

**LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY**

Political Discourse Analysis of News Reports:  
An Exploratory Study of Lebanese Newspapers

By  
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A thesis  
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## Dedication

To my family, thank you for giving me all the support I needed. It was all your hard work, patience, and love that helped me become the person I am today. With your words of encouragement and with your positive energy, I was able to carry through with my thesis. For you, I am forever grateful.

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# Political Discourse Analysis of Media Reports: An Exploratory Study of Lebanese Newspapers

Layla Itani

## ABSTRACT

Politics has proven itself to be a linguistic activity that utilizes emotional appeals that mold people's beliefs and thoughts. This study is an exploration of the language of politics in two Lebanese newspapers - which are, *As-Safir* and *The Daily Star*. Three different frameworks were chosen to carry out a critical discourse analysis of the news reports. The frameworks used are that of Michael Halliday, Teun van Dijk, and Norman Fairclough. Findings show that the language of politics is never an impartial and objective one. It is structured in a way that supports respective political beliefs and sustains respective ideologies; hence, shaping the readers' thoughts into believing that the "enemy" is hateful and intolerable. Nonetheless, future research could develop instruments that aim at analyzing the perceptions of the vast audiences to further objectify the act of critical discourse analysis.

Keyword: Ideology, Critical Discourse Analysis, Positive-self representation, Negative-other representation, Field, Tenor, Mode, Transitivity, Nominalization, Modality, Classification, Politics, Media, News, Language, Discourse

## Table of Contents

Chapter.....	Page
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the Study .....	1
1.2 The Statement of the Study.....	4
1.3 Purpose of the Study .....	4
1.4 Significance of the Study.....	5
1.5 Thesis Division .....	6
<b>Literature Review .....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 Defining Ideology .....	7
2.2 Defining Critical Discourse Analysis .....	9
2.3 News and Language.....	11
2.4 Methods of Analyzing Discourse.....	14
2.4.1 Michael Halliday.....	14
2.4.2 Teun Van Dijk.....	16
2.4.3 Norman Fairclough .....	20
2.5 History of Newspapers in Lebanon.....	23
2.6 Media in Lebanon .....	24
2.7 Discussion of previous research about political discourse analysis in news reports .....	25
<b>Methodology .....</b>	<b>29</b>
3.1 Method .....	29
3.2 Sampling .....	29
3.3 Instruments.....	32
3.4 Data Analysis .....	34
3.5 Reliability and Validity.....	35
3.6 Ethical Considerations .....	35
<b>Findings.....</b>	<b>36</b>
4.1 Discourse Analysis based on Halliday’s Framework .....	36
4.2 Discourse Analysis based on van Dijk’s Framework .....	42
4.3 Discourse Analysis based on Fairclough’s Framework.....	48
<b>Discussion.....</b>	<b>56</b>
5.2. Van Dijk’s Framework: .....	59

5.3. Fairclough's Framework:.....	63
5.4. Synthesis .....	66
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>70</b>
6.1 General Conclusion.....	70
6.2 Implications on Language Pedagogy .....	71
6.3 Limitations .....	73
6.4 Suggestions for further research .....	74
<b>References .....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>80</b>

# List of Tables

Table 1 - Summary of Participants .....	31
Table 2 - As-Safir Article 1 - van Dijk's Analysis .....	43
Table 3 - As-Safir Article 2 - van Dijk's Analysis .....	44
Table 4 - As-Safir Article 3 - van Dijk's Analysis .....	45
Table 5 - As-Safir Article 4- van Dijk's Analysis .....	46
Table 6 - The Daily Star Article 1 - van Dijk's Analysis .....	46
Table 7 - The Daily Star Article 2 - van Dijk's Analysis .....	47
Table 8 - The Daily Star Article 3 - van Dijk's Analysis .....	47
Table 9 - The Daily Star Article 4 - van Dijk's Analysis .....	48

# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Whether we'd like to conform to them or not, we live in binary systems that seem to govern our mental construction of different structures. It comes very troubling to me to see how people are highly affected by those systems. They seem to be obsessive about a certain end of the systems and exceedingly phobic by the other end. This either-or situation or two-dimensional situation appears to be very problematic. It is either you are this or you are that. Therefore, most people actually insist that whoever is not "with" is "against". People who are with either side are viewed as enemies to the other side. Consequently, everyone and everything should be classified as either with the "with" party or with the "against" party. I strongly believe that those two extremes are built because of our individual thinking. Initially, a conscious decision was being made to categorize thoughts, ideas, and eventually people as such. Unfortunately, what once used to be conscious is now unconscious. Therefore, we need to, first and foremost, understand that those categories are of our creation – they are man-made. We also need to develop our critical thinking skills to refrain from forcing any idea, person, thing, or event from conforming to our perception of those extremes.

Politics and media outlets are unconsciously feeding into this dilemma of the binary systems through their polarization of 'us' and 'them'.

Politics has been a key area of study throughout the years, widely debatable with different points of view and, in most cases, a far-fetched consensus. Politicians market and sell their ideas to the public using their language. To convince people to support a certain political party, respective politicians use their powerful language. To intimidate the public from an opposing political party, politicians also use their powerful language, the most powerful tool they have, and the list goes on. Consequently, language lies at the core of political acts. Without linguistic appeals, politics would lose its value and power to prompt consequences (Zglobiu, 2011). Politics has become a linguistic activity itself that favors and promotes certain ideologies over others. Chilton and Schaffner (2011) even pointed out the following:

*It is surely the case that politics cannot be conducted without language, and it is also probably the case that the use of language in the constitution of social groups leads to what we would call 'politics'; in a broad sense (p.303).*

Media has been a major outlet and has played a decisive role in delivering political facts and information. However, media has stage-managed the system, gate-kept the facts, and in most cases manipulated the power of language to convey only what needs to be conveyed and not what should be conveyed. Sobieraj and Berry (2011) held media responsible for provoking primitive and visceral responses such as anger through the use of different linguistic devices. As a matter of fact, Tucia (2011) has described media as being - “a journalistic exercise to simulate the political indexes which are satirized beyond the absurd” (p.10).

By clearly depicting the reality we live in today, Fairclough, Mulderrig, and Wodak (2011) criticized how politicians with the help of media have easy access to large number of people. This public exposure helps them mold people's perceptions of reality and win their support; concluding that a strategic political language is a crucial stairway to success.

Language constitutes the core of our day-to-day communication. Its value and importance weigh a lot especially in language classrooms. When in the classroom, language and its representations in social contexts could be approached through various angles. A teacher could explain the ABCs of the English Language; however, achieving a full understanding of this language requires teaching it through context and social events. We can label this notion, pragmatics. Students will be able to conceive the language more efficiently if they were exposed to it authentically through their social interactions. Hence, and in aims to do so, students need to understand the way the social context has been built and its means of functioning. Having known that, students could then analyze their discourse for more reliable and steadfast meaning-making.

According to Ahmadian and Farahani (2014), learners of English as a Foreign Language could highly benefit from discourse analysis, whereby they analyze the relationship between language and society, in a sense that they could develop a greater awareness of the power of language that is embedded in the textbooks and movies that they are being exposed to. EFL learners need to be aware of the ideologies underpinning these textbooks so that their own beliefs don't clash with those implanted in their learning tools.

Moreover Ahmadian and Farhani (2014) suggested that critical discourse analysis could aid with journalism and reading comprehension courses. Other than improving their reading skills, students can develop an analytical-eye to develop a better understanding of texts.

## **1.2 The Statement of the Study**

With the rise of conflicts, people are always on the lookout for more news. They read the newspaper every morning, watch the news channel every evening, or have a fast and easy access to news websites and applications on their Smartphone. However, few have paid attention to the discourse used, and the ways this discourse affects their perceptions of the incidents happening. The literature studies on media discourse take a more general worldwide outlook. In my thesis, I look to the local incidents and their portrayals.

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

Zhang (2014) clearly portrayed the distinctive features of political discourse in two different news reports. He concluded that media outlets have used the power of language in diverse forms to deliver ideas with subliminal and embedded messages; which are indirectly depicted throughout reports. This signifies that if a person does not read news reports thoroughly and fastidiously with an open mind, he or she might fall into the fallacies of the political discourse presented (Zhang, 2014).

Consequently, this study was designed as a wake-up call for stakeholders to fully understand the power of language; which is responsible for molding and shaping their

thoughts and opinions about the different events happening. It acts as an encouragement for people to consciously program their minds before the system does it for them.

In addition, this study provides implications for language pedagogy. It shows how understanding discourse could be of great value for foreigners wanting to learn a new language or even using books of different cultures. Through discourse, learners could understand and evaluate different cultural backgrounds.

The research involved two Lebanese newspapers. Four articles from each newspaper were extracted through their online platforms. In-depth text analysis was carried as a means to conduct this study.

Accordingly, this study is a qualitative study that analyzes news discourses. It is an exploration of the language of politics in Lebanese newspapers. Specifically, it aims at answering the following questions:

- How does media use linguistic recontextualization to cover different reports about the war on Syria?
- How do those linguistic devices reinforce ideologies represented by the media outlets?

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The results will help in the perception of news reports. They will also help in exposing, or uncovering different, usually hidden, strategies that media outlets have been using to dictate to the people what is thought to be appropriate. Hence, explaining to news-followers that the news they read and hear is actually through the eyes and ears

of reporters who wish to reinforce a certain political ideology over others. The study will also help us in finding ways to bring this impaired discourse into our EFL classrooms.

## **1.5 Thesis Division**

The thesis is divided into six main chapters. Chapter one is dedicated to the introduction where the background, statement, the purpose, and significance were provided. The second chapter incorporates the literature review which discusses different statements, theories, definitions, and frameworks related to the research topic. Chapter three is the methodology section which guides the readers into a detailed, clear pathway of how the participants were chosen and how the analysis will be conducted. Chapter four is a display of my findings and the discussion is carried out in chapter five. Finally, chapter six is my conclusion with implications on language pedagogy, limitations, and suggestion for future research.

In summary, the chapter included a background of the study whereby I discussed my personal experience, politics, and media. Later, the statement and the purpose of the study were provided; which aimed at conveying how this study is an exploratory one, studying the language of two Lebanese newspapers. Finally, the significance of the study was provided where results helped in the perception of news reports and in bringing this impaired discourse into the classroom.

# **Chapter Two**

## **Literature Review**

The literature review now follows. It begins with defining the terms ideology and critical discourse analysis based on prominent researchers in the field. After the discussion of news and language and the relation between the two, three frameworks are explained. Subsequent, a local projection of news and newspaper was provided. Lastly, previous research about the topic has been discussed.

Defining ideology and discourse analysis acts as an overview to understand the lexis that will be used throughout. The section about news and language could help the reader understand how language reinforces ideologies underpinned by media reports. As for the frameworks proposed by the three pioneers in CDA, they will convey the linguistic recontextualization used by media reports on the war on Syria. Discussing the news and newspaper in Lebanon will provide a deeper understanding of the local dynamics of news reporting. Besides, proposing previous research about the topic familiarizes the readers with the type of study at hand.

### **2.1 Defining Ideology**

Teun A. van Dijk offered his readers a well-rounded definition of ideology. According to van Dijk (2011), ideology is composed of shared ideas belonging to a certain group or community. These ideas shape the group's perception of social events, situations, and even discourse. In other words, ideology is characterized as a "belief system". This belief system is thus shared by members of social groups, and it also

controls opinions and acts about certain social events and actions that the group might be exposed to. Hence, ideologies are in command of different kinds of social practices.

Different groups develop different ideologies about their history, existence, meaning of life, and so on. Basically, ideologies are passed on through generations. In accordance with van Dijk's (2011) view of this idea, new individuals to a certain social group might learn its underpinning ideology by either interpreting actions of different people belonging to that same group, by paying attention to the discourse used, by reading about it, some ideologies are even reinforced through educational systems, or by asking an expert.

In a book about a multidisciplinary introduction to discourse studies, van Dijk (2011) presented his readers with what he called: "schematic categories of the structure of ideologies" (p.386). Therefore, in order to identify the structure of a certain ideology, we have to look out for the six different categories that he proposed which are *identity*, as in who we are and where we come from, *activities*, as in our practices and what we do, *goals* as in our destinations and wants, *norms and values*, *group relations*, as in classifying our opponents and allies, and finally *resources*, which emphasize our power and the means of achieving it (van Dijk, 2011, p.386).

Having answered all these questions in their respective categories, we would be able to fully identify a certain ideology.

Boiled down, ideologies are belief systems that are shared by social groups. They control social practices and the groups' perceptions of how the world is constructed. It is also a polarization between US as an in-group and THEM as an out-group (van Dijk, 2000).

## **2.2 Defining Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a recent discipline that was brought into evidence in the late 1980s (Wodak, 2013). Wodak (2013) states that CDA is a “problem-oriented interdisciplinary research program” (p.5), it draws on a variety approaches and research methods.

Language is what comes to mind when speaking of CDA. According to Norman Fairclough (1995) one of the founders of CDA, critical discourse analysis explores the relationship between two aspects: the first is the actual text or discursive practice, and the second being the social and cultural contexts and structures. Hence, CDA implies that language itself is subject to ideological effects which are controlled and affected by power. In other words too, language is socially constructed. Locke (2004) goes on further, based on Parker and The Bolton Discourse Network (1999), to say that language has come into “preceding and shaping reality” (p.11) rather than reality affecting language. Language constructs how the reader will make sense of the reading. Therefore, it is a power in itself that constructs meaning-making.

In aims to find the reason behind the act of ‘critical discourse analysis,’ Locke (2004) breaks down this act into its three major components: critical, discourse, and analytical. In his definition of why the act contains the term critical, Locke (2004) explained how the central outcome for critical discourse analysis is for the reader to take a stance on the social topic presented. The reader, thus, has to be critical in where he/she will position while reading a certain piece. Discourse is mainly concerned with the analysis of the language use and how this language manifests itself in the social context.

Finally, analytical (analysis) was used because the piece presented or under study undergoes a thorough examination in aims of uncovering its underpinning principles.

Since language structures reality and its perception, Locke (2004) iterates that discourse involves powerful relations. He goes on explaining how powerful discourse reinforces self-esteem in its readers. It gives them a sense of power and control. On the other hand, “non-powerful” or weak discourse disempowers its readers placing them at an inferior stance rather than a superior one.

Along those lines, Locke (2004) also mentioned the following:

*CDA is concerned with the ways in which the power relations produced by discourse are maintained and/or challenged through texts and the practices which affect their production, reception, and dissemination (Locke, 2004, p.38).*

In order to maintain or challenge such power, writers of discourse often use subtle ways to reinforce their respectful ideologies. Those subtle ways include the use of embedded or subliminal messages, which in turn lie at the core of those written texts. In order to uncover those messages one needs to carry out the act of critical discourse analysis. According to Locke (2004), the linguistic knowledge that a person should have to carry such an act is limited to whether or not this person is able to detect and comprehend the reading position a particular text is offering to its readers.

Fairclough et al. (2011) support Locke’s notion of CDA. Discourse in itself becomes a social practice which is composed of a dialectal relationship between the text and other social elements. According to Fairclough et al. (2011), this relationship is a “two-way” relationship. Hence, discourse affects and shapes the social elements. The social elements in turn affect and shape discourse. Discourse and discursive practices are

thus powerful tools to produce imbalanced power relations leading to major ideological effects.

Chouliaraki (2013) defines critical discourse analysis as an analysis that occurs between textual and intertextual features. Texts are intertextual because they are constituted of a variety of discourses and practices. With regards to political discourse, media prefers, with a careful selection, reported events that further reinforce hegemonic representations. Hence critical discourse analysis, being a qualitative approach, delves into language and how it affects the process of meaning-making especially in social process. Chouliaraki (2013) states:

*CDA not only views the text as intertextual but maintains that linguistic processes in a text encode multiple social functions - i.e. that they are multifunctional. The multifunctional view of language makes it possible to investigate how choices in the lexico-grammar simultaneously constitute representations, social relations and social identities in text (p.102).*

Chouliaraki's (2013) definition is in accordance with other definitions of critical discourse analysis. In summary, critical discourse analysis is a discipline which aims at analyzing the relation between discourse and language with society.

### **2.3 News and Language**

Danuta Reah (2002) was not satisfied with the definition of news as “information about recent events that are of interest to a sufficiently large group, or that may affect the lives of a sufficiently large group” (p.4). As a justification of her stance on this definition, Reah (2002) argues that recent events happen daily all around the world and

cannot actually be covered in a daily newspaper. So her concern was: who decides what kind of news people will read every day. The answer to her concern was editorial decisions. Decisions are being made on behalf of the readers. Therefore, Reah (2002) continues her argument with the fact that readers have no control of what is being presented to them. She continues discussing how the owner of a newspaper has thus a power which can highly affect readers' perceptions of what is happening or what those recent events really are. The readers are being exposed to selected news reports which have certain ideological aspects.

Along those lines, Reah (2002) encourages newspaper readers to become critical readers who are aware of what they are being exposed to.

Defining newspapers was also problematic. According to Reah (2002), newspapers are not present to deliver information. The news they provide are specific; their specificity is ideologically related. News editors deliver specific news reports which aim to guide the readers to certain ideological stand points.

In the process of news production, Busa (2014) explains that the process is based on the partnership and cooperation of reporters, editors, and managers. Reporters and editors collaborate in the making of news. They generally work in the newsroom. Reporters are assigned to cover different stories by their editors. They are responsible for gathering information and photographs to compose the story. Editors make decisions on which direction the newspapers will take and which stories are worthy to be published. Moreover, managers are responsible for all the financial and administrative matter in the paper.

Language in newspapers is very powerful, because ideologies tend to be embedded in it. Reah (2002) puts it as follows: "it is easy to resist a particular viewpoint

or ideology when you know it is being presented to you, but not so easy to resist when the viewpoint or ideology is concealed” (p.54).

Journalists create stories that incorporate interesting and worthy factors. Busa (2014) acknowledges the fact that different people have different preferences, but despite this notion a group of people might have cohesion and shared aims because they stem from the same community, and therefore have same beliefs. Busa (2014) continues to avow that journalists indirectly address those preferences and embed those beliefs in the production of their texts to reinforce them - hence, reinforcing ideologies.

Fowler’s (1991) ideas and viewpoints are in accordance with Reah (2002). He asserts that language in newspapers is not neutral, and newspapers are not a means of delivering facts. They are used as a medium to deliver beliefs, values, and ideologies. This results in a social construction of news; the events are not reported for their importance, they are in fact reported because they follow a certain criteria. Criteria determined and guided by ideas and beliefs (Fowler, 1991). Busa (2014) also asserts that language is not neutral simply because it is socially constructed. Lexical and grammatical choices done by journalists often reflect ideologies which in turn shape reader’s interpretation. Said differently, news texts are written and interpreted in a subjective manner.

When talking about the language of newspaper, Fowler (1991) says that “news is a representation of the world in language... it is not a value-free reflection of facts” (p.4). Fowler (1991) continues his argument by an explanation of how language is not a “clear window” that reflect ideological positions; it is a “refracting” medium. Hence, linguistic aspects such as syntax represent the world in actual written text. News, therefore, becomes a creation. It is created through journalistic and publishing processes

(Fowler, 1991). Consequently, Busa (2014) adds that journalists have the ability to manipulate the language in order to provide powerful stories that have a strong impact and that favor viewpoints over others.

Ideas and facts cannot be represented neutrally and in their natural structure which according to Fowler (1991) is not surprising because they are being passed on through a medium which has its own structural features. Those features are in turn affected by social events which affect perspectives and viewpoints on events and their reporting.

## **2.4 Methods of Analyzing Discourse**

### **2.4.1 Michael Halliday**

A widely used framework for analyzing discourse is that of Michael Halliday (1985) titled: Systemic Functional Linguistic. This approach to language is mostly aligned with Sociology. It explores how people utilize their power of language to reach goals in different contexts. A key concept in this approach is the “context of situation” which incorporates the systematic relationship between the functional organization of grammar and the social environment (Halliday, 1985).

In Halliday’s (2014) theory a heavy emphasis is put on grammar - hence the name, functional grammar. In functional grammar, the priority is given to grammar to establish meaning making. He aims to engage with grammar through discourse. Halliday (2014) extends his theory on a spectrum that endeavors at verifying a relationship between grammar and lexis (lexico-grammar). Lexico-grammar in essence deals with words and structures.

In his pursuits to analyze texts, Halliday distinguished between three aspects of context that affect language which he calls features of the context: field, tenor, and mode.

Field focuses on the topic or action that the language is expressing or talking about. It basically answers questions such as: what is happening (the nature of the action taking place), what participants are involved in, what is going on through language and so on. Therefore, field is realized by an ideational meaning or an experiential one. This meaning involves: processes, participants, and circumstances. The processes are actions and events and therefore form a verbal category, the participants constitute the name of entities such as persons or things and therefore form the nominal category, and finally circumstances can come in form of adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions - all of which constitute grammatical classes of words.

Being the second feature, tenor stands for language users. It incorporates the participants or the actors in a given situation. Tenor talks about participants' statuses, roles, and relationships towards themselves and one another. It also uncovers stances and attitudes toward the topic discussed. Poynton (1985) points out that tenor could be divided into 3 categories: (1) power, are the participants of equal power or unequal ones? (2) Contact, do the roles being performed by participants put them in frequent or occasionally contact? (3) Affective involvement, are the participants involved? to what degree? In addition, tenor is also related to interpersonal meaning which discusses relations and mood patterns of grammar. Grammatical moods include: imperative, subjunctive, indicative, and infinitive. In brief, imperative mood expresses commands, requests, and advice, subjunctive mood expresses doubt or uncertainty, indicative

expresses factual statements and questions, and infinitive expresses certain actions or states without specific referencing to subjects.

Finally, mode deals with how the text is portrayed, i.e. the channel through which communication is being put through. It also attends to the role the text is playing in conveying the message. Being written or spoken, prepared or improvised could be the mode of a certain discourse. Mode serves textual meaning and the use of lexis.

Field, tenor, and mode provide a clear analysis of a text and its functions. They are not directly related to ideology nor do they aim at uncovering certain ideological stances; on the contrary, they provide a better understanding of a text which might provide a way to use the different frameworks proposed by van Dijk and Fairclough to uncover the principles and the underpinning ideologies.

#### **2.4.2 Teun Van Dijk**

Teun A. van Dijk applies a range of analytical methods to scrutinize political discourse and language used in media outlets (Chilton & Schaffner, 2011). His methods rely on cognitive processes and approaches to explain how discourse functions in ideology, racism, and knowledge (Fairclough et al., 2011).

After defining ideology as a belief system that shapes and structures social groups' thoughts and reactions to different social events, van Dijk (2011) linked ideology to discourse. Van Dijk (2000) claims that our discourse and our language use express our ideologically based opinions. He emphasizes that ideologies seldom exist in texts; however a deep analysis of context along with the discursive practice might uncover underpinning ideologies. Hence, ideologies in discourse are not directly visible, nonetheless applying van Dijk's method, which I explained below, along with the

analysis of context might make it perceptible. Consequently, analyzing discourse will require that we pay attention to certain properties of discourse use which clearly depict the ideological orientation (van Dijk, 2000).

According to Van Dijk (2000), positive self-representation and negative other-representation is a palpable characteristic of group conflict. Based on this proposition, Van Dijk (2000) modified four general principles in order to simplify the process of analyzing and detecting subtle messages in political texts. The four principles are the following: “emphasize positive things about us, emphasize negative things about them, de-emphasize negative things about us, and de-emphasize positive things about them” (Van Dijk, 2000, p. 44). Van Dijk (2011) later classifies these principles in what he called “the ideological square” (p.396) as follows:

Emphasize *Our* good things

Emphasize *Their* bad things

De-emphasize *Our* bad things

De-emphasize *Their* good things

In description of this square, van Dijk (2011) comments:

*The complex meta-strategy of the ideological square tells us that group members will tend to speak or write positively about their own group, and negatively about those out-groups they define as opponents, competitors or enemies, if only because the Others are different (p. 397).*

In aims to analyze discourse and emphasize the negative characteristics of out-groups, van Dijk (2011) listed some diverse structures and strategies which I summarized below:

- **Topics:** the topic chosen will describe the out-group as a threat or a criminal to the in-group; therefore, topics chosen to describe are in most cases negative
- **Level of description and degree of completeness:** when describing the out-group's negative actions and doings, the language used would be detailed and specified whereas the in-group's would be less detailed
- **Granularity:** the out-group's negative properties or actions tend to be more precise, whereas the in-group's tend to be vague
- **Implications:** use of propositions to imply negative things about out-groups
- **Denomination:** describing the out-groups as different from the in-groups especially with the use of words such as immigrants, others, opponents, and so on.
- **Agency:** holding the out-group responsible for negative actions with emphasis on their agency.
- **Focus:** giving special focus to different aspects of the text such as participants or actions.
- **Demonstratives:** to signal closeness or distance; for instance, using the word those in the phrase *those people* signals distance.
- **Pronouns:** using words such as us and them to classify groups as in-groups or out-groups.
- **Syntactic structures of sentences:** using active sentences with emphasis on negative actions of out-groups versus using passive sentences to de-emphasize negative actions of in-groups.

Although the list only provides some of the categories proposed, van Dijk (2011) was clearly able to portray how language users may emphasize negative information about a certain out-group or positive information about a certain in-group.

Van Dijk (2000) has also provided different categories for ideological analysis; other than the ones mentioned earlier. Below is also some of his categories and with a brief description of each:

- **Actor description:** Discourse includes descriptions of actors that might emphasize/de-emphasize positive characteristics or emphasize/de-emphasize negative ones. Descriptions might include titles, group affiliations, roles, attributes, attitudes, position with respect to a certain belief, and so on. Description of others may be blatantly negative, or may be subtle containing negative opinions.
- **Disclaimer:** The beginning of the discourse might deny adverse feelings about a specific group; however the next part may be full of negative things about others. An example of disclaimer: I have nothing against group X, but....
- **Dramatization:** dramatization is an exaggeration of facts in favor of one's interests and opinions. Words such as "great" and "extreme" act as triggers to this category.
- **Evidentiality:** evidentiality is when people present proof or evidence to the arguments being made in order to strengthen their ethos. Using this category enhances credibility, objectivity, and reliability. Evidentiality could also occur by referencing authority figures or institutions.
- **National self-glorification:** national self-glorification is associated with praise of one's own country, principles, histories, and traditions.

- **Victimization:** is the process by which the writer acts as the victim; as in, opposing forces have threatened the respective party or have injured it severely.

- **Positive self-representation:** occurs when the speaker or writer emphasizes the positive aspects of the group or political party. It often highlights tolerance, generosity, acceptance, unity, lack of bias...

- **Negative other-representation:** occurs when the speaker or writer emphasizes the negative aspects of the opposing group or political party.

Throughout my study and in my data analysis, I analyzed my data based on the ideological square along with some of the structures and some of the categories proposed by van Dijk (2000; 2011).

### **2.4.3 Norman Fairclough**

Norman Fairclough (2009) adopts a dialectical-relational version of critical discourse analysis. He defines discourse as medium through which social practices are investigated and explained. It is not limited to language; on the contrary, Fairclough (2009) expresses how language is only one of the semiotic modalities that discourse is concerned with. Focusing on language, critical discourse analysis is based on a dialectal relationship between language and society. In other words, it is a two-way street between language and society. Fairclough (2009) proposes such a notion because language shapes and is shaped by society; i.e. language is affected by society, and society is, in turn, affected by language. Subsequently, describing discourse as a social practice entails this dialectical relationship.

Fairclough's (1995) model consists of three interrelated processes of analysis:

1. Text analysis is concerned with the object under investigation such as a visual, verbal, or written text. In this analysis, we speak of a description of the properties of a text such as lexis and syntax.
2. Processing analysis is concerned with the interpretation the texts by people. In this analysis which is also defined as an interpretation we establish a relationship between text and interaction - interacting with the text.
3. Social analysis is mainly concerned with an explanation of the socio-historical conditions of a text. In this analysis, the explanation establishes a relation between interaction and the social context. At this stage, uncovering the ideology occurs.

On a personal note, what I find interesting about this framework is the fact that it attempts to analyze discourse from three different yet related angles. Hence, the three analytical dimensions are inter-dependent.

In order to carry out text analysis, I used what Zhang (2014) used as descriptors of a text and provided a brief description each: transitivity, nominalization, classification, and modality.

Transitivity is in principle a part of Halliday's systematic functional analysis. Transitivity points out material processes, mental processes, relational processes, and verbal processes. Usually, material processes occupy a large part of news report because they are defined as processes of doing. People do something to other people. Thus, reports would be concerned about telling a succession of different actions. Mental processes describe mental states as in cognition and perception; they include

experiencing or sensing something. Relational processes related to describing attributes, verbs such as being and becoming could be part of this category. Finally, verbal processes are those of communication which usually have a person communicating a thought to an addresser.

Nominalization is the process of turning a verb or an adjective into a noun. According to Zhang (2014), nominalization weakens the action. This process is used to reduce bias.

Classification is a process whereby journalists use naming to represent certain people or events. The use of certain lexis could point out to this process. Naming people or events in specific ways portray and express attitudes towards them.

Finally, modality is the mode in which the writer of the news report expresses his/her attitudes towards the story written. High affinity words such as the word “would” could depict how the writer entrusts a certain stance, whereas the use of words of low affinity such as “seem” might depict or imply to the readers a negative notion about the other stance.

In the interpretation which is the second analysis, I looked at how the writer portrayed the subject written about. As discussed earlier, the journalist makes conscious decisions to affect unconscious readers. Therefore, choosing to cover a story from a particular angle is a choice, choosing who to quote in a story and what to quote is another choice. All those aspects play a negative or positive role in portraying a certain group.

The socio-cultural analysis or the explanation of the news report will bridge media with the authority. Hence, relating political institutions to the text and explaining how it further reinforces certain political structures.

Having an analysis from three inter-dependent dimensions proposed by Fairclough (1995) provides a more comprehensive view of the news report and its underlying social structures and principles. It views the report from three different angles.

## **2.5 History of Newspapers in Lebanon**

The oldest means of communicating news in Lebanon's media sector is print media which is also known as newspapers. According to Dabbous (2007), newspapers were first introduced in 1610. They were created by a group of Maronite priests.

The first newspaper issued was titled "Hadiqat al-Akbar" or the "News Garden" (Kraidy, 1999). A non-religious weekly newspaper later appeared in 1857 which was under the control of the Ottoman Empire. Other weeklies emerged with a nationalistic outlook to educate people and bring them closer. This didn't last long due to the increasing pressure on the press. Soon after, journalists began to call for independence and freedom (Dabbous, 2007).

According to Kraidy (1999), Beirut alone witnessed the publishing of around 60 newspapers between 1908 and 1914. However, after Lebanon's independence in 1943, press restrictions were diminished. This lack of restriction enabled newspaper editors to seek help and get a sponsorship from foreign countries. In the 1960s, legislation was issued to limit the number of daily newspapers to twenty-five and of weekly newspapers to twenty.

According to the Ministry of Information, and as cited in a report issued by the Mapping Digital Media: Lebanon in 2012, today, there are fourteen political newspapers

published daily. The two most popular newspapers are As-Safir and An-Nahar. As-Safir issues 50,000 daily copies, whereas An-Nahar issues 45,000.

## **2.6 Media in Lebanon**

Lebanon is divided along several political parties. This division forms two major alliances: a Saudi-backed pro-western alliance and an Iranian-backed anti-western one (Dabbous, 2010). This division hence affects all other aspects of Lebanon and its government - media being one of them.

According to Dabbous (2010), Lebanon's press is relatively a free one with respect to the Arab World. However, she states: "Lebanese media tend to be owned or supported by political personalities as well as parties and do not criticize or harm the hand that feeds them" (p.721). Hence, media outlets are supported by certain local or regional powers that have their own system of belief which is also known as their ideology.

Newspapers' aim in Lebanon is not to gain profit; they are established with a clear ideological and political stance (Mapping Digital Media: Lebanon, 2012). Nevertheless, accepting bribes is regarded as a normal act. Bribes either cover or uncover certain issues that deem to be of value to political and/or religious figures (Dajani, 2013).

Newspaper ownership, newspaper affiliations, division of shares, political stances are not public information. Consequently, knowing about or uncovering media ownership information in Lebanon is intentionally made difficult. Very few sources exist.

## **2.7 Discussion of previous research about political discourse analysis in news reports**

In her article, Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2013) affirms that media or political texts are not stand-alone texts that serve the function of only delivering the news of a particular event. In fact, those texts trigger political discussions. Every text supports and sustains the ideology or political party it is affiliated to and discourages other ideologies or political parties. Van Dijk (2000) defined ideology “as a form of social cognition and more specifically as the basic beliefs that underlie the social representations of social groups” (Van Dijk, 2000, p. 16). Moreover, ideology, as explained by Shojaei and Laheghi (2012), is in many cases associated with economic and political ideas. It is a system of beliefs, ideals and values that reflect a certain population.

Many research articles have been conducted as an exploration of the extent political parties and respective ideologies effects on the delivery of news in print reports. Studies carried out different investigations with the incorporation of different frameworks and approaches that aim at analyzing print texts.

Ahmadian and Farahani (2014) used Van Dijk’s (2000) framework to probe how ideological disparities depict themselves in the political discourse of two opposing newspapers concerning Iran’s nuclear program; The Los Angeles and Tehran Times - the former being a top American newspaper, and the latter being an Iranian newspaper. Findings portrayed that the different representations of events and news depends on the underpinning ideologies that each newspaper is associated with. In fact, ideologies were instilled into discourse to protect and maintain their stand in the political field.

In another study, Musa and Ferguson (2013) also employed Van Dijk's (2000) framework to find out how perceptions and stereotypes of enemies are created in news reports during the November 2008 religious conflicts in Nigeria. The researchers analyzed THISDAY and Daily Trust newspapers using the socio-cognitive model presented by Van Dijk - namely, labels, rhetoric, hyperboles, and litotes. Results affirmed Van Dijk's negative other-representation whereby the enemy images used in newspapers mold the reader's impression into thinking that the enemy is intolerant and hateful.

In his article, Yaghoobi (2009) employs Halliday's approach to discourse analysis. Yaghoobi (2009) analyzed the discourses presented in two opposing news print outlets about the Hezbollah-Israel war in 2006. He concluded that political discourse is actually socially constructed. Moreover, embedded meanings of these texts act as influencers on readers' perception of different reports.

Li (2011) also employs Halliday's systemic functional linguistic approach in aims of analyzing reports in the New York Times and the China Daily newspapers. Reports extracted were about the air collision between China and USA in April 2001. Findings depicted that the discourse associated with the different newspapers is highly affected by the political party each is affiliated to. Veritably, the reports construct a different understanding of the actual situation and event; the understanding is also linked to the specific political interest deployed by the newspapers.

Zhang (2014) utilized Fairclough's three dimensional framework and Halliday's functional grammar in an attempt to critically analyze the political discourse by the American media on the Iraq war. He concluded that lexical and grammatical rules have been applied to sustain ideologies and circuitously send embedded messages.

Youssefi, Kanani, and Shojaei (2013) conducted an exploratory study of the portrayals of Iran sanctions in western press. With the utilization of van Dijk's critical discourse analysis framework, Youssefi et al. (2013) analyzed twenty news reports released by ten western newspapers. Their results yielded strong ideological inclination and orientations in the western newspapers.

After her lengthy analysis of the Shi'a discourse by two leading Shi'a scholars and their understandings of jihad, martyrdom and resistance, Husseini (2008) portrayed how their discourse aims at maintaining an ideological foundation that has a proclivity toward Hizbullah; their discourse has even "paved the way for the emergence of Hizbullah as a Shi'a resistance force" (p.413).

Through a triangulated critical linguistic analysis of BBC's online news reports, interviews with BBC editors, and BBC guidelines and the editor's blog, Barkho (2008) conducted a study to examine BCC's discursive practices and strategies with regard to the conflict happening between Palestine and Israel. Results depicted that regardless what editors and BBC personnel have mentioned in their interviews about lacking bias, balance, neutrality and so on, the language used by BBC reflects to a great extent the underpinning ideology of the outlet itself.

Even when translating media reports, translators are impinged on by ideologies. Shojaei and Laheghi (2012) conveyed that translation and the use of words in media are subjective to a certain adapted and approved on ideology. The translator is thus making a conscious effort in picking his or her choice of words so that they match the values of the ideology and the needs of the patrons intended. This feeds on to the idea of gate-keeping too. Furthermore, a study conducted by Al-Harashah and Obiedat (2014)

presented the challenges of translating news report from English into Arabic. Those challenges also promote the subjectivity in translation of texts.

# **Chapter Three**

## **Methodology**

Having provided a literature review that sums up main definitions, theories, frameworks, statements, and discussions of research regarding the topic of this study – political discourse analysis of news reports, the next chapter examines the methodology. In the methodology section, I provide the method, the sample selection, instruments, data analysis, reliability and validity, and ethical considerations.

### **3.1 Method**

As aforementioned, this study is an exploratory study that aims at analyzing the discourse of news reports. It is a qualitative research because this type of research followed a naturalistic approach where things are understood through the social context; in other words, the results yielded by this study arrive from the real world setting (Golafshani, 2003).

### **3.2 Sampling**

The study took into account two opposing newspapers, which are believed to be from different political sectors. Four articles about the same topic were extracted from each newspaper's website and an in-depth discourse analysis was conducted. Thus, the main focus was on the comparison of the discourse that each newspaper follows and the representations of events.

The two newspapers that were looked into are the following: As-Safir and The Daily Star. Reports/articles have been extracted electronically through both websites: [www.assafir.com](http://www.assafir.com) and [www.dailystar.com.lb](http://www.dailystar.com.lb). (See Appendices for the articles).

The newspapers have been selected based on whether or not they offer English reports and articles. Although *As-Safir* is an Arabic newspaper, I was able to find English articles under the English tab, which facilitated my study. *The Daily Star* is the only English newspaper issued in Lebanon. Several other newspapers do not offer an English language option for their reports.

The articles chosen are as follows:

Title of Report	Source	Date	URL
<b>Aleppo's Bloody June</b>	As-Safir Newspaper by Alaa Halabi	July 1, 2015	<a href="http://assafir.com/Article/50/426480">http://assafir.com/Article/50/426480</a>
<b>Zabadani battle rages on</b>	As-Safir Newspaper by Khalil Harb	July 8, 2015	<a href="http://assafir.com/Article/50/429597">http://assafir.com/Article/50/429597</a>
<b>Aleppo's battle rages on</b>	As-Safir Newspaper by Alaa Halabi	July 9, 2015	<a href="http://assafir.com/Article/50/429850">http://assafir.com/Article/50/429850</a>
<b>Syrian Army, Hezbollah advance in Zabadani</b>	As-Safir Newspaper by Alaa Halabi	July 16, 2015	<a href="http://assafir.com/Article/50/431307">http://assafir.com/Article/50/431307</a>
<b>Bomb, rockets kill 19 civilians in Syria's Aleppo: activists</b>	The Daily Star - No author mentioned	July 9, 2015	<a href="http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/World/2015/Jul-09/305873-bomb-rockets-kill-19-civilians-in-syrias-aleppo-activists.ashx">http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/World/2015/Jul-09/305873-bomb-rockets-kill-19-civilians-in-syrias-aleppo-activists.ashx</a>
<b>Hezbollah, Syrian army seize main entrance to Zabadani:</b>	The Daily Star - No author mentioned	July 13, 2015	<a href="http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2015/Jul-">http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2015/Jul-</a>

<b>Al-Manar</b>			<a href="http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2015/Jul-14/306490-hezbollah-syrian-army-seize-main-entrance-to-zabadani.ashx">13/306490-hezbollah-syrian-army-seize-main-entrance-to-zabadani.ashx</a>
<b>Iran deal may make region more dangerous: Saudi official</b>	The Daily Star - No author mentioned	July 14, 2015	<a href="http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2015/Jul-14/306628-iran-deal-may-make-region-more-dangerous-saudi-official.ashx">http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2015/Jul-14/306628-iran-deal-may-make-region-more-dangerous-saudi-official.ashx</a>
<b>Hezbollah tightens the noose in Zabadani</b>	The Daily Star - No author mentioned	July 15, 2015	<a href="http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2015/Jul-15/306829-hezbollah-tighten-the-noose-in-zabadani.ashx">http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2015/Jul-15/306829-hezbollah-tighten-the-noose-in-zabadani.ashx</a>

Table 1 - Summary of Participants

As stated in As-Safir website, As-Safir is a daily, political, and Arab newspaper founded by the journalist Talal Salman. It was first issued in March 26, 1974. It had two slogans which stated: “Lebanon’s newspaper in the Arab world and the Arab’s world newspaper in Lebanon” and “the voice for those who have no voice”. By the time of its second publication, sixteen law suits were filed against it. However, publications were not suspended. As-Safir newspaper, its buildings, and its founder were terrorized multiple of times during 1980, 1984, and the Lebanese civil war. Publications were only suspended three times due to decisions set by the Lebanese government. The last suspension was in 1993 lasting for only a week.

In addition to daily news reports, As-Safir issues weekly reports of different subjects such as sports, environmental issues, ideas, and such.

As stated in the Daily Star website, the newspaper was founded over 60 years ago in 1952 by Kamel Mroue. Mroue had a vision to introduce the Arab region to non-

Arabic readers. In the 1960s, the outbreak of the war suspended the publications. However in 1983, Mroue's three sons relaunched the paper. The publications were also suspended again in the civil war. Nonetheless, the determination of Mroue's eldest son, Jamil, recommenced the publications in 1996 hiring new, experienced, and foreign staff and journalists. In late 2010, the newspaper was sold to news investors who wanted to raise the bar for the paper, maintain its status, and promote it.

Articles or reports have been chosen randomly. I chose articles based on their titles bearing in mind that I need them to be about the same topic which in this case is the war on Syria. Hence, and as much as possible, I opted for articles based on similarities in titles and in publishing dates.

### **3.3 Instruments**

Based on theories produced by Teun A. van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, and Michael Halliday, I conducted an in-depth discourse analysis of the eight news reports which were extracted from both news platforms.

All three methods have been explained and looked into in my literature review section. However, a succinct overview of every method is provided below:

- **Teun A. van Dijk:**

Van Dijk's framework envisions discourse in terms of a polarization between *us* being the in-group and *them* being the out-group. Through discourse, the in-group uses certain strategies and categories to abide by the ideological square which is basically based upon four principles: emphasize the in-group's positive things, emphasize the out-

group's negative things, de-emphasize the in-group's negative things, and finally de-emphasize the out-group's positive things.

- **Norman Fairclough**

Fairclough composed a three dimensional framework in his endeavors to critically analysis discourse. His framework is composed of analysis of three constitutes of a report: text analysis which is concerned with the actually language and text, processing analysis which is an interpretation of the text and the interaction. Finally, social analysis is concerned with an explanation of interaction and the social context. It is at this level that the ideology is basically uncovered because it aims to relate authorities to the reports. Fairclough's framework analyzes those aspects as inter-related and inter-dependent; therefore, providing a more comprehensive view of the report.

- **Michael Halliday**

Michael Halliday's theory of systematic functional linguistics emphasizes field, tenor, and mode of a certain text. Under the title of features of context, field is concerned with topic or actions that are taking place, tenor is concerned with participants along with their statuses, roles, and relationship, and mode deals with the channel of which the communication takes place. Each aspect is related or realized by certain meanings which relate to text: field is realized by experiential/ideational meaning, tenor is realized by interpersonal meaning, and mode is realized by textual meaning. Using field, tenor, and mode provides a clearer understanding of a text and its functions.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

Critical discourse analysis was utilized in order to analyze the different articles extracted from the online platforms of each newspaper. With this analysis, the focus was placed on content and language.

Although this qualitative analysis may sound theoretical or ‘intangible’, it was made concrete through the utilization of three different frameworks and approaches of prominent figures in the field. As a start, I proposed some research questions that I wanted to find answers to. After proposing those questions, I followed them with statements, theories, and explanations that relate to the aim of the research. Collecting the data came next and the analysis was carried. The analysis was focused on some distinct patterns, differences in sentence structures, and specific language use. Finally, a synthesis of the results was provided with implications on language pedagogy.

My analysis was basically divided into three parts. Each part dealt with one of the proposed framework. The first framework I used was that of Halliday. The reason I chose it as a start to my analysis is because this framework provides a holistic view of the articles. It acted as summary that still aimed at analyzing relationships of participants and events. The second framework was that of van Dijk whereby I chose different categories proposed by this researcher and drew some examples that directly relate to those categories. Finally, I kept Fairclough as my last analysis because part of his framework links the media to the actual authority or the political stance. I didn’t want to provide my research on media ownership before actually carrying out my entire analysis.

### **3.5 Reliability and Validity**

According to Golafshani (2003), the terms validity and reliability are misleading in the realm of qualitative research because they depend on the perceptions of the researcher and how he/she carries out the study proposed with regards to research methodologies and projects. However Golafshani (2003) argues that reliability and validity in a qualitative research is linked to the quality of information and/or results provided. Moreover, a qualitative study that presents such quality in delivery would help readers better understand somewhat confusing concepts. Nevertheless, the study in itself should be trustworthy and dependable.

Though it is somewhat vague to talk about those terms in qualitative research, I aimed to achieve reliability and validity or trustworthiness and dependability through the adoption and the analysis of texts according to the three different frameworks that, in turn, served the same purpose – uncovering the underpinning ideologies of political texts. This further proved that my analysis was rigorous and systematically aimed at understanding underpinning ideologies. If all three frameworks yield the same results, then the study would be reliable and valid.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

My research relied solely on text analysis. The reports taken are found online through the respective newspapers' platforms. No restrictions, permissions or extra charge was required to obtain them. Hence, they were open to the public.

# **Chapter Four**

## **Findings**

Before starting this analysis, it would be good to note that the Daily Star articles were brief and to the point – some being only half a page; however, As-Safir articles were around two pages long each, and therefore incorporated more aspects to analyze than those of the former.

### **4.1 Discourse Analysis based on Halliday's Framework**

The main reason I started with Halliday's framework is because it provided a holistic understanding of the reports chosen. It provided an analysis of processes, participants, and circumstances according to the three features of context proposed by this researcher.

#### **4.1.1 Assafir Reports**

##### **a) Aleppo's Bloody June**

To begin with, starting with the field, the author communicates how Aleppo has witnessed one of its worst months since the start of the crisis five years ago – hence the title 'bloody June'. The two main participants in this article are Jabhat al Nusra and the Syrian Army. The processes taking place are related to fighting battles and different attempts to take lead in those battles. The circumstances presented depict the situation that the two participants are in and the brutality of the bombing that happened.

Moving on, the second feature of context titled tenor portrays how there was unequal power between the participants; primarily because Jabhat al Nusra is being backed by Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Qatar. In addition, Jabhat al Nusra has US-made missiles which render the idea that probably this movement is also being backed up by the United States. However, the Syrian Army is containing the attack to hit back. Therefore, even though Jabhat al Nusra was backed, the Syrian Army was able to fight back. The participants were in direct contact and were very well involved in a war zone.

Finally, with regard to mode, this text was extracted from a newspaper; hence it is a written text and not improvised.

**b) Zabadani battle rages on**

Starting with field, the article incorporates a ‘knowledgeable’ source informing As-Safir about the battles happening in Zabadani and how the Syrian Army alongside Hezbollah are advancing and taking over this area. Therefore, the processes used are verb that signal conquering and successfully taking over Zabadani; such as, control over, utilized different tactics and combat strategies, and so on. The author mainly talks about the Zabadani state in itself and the sourcing informing As-Safir about the events happening in this area; however, the participants that the author sheds light on several times are Hezbollah and the Syrian Army opposing the militants. Circumstances illustrate the events battles happening in Zabadani, some information about it, and the measurement of success by the two allies.

For tenor, clearly, the opposing teams are of unequal power because the author informs the readers about the Hezbollah and the Syrian Army’s successful endeavors in fighting against the ‘takfiri’ factions. The participants are again in direct contact as they take on a fight in Syria.

Because this is a text extracted from the newspaper, the mode of the text is a written and deliberately planned one.

**c) Aleppo's battle rages on**

Similar to the articles that have been looked into earlier, the author of this article conveys the clashes that have been happening in and around Aleppo between the different forces present on the battlefield. Different anti-regime groups, not allies though, have been carrying out these battles and in return, the Syrian army is setting up ambushes and plans to fight back. This mostly covers the field of the article. The processes included illustrate the happenings; words such as retreated failed depict those happenings. The circumstances picture a hopeless situation where the efforts and attempts of the anti-regime groups go to no avail every time.

To cover tenor, the participants of this article are the Syrian army and the different anti-regime groups which seem to be numerous. Because of their failed attempts to take over any area, the author depicts the Syrian army as having more power than the other groups because, in the given cases, the Syrian army fights back and establishes an efficacious breakout. Consequently, the participants are in a direct interaction on the various battlefields.

Correspondingly, with regards to mode, this text is a written one. The author has taken enough time to plan and write it.

**d) Syrian army, Hezbollah advance in Zabadani**

With regards to field, the article discusses Hezbollah's and the Syrian Army's advance in Zabadani. According to the author of the article, Hezbollah and the Syrian Army have achieved a 'strategic progress' in Zabadani. Hence, the processes used are words such advanced, blocking entrance, sought control, and closed the main entrance.

The participants involved are mainly Hezbollah and the Syrian Army against the Islamic State (IS) militants. The circumstances render the achievement that the allies have accomplished and their careful study of plans and actions.

As for tenor, then the title itself portrays an unequal power. It highlights how the Syrian Army and Hezbollah are ahead and therefore of more power than their opponents which is the Islamic State. All those participants are in direct contact and are a huge part of this crisis in Syria.

Similarly to the previous articles, this article is extracted from a newspaper; consequently, it was a carefully written and planned text.

#### **4.1.2 The Daily Star Reports**

##### **a) Bomb, rockets kill 19 civilians in Syria's Aleppo: activists**

Starting with the field, the article provides the readers with information about the victims of the Syrian war mentioning that both the Syrian regime and the rebels are held responsible for the attacks. The processes used are therefore related to killing and attacking by using the verb 'were killed' throughout. The participants are the Syrian regime, the rebels as identified by the author, and the victims who are being killed due to the attacks. The circumstances further explain how and when those victims were killed.

As for tenor, then it is obvious that the participants are of unequal power. The Syrian regime and the rebels possess more power than the civilians because the civilians are the ones being attacked and killed. Although the civilians are not involved in the war, they are not initiating battles or fights; they are in direct contact with the other participants who have a conflict of interest.

Moving on to the mode, this article is extracted from a Lebanese newspaper; hence it has undergone the processes of revising and editing before publishing. In other words, it has been carefully planned and executed.

**b) Hezbollah, Syrian army seize main entrance to Zabadani: Al-Manar**

The field of the article informs the readers that both Hezbollah and the Syrian army have overtaken the main entrance to Zabadani. It also illustrates scenes of those allies firing rockets, using gunfire, and throwing grenades on top of residential areas. The processes included are verbs such as swarming, firing, trapped, and so on. The participants are Hezbollah and the Syrian army as allies and the rebels all taking place in Zabadani. The circumstances depict the situation Zabadani is in especially through describing the footage that was released and shows how Hezbollah fighters are attacking the city.

The tenor of this article shows Hezbollah and the Syrian army as main participants and therefore possessing the power. Although the rebels were mentioned, they didn't play an active role in this article. They were trapped and besieged. The participants are in direct contact due to their involvement in the war.

Lastly, this is a newspaper article. Consequently, it is prudently designed and completed.

**c) Iran Deal may make region more dangerous: Saudi official**

First, the field of the article discusses how the Iran's nuclear deal will be a good idea if it stops the country from gaining additional weapons and such. However, the deal would be a bad idea if it spread destruction in the region. A process used to describe this destruction is the use of the verb destabilize. The main participants are Iran and its

nuclear deal. There are no specific circumstances that depict the destabilization that is going to happen if Iran decides to spread havoc.

Second, the tenor shows that Iran possesses a greater power than other countries in the Middle East because of the nuclear program mentioned. Iran is involved in this program and will be in direct contact with the region if it decides to inflict disorder.

Third, describing the mode, this is again a newspaper article and hence the information presented are planned and agreed upon.

**d) Hezbollah tightens the noose in Zabadani**

The field of this article describes how Hezbollah has pushed deeper into Zabadani and how it took over the city with the help of the Syrian army. It also briefly discusses some of the battles that have happened with a count of the number of people killed. The processes utilized are verbs such as pushed deeper, tightening the noose, besieged, fire, and so on. The participants are the Hezbollah, the Syrian army, and the rebels. Although Hezbollah is advancing or pushing deeper into the city of Zabadani, there are not circumstances that depict the situation as an achievement for Hezbollah.

The tenor of this article portrays Hezbollah and the Syrian army as having more power than the rebels especially through their advance. The participants are in direct contact due to their involvement in a war zone.

As for the mode, then just like the articles before, this is a newspaper article that has been carefully written.

## 4.2 Discourse Analysis based on van Dijk's Framework

In van Dijk's framework, directed quotations were extracted which serve as examples to the different categories. Therefore, the evidences below were quoted from the text as they were written.

### 4.2.1 – As-Safir Reports

#### a) Aleppo's bloody June

Positive Representations		Negative Representations	
Category	Evidence	Category	Evidence
Agency	<i>However</i> , the army forces contained the attack and hit back	Denomination	<i>Jihadist and extremist factions</i>
Evidentiality	<i>A military source confirmed</i> that the Syrian army and the supporting factions have deterred attacks and contained the situation.	Syntactic structure of sentences	Jihadist and extremist factions <i>have launched</i> rocket attacks, mostly reaching the government-controlled neighborhoods
Level of Description and degree of completeness	<p>Syrian army and the supporting factions have deterred the attacks and contained the situation.</p> <p>Syrian air forces have intensified airstrikes on the missiles launching locations toward the city, managing to destroy several bases.</p> <p>Syrian army has reinforced its presence on several contact points and sent reinforcements to different axes.</p>	Evidentiality	<i>A pro-opposition told As-Safir</i> that the armed factions began to unite... The countries supporting the factions, namely Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia started to send weapons and equipment needed...
		Level of Description and degree of completeness	Urgent orders made to the factions affiliated with the Aleppo Conquest Operation Room...

			<p>Jabhat-al-Nusra- affiliated factions moved closer to the contact points...</p> <p>The Aleppo Conquest Operations Room launched a few violent attacks on al-Rashidin axes...</p>
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Table 2 - As-Safir Article 1 - van Dijk's Analysis

**b) Zabadani battle rages on**

Positive Representations		Negative Representations	
Category	Evidence	Category	Evidence
Dramatization	<p>the push by Syrian army units and Hezbollah forces... was deeper than anticipated, leading so far to losses that were lower than expected</p> <p>the city falls under total suppressive control</p> <p>(Syrian army)... following their successful breakthrough</p>	Agency	armed factions that <i>threaten</i> Damascus, Beirut and beyond
Syntactic structure of sentences	Dozens of terrorists had been killed or wounded in the attack	Denomination	<i>armed and takfiri factions</i> <i>insurgents</i>
Evidentiality	<p>According to battlefield sources</p> <p>Reuters quoted</p> <p>Reminiscing about the battle fought, in 1982</p>	Dramatization + agency	(gunmen) not only <i>greatly</i> contributed to <i>threatening</i> the Syrian capital, but also the Lebanese border strip, as well as the <i>vital</i> international highway that links the two countries
Victimization	<p>... put an end to extortion practiced by insurgents who <i>cut off the water</i> supply of Damascus residents</p> <p>Displacement of its 50,000 residents to neighboring areas</p>		

Table 3 - As-Safir Article 2 - van Dijk's Analysis

c) Aleppo's battle rages on

Positive Representations		Negative Representations	
Category	Evidence	Category	Evidence
Focus	<p>Syrian army forces and supporting factions continued with their advance... announcing full control over the eastern Nashwa neighborhood... this is in addition to advancements...</p> <p>Syrian army continues to fortify the shield around Aleppo through mobilizing reinforcements</p> <p>The forces were capable of absorbing the attack and achieving victory in direct confrontations, despite the fact that the enemy used heat-seeking missiles</p> <p>Syrian army imposed control on four new villages</p>	Actor description	Huge defeat befell Fateh Halab
Actor description	Syrian army set up an ambush for armed fighters	Syntactic Structure	Ansar al-Sharia, led by Jabhat al-Nusra, failed to achieve an infiltration
National self-glorification	The ambush set up by the Syrian army was of high impact, lifting the already-high morale of the Syrian army and discouraging the enemy who thought that Aleppo was up for grabs.	Disclaimer	Although Ansar al-Sharia did not announce the failure or dissolution of its command center, a field source believes that the fate of the center, as for its predecessors, was a failure.
Syntactic structure of sentence	During clashes, different weaponry was used and a tunnel was blown up.	Denomination	<i>Al-Qaeda-affiliated organization</i>

			<i>Terrorists</i>
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Table 4 - As-Safir Article 3 - van Dijk's Analysis

**d) Syrian army, Hezbollah advance in Zabadani**

Positive Representations		Negative Representations	
Category	Evidence	Category	Evidence
Topic	Syrian army, Hezbollah <i>advance</i> in Zabadani	Denomination	<i>Militants, terrorists</i>
Dramatization	achieved <i>strategic</i> progress	Actor Description	<i>State of confusion</i> that plagues the armed group Pushed IS (Islamic State) to expand its engagement circle in a bid to find a way to <i>relieve the pressure</i> that it is facing
Evidentiality	A <i>military source</i> told the Syrian News Agency The Facebook page of <i>Harbi Press</i>	Granularity	IS managed to <i>penetrate and control</i> the village
Actor Description	Syrian army is <i>slowly progressing</i>	Level of description and degree of completeness	After controlling the Althias village, IS gunmen set Grad missile launchers and targeted the fourth station housing as they tried to target the T4 airport before warplanes launched a series of airstrikes on the airport perimeter. These also targeted rocket launchers then launched a small military operation to restore the village and further fortify the airport perimeter.
Syntactic structures of sentences	He (Hammoud al-Hardan – one of the top commanders in IS) <i>was killed</i> in the battle of Hasakah. 30 fighters affiliated with Jaish al-Fatah, led by Jabhat al-Nusra, <i>were</i>	Disclaimer	The organization is attacking the airport perimeter to alleviate pressure on Palmyra, <i>although it is well aware it cannot break through to the airport</i>

	<i>killed</i> in an attempt to control the strategic Khattab hill.		
		Syntactic Structures of Sentences	Source said that militants <i>launched</i> a violent attack in an attempt to control the hill.

Table 5 - As-Safir Article 4- van Dijk's Analysis

#### 4.2.2 – The Daily Star Reports

##### a) Bomb, rockets kill 19 civilians in Syria's Aleppo: activists

Positive Representations		Negative Representations	
Category	Evidence	Category	Evidence
Denomination	<i>Rebels</i>	Focus	Bomb, rockets <i>kill</i> 19 civilians in Syria
Victimization	<p>19 civilians, including five children were killed</p> <p>Fifteen of the dead, among them four of the children</p> <p>The children were under the age of 10</p> <p>A pregnant woman was also among Wednesday's dead</p> <p>As residents were sitting down at the iftar meal</p>	Agency	... came in the barrel bomb strike on a <i>rebel-held district</i>
Syntactic structures of sentences and agency	The conflict began with anti-government protests in March 2011 that were met with a bloody crackdown.		

Table 6 - The Daily Star Article 1 - van Dijk's Analysis

##### b) Hezbollah, Syrian army seize main entrance to Zabadani: Al-Manar

Positive Representations		Negative Representations	
Category	Evidence	Category	Evidence
Victimization	Hezbollah fighters firing	Topic	Hezbollah, Syrian army

	rocket-propelled grenades and automotive weapons from inside and on top of <i>residential buildings</i>  Rebels <i>had been trapped</i> and their <i>escape routes</i> have been cut off		<i>seize</i> main entrance to Zabadani
Denomination	<i>Rebels</i>	Evidentiality	<i>Al-Manar reported – the Hezbollah-run station</i>
Syntactic structures of a sentence	At least 16 Syrian army soldiers and 200 militants have been killed in the battle	Actor description	Footage also showed Hezbollah fighters swarming an area of the city with the sound of heavy gunfire in the background.

Table 7 - The Daily Star Article 2 - van Dijk's Analysis

**c) Iran deal may make region more dangerous: Saudi official**

Positive Representations		Negative Representations	
Category	Evidence	Category	Evidence
Evidentiality	<i>Saudi Official</i>	Agency	Iran deal may make region more dangerous  Iran had destabilized the whole Middle East through its activities in Iraq, Syrian, Lebanon, and Yemen
Victimization	If the deal allowed it concessions, the region would become <i>more dangerous</i>	Disclaimer	Iran's nuclear deal with world powers will mean "a happy day" if it stops the country from gaining a nuclear arsenal, but the agreement would prove bad if it allowed Tehran to "wreak havoc in the region"

Table 8 - The Daily Star Article 3 - van Dijk's Analysis

**d) Hezbollah tightens the noose in Zabadani**

Positive Representations		Negative Representations	
Category	Evidence	Category	Evidence
Denomination	<i>Rebels</i>	Topic/Focus	Hezbollah tightens the noose in Zabadani

	<i>Rebel factions</i>		
Victimization	<p><i>Rebel fighter succumbed to his wounds</i></p> <p><i>43 rebels had surrendered, according to the source, with a further nine surrendering Tuesday.</i></p>	Syntactic structures of sentences and actor description	<p>Allied forces destroyed a militant convoy using rocket fire in the Al-Zahra neighborhood.</p> <p>The attack killed all passengers on the vehicle.</p> <p>The allied forces issued an ultimatum to Syrian rebels over the weekend to either surrender or die.</p>
Evidentiality	<i>The Syrian Observatory's Report</i>		
National Self-glorification	Add to Hezbollah's recent victories in Lebanon's eastern mountain range		

Table 9 - The Daily Star Article 4 - van Dijk's Analysis

### 4.3 Discourse Analysis based on Fairclough's Framework

In this approach of discourse analysis, I did not go by analyzing each article on its own as I have done earlier. Instead, I chose to analyze the newspaper articles holistically; primarily because Fairclough's text analysis describes certain aspects or descriptors of the text. Moreover, his processing analysis is shaped by the interpretations regarding the text and the interactions with it. Finally, in his social analysis, Fairclough aims at bridging the media with the authority. Uncovering the ideology occurs as such a stage and this cannot be regarded through each article at a time; instead, one needs to combine the different articles presented by the newspapers.

#### 4.3.1 – As-Safir Reports

Fairclough (1995), and according to the descriptors chosen by Zhang (2014), has divided his text analysis into four parts.

The first part, transitivity, dealt with processes: material processes, mental processes, relational processes, and verbal processes. As-Safir reports mainly covered

material processes which are the processes of doing – a party has done something to another party. A lot of examples were drawn for this type of process, below are a sample:

- The city falls under total suppressive control (Zabadani battle rages on)
- Gave militants the ability to disrupt the Damascus highway (Zabadani battle rages on)
- Syrian army forces and supporting factions continued with their advance (Aleppo's battle rages on)
- Syrian army continues to fortify the shield around Aleppo (Aleppo's battle rages on)
- The Syrian army and Hezbollah fighters yesterday achieved strategic progress in the city of Zabadani (Syrian army, Hezbollah advance in Zabadani)
- IS brought in large reinforcements in Shaddadi city and tried to launch a swift attack on the army (Syrian army, Hezbollah advance in Zabadani)
- Jihadi and extremist factions have launched rocket attacks (Aleppo's bloody June)
- Syrian army and the supporting factions have deterred attacks and contained the situation (Aleppo's bloody June)

Many other examples of material processes emerge from the texts primarily because those material processes are processes of doing where newspapers are concerned with telling a succession of different actions. As for mental processes, relational processes, and verbal processes, then they weren't that evident and clear throughout the texts. Those processes were not used through the interactions of different participants. Verbal processes were only used to relay different information that was said

by a certain source. The three mentioned sources were did not act as descriptors of the happenings and roundabouts of the participants.

The second part concerned nominalization. Nominalization was used when certain verbs and/or adjectives were used as nouns. The case of nominalization was present throughout the different As-Safir news reports and the most patent example was the use of the word “control”. Instead of saying the Syrian army and its ally Hezbollah has controlled a certain city or another party, the authors would say something like ‘took control over’ or ‘sought control’. Another example was with the use of the word attack. Instead of saying that the pro-regime groups attacked, the authors would say ‘launched an attack’ or ‘the attack failed’.

Next, we have classification with was evident throughout As-Safir articles – just like denomination in van Dijk’s framework. Authors of As-Safir newspaper used naming to relay certain attitudes about the anti-regime movement. Some of those name callings and labeling were: terrorists, takfiri factions, insurgents, jihadi extremists, and militants. While labeling the pro-regime movements, the authors used names such as fighters, army forces, and the allies.

The final part of this text analysis was modality. It was evident in the articles presented by As-Safir that they have used high-affinity words, especially the word “would” to describe the importance of what the Syrian army and Hezbollah are doing in terms of advancements and successes and to describe as well the effects of what the anti-regime factions are doing in terms of destruction. Some examples of those include the following:

- Syrian army’s total control over the city of Zabadani would mean the total collapse of the supply route used by insurgents (Zabadani battle rages on)

- Jabhat al-Nusra had dragged itself into a dilemma in Aleppo, as the city would constitute a turning point for the worse for the al-Qaeda-affiliated organization, drunk on its victories in Idlib (Aleppo's battle rages on)
- The source considered that the army is adamant that it will regain control over the area (Aleppo's battle rages on)

However, the use of low-affinity words was not as evident throughout to describe the negative notions about the other stance. Nonetheless, the high-affinity words were used to describe such notions.

Moving on to the processing analysis, which interprets the relationship between the text and interaction, then the authors of *As-Safir* article tailored how the subject was portrayed using certain methods. Those methods entail certain quotations from different sources which did not act as proving ethos. The decision was made to quote certain military sources that are guided by the pro-regime group; they also quoted 'knowledgeable' sources about the battlefield, the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA), and field sources. However, even though the above mentioned sources are all pro-regime, the authors did manage to include some that are actually anti-regime. They have done so by labeling those sources as 'pro-opposition sources.' With this type of referencing, the authors chose a certain lens to view the events happening which in turn yielded definite interpretations that I discussed in the discussion section.

With regards to the social analysis, which is the last type of analysis discussed by Fairclough (1995), and according to Trombetta's article in the European Journalism Centre, the Shiite Muslim owner of *As-Safir*, Talal Salman is a high advocate of the

Hezbollah-led resistance against Israel and the United States of America. Those facts depicted that As-Safir newspaper sides with the pro-regime factions.

#### **4.3.2 – The Daily Star Reports**

As aforementioned, the text analysis part regarded certain descriptors of the text which are divided into four parts.

To begin with, the first part is related to the different processes: material, mental, relational, and verbal. Just like As-Safir articles, the most evident process is the one related to the material between the participants where a certain stance is inflicting an action on the other stance. Some of those examples include:

- The crude explosive-filled container hit a building (Bomb, rockets kill 19 civilians in Syria's Aleppo: activists)
- 19 civilians, including five children, were killed by a Syrian regime barrel bomb (Bomb, rockets kill 19 civilians in Syria's Aleppo: activists)
- Showed Hezbollah fighters firing rocket-propelled grenades (Hezbollah, Syrian arm seize main entrance to Zabadani: Al-Manar)
- The rebels had been trapped inside Zabadani (Hezbollah, Syrian arm seize main entrance to Zabadani: Al-Manar)
- Allowed Tehran to wreak havoc in the region (Iran deal may make region more dangerous: Saudi Official)
- Iran has destabilized the whole Middle East (Iran deal may make region more dangerous: Saudi Official)
- Allied forces destroyed a militant convoy using rocket fire (Hezbollah tightens the noose in Zabadani)

- Rebel fighter succumbed to his wounds (Hezbollah tightens the noose in Zabadani)

Different examples would emerge out of this category or process. However, the other three processes, similarly to As-Safir, were not that transparent throughout the text with relevance to the involvement and contact of the participants. Nevertheless, one would not that verbal processes only happened when communicating certain ideas or information that a sources has provided.

When talking about nominalization as a tool to reduce bias, then the articles developed by the Daily Star's authors did not convey such process. As a matter of fact, they have used active verbs and different adjectives to portray the wrongdoings or simply the doings of the Syrian army and Hezbollah. The anti-regime factions, or what they called the rebels, were not regarded a lot in their texts and often played an inactive role. Hence, nominalization was not utilized to communicate certain messages.

With regards to the classification system used by the Daily Star, then it differed from that of As-Safir. While As-Safir used a negative jargon to label the anti-regime groups, the Daily Star refrained from using such jargon. Instead, it chose to label the anti-regime sanctions as rebels or rebel fighters. The labeling for the advocates of the Syrian regime were describes as troops or by their standard labeling Hezbollah and the Syrian army.

Finally when talking about text analysis, we have modality. High-affinity or low-affinity words were not clearly depicted throughout the text. The authors did not express an open and transparent attitude towards any party. However, when analyzing carefully, at some instances, the authors do express three cases of high-affinity words; two of

which negatively describe pro-regime movements, and the last describing Hezbollah's victory. The three examples are presented as follows:

- But the agreement would prove bad if it allowed Tehran to wreak havoc in the region (Iran deal may make region more dangerous: Saudi official)
- the region would become more dangerous (Iran deal may make region more dangerous: Saudi official)
- The capture of the largest Qalamoun city would add to Hezbollah's recent victories (Hezbollah tightens the noose in Zabadani)

Furthermore, in one of the articles' titles, the author used the low affinity word 'may' to negatively express attitudes towards a country that is a high advocate of the Syrian regime; 'Iran deal may make region more dangerous: Saudi official.'

The second type of analysis discussed by Fairclough is the processing analysis. Just like *As-Safir*, the *Daily Star* chose to quote different references and sources which portrayed the events from different angles. In one of the articles, the authors decided to quote *Al-Manar* which they later said in their article that it is a Hezbollah-run station. In the other articles, they quoted Saudi officials, activists, and the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights which also an activist group. Activist in this context are the people who are campaigning for social change and hence side by or share certain ideas with the anti-regime groups. The choice of references chose by this newspaper also depicts the situation happening from certain angles tailored by the newspaper itself.

As for the social analysis, then according to a report published by Mapping Digital Media: Lebanon; the *Daily Star* was sold to news investors in 2010 who were affiliated to the Hariri Group. They also noted in an interview they have done with one of the newspaper's employees that it might still be too early to assess whether the Hariri

Group has actually impacted the newspaper as this employee/reporter has not witnessed major changes yet. However, the report did mention that “this may be partly due to the Daily Star’s original tone which leaned towards the March 14 Alliance, but also because the acquisition has been too recent to produce any tangible outcomes” (p. 73).

Nonetheless, when discussing social analysis, we need to bear in mind that the research provided is just a quick overview on the affiliations that the two newspapers hold. Other updated information about newspaper ownership might not have been put into the public. As discussed in the literature review, uncovering ownership of Lebanese newspapers is purposefully made difficult.

# Chapter Five

## Discussion

Just like my analysis, my discussion was divided into three parts. Each part would be dealing with one of the proposed frameworks. After the discussion of each framework, a synthesis, that answers the research questions posed at the beginning of the research, is provided that sums up all the results in relation to the underpinning ideology that each newspaper is affiliated to. Lastly, the results of my study will be compared to previously conducted research results that have been discussed in the last section of the literature review.

### **5.1. Halliday's Framework:**

The articles were analyzed based on the field, tenor, and mode which are characterized as the features of context by Halliday (1985). Unequal power was evident throughout the eight different articles.

The newspapers with regard to these features, more or less, agree with the happenings and roundabouts in Syria. The fields discussed are the battles that are occurring around Syria; namely, Zabadani and Aleppo. The processes include a jargon that is war-related with heavy emphasis on killings and battle techniques.

As for tenor, then in As-Safir newspaper, the participants were always divided into two parties. One party incorporated the Syrian Army as standalone fighters at some points and the Syrian Army alongside Hezbollah at some other points. The other party was constituted of the 'takfiri' factions in "Zabadani Battle Rages On", anti-regime groups in "Aleppo's Battle Rages On", Islamic State in "Syrian Army, Hezbollah

Advance in Zabadani”, and Jabhat al-Nusra in “Aleppo’s Bloody June”. Even though the names of the factions changed in the second party, they still belonged under one big umbrella titled the “anti-regime group” that was opposing the Syrian Army and its ally Hezbollah. Regardless of the names used, those anti-regime groups always seemed to be of less power than that of the Syrian Army and Hezbollah. The authors of those articles clearly depicted this inequality of powers through their choice of words and processes. As aforementioned in my analysis, the Syrian Army and Hezbollah were always capable of containing the situation and fighting back. Moreover, they have had successful endeavors in taking over certain aspects of the city. At some point, the author of one of the article even mentions that the anti-regime groups are being supported by different countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey. Nonetheless, Hezbollah and the Syrian Army were able to challenge the odds and fight back.

Because many researchers have established that language is driven by power relations, then As-Safir newspaper seems to be siding with those of more power against those of less power. In fact, Locke (2004) has discussed how power constructs meaning. In addition, Fairclough (1985) has mentioned language is subject to ideological effects and how those ideological effects are controlled by power. Hence, discourse involved power relations. The portrayal that a party has more power than the other party could be interpreted as a conscious siding with the former against the latter.

However, one needs to note that this is just the preliminary analysis which might be subject to change after the discussion of the other two frameworks.

As for the Daily Star newspaper, then it also depicted unequal power relations. Nevertheless, in this newspaper, the parties were different. There were no specific, targeted parties throughout the four articles. As a matter of fact, the polarity between the

pro-regime and anti-regime group was only evident in one article “Hezbollah tightens the noose in Zabadani;” where the pro-regime had more power than the anti-regime group. In another article “Hezbollah, Syrian Army seize the main entrance to Zabadani: Al Manar” the polarity was not evident because the anti-regime group did not really have an active role throughout the article.

Even when Hezbollah and the Syrian Army conveyed more power than the ‘rebels,’ in “Hezbollah tightens the noose on Zabadani,” there was no noted achievement that the allies have accomplished; unlike the article in *As-Safir*, where the allies’ endeavors were constantly described as successful advancements.

Although there is depiction of power relations in the *Daily Star* newspaper where pro-regime group in some instances have more power than other anti-regime groups, the manifestation was not as clear and evident as those in the *As-Safir* newspaper. This does not condemn that the *Daily Star* is with or is against the pro-regime group because there was not enough facts to base this judgment on. One article depicting this unequal relation is not enough. It is still too early to decide as this point where the *Daily Star* stands.

As for the mode, all eight articles are carefully written and planned being newspaper articles. They underwent certain publication processes for achieving a careful, precise selection. Busa (2014) explains how the processes of publishing are actually based on the partnership and cooperation of different stakeholders in a newspaper industry, such as: reporters, editors, and managers. While the reporters and editors make the news, the managers decide the direction a certain news story would take.

As a summary, Fairclough et al. (2011) have established that discourse incorporates power relations that are in accordance with the underpinning ideology that the newspaper reinforces. As-Safir newspaper clearly depicted power relations that favor Hezbollah and the Syrian Army over the other anti-regime groups which at some instances they have described as ‘takfiri’ factions and terrorists. This signals that As-Safir is siding with the formers. Conversely, the Daily Star newspaper did not present such a clear, evident distinction. The power it gave the pro-Syrian regime was minimal, and therefore valid and reliable conclusions could not be reached yet.

## **5.2. Van Dijk’s Framework:**

With van Dijk’s framework, I aimed at categorizing some positive representations and some negative ones depending on the categories proposed by van Dijk which I have already discussed in the literature review section. Throughout the discussion of this framework, I analyzed who the positive representations represent and who the negative representations represent. I also interpreted some of the examples I have used in my analysis.

One needs to note that positive self-representation and negative other-representation are profound characteristics of group conflict (van Dijk, 2000).

In As-Safir newspaper, the categories proposed by van Dijk were both, positively representing a certain party and negatively representing another party. The positive representations, which will fall under van Dijk’s positive **self**-representation class, were only concerned with describing the positive doings of the pro-regime. Whereas the negative representations that incorporated a description of what the anti-regime movement was doing falls under van Dijk’s negative **other**-representation.

The author used agency to hold the Syrian Army responsible for containing the situation in Syria. He used dramatization to depict the successes that the Syrian Army and its ally Hezbollah accomplished. This dramatization was accompanied with words such as, suppressive control, successful breakthroughs, and strategic plans. Moreover, the author used victimization when describing how the water supply was cut off and how the citizens had to flee Damascus. This serves as a positive image for pro-regime because the author mentions that this is the anti-regime's responsibility. The use of evidentiality was also prominent; quoting Reuters and different army sources and reminiscing on the war in 1982 served their purpose. Nevertheless, there was a huge focus on what the army did in terms of fighting battles, monitoring the country, advancing through different cities, and so on. Finally, using passive sentence structures did not convey to the readers that the Syrian Army or Hezbollah were involved in negative actions.

Conversely, the author used denomination which negatively portrayed the anti-regime movement as terrorists, takfiri factions, and insurgents. This reflects that those anti-regime groups have infidelity and a mindset of destruction. Moreover, the author used agency which held those takfiri factions responsible for threatening Beirut, Damascus, and beyond. Using actor description, the author of the article described the anti-regime movement as a defeated movement and categorized it as a 'state of confusion'. Furthermore, granularity was used to illustrate an image in the reader's mind that those factions are actually penetrating a certain village. Using the word penetrating for those factions vs. controlling for the pro-regime movement made this negative other-representation more visible. Finally, using active sentence structures depict that the anti-regime factions are highly involved in the wrong-doings in Syria.

This positive representation of the Syrian Army and Hezbollah and this negative representation of all other anti-regime groups put the former at an advantage and the latter at a disadvantage. This further implies and supports the claim that was mentioned earlier in Halliday's framework that As-Safir newspaper is siding with the pro-regime group against the anti-regime one.

The Daily Star newspaper also used some of the categories proposed by van Dijk to positively represent a certain group and negatively represent the other. However, the categories were not as much as those utilized by As-Safir primarily because the Daily Star article are much shorter and less detailed.

Nonetheless, the author used denomination to describe the anti-regime groups as rebels instead of terrorist or takfiri factions. None of the articles presented by the Daily Star negatively labeled the anti-regime movement. Moreover, the author used the passive tense when talking about the toll of dead people in the pro-regime section. This refrain from the usage of active verbs lessens the blames or the pointed fingers on the anti-regime groups. Finally, the articles utilized a lot of victimization techniques. In one of the articles "Bomb, rockets kill 19 civilians in Syria's Aleppo: activists," the author gave a detailed death toll of the civilians keeping in mind that there are five children and a pregnant lady. The fact that this article was actually referenced from activist groups that are categorized as rebels implies that the pro-regime factions are the ones responsible for this death toll. This in turn negatively represents the pro-regime factions because the entire focus of the article was on the dead civilians who were having Iftar during the holy month of Ramadan.

In addition to the negative focus mentioned in the previous paragraph, the author of the Daily Star article also used evidentiality as a negative connotation; after quoting

Al Manar, he said that it is a Hezbollah-run station giving the impression that this station is of course going to side with the pro-regime because Hezbollah are their allies. Moreover, the author used actor description where he referenced footage in which Hezbollah fighters were packed with gunfire and were shooting towards residential buildings that were evacuated due to the war. He also held Iran responsible for destabilizing the Middle East by using the agency category. Finally, using the disclaimer category, the author mentioned how it would be a 'happy day' for Iran to use the Nuclear Program for a good cause, however, if used unwisely, it will cause havoc.

Even though the categories used by the Daily Star were not as evident and as detailed as those used by As-Safir, one could tell throughout this analysis that the Daily Star is siding with the rebels against the pro-regime allies. This was apparent in some of the positive representations of the rebels and the negative representations of the allies.

As aforementioned, those positive representations and negative ones could be easily placed in van Dijk's ideological square; where the positive representations could be related to the self-representations and the negative representations could be related to the other-representations. Consequently, As-Safir has positively represented itself through its siding with pro-regime factions, and negatively represented others through its opposition to the anti-regime factions. Conversely, the Daily Star has positively represented itself through its siding with the anti-regime factions, and negatively represented others through its opposition to the pro-regime factions.

### **5.3. Fairclough's Framework:**

In addition to the discussions and findings that were produced above, Fairclough's approach to critically analyzing written discourse yields same results and conclusions.

As-Safir presented various markers that further reinforced a pro-regime ideology. Starting with material processes, As-Safir used those processes to convey certain happenings that occurred by or to a specific party. Although the newspaper has used processes that incorporated both stances, however the processes differed when describing what each stance has done. For instance, when utilizing this material processing to depict pro-regime movement, the authors used positive words; such as, advancement and strategic progress. This implies that there an inclination towards the pro-regime parties. Conversely, when describing the doings of the anti-regime movements, the processes were rather negative. The IS, for instance, tried to launch attacks, and the takfiri factions have disrupted the Damascus highway. In turn, this implies that the authors are taking a stand against those pro-opposition movements. The material processing was highly used to convey the various processes that were happening between the participants. Which goes in accordance with what Zhang (2014) suggested about those processes; being the most apparent in news reports because news is usually a depiction of events that have happened.

In order to reduce the bias, nominalization was used a few times throughout As-Safir articles. For example, instead of using 'attack' as a verb, authors used it as a noun; the same case happens with the word 'control'. Nonetheless, both actions are portrayals of what the pro-regime movement is doing. To lessen the bias and the effect of such

actions, the authors used nominalization; which further reinforces the assumption that As-Safir is siding with the pro-regime forces.

Classification was evident and transparent. Labeling and naming the opposing party as terrorists, jihadi extremist, and takfiri factions, clearly renders the fact that the authors are against those movements – the opposing or anti-regime movement. This negative labeling further revealed the negative attitudes that the authors have regarding such movements. On the other hand, labeling Hezbollah and the Syrian army as allied forces puts forward a positive connotation regarding the attitudes towards the pro-regime parties.

Even in modality, with the use of high-affinity words, As-Safir portrayed such a distinction between pro and anti-regime movements. They have positively used different high affinity words to render the positive actions taken by the Syrian army and its ally; whereas, they have negatively used the high-affinity words to render the negative actions taken by the anti-regime movements which in most cases led to destruction and undesired outcomes.

Additionally, the processing analysis of this newspaper yielded similar results. Authors have made a conscious decision to quote certain sources and not others. They used pro-regime sources to discuss positive actions done by the Syrian army and Hezbollah such as their advancements and successes. They also used anti-regime sources to further reinforce that the anti- Syrian regime are up to no good.

Finally, to bridge media and authority, then research has concluded that As-Safir is a strong advocate of the Hezbollah-led resistance. It is highly against Israel and the United States. This supplements the fact that the newspaper reinforces that As-Safir is siding with the pro-regime party against the other ‘takfiri’ factions.

Having discussed what As-Safir had to offer, I now will discuss what the analysis of the Daily Star newspaper has to unfold.

Starting with the processes used in transitivity, material processes were most evident. Those processes focused on the description of the wrongdoings of the pro-regime factions; such as Hezbollah fighters firing rockets, Iran destabilizing the Middle East, Syrian regime barrels killed civilians, and so on. Those processes depict negative actions done by the pro-regime factions. Conversely, material processes for describing anti-regime factions were not that evident; even though they had been trapped and a fighter has surrendered to his wounds, they still were not as apparent as those of the pro-regime or even not as apparent as those of As-Safir.

Nominalization was not evident as well; primary because an active role of the anti-regime group was not that apparent. Hence, the reduction of bias would not be used to express actions of the opposing groups.

Negative language as the one used by As-Safir was also not transparent. Therefore the classification or naming of the opposing groups was the label 'rebels' or 'rebel fighters'. In the context, rebel does not serve a negative connotation. As a matter of fact, it serves as a positive one. They are rebels who want to change the social, political, or economic system.

Modality was not that evident too. There were some examples where the Daily Star authors used high affinity to describe the negative actions of the pro-regime groups, yet, in one of the cases, they used a high-affinity word to describe one of the victories of Hezbollah.

In their processing analysis, the authors drew on various sources from different parties. However, once they mentioned Al-Manar, they followed it by a Hezbollah-led

station. This implies that there was a negative attitude expressed towards this station. The newspaper made sure that the readers are well aware that Al-Manar is a station led by the pro-regime movement. Consequently, whatever this station says is affiliated to the pro-regime.

As research has shown, through the social analysis, the Daily Star had an inclination towards the March 14 alliance which is known to be anti-regime. Nonetheless, the Hariri Group has also invested in the newspaper. Even though the analysis does not show an apparent, yet subliminal inclination towards the pro-opposition factions, this social analysis and bridging media with authority further reinforces and makes visible this inclination.

Fairlough's analysis supplemented the conclusions reached in Halliday's and van Dijk's frameworks. As-Safir has again proven to have a positive inclination towards the pro-regime alliance through the different descriptors discussed. In turn, the Daily Star has also proven to have a less intense, less apparent inclination to the anti-regime alliance. As a matter of fact, the Daily Star's opposition was more evident. This opposition was towards the pro-regime factions.

#### **5.4. Synthesis**

Having discussed the two newspapers separately, the synthesis provided below will first summarize the discussion and answer the research questions that were proposed at the beginning of my study:

1. How does the media use linguistic recontextualization to cover different reports about the war on Syria?

2. How do those linguistic devices reinforce the ideologies represented by the media outlets?

Using Halliday's approach to critical discourse analysis, I have established that there was clear unequal power relations depicted in As-Safir newspaper, and rather vague, subliminal ones depicted in the Daily Star newspaper which could not yield reliable conclusions. Therefore, I have recognized that throughout this framework As-Safir had a disposition towards the pro-regime alliance; whereas the Daily Star's proclivity was not apparent. In van Dijk's approach, As-Safir positively represented the pro-regime movement and negatively represented the anti-regime one. Conversely, the Daily Star has positively represented the pro-opposition; whereas negatively represented the anti-opposition alliance. This reinforces the conclusions reached by Halliday in regard to As-Safir. Moreover, it adds value to Halliday's approach with regards to the Daily Star because it becomes clearer here that the Daily Star is inclining towards the pro-opposition movement, but more so to opposing the pro-Syrian regime. Finally, in Fairclough's framework, As-Safir has again proven to have a positive predisposition towards the pro-regime alliance through the different descriptors discussed. In turn, the Daily Star has also proven to have a less intense, less apparent inclination to the anti-regime union.

Throughout my analysis and discussions, I have provided how media uses linguistic recontextualization to cover different media reports. In Halliday's methods, I have gone over the features of context: field, tenor, and mode and have also discussed how power relations convey certain, subliminal messages about the proclivity of the newspapers and its hidden ideology. In van Dijk's framework, I have covered positive and negative representations through the description of different categories such as

denomination, topic, focus, actor description, victimization, dramatization, and so on. The categories can play a negative and/or positive role in depicting the other and the self through the construction and delivery of ideas. Lastly, in Fairclough's approach, text analysis was carried to answer the question of linguistic recontextualization in particular. The text analysis incorporated transitivity – the use of certain processes, nominalization, classification (just like denomination in van Dijk's framework), and modality.

Moreover, the analysis and discussion have proven that the newspapers reinforce certain ideological beliefs; namely ones that belong to pro-Syrian regime and to the anti-Syrian regime. The intensity of such portrayal differs. That is, *As-Safir* has a more intense, more apparent inclination towards the pro-regime; whereas, the *Daily Star* has more vague, subliminal inclination toward the anti-regime but mainly against the pro-regime alliance. Consequently, the linguistic features used have helped in uncovering the underpinning ideologies of the different newspapers and have unconsciously reinforced them.

This is very crucial and critical because individuals, as van Dijk (2011) proposed, might unconsciously acquire the ideology through this impaired discourse. Once this ideology is acquired, it is very hard to let go off. Furthermore, Reah (2002) even mentions how difficult it is to resist a subliminal, hidden ideology or view point. Language is thus being socially constructed (Fairclough, 1995). That is, language is structuring reality and affecting the processes of meaning making. With regards to this analysis, if one reads *As-Safir* newspaper, he/she would have a negative view about the anti-regime party; whereas, if one reads the *Daily Star* newspaper, he/she would have a negative view about the pro-regime party. Both views, to a certain extent, might not be

true. In fact, the reader is actually reading through the lens or even the pen of trained employees who are required to work under specific ideological criteria.

The results that my study yielded are in great accordance with the results that have been yielded by previous research on the topic and that have been discussed in the literature review. Tenen-Weinblatt (2013), Ahmadian and Farhani (2014), Musa and Ferguson (2013), Yaghoobi (2009), Li (2011), Barkho (2008), Shojaei and Laheghi (2012), and Al-Harashah and Obiedat (2014) have arrived to the conclusion that the language used by newspapers is far from being objective and neutral. In fact, the language follows a certain criterion that reinforces certain ideologies over others. This portrayal was evident through the discourse analysis that was carried out in the research articles according to the different frameworks proposed by the pioneers of CDA. The results of my study had the same interpretations. Analysis has shown that As-Safir takes a strong, supporting standpoint to the pro-regime party, whereas The Daily Star takes a negative, opposing standpoint to that same party.

# Chapter Six

## Conclusion

### 6.1 General Conclusion

The study performed aimed at exploring the language of politics in two opposing newspapers. After data collection and analysis, we concluded that the language of politics is never a neutral one. Fowler (1991) agrees with that notion and goes on to claim that newspapers do not actually serve the purpose of delivering facts. Reports are actually published because they follow certain criteria that are guided by ideas and beliefs. Hence, reports are highly affected by the supporting ideologies and political groups. It is always, as van Dijk (2000) described, a polarization between two parties; the out-group regarded as 'them' and the in-group regarded as 'us'. News reports have also shaped reader's perception of the truth. They seek to show truth from different perspectives - usually, perspectives are in high accordance with the newspaper's ideological beliefs. Locke (2004) has explained how language is affecting the reality we live in; instead of reality affecting the language. Subsequently, Busa (2014) uncovers the power that journalists have to manipulate the language in order to provide stories with powerful impacts. This highlights the fact that what we read through those media outlets is not a mere depiction of reality; instead, it is a constructed reality through the lens of news agencies that aim at reinforcing and strengthening their ideologies.

## 6.2 Implications on Language Pedagogy

In order to acquire a new language, attaining its syntax and lexis is essential but not enough. Language needs to be acquired through social contexts and social events. Learners of the language would be able to conceive the language effectively and efficiently if they were authentically exposed to it. Subsequently, critical discourse analysis could be of great value for students wanting to learn a new language because it is a means that helps them uncover the social agents present in text.

Rogers (2011) describes education as a “communicative event”. She explains the importance of critical discourse analysis in education. To begin with, methods of discourse analysis could help in analyzing the different constructions of a text, a conversation, and any semiotic interaction. It also provides ways of conceptualizing such interactions through a sociocultural perspective. Students could hence learn and uncover the ways discourse reflects the social world we live in and how it also plays a role in constructing it. Rogers (2011) also discusses that just like constructivist learning, critical discourse analysis is a problem-based discipline. Therefore, both the view of the constructivist in education and critical discourse analysis address social problems such as power and inequality.

Kress (2011) supports Rogers’s (2011) notion of education reflecting society and social practices. According to Kress (2011), education is a product of social agents, process, values, constraints, beliefs, and so on. Consequently, critical discourse analysis could be helpful in getting meaning of the embedded social aspects in texts and semiotic

practices. In other words, texts produced in educational systems shape social aspects and institutions; critical discourse analysis could help in the understanding of their processes.

Clark and Ivanic (1997) argue that critical discourse can help in educational change not only for learners, but for institutions and society as well. Critical discourse analysis empowers its learners because it provides them with a framework that is both critical and analytical. This framework can help learners reflect on certain language experiences that occur in their surroundings. Once learners become aware of the role that language plays in their context, Clark and Ivanic (1997) encourage the learners to “turn awareness into action”. Learners could do so by, for example, choosing different practices to face the pressure of society’s demands, or simply by being open to new possibilities of linguistic usage.

Rahimi and Sharififar (2015) have conducted a research related to discourse and its implications on language pedagogy in aims to examine the impact of CDA on males and females, and to assess the degree of critical thinking that students acquire after learning about this discipline. Results portrayed that females, to a small degree, are affected by this discipline more than males are, and that critical discourse analysis nurtures and fosters critical thinking in students which positively affects their motivation levels and ability to decrypt texts.

Personally speaking, teaching students how to analyze texts critically and analytically could be great help for their future endeavors. It does not have to be in a form of complicated frameworks; however, it can be modified based on the various ability levels of students. In addition, teaching learners such frameworks could be of

assistance in their comprehension skills. It could also target the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy: analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. When students understand a text and its underlying principles and embedded ideologies, they could later evaluate such principles reaching certain conclusions.

Wanting students to be agents of change and of progress requires that we teach them frameworks to critically analyze discourse in its various forms. This critical analysis could provide them with an understanding of how things are constituted and peaceful means of altering them.

### **6.3 Limitations**

Hodge (2012) proposes challenges for critical discourse analysis starting with the name itself. With regards to the word critical, Hodge (2012) raised a concern of who criticizes whom and for what reasons. Criticism could be biased as in the left-winged or the right-winged could use the forms of analysis against their opponents the right-winged or the left-winged respectively. The critical discourse analysis does not propose any mechanism to stop these biased occurrences.

Poole (2010) also expressed his concerns on Fairclough's perspective to critical discourse analysis. In his article he published the limitations which were made by various scholars on the issue. He argued that until this date, discourse still has no set definition, and sometimes it overlaps with language. In addition, critical discourse analysis relied on or is affected by a variety of influences other than social events which have not been addressed and put together to form a whole. There is also the concern of differences people have. Poole (2010) argues that different people read texts differently,

i.e. two people might have a different interpretation of one text. According to Poole (2010) and the various scholars on which he draws upon, those concerns and problems were not addressed in the elucidation of critical discourse analysis.

Philo (2007) attempted to find an answer to whether or not discourse analysis can successfully explain the content of journalistic reports and practices. Even though Van Dijk's framework is a widely used one, Philo (2007) elucidates that the framework is still text-based. He argues that text-based frameworks or approaches fail to show the origins of competing discourses and their relations to different social interests. They also fail to show how social and external factors affect the discourse, and how the discourse is perceived by different audience. Hence, Van Dijk's studies do not take into account the study of key production factors in journalism or the analysis of audience understanding. This limits the conclusions that could be drawn from Van Dijk's discourse analysis. According to Philo (2007) reports or practices cannot be analyzed unless the social context and interests and the audience's perception of reports are taken into account.

Finally, Fowler (1991) highly advocates discourse linguistics to use discourse-related moments other than the text.

#### **6.4 Suggestions for further research**

Due to the concerns of researchers regarding critical discourse analysis as a subjective discipline, attempting to objectify it even more could be area of potential growth for further research. Even though one needs to look at texts with a critical and open eye, one needs to keep in mind that the act of criticism in itself is subjective.

Moreover, another potential area of growth for further research could regard audiences' interpretation of the news report; probably, developing an instrument that aims at analyzing the perceptions of the vast audience. Involving the readers as participants in constructing the meaning and subliminal message of a certain report could add value to the findings and results that research yields.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: As-Safir Articles

### Zabadani battle rages on

The battle underway in the Syrian city of Zabadani is not an ordinary one. Its repercussions upon Lebanon — as well as Syria, of course — are beyond being limited to a mere isolated skirmish in the open conflict that has endured for years with armed factions that threaten Damascus, Beirut and beyond.

A source knowledgeable about the battlefield situation told As-Safir that the push by Syrian army units and Hezbollah forces inside Zabadani after almost four months of under-the-radar battles was deeper than anticipated, leading so far to losses that were lower than expected.

Battlefield sources also added that seizing control of the strategic city of Zabadani adjacent to the Lebanese border and close to the Damascus-Beirut international highway will be complete as soon as the city falls under total suppressive fire control, as its supply lines are severed, with the armed factions therein losing an important stronghold that constituted a weak point threatening the security of the Syrian capital. The source continued to state that, in curbing the Qalamoun threat, the battle for Zabadani was a turning point in the war with armed and takfiri factions, which, according to the source, constituted one of the severest blows in the battle for Qalamoun, that would have a

direct impact on the battles for east and west Ghouta, located on the perimeter of the capital, Damascus.

Large quantities of arms and funds were ferried from Aarsal to Zabadani through al-Toufayl, ultimately reaching the two Ghoutas — which brings back to mind the crisis cell bombing three years ago, and the subsequent determination that the C4 explosives used therein to assassinate Syrian military commanders were transported from Lebanon to Zabadani and finally to Damascus.

Zabadani, where estimates indicate that between 1,000 and 1,500 gunmen are entrenched — among them many who withdrew there after previous battles in Rankous and Asal al-Ward — not only greatly contributed to threatening the Syrian capital, but also the Lebanese border strip, as well as the vital international highway that links the two countries.

The source clarified that “while the battle for Qalamoun may be open-ended, the battle for Zabadani takes on a different meaning due to the need to remove it from the equation in the Syrian conflict along the Lebanese border” in order to bolster defenses around Damascus and put an end to the extortion practiced by insurgents who cut off the water supply of Damascus residents.

The knowledgeable source also indicated that following their successful breakthrough into the Jamiyat neighborhood, Syrian army and Hezbollah forces reached the perimeter

of Al-Hoda Mosque in the past few hours, without indicating that the battle was over. Furthermore, battlefield sources said that the danger of the city of Zabadani lay in the fact that it extended geographically from the Syrian south toward Deir al-Ashayer and the countryside of Quneitra, which gave militants the ability to disrupt the Damascus highway and threaten the capital from the south through Qatna al-Madamiya, as well as from the north and west, through the city of al-Tell. According to battlefield sources, from the very first day of battles, the Syrian army and Hezbollah managed to isolate Zabadani from its environs and Qalamoun from the north, as well as cut off its supply line toward Serghaya and Ain Houli toward Qalamoun, through a quick onslaught emanating from Bloudan on the east and Tell el-Sendyan in the village of Maadar on the north side, as troops converged and met in the center at the Kefr Amer Heights (1,411 meters [4,629 feet] above sea level), which overlook the heart of Zabadani city from the north. The same sources added that Hezbollah and the Syrian army utilized different tactics and combat strategies in the battle for Zabadani, whereby they relied on tightening the front line around the city as they gradually advanced and took control of areas held by the militants.

Insurgents are spread throughout the city of Zabadani, its surroundings and orchards over a land area of 25 square kilometers [nearly 10 square miles], where several factions

hold positions, such as the Ahrar al-Sham (Free Men of the Levant), considered to be the largest faction, followed by Jabhat al-Nusra and a number of Islamic State (IS)-affiliated groups, some members of which had fled from the previous years' battles of Qusair and Qalamoun. In addition, reports indicated new cases of desertion, whereby in excess of 200 militants fled toward the Madaya highlands of Qalamoun. In that context, the Syrian army announced that it now controlled the Sultana neighborhood east of the city, and indicated that "dozens of terrorists had been killed or wounded in the attack." Furthermore, on the day before last, army units completed their control of the al-Tell castle west of Zabadani, mere hours after military operations began.

Moreover, Reuters quoted militants as saying that "over 2,000 gunmen from various factions, including al-Nusra, planted mines and fortified their positions inside the city prior to the beginning of anticipated fierce street battles." Ahrar al-Sham militant Abdullah Enid added in this regard, "Our morale is high with the help of God. They shall not enter the city except on our martyred bodies."

A battlefield source further explained to As-Safir that the Zabadani battle was a key contact point along two fronts: the battle for Qalamoun and west Damascus. He opined that completing control over main areas of the Qalamoun would lead to the establishment of an integrated defensive line along the border with Lebanon, particularly

toward the Bekaa. The west Damascus front, on the other hand, would result in the cutting or besieging of insurgent supply lines, which, in the coming months, would affect the progress of battles in west Ghouta.

Heading right, along the international highway from Damascus toward the Lebanese border, leads to Bloudan, Zabadani and Madaya, while heading straight leads travelers to the Lebanese border. Thus, the geography of the locale reflects the importance of the battle for Zabadani, which would allow the protection of the international highway towards Lebanon at the crossing points of Jdeidat Yabous and Masnaa, as well as serve to protect the overlapping areas between the two countries from Serghaya to Zabadani along the eastern Syrian side of the border, and Nabi Sheet, Qosaya and Anjar on the Lebanese western side.

Before reaching Madaya, which bifurcates toward Bloudan and Zabadani, battles along the right side of the highway take on a different dimension in Wadi Barada, Ain al-Fijah, Deir Muqaran, Deir Qanun and Baqeen, where the war for potable water is an essential part of military strategy. The importance of the area thus lies in the Ain al-Fijah spring that supplies Damascus with potable water, which was the scene of combat between the Syrian army and insurgent factions that tried to cut off the water supply for the purpose, as their statements claimed, of pressuring the Syrian army into stopping its shelling of the Zabadani. In addition, the Baqeen water source is a key water tributary where the

bottling factory for Baqeen mineral water is located. The same battlefield source added to As-Safir that the Syrian army's total control over the city of Zabadani would mean the total collapse of the supply route used by insurgents in Wadi Barada, as well their complete encirclement.

The battlefield source further expounded on the importance of Zabadani and Qalamoun's border regions for the two countries, by reminiscing about the battle fought, in 1982, by the Syrian army against Israeli occupation forces in the Bekaa's Sultan Yacoub region. That was a battle that aimed to control the international highway and advance toward the Syrian border.

The Syrian army's control over Zabadani also shuts down a number of illegal border crossings between Lebanon and Syria, due to the fact that the town overlooks a range of hills and rugged trails between the two countries.

Despite the start of reconciliation efforts in several neighboring villages, Zabadani's fate was left hanging before the intensification of the siege around it, complemented by artillery shelling, airstrikes, and dozens of military operations aimed at isolating and besieging it, before ultimately storming it — all of which led to the displacement of its 50,000 residents to neighboring areas.

### **Aleppo's battle rages on**

For the past two days, battles in Aleppo stole the spotlight, only to wind down afterward. In Damascus, fierce battles were fought in Jobar, marring stability in the city, without bringing about any significant change to the map of power. Meanwhile, Syrian army forces and supporting factions continued with their advance into Hasakah, announcing full control over the eastern Nashwa neighborhood, reaching what's known as the electricity roundabout. This is in addition to advancements into al-Ghab, and the capture of four villages.

In Aleppo, despite the large-scale offensive started against the city from various positions in the past three days, Ansar al-Sharia, led by Jabhat al-Nusra, failed to achieve any infiltration or remarkable victory. Meanwhile, Fateh Halab [Aleppo Conquest] took advantage of the raging battles on the different battlefronts and advanced toward the western areas of Aleppo after its temporary control over the Scientific Research Center area, which protects the most delicate areas of western Aleppo. Then a huge defeat befell Fateh Halab after the Syrian army set up an ambush for the armed fighters of the Sham Revolutionary Brigades, leaving 10 fighters dead and taking around 25 others hostage.

As noted by an opposition source, this led to the eruption of disputes between the two operations, putting al-Nusra in a predicament, especially after the latter lost around 30 fighters — 10 of whom were first-order leading members — to a suicide bomb in a

mosque in Aleppo's Ariha. At the same time, the Syrian army continues to fortify the shield around Aleppo through mobilizing reinforcements to the rear-end battle lines, and recapturing many buildings in the Scientific Research Center area. The opposition source explained to As-Safir that on the first day of the launching of operations by Ansar al-Sharia, Fateh Halab decided to open parallel battlefronts in order to take advantage of the "dispersion of the Syrian army." He said that Ansar al-Sharia and Fateh Halab fought battles simultaneously, so much so that they formed an alliance in al-Zahraa neighborhood. The alliance then fell apart when 35 Fateh Halab fighters fell to an ambush set up by the Syrian army in al-Zahraa neighborhood after Jabhat al-Nusra fighters retreated from a nearby point and refused to support them. This led to the eruption of a dispute between the two rebel operations, which have been competing over announcing who has control, and seeking to steal the limelight for battles that lasted only for a few hours.

A jihadi source denied the accusations leveled against Ansar al-Sharia that it was responsible for the fighters falling victim to the ambush. He said that the "Fateh Halab leadership failed to achieve any victory in the past. What it did was attempt to take over the victories of Ansar al-Sharia." He noted that the "factions operating under the auspices of Ansar al-Sharia were disregarded when Fateh Halab established its command center, and here the latter is today looking to form an unannounced alliance

with them, and try to steal their victories."

In terms of field developments, a military source said that Syrian army forces have recaptured buildings in the environs of the Scientific Research Center in a step forward toward regaining control over the area. The source considered that the army is adamant that it will regain control over the area, considered as necessary to further fortify the shield around Aleppo — a city that is deemed a red line never to be crossed. The source said that the ambush set up by the Syrian army was of high impact, lifting the already-high morale of the Syrian army and discouraging the enemy who thought that Aleppo was up for grabs.

During the battles that erupted in the surroundings of Aleppo, a decreased reliance on the air force was shown. In the past, airpower contributed to fending off attacks. However, on the first day of the attack, the air force did not fly any sorties. This was considered by the military source as an indication of the balance of power in the battle and the readiness of the forces defending Aleppo. The forces were capable of absorbing the attack and achieving victory in direct confrontations, despite the fact that the enemy used heat-seeking missiles. On the second day, the air forces mounted a series of strikes, hitting the locations where armed groups were entrenched around Aleppo as well as the groups' supply routes. These strikes helped bring the battles temporarily to a halt. Although Ansar al-Sharia did not announce the failure or dissolution of its

command center, a field source believes that the fate of the center, as for its predecessors, was a failure. He said Jabhat al-Nusra had dragged itself into a dilemma in Aleppo, as the city would constitute a turning point for the worse for the al-Qaeda-affiliated organization, drunk on its victories in Idlib. What is more, the armed factions operating under the auspices of the Unified Military Command of eastern Ghouta failed to achieve any change in the map of power in Damascus after the announcement of Ayyam Badr battle. The battle aims at imposing control on different posts in the raging Jobar neighborhood, where fierce clashes took place in Zablalani, on the outskirts of Jobar. During the clashes, different weaponry was used and a tunnel was blown up. Also, the city of Damascus was targeted with 15 shells, hitting BabTuma, Dama Rose hotel and the square of the province, killing two civilians and injuring 10.

A field source explained that the battles, despite their ferocity, did not bring any change to the map of power. He explained that the Syrian forces deployed to confrontation lines absorbed the attack before allowing the air forces to intensify attacks on the rebel positions. The Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reported a military source as saying that the Syrian army was able to eradicate a number of terrorists in Jobar, Ein Terma, and eastern Ghouta, and destroy a mortar cannon and rocket-propelled grenades production.

In the central area of Syria, the Syrian army and supporting factions were able to further shield Al Ghab, which constituted a target for the attacks of Jabhat al-Nusra in last month. There, the Syrian army imposed control on four new villages, namely Al Karim, Al Ramle, Qaber Fedda and Ashrafiyh. This new developments incited the dormant battles on this battlefield.

### **Syrian army, Hezbollah advance in Zabadani**

The Syrian army and Hezbollah fighters yesterday [July 13] achieved strategic progress in the city of Zabadani as they blocked the main entrance linking the city to neighboring Madaya. Meanwhile, the Syrian army continued to crack down on Islamic State (IS) militants in Palmyra, and this has seemingly pushed IS to expand the engagement circle in a bid to find a way to relieve the existing pressure; it has waged a series of attacks in the vicinity of the T4 military airport in eastern Homs, as well as near the fourth natural gas station.

A military source told the Syrian news agency, SANA, that in cooperation with the Lebanese resistance, “Units of the army and the armed forces have sought control of areas toward the depth of Zabadani town and closed the main crossing point to Madaya after they eliminated large numbers of terrorists.”

This came amid progress made by the Syrian troops on the ground as they entered the electricity roundabout near the Huda mosque and Al-Haql Al-Asfar street and controlled

al-Sultani

neighborhood.

The Facebook page Harbi Press reported: “The mujahedeen of the resistance and the Syrian army repulsed a violent attack on the part of armed groups on the electricity roundabout in al-Sultani neighborhood, southeast of Zabadani. This followed a state of confusion that plagued the armed groups after the liberation of the neighborhood. The attack failed and the insurgents suffered both material and human losses amid a state of shock. This shock resulted from the fact that several armed groups did not know about the liberation of the neighborhood by the Syrian army and the resistance as a result of poor coordination between the leaders of the factions involved in the battle.”

In addition, the Syrian army is proceeding with its broad military operation launched on the archaeological city of Palmyra, and it has tightened the noose on IS militants. This has seemingly pushed IS to expand its engagement circle in a bid to find a way to relieve the pressure that it is facing. Meanwhile, IS militants have launched a series of attacks in the vicinity of the T4 military airport in the eastern countryside of Homs as well as near the fourth natural gas station.

The IS attacks led to the organization militants’ “temporary” settlement in the Althias village, which lies about 10 kilometers [6 miles] from the military airport. This took place after IS managed to penetrate and control the village following fierce fighting that lasted for more than seven hours, according to a field source.

A military source in the T4 airport denied to As-Safir the rumors about the targeting of the airport with car bombs, and added that the airport and its surroundings are totally safe, except for the breach that took place in the village of Althias that is currently being dealt with. The source stressed that “such a breach never affected the traffic movement at the airport and does not pose any threat to the airport,” which serves as an important starting point for military operations and one of the most prominent air support bases for the Syrian army.

After controlling the Althias village, IS gunmen set Grad missile launchers and targeted the fourth station housing as they tried to target the T4 airport before warplanes launched a series of airstrikes on the airport perimeter. These also targeted rocket launchers then launched a “small” military operation to restore the village and further fortify the airport perimeter.

A field source confirmed that the organization is attacking the airport perimeter to alleviate pressure on Palmyra, although it is well aware it cannot break through to the airport. At the western gate of Palmyra, fierce fighting is taking place while the Syrian army is slowly progressing. Clashes are currently concentrated in the ruins region and the driving school in the west of the city. The organization brought in military reinforcements, hindering the advance of the Syrian regime, which has come a long way in two days only before the clashes raged at the western entrance of Palmyra.

According to the same source, there are two main plans to deal with the developments in the ancient city. The first calls for stationing the army in the vicinity of the city to tighten the blockade, cutting off IS supply routes, in order to alleviate losses. This is especially true since the nature of the battles in Palmyra necessitate direct alliances and heavy weaponry. The Syrian army and its allied factions are likely to break into the city from its western gate, according to the circumstances of the battle.

In Hasakah, eastern Syria, the Syrian army continues its operations to regain control over the rest of al-Nashwa neighborhood, after having managed to restore its western part. Meanwhile, IS brought in large reinforcements in Shaddadi city and tried to launch a swift attack on the army by penetrating into new areas in the southwestern outskirts of the city.

A field source told As-Safir that IS fighters tried to infiltrate into al-Nashwa neighborhood toward the Habbo area, but the Syrian army units deployed on the contact point deterred their advance. The battles escalated until the army succeeded in deterring the attack, which killed many militants, while the rest backed off.

IS mourned Hammoud al-Hardan, one of its top commanders in the eastern region, who was in charge of the organization's operations in al-Nashwa neighborhood. He was killed in the battle of Hasakah.

In a related context, jihadi websites posted a video showing a US B1 aircraft shelling the

organization's locations in Hasakah, in an unprecedented development since IS entered the city. The Kurdish forces that had air cover still refused to engage in the battles; field sources refrained from confirming the news on bombings. Field sources also announced that more than 30 fighters affiliated with Jaish al-Fatah, led by Jabhat al-Nusra, were killed in an attempt to control the strategic Khattab hill to the east of Jisr al-Shughur city in the countryside of Idlib. Sources said that militants launched a violent attack in an attempt to control the hill but were confronted by the forces in charge of protecting in this area. At the same time, warplanes launched airstrikes targeting the militants' rear lines, killing the commander of the operations. The attack ended without any changes in the control map.

### **Aleppo's bloody June**

In a new attempt to shuffle the cards in northern Syria, which is currently witnessing conflicts at different levels, the jihadist and extremist factions have launched rocket attacks, mostly reaching the government-controlled neighborhoods in the southwestern part of Aleppo. Meanwhile, Jabhat al-Nusra has deployed its forces near demarcation lines with the Syrian army, as a way to lead the battle after other groups have failed to break into the city. More than 300 rockets and shells descended on the city, killing 42 civilians and wounding about 200, which made [June 15] the bloodiest in Aleppo since the outbreak

of the crisis about five years ago.

A pro-opposition source told As-Safir that the armed factions began to unite their ranks three months ago under a “single operations room” — dubbed “Aleppo Conquest Operations Room” — in order to storm the city. The countries supporting the factions, namely Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, started to send the weapons and equipment needed to break into the city, according to a major plan to conquer Idlib and Aleppo. In Idlib, the work has effectively started so that Jabhat al-Nusra would take the lead, which has led to much international pressure being placed on the states supporting the factions. Eventually, as a striking force, Jabhat al-Nusra has been excluded from the ranks of the armed groups.

This has foiled the plan that was set for Aleppo. Factions received orders to “stand their ground and wait,” which has been interpreted as “a conquest failure” among the armed groups. Many media statements by sources following up on the conflict in northern Syria were issued to mourn the battle before it even started. What has changed? The pro-opposition source spoke of urgent orders made to the factions affiliated with the Aleppo Conquest Operations Room to heavily bomb the city’s neighborhoods. During the clashes, the Badr Martyrs Battalion, based in Bani Zaid neighborhood, was using a Turkey-made rocket launcher in preparation for the “Aleppo Conquest.” This explains the heavy firepower on the axes connected to the neighborhood north of the city.

Following the orders to bomb the government-controlled neighborhoods in the city, Jabhat-al-Nusra-affiliated factions moved closer to the contact points with the Syrian army, in the axes of Bani Zaid and al-Rashidin, and were stationed in the rear lines of the factions that are deployed here. Some of the factions on the contact lines considered the order to bomb the city as an order to storm it. The Aleppo Conquest Operations Room launched a few violent attacks on al-Rashidin axes west of the city, and on the axes of Bani Zaid and Lirmoun, in an attempt to break into the city. In al-Rashidin area, US-made TAO missiles targeted some of the Syrian army's military vehicles, allowing the factions to "make a few meters progress in the area," according to a military source. However, the army forces contained the attack and hit back. The pro-opposition source stressed that "breaking into Aleppo is not possible without the participation of Jabhat al-Nusra," which owns the deadliest weapons, i.e., the suicide bombers. Bombing the city was made "to test the waters and the reaction of the Syrian army, as well as to send a message to the UN envoy to Syria, Staffan de Mistura, who is currently visiting Damascus. De Mistura held several meetings with Syrian diplomats before meeting with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. The factions have previously conveyed a message to the UN envoy to express their rejection of his former endeavors to freeze the fighting in Aleppo before he started on working for a third meeting in

Geneva on Syria,” the source added.

Regarding the close proximity of Jabhat al-Nusra to the site of the clashes, the source said, “Jabhat al-Nusra has brought in a thousand fighters from Idlib and Aleppo and is waiting for the factions to fail in their mission, in order to lead the way and try to exert its authority by force.”

It is remarkable that there was no major media campaign accompanying the violent attack on Aleppo, which was what the Aleppo Conquest Operations Room and its supporting states started to do at the beginning. However, no statements were made later on as there was no news on the latest attacks on any of the groups' websites, Twitter or Facebook, which were created to cover the developments of the “conquest of the city.” This demonstrates that “the order to bomb the city was made hastily and is currently limited to targeting the city only and to engage in side battles on the already flared fronts.”

A military source confirmed that the Syrian army and the supporting factions have deterred attacks and contained the situation. The source added that Syrian air forces have intensified airstrikes on the missile launching locations toward the city, managing to destroy several bases. In the meantime, the Syrian army forces have intensified the combing of the areas of contact with the armed factions, which help stop the attack on several axes.

In the same vein, the military source added that the Syrian army has reinforced its presence on several contact points and sent reinforcements to different axes. Meanwhile, the supporting factions (including the National Defense Force, the Baath Brigades, the Local Defense force and al-Quds Brigade) have also reinforced their forces on the contact points so as to hold off any sudden attacks in the future.

## **Appendix B: The Daily Star Articles**

### **Bomb, rockets kill 19 civilians in Syria's Aleppo: activists**

BEIRUT: At least 19 civilians, including five children, were killed by a Syrian regime barrel bomb attack and rebel rocket fire in Aleppo, an activist group said Thursday.

Fifteen of the dead, among them four of the children, came in the barrel bomb strike on a rebel-held district of the divided northern city, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

“The children were aged under 10,” said Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman, adding that a pregnant woman was also among Wednesday's dead.

The crude explosives-filled container hit a building in the northeastern neighborhood of Karam al-Beik as residents were sitting down to the iftar meal, which breaks the daytime fast observed during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

The other four civilians were killed by rebel rocket fire on the government-held district of Midane, the Observatory said.

For the past three years, Syria's pre-war economic hub has been divided between a government-held western sector and a rebel-held eastern one.

The rebels launched a major offensive in the first week of July to try to advance the front line. More than 220,000 people have been killed in Syria since the conflict began with anti-government protests in March 2011 that were met with a bloody crackdown.

**Hezbollah, Syrian army seize main entrance to Zabadani: Al-Manar**

**BEIRUT:** Hezbollah and the Syrian army Monday captured the "main entrance" to a key border city that has been scene of intense fighting over the past two weeks, Al-Manar reported. The Hezbollah-run station said the allied forces captured the Hay al-Sultani neighborhood in Zabadani's southeastern region, leaving scores of militants dead or wounded. The report said the latest advance has led to the closure of the "main entrance to the city," isolating Zabadani from the neighboring mountain town of Madaya. Al-Manar said the allies destroyed a house rigged with explosives after targeting it with a rocket, showing footage of white plumes of smoke emerging from the blast site. The footage also showed Hezbollah fighters swarming an area of the city with the sound of heavy gunfire in the background. Other scenes showed Hezbollah fighters firing rocket-propelled grenades and automative weapons from inside and on top of residential buildings that had been evacuated. The video also showed the city's Al-Huda Mosque intact, dispelling media reports that claimed they had damaged the religious

landmark during the battle. Monday's gain comes after the allies issued an ultimatum to Syrian rebel factions to surrender or die, a source close to Hezbollah told The Daily Star over the weekend. It was believed that the rebels had been trapped inside Zabadani since their escape routes were cut off on July 4, but Monday's report suggests they still had access to some villages south of the village. Hezbollah and the Syrian army launched the offensive to retake the town earlier this month, hoping to bolster their control of land routes between Lebanon and Syria. The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, revealed that Hezbollah's overall death toll now stands at 12, while at least 16 Syrian army soldiers and 200 militants have been killed in the battle. Hezbollah and Syrian troops also managed to capture around 43 rebels, the source added. The capture of the largest Qalamoun city would add to Hezbollah's recent victories in Lebanon's eastern mountain range since launching a wider offensive to oust militants from the border region in early May. Zabadani is located on the southern end of Qalamoun, about 50 kilometers northwest of Damascus and 12 kilometers northeast of Lebanon's Masnaa border crossing.

### **Iran deal may make region more dangerous: Saudi official**

RIYADH: Iran's nuclear deal with world powers will mean "a happy day" if it stops the country gaining a nuclear arsenal, but the agreement would prove bad if it allowed Tehran to "wreak havoc in the region", a Saudi official said Tuesday. The official told

Reuters Iran had destabilized the whole Middle East through its activities in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen and added that if the deal allowed it concessions, the region would become more dangerous.

### **Hezbollah tightens the noose in Zabadani**

BEIRUT: Hezbollah and the Syrian army pushed deeper into the Qalamoun city of Zabadani Wednesday, tightening the noose on Syrian militants who are besieged in their last stronghold along Lebanon's border. Allied forces destroyed a militant convoy using rocket fire in the Al-Zahra neighborhood, located in northwest Zabadani, the Hezbollah-owned Al-Manar TV reported Wednesday. The attack, according to the report, killed all the passengers in the vehicle. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an activist group, reported that Syrian warplanes continued to fire at militant positions in the city, as the army, backed by Hezbollah, clashed with rebel factions. According to the Observatory's report, at least one man was killed as a result of the clashes and several others were wounded. The report did not identify which side the casualty belonged to. Meanwhile, a rebel fighter succumbed to his wounds after being shot by a sniper in previous battles, the Observatory reported. Wednesday's advance comes one day after allied forces destroyed a 360-meter tunnel passed under the main highway linking Zabadani, located 8 kilometers from Lebanon's eastern border, to the village of Madaya. The rebels have been largely trapped in the town after most of their exit routes were cut

off in the first few days of the fighting. The allied forces issued an ultimatum to Syrian rebels over the weekend to either surrender or die. Before Tuesday, at least 43 rebels had surrendered, according to the source, with a further nine surrendering Tuesday. Hezbollah and the Syrian army launched the offensive to retake the town around the start of the month, hoping to bolster their control of land routes between Lebanon and Syria. The source said over the weekend that Hezbollah's overall death toll stood at 12, while at least 16 Syrian army soldiers and 200 militants had been killed in the battle. The capture of the largest Qalamoun city would add to Hezbollah's recent victories in Lebanon's eastern mountain range since launching a wider offensive to oust militants from the border region in early May. Zabadani is located on the southern end of Qalamoun, about 50 kilometers northwest of Damascus and 12 kilometers northeast of Lebanon's Masnaa border crossing.