover, the results and percentage of the study only represent these selected newspapers and do not represent Western and Arabic newspapers in general. The significance of the study springs from the fact that there is no study conducted in this particular topic concerning the analyses of images and their accompanying news story of New Zealand mosque carnage in Western and Arabic newspapers. The study attempts to add a creative imprint to the field of semiotics which enables or helps the readers how to understand the way in which images or headlines are used to represent and convey information to the readers. Finally, it provides the readers with a means of accessing how verbal and visual signs are deployed, presented and understood within the media.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Semiotics can be very helpful to obtain a clearer understanding of the status that is being ascribed to words or images, from the viewpoint of a historically situated religious tradition. Keane states that language ideology is what one believes about language” (2007: P. 16). Ideology is used not only in the sense of a false consciousness, but with the productive effects of reflexive awareness. According to Leon (2010), if an ‘Ideology’ is a system of ideas, principles and beliefs that guides the cultural, social, economic and political functioning of a society, semiotics has studied signs of ideologies and ideologies as sign systems and developed critical tools to reveal the ideological foundations of media discourse. Thus, semiotic system includes language, ideology, acts, images, sounds, objects, and myths which have no intrinsic meaning and become signs only when we attribute meaning to them.

Language, discourse, and ideology in the news are primarily concerned with the description of the features of linguistics that indicate the biased ideologies in the process of representation. The ultimate goal is seen to be pedagogical that is informative or educational since a reader is instructed on how to perceive the values that are imposed subliminally by language on the illustration of news and media (Van Dijk, 2004). These readings, or produced meanings, are measured with regard to their agreement or disagreement with a certain dominant ideology. An oppositional reading does not necessarily result from a lack of symmetry between the encoding and decoding systems of the producer and reader. Thus, the reader may decode and fully understand the denotative and connotative intended meanings of the televisual text but still unable to adapt the message to a local level (Hall, 1980, p. 136). The difference between the reader’s context and the

context of production of the original text may also affect the dominant code's adaptability to the reader's situation, thus straining the reader's ability to accept the dominant message.

Fairclough (2001) states that the text does not necessarily convey meaning through linguistic features but it is generated and realized by its discursive formations reflecting certain ideologies. Hence, each text has hidden ideology particularly political texts where the ideas behind structure, the word choice and message of the texts are intricate. Similarly, van Dijk (2011) asserts that a text is like an iceberg and it is only the tip which is really expressed in words and sentences. Therefore, the analysis of a text is very helpful in the study of the underlying ideologies

Media can be used to verbally and visually convey negative or positive messages about its content including people, places, and events. Langton (1991) stated that photojournalists employ their own biases in the angles they use and in the pictures they take. He also argued that newspaper editors may employ those biases by running certain pictures with their stories. The placement of the story within the newspaper is chosen to accompany the biases attached to them. The significance of print media images and text is not only strengthening the beliefs but also represent cultural values. Hall (1997) argues that print media text shares cultural meaning through linguistic signs or visual signs. These images cultivate culturally constructed meanings at symbolic level.

Barthes (1915-1980) showed the importance of studying media in terms of how meanings are generated. Semiotic discipline is essential because it emphasizes almost exclusively on hidden meanings. As Mc Quail (2010) too says, "The application of semiological analysis opens the possibility of revealing more of the underlying meaning of a text." Semiotics can be applied to 'texts' which involve signs such as sounds and visual images. According to Burgelin (1972) mass media obviously form a complete culture of their own to which the culture they belong. Semiotics plays a crucial role in establishing the 'cultural meaning' of media content. It describes content and can shed further light on those who produce messages

Regarding signs, Peirce (1931-1958) develops a tripartite system that classifies signs into icons, indexes and symbols. Iconic signs: refers to a sign that resembles the signified. Symbolic signs: a sign which is purely conventional. Indexical signs: a sign which is inherently connected to the signified. Peirce gives the relationship between the sign and its referential reality as much emphasis as the relationship between that of signs to each other and the relationship between signifier and signified within a sign. A sign plays a crucial role in building ideas and delivering proper message to its readers. Therefore, signs and symbols are used to support and strengthen a message to which the news reporters tried to convey.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section mainly handles the verbal signs of headlines as they consist of three constituents: *Representamen* (sign), *Object* (to which the sign is related) and an *Interpretant* (the mental image that is developed when a receiver encounters sign).

Daily Mirror, 16th March, 2019



A. Angelical boy who grew into an evil far-right mass killer

The headline "A" is a main headline written in bold typeface and small size with red color which strengthens its concise, straight message that implies bloodshed in mosques where 51 Muslim were shot by an Australian terrorist. Hence, this headline is very short to recap the details of the news story. The phrase 'massacre' is employed as an instance of killing a number of usually helpless or unresisting human beings under circumstances of cruelty. The main headline is short but it conveys a lot of meaning. The term 'massacre' carries a strong meaning associated with killing. The headline 'B' is much larger and more eye-catching than the main headline. The description of a white supremacist right-mass killer using the saccharine language of "angelical boy" reprimands the perpetrator of the violence while fueling its ideology. It is half-hearted criticism - rather than incontrovertibly denouncing white supremacy as we ought to expect, the equation of the killer's angelical boy with innate goodness reaffirms it, instead. The Daily Mirror's front page following the Christchurch terror attacks also caused much consternation and condemnation given the emphasis placed on the killer's background and the description of terrorist Brenton Tarrant as an "Angelical Boy. The sub-headline is that such tragic attack using phrase like 'Angelical boy' masks the Islamophobic motives of the accused. The New Zealand mosque attacker is portrayed as a sweet innocent re child. Also, the alleged shooter is called 'evil far-mass killer', the headline and the photo tell a different story. It has displaced the focus from the victims to the perpetrator.

The New York Times, 16th March, 2019



Officers searching the area near Al Noor mosque, one of two houses of worship that were attacked in Christchurch, New Zealand.

- A. Extremist hate fuels New Zealand massacre
- B. 49 killed at Mosques-Australian charged in a spree to reverberate

The headline 'A' is a main headline written in bold in which the terrorist is portrayed as extremist hate fuels which reveals of terror incitement and anti-Muslims. It depicts the growing danger of far right terrorism against Muslims and how hateful, inciteful and violent the Australian terrorist is. He is fueled by some type of white supremacy. Also, he is immersed in white supremacist ideology. Despite the fact that the name of the terrorist is not mentioned, the use of the term 'extremist' shows the terrorist negatively and depicts the prejudice nature of the Australian terrorist.



4.3. The New York Times, 16th March, 2019



- A. As Home Secretary damns web giant for live streaming mosque terror attacks that killed 49 in New Zealand
- B. MASSACRE SHAME OF FACEBOOK

The headline 'A' reveals that the mass killer livestreamed his rampage on social media. The internet and social media allow the terrorist unprecedented ways to network globally and the ability to propagate his ideologies on Facebook and create a breeding ground of extreme-right terror. Web giants are major companies such as Twitter and Facebook that have taken their own initiatives to platform extremist views. Flattering the Christchurch mass killer on Facebook, for example, might result in an account having its ability to live stream disabled or suspended completely. The headline 'B' is a nominal sentence that is written beneath the image of the terrorist directly. The sub-headline is short and more eye-catching than the main headline because it is written in big font size. The phrase 'shame of Facebook' is a modern form of social control that has emerged due to the advancement of technology and the extensive usage as well as development of internet social media. It actually brings more benefit than causing more harm to the society. Literally, 'shame' is a negative, painful, social emotion that results from comparison of the self's action with the self's standards.

The Guardian, 16th March, 2019.

- A. Carnage in New Zealand as gunman kills 49 in mosques
- B. Gunman with white supremacist symbols targets Friday prayers

- C. Social media outlets criticized after footage of attacks is circulated

The headline 'A' explicitly points to violent situations but does not name or attribute the terrorist to violence. The headline only featured the victims who were involved in the attacks. The term 'carnage' denotes the savage and excessive killing of many people.

The headline 'B' it's probably more than coincidence that the accused mosque shooter, 28-year-old Australian Brenton Tarrant, settled in the region, known for a white demography. He has chosen his victims because he saw them as invaders who would replace the white race. He definitely would feel no remorse for their deaths. It can be clearly seen that in the video he livestreamed of his shooting, no remorse can be seen as he sprays terrified worshippers with bullets again and again and firing at people he has already cut down.

The headline 'C' implies strong criticism of social media companies for their failure to remove copies of the video from their sites quickly enough. Questions are raised regarding the tech giants about which the way their products have allowed the mass killer to broadcast the shootings around the globe and about the way his supporters have shared footage on Facebook.

The Sun, 16th March, 2019



- A. New Zealand's 'Darkest Day'
- B. FACEBOOK TERRORIST
- C. Maniac kills 49 in mosque massacre
- D. Racist planned attack for 2 years
- E. Backlash as live stream appalls world

The headline 'A' describes the shootings as the first social media terror attack because it was streamed live by the suspect, wearing a body camera. The headline is written in a

very short bolded red color which reveals bloodshed and illustrates deaths of Muslims. The phrase 'Darkest day' is written between single inverted commas which represents to mark a speaker's speech or a quote by a famous personality. Single inverted commas are used to summarize (accurately) what someone said and to strap and display panels.

Mass shooting is described by the Prime Minister as "one of New Zealand's darkest days". The black color is symbolically used to represent darkness and is associated with mourning, bereavement and evil. The headline 'B' is written in a large white headline against a black background which describes opposites such as good and evil. Facebook is as an online social networking where the killer has utilized it to share his heinous act toward victims in front of the eyes of people without any remorse.

Hence, the tragic terrorist attack in Christchurch, New Zealand demonstrated the misuse of technology to spread radical expressions of hate by the white supremacist who utilized social media giant. The term 'Facebook Terrorist' implies that Facebook takes its responsibility towards terrorist content very seriously. Facebook primarily impacts individuals and organizations policy. The headline 'C' denotes that the alleged shooter posted a hate-filled, xenophobic manifesto that detailed his White nationalist ideology before the massacre.

Addustour, 16th March, 2019



- A. Two Jordanian martyrs and eight others were injured among 50 worshippers killed by terrorist attack on two mosques in New Zealand
- B. The King: The heinous massacre unites us against extremism and terrorism
- C. Jordan denounces and foreign ministry deposes an ambassador to follow up and our embassy in Australia and New Zealand opens operating room
- D. The injured Waseem ALSalti: I'm in a big pain shot three times.... pray for me and for my daughter

The headline 'A' indicates that Jordan lost two Jordanian citizens and 8 others were injured in the barbaric terrorist attack on the two mosques. The two Jordanian citizens are described as martyrs. Within the frame of ideological and geopolitical confrontation between East and West may interpret most terrorist acts.

The headline 'C' depicts that Jordan's Foreign Ministry announced that two Jordanians were killed in the attacks. Efforts are being made to provide all assistance and support needed by the victims and this represents the Jordan gov-

ernment towards victims especially Jordanian victims. Jordan has lost two Jordanian citizens and other eight Jordanian were injured in the barbaric terrorist attack on the two mosques.

AL-Jazirah, 16th March, 2019



- A. Terror appeared with ugly face in New Zealand yesterday morning with an attack on two mosques
- B. 49 killed and 20 wounded by an Australian extremist

The headline 'A' demonstrates heinous terror act of an Australian terrorist who targeted peaceful and armless people and shot them in cold blood. His heinous act reveals his genuine ugly face. The terrorist is described in this newspaper as an ugly face which depicts his racism and his covert ideologies. The headline 'B' alludes that radicalized individual is destabilized by various environmental factors, exposed to extremist ideology, and subsequently reinforced by members of their community.

AL-Anaba, 16th March, 2019



- A. Demonstrations denounce Islamophobia and New Zealand Prime Minister pledges to protect Muslims and control arms.
- B. The butcher of two mosques puts the right extremist under the microscope.

The headline 'A' depicts that attacks against mosques and murders of Muslims showed the "brutal, inhumane and horrific outcomes" of hatred of Islam. The reaction of empathy which is shown by New Zealand Prime Minister after the attack in Christchurch should be presented as an example for all leaders. She reassured Muslims that they would be secure and safe in spite of the deadly attacks on two mosques in Christchurch.

The headline 'B' signifies that the heinous attack against the two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, is seen as

a rising trend in right extremism. In other words, far-right attacks across the globe have increased because of far-right utilization of social media, and the inter-connectedness of extremist networks around the globe. Right-wing terrorism is attributed to the use or threat of violence by non-state entities. The growth of right-wing networks and right-wing extremism appears to be rapidly using the internet and social media to issue their propaganda statements.

AL-QUDS AL-ARABI, 16th March, 2019



A. The Massacre of the two mosques shocked the world...right-wing extremist influenced by Trump kills 50 Muslims in New Zealand

The headline 'A' denotes that the Australian terrorist who shot and killed dozens of Muslim worshippers in Christchurch has published a manifesto praising U.S president Donald Trump. For him Donald Trump is a symbol of renowned white identity.

AL-Sharq, 16th March, 2019



A. Terrorism has no religion

The headline 'A' signifies that terrorism is the product of hardened hearts, corrupt minds, corruption and arrogance. The carnage was committed by a sick, tormented man who was motivated by extremism, not by the values of peace that are basic to the Christian creed. The Australian terrorist is responsible for this horrific act does not stand in the light of any creed, but act in the darkness of pure evil and hatred. Terror has no religion and those who kill innocents on the

streets and in religious places has to be labelled a terrorist, no matter what his motivation. Hence, the fight against terrorism is not against any religion, but against the radical mindset that misguides youth.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Results of Semiotic Analysis of Headlines

The table below consists of 8 semiotic signs that are found in main headlines. These semiotic signs are font size, colors, symbolic signs, explicit utterances of terrorism and utterances of empathy. Western newspapers headlines are in table (1) and Arabic newspapers headlines are in table 2. The results and percentage of these tables only represent these selected newspapers and do not represent Western and Arabic newspapers in general.

Analysis of Frequency and Percentage of Semiotic Analysis of Headlines

The two tables above illustrate data regarding the frequent use of semiotic signs and their percentage in Western and Arabic front page newspapers. To begin with, the percentage of using bold headlines in the front page of Arabic newspapers (specific sample study) is 80%. This denotes clearly that Arabic newspapers (specific sample study) mainly focus on the main headlines to attract the attention of the readers to the real heinous act of the terrorist. Moreover, it depicts that the heinous act is the main core of the front page. The percentage of using black color in Arabic newspapers (specific sample study) is 60%. This demonstrates that the use of black color particularly in headlines represents death and mourning, while the percentage of using white color is much lower (40%). This indicates that the white color symbolizes peace, innocence and purity not death or mourning.

Another notable trend can be seen in the frequent use of symbolic signs. The percentage of using symbolic signs is 100%. All Arabic newspapers (specific sample study) contain symbolic signs that have ideological and political signs to reveal the hidden messages. For example, Trump, two martyrs and islamophobia are clearly seen in the main headlines. Explicit utterances are clearly used in the main headlines that condemn the heinous act of the massacre. The percentage of explicit utterances is 100% and that depicts how this massacre has left the world in mourning and shock. The percentage of explicit utterances of empathy is 60% and this percentage is less than explicit utterances that condemn the heinous act. The percentage of subtitles is 40%. The percentage shows that Arabic newspapers (specific sample study) try to shed further light on the heinous act directly without any details that may confuse the mind of the readers. Arabic newspapers (specific sample study) share the same percentage regarding the first four semiotic signs. Semiotically speaking, this similarity is attributed to the professionalism of journalists in revealing how brutal the terrorist is.

The noteworthy point is that symbolic signs in western newspapers (specific sample study) are not neutral, some symbolic signs denote that western newspapers don't condemn the heinous act. For example, the terrorist is portrayed as angelic boy in the Daily Mirror and other newspapers have blamed social

Table 1. The percentage and frequency of semiotic signs

No.	Semiotic signs	Mass killer	The New York Times	Daily Mail	The Guardian	The sun	Frequency	Percentage
1	Main Headline (big)	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	3	60%
2	Main Headline (small)	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	1	20%
3	Main Headline (black)	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	3	60%
4	Main Headline (red)	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	2	40%
5	Symbolic signs	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	3	60%
		Angelic boy	✗	Microscope Islamophobia	✗	Darkest day Facebook		
6	Explicit utterances of terrorism	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	4	80%
		Mass killer	Extremist massacre	Massacre	Carnage kill	Terrorist		
7	Explicit utterances of empathy	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	0	0%
		✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		
8	Sub-title	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	2	40%

Table 2. The percentage and frequency of semiotic signs

No.	Semiotic signs	Addustour	AL-Jazirah	AL-Anba	AL-Qudus ALArabi	AL-Sharq	Frequency	Percentage. %
1	Main Headline (big)	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	4	80%
2	Main Headline (small)	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	1	20%
3	Main Headline (black)	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	2	60%
4	Main Headline (red)	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	2	40%
5	Symbolic signs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5	100%
		Two martyrs	Ugly face	Microscope Islamophobia	Trump	Cartoons Hate speech	5	
6	Explicit utterances of terrorism	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5	100%
		Heinous Massacre Extremism Terrorism	Extremist massacre Attacking Terrorism	Terrorism Extremist	Extremist butcher	Terrorism		
7	Explicit utterances of empathy	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	3	60%
		Martyrs prayers union	wounded	✗	Shocked the world	✗		
8	Sub-title	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗		40%

media or Facebook instead of portraying the real face of the terrorist. In addition, Western newspapers (specific sample study) don't have explicit utterances of empathy towards the victims.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has presented a semiotic comparative analysis of visual signs of images and headlines found in ten Western

and Arabic front page newspapers based on Peirce's theory to identify and explain various types of signs and their function in the newspapers at hand. It confirmed that ideological implications and sign manipulation towards New Zealand mosque carnage were reflected within Western newspapers (specific sample study). This study also explores the application of semiotics in ten Western and Arabic newspapers published on 16 March, 2019. According to the find-

ings of this study, it can be concluded that the application of functional semiotics to exploring news story in ten newspapers sheds further light on the ambivalence of presenting the New Zealand carnage by these newspapers. The prominence of photos of the terrorist and the victims is used on Western newspaper front pages but does not present the actual reality. This reveals the biased attitude which is politically and religiously triggered and motivated. Moreover, the study has shown that there are seven visual signs. These visual signs are; image and headline (100%), iconic image of the terrorist (60%), iconic image of victims (20%), denotation of the image (40%), symbolic image (80%), color of the image (60%) and cartoon (0%). Whereas, the visual signs used in Arabic newspapers (specific sample study) have shown that the percentage of image and headline is (100%), iconic image of the terrorist (60%), iconic image of victims (80%), denotation of the image (100%), symbolic image (60%), color of the image; black, red, and white (80%), and cartoon (20%). This study has revealed clearly the ideological features, biased features, and manipulative features in depicting the Australian terrorist, on the one hand, and covert racial prejudice against Muslims, on the other hand, in some western newspapers. Future studies are recommended to find out how newspapers manipulate iconic and indexical signs.

REFERENCES

- Althaus, S. L., & Tewksbury, D. (2002). Agenda setting and the “new” news patterns of issue importance among readers of the paper and online versions of The New York Times. *Communication Research*, 29(2), 180–207.
- Al-Soufi, W. (2020). Covert Ideologies and Sign Manipulation: A Functional Semiotic Analysis of Western vs. Arabic News Coverage of New Zealand 2019 Mosque Carnage. (Unpublished MA Thesis, AABU, Mafraq: AlAlBayt University).
- Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies*. (A. Lavers, Trans.). London, England: Paladin. (Original work published 1957).
- Barthes, R. (1977). *Rhetoric of the image*. London: Collins Sons.
- Bell, A. (1991). *The Language of News Media*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Breen, J. M. (2007). Mass media and new media technologies. In E. Devereux (Ed.) *Media Studies: Key Issues and Debates*. London: Sage.
- Burgelin, O. (1972). Structural analysis and mass Communication. In Denis Mc Quail (Ed.) *Sociology of Mass Communications*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Carter, P. (2000). *A semiotic Analysis of Newspaper Front-page Photographs*. URL <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/students/pmc9601.html>
- Joes, C. M. (2019). A Semiotic Analysis of Political Cartoons in Malayalam Newspapers during the 2016 Assembly Election. CHRIST BENGALURU, INDIA.
- Leeuwen, T.V. (2005) *Introducing Social Semiotics*. London: Routledge
- McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail’s mass communication theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Moriarty, Michael. (1991). *Roland Barthes*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Pasternack, S., & Utt, S. H. (1986). Subject perception of newspaper characteristics based on front page design. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 8(1), 29–35.
- Peirce, Ch. (1931-1958). *Collected Writings* (8 Vols.). (Ed. Charles Hartshorne, Paul Weiss & Arthur W Burks). Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Petrilli, Susan. (2001). *Global Semiotics*. Bloomington. Indiana University Press.
- Reah, D. (2002). *The Language of Newspapers*. London: Routledge.
- Reisner, A. E. (1992). The news conference: how daily newspaper editors construct the front page. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 69(4), 971–986.
- Sebeok, A. T. (2001). *Signs: A Introduction to Semiotics*, Second Ed., Toronto Buffalo, London: University Toronto Press.
- Utt, S. H., & Pasternack, S. (2003). Front page design: some trends continue. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 24(3), 48–61.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2006). Discourse and manipulation. In *Discourse society* 17: 359. The online version of this article can be found at <http://das.sagepub.com/content/17/3/359>.

Electronic Articles and Websites

Angelic boy who grew into an evil far-right mass killer (2019, March 16), *Daily Mirror*. Retrieved from <http://dailymail.com>

Arden, Jacinda. "Jacinda Ardern's House Statement on Christchurch mosques terror attack 19 Mar.2019. <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/media-and-resources/ministry-statements-and-speeches/prime-minister-jacinda-arderns-house-statement-on-christchurch-mosques-terror-attack>.

Arden, Jacinda. "Jacinda Ardern's House Statement on Christchurch mosques terror attack 19 Mar. 2019. <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/media>.

Carnage in New Zealand as gunman kills 49 in mosques (2019, March 16), *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://theguardian.com>

Extremist Hate Fuels New Zealand massacre (2019, March 16), *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://newyorktimes.com>

Facebook Terrorist (2019, March 16), *The Sun*. Retrieved from <http://thesun.com>

Massacre: 49 killed and 20 wounded by an Australian extremist (2019, March 16), *Al-Jazirah*. Retrieved from <http://aljazeera.com>

Massacre Shame of Facebook (2019, March 16), *Daily Mail*. Retrieved from <http://dailymail.com>

Terrorism has no religion (2019, March 16). Al-Sharq. Retrieved from <http://alsharq.com>. The butcher of two mosques puts the right extremist under the microscope (2019, March

16). *Al-Anba*. Retrieved from <http://alanba.com>

King Abdulla II: The heinous massacre unites us against extremism and terrorism (2019, March 16). *Addustour*. Retrieved from <http://addustour.com>

The Massacre of the two mosques shocked the world... right-wing extremist influenced by Trump kills 50 Muslims in New Zealand (2019, March 16). *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*. Retrieved from <http://alqudsalarabi.com>

Disclaimer: *In accordance with AABU's academic regulations and guidelines, this paper has been extracted from an MA thesis supervised by dr. Naser AlBzour, the second author of this study, and successfully written and defended by the first author of this paper, Waleed AlSoufi, at AABU in 2020.*