
**25th Jan Revolution in the Articles of *New York Times*:
A Study in Critical Discourse Analysis**

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ABSTRACT

Journalists have covered the 25th January Egyptian revolution analyzing and expressing opinions. The thesis is concerned with the inconsistency of their stances and positions. More specifically, it investigates shifts in the political stances of American journalists during and post the January 25th Egyptian Revolution. The thesis adopts Fairclough's (1992, 2010) three-dimension framework of discourse, together with, Fairclough & Fairclough's (2012) argumentation model to investigate the corpus of the current work. The corpus incorporates ten articles, seven editorials and three op-ed articles, that are published in the American newspaper New York Times on the Egyptian revolution from January 25th, 2011 to March 31st, 2011. Analysis is conducted on three levels; textual, discursive and social. Results indicate that writers are bias, taking sides and changing them according to the changes of the events. Thus, the articles witness a gradual change of stance from the pro-Mubarak and anti-revolution stances to the anti-Mubarak and pro-revolution stances¹.

1. Introduction:

The Egyptian revolution that began on the 25th January 2011, is one of the most significant revolutions in the Arab world. The revolution created radical political and social repercussions in Egypt. One of those political repercussions is that it changed the 30-year regime of Mubarak. The change involved a shift in the political stance of journalists and media men. However, changes were subtle and unannounced. This brings about questions of how such subtle changes can be described, how they can be detected; and the extent to which power relations and hegemonic structures in society can be said to be the force behind such a shift in political stance and ideologies.

¹ This article is part of the author's unpublished MA thesis under the same title.

Thus, the present thesis is a study of shifts in political stances of American journalists during and post January 25th Revolution. To that effect, the thesis uses a linguistic framework that draws on Fairclough's (1992, 2010) three-dimension framework of discourse, together with, Fairclough & Fairclough's (2012) argumentation model to investigate the corpus of the thesis. The corpus consists of ten newspaper articles (seven editorials and three opinion editorials) that are published in the American newspaper New York Times on the Egyptian revolution from January 25th, 2011 to March 31st, 2011. Newspapers are chosen rather than other mediums of mass media, because they are affordable to a large segment of people. Editorials and opinion editorials are particularly selected since they define the line for the newspaper and thus convey the stance of both the writer and the newspaper itself.

2. Objective and Scope of the Study

The main objective of the study is to depict the shifts in stances within the field of journalism. In an attempting to realize this objective, the study makes use of Fairclough's (1992, 2010) theory of CDA. However, this study does not apply Fairclough's model entirely. It employs only selected linguistic tools that are assumed to assist in detecting changes in stances, namely; macroanalysis: level of social practice; and microanalysis: a) level of discursive practice, b) textual level: (diction, metaphor, modality, reference, and transitivity and theme). In addition, the thesis adopts Fairclough & Fairclough's (2012) argumentation model.

3. Research Questions

1. How does language reflect change in stance? How far do these linguistic cues denote the change in stance embedded in ideology?
 - a. How far does the use of diction detect the change in stance?
 - b. To what extent is metaphor indicative of stance shift?
 - c. How does modality contribute to show the shift in stance?
 - d. How far does reference reveal the stance shift?
 - e. To what extent are transitivity and theme indicative of stance shift?
 - f. How does argumentation show the writer's change of stance?
2. To what extent are writers neutral and objective in their stance towards the January 25th revolution? If they are not neutral, which side do they take? Whose ideologies do they articulate? Which dominating power or hegemonic structure has the upper hand in such social context?

4. Significance of the Study

1. The present study has practical relevance to researchers investigating discourse by applying critical discourse analysis. In particular, those concerned with the analysis of language in relation to social practices. 3
2. This study is also useful for media institutions. The results of this study can help media institutions in achieving what Fairclough refers to as the “technologisation of discourse”. Through this “technologisation”, institutions can change the discursive practices and train people onto using them (Fairclough, 1992, pp. 8, 215-8; 2010, pp. 137-45).
3. This study is also significant at the social level, since it raises what Fairclough refers to as “critical language awareness”. People can be educated to become more aware of the power of the discursive practice and the power relations that shape them as well as the possibility of resistance and change.

5. Review of Literature

In attempting to realize the objective stated above, the studies done on media discourse are reviewed. This review of literature only includes studies that undertake newspaper articles, investigating political issues in Egypt and employing CDA methods in particular. The review of literature, also, focuses on studies that employ CDA methods in dealing with stance change within the political atmosphere of Egypt.

The studies reviewed are so beneficial to the current one on many levels. On the linguistic, micro level, all of these studies apply CDA methods to the research, which functions as the main theoretical framework for the current study. On the discursive level, they apply the linguistic model to newspaper, same genre under investigation in the current study. On the contextual macro level, all of them deal with political issues in Egypt before, after and during the revolution. However, none of the reviewed studies directly deals with stance change except Abdel Kawy's (2015) study. Such change in stance is noticed and reported in the studies of Youssef (2012) and Alhumaidi (2013). It is also noticed while comparing Al-Sawi's (2015) work to Pasha's (2011) work, as they investigate the representation of the Muslim Brotherhood within the same news house. While Pasha's (2011) findings indicate how (MB) members are negatively represented from 2000 till 2005, Al-Sawi's (2015) work relays a positive representation of the MB president Mohammed Morsi in 2012.

Unlike the previous studies which focus on the representation of certain groups or the ideological work in text, the current thesis investigates stance change in newspaper articles. Unlike Abdel Kawy's (2015) study which investigates stance change in headlines in various Arabic newspapers, the current study examines stance change in whole articles (editorials and op-ed articles) that are published in an American

newspaper, New York Times. To this purpose, the current work develops a modified model of Fairclough's (2010) approach and it considers three constant factors; same writers in the same news house, same article type (editorials and op-ed articles) tackling the same topic and same time frame. In short, one of the aims of this study is to fill the gap in the literature by examining stance change and doing it on the level of complete texts or articles. Another aim is the introduction of a proposed model for analysis that is based on Fairclough's approach and the investigation of the adequacy of this model in detecting shifts in stances.

6. Data Collection & Methodology of Analysis

The data for this study consists of ten written newspaper articles (seven editorials and three op-ed articles) from The New York Times that tackle the Egyptian Revolution. The types of articles selected are editorials and op-ed articles since they reflect the ideological orientation of the news house. All seven editorials are written by the editorial board and the three op-ed articles are written by one author, Thomas L. Friedman. The articles are obtained from the official website of the newspaper, <http://www.nytimes.com>. The time frame used for collecting the data covers the period from January 25th, 2011 to March 31st, 2011. This particular span of time is selected for investigation as it is assumed to involve a change in stance, since it covers the time span from the beginning of the Egyptian revolution, when Mubarak was still in power till his ouster.

The Data is analyzed qualitatively using CDA tools. First, the social context is explored and then discursive and linguistic analyses are conducted. While, linguistic analysis is meant to describe the data, the discursive and social analyses are used to interpret such descriptions. Three stable variables are designated to ensure accurate results while monitoring shifts in stance; the articles selected 1) belong to the same type, tackling a common topic (the Egyptian revolution); 2) cover the same span of time; and 3) are written by the same authors in the same news house.

7. Sample Analysis

This section involves the analysis of two editorials from the corpus of the thesis. The first editorial is published on January 27th, 2011, under the title *Mr. Mubarak Is Put on Notice*, and the second one is published on February 3rd, 2011, under the title *Egypt's Agonies*. Analysis is conducted on three levels that cover two types of analysis; macroanalysis and microanalysis. While, macroanalysis is concerned with analysis at the level of social practice, microanalysis focuses on both analysis at the discursive practice level and analysis at the textual level.

7.1 Social Practice Analysis

At this level of analysis, three aspects of context are investigated; situational, institutional, and social.

7.1.1 Situational

This level will focus on the immediate situation for each editorial. The immediate situation for the first editorial is the beginning of the Egyptian revolution that started on 25th January 2011. According to Al-Jazeera English Website and The Guardian Website, thousands of Egyptians take to the streets on January 25th in what is called the "Day of Rage". The events developed greatly for the second editorial. On January 28th massive demonstrations took place in what is called the "Friday of Rage". On the same day, Mubarak makes his first speech in which he doesn't offer any apologies or sympathy for the dead, and he blames the government as inept. This is followed by the government's resignation. February 2nd witnessed one of the most terrible brutal attacks on the rebels in Tahrir square known as "the camel battle".

8.1.2 Institutional

The New York Times (or NYT) is an American daily [newspaper](#), founded and continuously published in [New York City](#) since 1851. It is long regarded as a national "Newspaper of record". This term typically refers to a major [newspaper](#) that has a large circulation and whose editorial and news-gathering functions are considered professional and typically authoritative. It is claimed that The Times has a liberal slant. This is manifested in the coverage of certain social issues such as permitting [gay marriage](#). It is also argued that it has Semitic orientations. In a book titled [The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy](#), the [political science](#) professors [John Mearsheimer](#) and [Stephen Walt](#), alleges that The New York Times sometimes criticizes Israeli policies but is not even-handed and is generally pro-Israel.

Editorials in New York Times newspaper are written by the editorial board. The editorial board is composed of 18 journalists with wide-ranging areas of expertise. As it is claimed on its website these editorials represent "the voice of the board, its editor and the publisher". Thus, in the first editorial, the stance of the journal house was still on the side of the former Egyptian president – being regarded a strong ally of the US. Therefore, the editorial shows the social circumstances as the reason for such protests with no accusations directed at Mubarak. Even Egypt is referred to as a partner in the peace treaty with Israel. In the second editorial, the newspaper shifts its stance, shifting responsibility for the unrest and pinning it on Mubarak. This trend agrees with the paper's liberal slant.

This can be further attested to on the level of orders of discourse. The editorials draw on many discourses, on top of them is the pro-Semitic discourse. Even in the first editorial the pro-Mubarak discourse is not used for Mubarak himself but for his policies that keeps Israel safe and America as a welcomed ally. In the second editorial, the anti-Mubarak discourse articulates the newspaper's liberal orientations.

7.1.3 Social

a. The Socio-political Level

Locally, Mubarak followed a neo-authoritarian regime that grant the country political stability but at the cost of a general decline in the country's economic and political influence in the region, and domestically, in an increase in social inequalities and an excessive reliance on coercion. Mubarak's political regime can be said to depend on the limitation of opposition and the maintenance of a ruthless police forces that would crush any challenge to the regime's

power. These policies can easily be traced through the consideration of the practices of the ruling party or the National Democratic Party (NDP) and the participation of the political opposition such as Muslim brotherhood the liberal Wafd and the leftist TagammuṢ.

Politically, America is driven by its special interest in the ME with Egypt. Such interests lie in the fact that Egypt has a critical geographic location that makes it a vital transit point for global trade and central to regional security. Moreover, Egypt is a crucial partner in the 1979 peace treaty with Israel. Another important concern for America in Egypt is that Egypt involves no organized and powerful opposition other than the Muslim Brotherhood. This would not allow for a real democratic atmosphere where secular as well as religious parties can compete. All these reasons compel the American administration to side with Mubarak at the beginning.

Thus, when the protests began, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton described Mr. Mubarak's government as "stable" and as "looking for ways to respond to the legitimate needs and interests of the Egyptian people.". Then America's special envoy, Frank Wisner, called for Mr. Mubarak to stay in power, saying: "President Mubarak's continued leadership is critical."

b. The Socio-economic Level

Locally, Mubarak's rule relied on a neoliberal economic system which further impoverished the vast majority of the population in Egypt. This system is designed in a way that would pump in more profit into the coffers of the multinationals and a small group of Egyptian capitalists. In 1996 Mubarak started a massive program of privatization. Most of the public sector industries, companies and banks were privatized. This program, on the one hand, brought forth a rise in unemployment rates, and a further impoverishment of wide sectors of the Egyptian population. On the other hand, it resulted in the accumulation of massive wealth among top generals, bureaucrats and businessmen. A salient example of businessmen is the steel tycoon Ahmed Ezz who controls nearly 70 percent of Egypt's steel production.

Globally, Egypt possesses key assets central to regional stability. Egypt manages the Suez Canal, a central location of shipping in global energy and trade markets. Stability in this region would guarantee a free flow of commerce and trade within the region through strategic maritime chokepoints and via land-based trade routes to international markets. Moreover, America treats the Arab world as an oil field. Such unrest in the region may influence the oil flow.

Thus, the social matrix is evident. Israel does hegemonize American policies which in turn impact Egypt. At the same time, Mubarak hegemonizes Egypt, counting on America and Israel as alliances. Such matrix accounts for the fact that the first three editorials and the first op-ed article embrace Mubarak's support. However, after the fading of Mubarak's powers stances alter to the opposite in the remaining articles.

7.2 Discursive Practice Analysis

Analysis at the level of discursive practice is concerned with aspects of a text's production, distribution and consumption. This level connects the micro-level of a particular text, in this case an editorial with the macro-level of the socio-cultural context. In particular, it focuses on intertextuality in the production of texts, intertextual chains in the distribution; and coherence or how they are received by their readers or audience.

The New York Times' editorials follow the regular structure of editorials. Each editorial involves the following sequential structure: a headline that gives the gist of the article; a summary and brief description of the events in the first paragraph (Definition category or introduction); elaboration and development that occupy all paragraphs except the final paragraph (Explanation or Evaluation category or body); outcome, which indicates what action is to be taken.

The activity involves a news giver (producer) and a news receiver (the reader). The news giver is the source of knowledge and information, and the reader is a passive recipient of it. The author makes extremely excessive use of authoritative categorical assertions which newspapers typically make about events, despite the fact that such events are usually of an uncertain character and open to various interpretations.

There is a common style in the two editorials. The style is formal in terms of tenor, written in terms of mode and argumentative in terms of rhetorical mode. It is worth mentioning that argumentative mode is used for persuasion. The author, also, uses it in order to support his own positions. The editorials draw upon many discourses. Two main discourses are noticed in the two editorials; a patronizing discourse and pro-Semitic discourse. While the former is manifested in the author's mentioning of the U.S aid and in the formulation of the following steps for Egypt, the latter appears in can be depicted in the author's concern about the peace treaty with Israel.

The first editorial peculiarly involves a pro-Mubarak discourse and socio-analytical discourse. The former can be traced to the suggestions that Mubarak can continue to assume office and do some reforms to alleviate people's anger and fury. The latter can be seen in the enumeration of the social _including political and economic_ reasons for the protests. In this respect it is worth noting that the editorial makes use of statistics such as '40 percent live on less than \$2 a day' to establish the authority of his argument. The second editorial is characterized by an anti-Mubarak discourse which is clear when the author blames the crimes on "Mubarak regime" or "Mubarak's supporters".

Manifest intertextuality is another important area for investigation that can account for the production of the text. A close reading of the editorials shows that they draw upon a variety of texts. The first editorial draws upon statistical texts for such statistical accounts. The two editorials draw upon Obama's speeches. Although, the editorials don't involve quotes from them, the stances in the editorials sound parallel to those in the speeches. The second article draws on Mubarak's second presidential speech as manifest in the criticism directed to Mubarak's speech.

7.3 Textual Analysis

The textual analysis of the New York Time's editorials is conducted across six linguistic tools; namely, diction, metaphor, modality, reference, and transitivity and theme, and argumentation.

7.3.1 Diction

Diction analysis considers the meaning of the lexical items used and the author's lexical choices. Conducting analysis along the two editorials reveals the editor's change of stance towards Mubarak and his regime, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Egyptian army, America and Omer Suleiman. For example, the pro-Mubarak stance is clear in the use of lexical items such as "reforms" and "more democratic path" in the first editorial. Such lexical items imply that there is something good that needs to be reformed and that there is some form of democracy that needs to be enhanced while Mubarak in office. The anti-Mubarak stance is clear in the use of lexical items such as "dictators", "brutalize" and "the old repressive order" in the second editorial.

7.3.2 Metaphor

Metaphor analysis explores the authors' perception. In so doing, it proves to be so efficient in monitoring stance change towards Mubarak, the revolution and the Egyptian Army in the editorials. For instance, in the first editorial, the editor uses the steering boat metaphor which favors Mubarak's rule reflecting the author's pro-Mubarak and anti-revolution stances. In this metaphor, Mubarak is still the captain or leader who just needs to steer his boat to safety. In the second editorial, the anti-Mubarak stance is projected in the iron hand metaphor, and the orchestra metaphor. In the first, Mubarak's rule is presented as an iron fist reflecting his dictatorship and repression, and in the second Mubarak is presented as the conductor who leads an orchestra of torture and death.

7.3.3 Modality

Modality analysis reveals stance change towards Mubarak. For example, in the first editorial, the writer's use of the low value modal verb "may", in "Mr. Mubarak may still have a chance...", indicates that the writer is supporting Mubarak while being unsure of his success. In the second editorial, the adverbs "obviously" and "likely", in "they were obviously encouraged, likely even orchestrated, by the Mubarak regime", are clear indications of the author's anti-Mubarak stance. Also, the author uses categorical modality, which presents propositions as uncontroversial facts, to confirm that Mubarak is a dictator as revealed in the author's statement "these are the familiar tactics of dictators"

7.3.4 Transitivity and Theme

Transitivity and theme analysis successfully reveals the writer's stances and monitors any changes done to them. For instance, in the first editorial a construction, such as "left two protestors and one policeman dead", marks pro-Mubarak and anti-revolution stances, since the agent is obscured. Also, agency is obscured in nominalizations such as "rising food prices", "unemployment" and "political repression". In the second editorial, the author expresses an obvious anti-Mubarak stance in the passive construction "They were obviously encouraged, likely even orchestrated, by the Mubarak regime". Such construction highlights the fact that Mubarak is the culprit.

7.3.5 Reference

Reference, as the fifth tool of analysis, demonstrates efficiency in detecting stance change. Such tool considers the author's pronominal choices and the related nominal choices. In the first editorial Mubarak is referred to as 'Mr Mubarak' or 'President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt'. In the second editorial, the author indirectly refers to Mubarak as a 'dictator', while describing the battle of the camel as "familiar tactics of dictators".

7.3.6 Argumentation

Argumentation is the sixth tool of textual analysis. This tool estimates and evaluates the entire argument. Tracing the line of argument throughout the articles facilitates the monitoring of stance change. It is noticed that all editorials are formed with quasi deliberation. In other words, the author is not addressing real options, but rather his own representations of the situation. Consequently, there is no actual deliberation. Actual deliberation is avoided by presenting his own interpretation of the situation, limiting alternatives and overlooking negative consequences of his proposals, etc. A change in stance is noticed in the two editorials. For instance, in the first editorial, the editor supports Mubarak's rule, arguing for a peaceful transition, led by Mubarak. He even claims that Mubarak just needs to make some reforms to steer his country on a stable path. In the second editorial Mubarak is directly asked to leave so that his vice president can take over and save the country.

9. Conclusion

The study shows that writers hold stances that are not neutral or objective with regard to the revolution. It, also, shows that the writers take sides and tend to change them according to the changes of the events and circumstances. Thus, both the editorials and the op-ed articles witness a gradual change of stance from the pro-Mubarak and anti-revolution stances to the anti-Mubarak, and pro- revolution stances. Therefore, the adequacy of the analytical tools in detecting stance change is proved. The study, also, shows that the discourses and ideologies of the dominating powers or the hegemonic structures are rearticulated on both the institutional level and the social one. On the institutional level, The New York Times' liberal slant and Semitic orientations are evidently depicted. On the social level, Mubarak and his regime's ideologies are rearticulated. Also, the American and Israeli ideologies are proved to be dominating the news house writings in general.

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