The Use of the Passive Voice in Selected Native and Non-Native

English Editorials: A Corpus Based Study

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ملخص

يعتبر هذا البحث لكتاب ناطقين باللغة الإنجليزية و غير ناطقين بها لتحليل كيفيه تصوير الصراع السوري والفليسطيني بها. يتم التحليل عن طريق القاء الضوء علي استخدام الكتاب لأسلوب المبني للمجهول و مدي دقته في التعبير عن اتجاهات الصحف في الأهرام الأسبوعي و النيو يورك تايمز الأمريكية. كما يهدف إلي التركيز علي السمات المميزة للصحف في بناء النص التي تعكس الأيديولوجيات والزوايا السياسية و دراسة نحوية مبنية علي علم المدونات لتحليل مقالات افتتاحية مختارة الاجتماعيه باستخدام نموذج فان دايك (٢٠٠٠) للتحليل النقدي للكلام.

Abstract

This research is a corpus-based study of the use of the passive voice in the depiction of the Syrian and Palestinian conflict in *The New York Times* and *Al-Ahram weekly* editorials in 2015. The data are analyzed quantitatively using Clusters/N Grams tool in the Antconc 3.4.4Software to find out the rates and distributions of the passive sentences in both newspapers. Afterwards, explanations and clarifications of these results are completed qualitatively using the framework of the socio-cognitive approach of Van Dijk (2000). Special consideration is devoted to how the use of the passive voice reveals hidden ideologies in the examination of the Middle East Politics.

Key words: Passive voice, Van Dijk (2000), Corpus Analysis, Editorials, Middle East

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1. Introduction

The current epoch is always referred to as the age of information. In the age of globalization the world has become a small enormous village because of information and communication. At the same time, press is probably one of the vital needs of societies, from domestic to national, from national to international that includes a variety of topics such as politics, health, industry, sports and entertainment. It forms new social relations and creates new ways of representing the other. It plays a crucial role in peoples' and governments' decision-making. In fact, language is reflected in our modern society in every aspect such as services, telecommunication, technical and technological evolution, in addition to the public opinion and political arena. Accordingly, "communication is what makes relationships possible and the specificity of human species is that the privileged medium of communication, unknown for other species, is language" (Martin,1995, p.6).

During the course of the twentieth century, linguists realized the role that computers could play in the linguistic analysis. They were able to recognize multifarious relations between language that undergoes continuous change and computers, as machines, that deal only with figures. The origin of computational linguistics (CL) is a crucial step in the development of both computers and linguistics, as linguists have perceived the value of using computer in their analysis. Actually, quantitative linguistics is a branch of linguistics that makes use of statistical techniques to study linguistic phenomena. The implementation of statistical techniques, as long as they are not considered as an end, made a revolution in this field. The introduction of computers into the study of language not only enabled linguists to face old problems in a better way, but also it

enabled them to tackle ones that were not previously explored (Crystal, 1993).

2. Objective of the Study:

This paper aims at digging deep into the analysis of newspaper's ideologies through analyzing the use of the passive voice quantitatively and qualitatively. The research targets the discursive representation of the Syrian and Palestinian conflict in *The New York Times* and *Al-Ahram weekly* in 2015 to evaluate hidden ideologies in both newspapers. The quantitative analysis is completed by using the Clusters/N Grams tool in the Antconc 3.4.4Software to find out the rates and distributions of the passive sentences in the two newspapers. Subsequently, elucidations and explanations of these results are done qualitatively using the framework of the socio-cognitive approach of Van Dijk (2000) as a toolkit for the analysis.

3. Study Questions

As a result, the present study aims at answering the following questions:

1-   How is the passive voice used to reflect the newspapers' ideologies? And what impact could this grammatical divice have on the recipients?

2-   How could computer software be used as a tool to examine the use of the passive voice?

4. Why have Editorials been Chosen?

Ideologies are the basic systems of fundamental social cognition. They organize the attitudes, situations and other social aspects shared by different groups. They are collective ideas or beliefs which serve to validate the interests of dominant groups. Editorials are ideological

representations that usually "express or signal the opinions, perspective, position, interests or other properties of groups" (Van Dijk, 1991, p.112).

The main function of editorials is "the expression and persuasive communication of opinions" (Van Dijk, 1996, p.3). They make up a relevant body of text for the examination of predominant ideological assumptions in society. Thus, the emphasis on the difference "between 'Us' and 'Them'" will depend on "the political orientation of the newspaper" (Van Dijk, 1992, p.245).

Editorials are usually organized along three schematic categories. They define the situation and give a summary of the news event. They present an evaluation of the situation, especially of actions and actors. They advance pragmatic conclusions in the form of expectations, recommendations, advice, and warnings (Van Dijk, 1992).

One of the most significant works conducted on the editorials from this point of view is that of Fowler (1991), which is based on the assumption that "the content in the editorials is not facts about the world, but in a very general sense ideas" (Fowler, 1991, p.1). In a similar vein, Van Dijk (1998a) defines the concept of ideology from a socio-cognitive point of view, contending that the editorials and the "op-ed" articles in the press are opinions and ideologies, which involve mental representations.

To study newspaper editorials, he proposes a model, integrating the production, as well as the interpretation of discourse. His theoretical framework constitutes three main factors, namely social functions, cognitive structures, and discursive expressions and reproductions. Van Dijk (2016, p.10) pays more attention to the production and interpretation of texts. In his model, ideology is accorded a more important position and has the function of polarizing in and out groups, "this polarization between

Us (ingroup) and *Them (Outgroup)* may appear in the specific social attitudes, and then in the mental models and the discourses expressing such models."

5. Methodology

The data analyzed in the present study consists primarily of most of the editorials featured in *The New York Times* (hereafter NYT) and *Al-Ahram weekly* including topics on 'Syria' and 'Palestine' which were published in 2015. The reason behind choosing these two media outlet is that they are prominent in their respective countries. The corpus, as a whole, consists of 94,428 tokens divided as *Al-Ahram Weekly* (43 articles; 60,928tokens), and *NYT* (50 articles, 32,883 tokens). These texts are saved as word document files entitled Al Ahram Weekly and the New York Times. The data collected are summarized in the following table below:

Source	Number of editorials	Number of words
The New York Times	50	32, 883
Al-Ahram weekly	43	60, 928

6. Theoretical Framework

6.1 Tuen Van Dijk: The Socio-Cognitive Approach

The researcher uses the socio-cognitive approach (2000) adopted by Teun Van Dijk. In fact, he is one of the leading figures and pioneers of study and research in the domain of CDA. Most of his critical works are concerned with prejudice, racism, and xenophobia in discourse. According to Van Dijk (2015 a), CDA is "a social movement of politically committed

discourse analysts", because CDA "primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in social and political context" (p.466).

According to Van Dijk (1988), CDA is concerned with studying and analyzing written texts and spoken words to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias, and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced and transformed within specific social, economic, political, and historical contexts.

Van Dijk offers a "schema" of relations between ideology, society, cognition and discourse: within social structures, social interaction takes place. This social interaction is presented in the form of text/discourse, which is then cognitized according to a cognitive system/memory. This "system/memory" consists of short-term memory, in which "strategic process," interpretation takes place. Long-term memory, however, serves as a holder of "socio-cultural knowledge, "which consists of knowledge of language, discourse, communication, persons, groups and events-existing in the form of "scripts". "Social (groups) attitudes" also reside within long-term memory and provide further decoding guides. Each of these "group attitudes" can represent an array of ideologies which combine to create one's own personal ideology which conforms to one's identity, goals, social position, values and resources (Van Dijk, 1991, p. 44-45). As for ideology, Van Dijk (1995) defines ideologies in socio-cognitive terms as

[F]undamental social cognitions that reflect the basic aims, interests and values of groups. They may (metaphorically and hence vaguely) be seen as the fundamental cognitive 'programmes' or 'operating systems' that organize and monitor the more specific social attitudes of groups and their members (p. 243).

As for the present study, the researcher adopts Van Dijk's (2000) approach of analyzing editorials in order to uncover ideologies in newspaper editorials. He sets the following suggestions for ideological analysis (Van Dijk, 1998a, p.61) :

 (a) Examine the context of the discourse,

(b) Analyze which groups, power relations and conflicts are involved,

(c) Look for positive and negative opinions about Us and them,

(d) Spell out the presupposed and the implied, and

(e) Examine all formal structures that (de)emphasize polarized group opinions.

6.2 Corpus Linguistics

Corpus Linguistics is considered a new field of Computational Linguistics (CL) that presents some advanced techniques to analyze specific corpora to get lexical and grammatical results. In fact, corpus linguistics is a branch of linguistics that studies "a finite set of linguistic utterances that serve as an empirical basis for linguistic research." (Hadumod, 1996, p.106).

According to Hadumod's Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics (1996) 'Corpus' is "A finite set of concrete linguistic utterances that serves as an empirical basis for linguistic research. The value and quality of the corpus depend largely upon the specific approach and methodology of the theoretical framework of the given study"(p.260).

As for Baker (2010), the word "corpus" is derived mainly from "Latin". It means "body"; the plural form is "corpora". Therefore, a corpus is "a body of language usually a very large collection of naturally occurring language, stored as a computer file" (pp.5-6).

Actually, using computers in linguistic analysis allows linguists to analyze bigger quantity of corpora by helping them in the processes of sorting, searching and counting, which are very beneficial in the linguistic analysis.

6.3 AntConc (3.4.4) Software:

AntConc is a freeware corpus analysis toolkit which comprises word lists and keyword frequency producers, a powerful concordancer, in addition to several tools for lexical and grammatical analysis. This software can be downloaded freely from the following website http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/AntConc/releases/AntConc 344/help.pdf. The study makes use of the following tools to detect the passive voice

1-   Clusters/ N-Grams

2-   Concordance lines

6.4 Combining Critical discourse Analysis (CDA) and Corpus Linguistics (CL)

An important question arises here which is how can linguists make use of corpus linguistics. Baker et al. (2008) state that "more recently, it seems that use of CL techniques is becoming increasingly popular in critical approaches to discourse analysis" (p.275).

According to Baker (2010, pp.8-9), the two approaches could benefit from each other in many ways. Firstly "both entail the collection and analysis of naturally occurring language …and both place a great deal of emphasis on language in use or social context."

Secondly, both "make use of quantitative methodologies in order to carry out comparison of different populations focusing on differences and similarities." Thirdly, both "use sampling techniques in order to able to be able to extrapolate claims to a wider population". Fourthly, both

"examine variation and change." They focus on the "linguistic features as phonics, morphology, lexis, grammar, discourse and pragmatics."

Finally, both approaches seek to "provide explanation for the findings that their research produces." As for the present study which applies CDA and pragmatics, corpus linguistics will have a crucial role in the analysis. According to (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001),

> There might be a large number of potentially patterns that escape the attention of the traditional linguists, these will not be recorded in traditional reference work and may not even be recognized until they are forced upon the corpus analyst by the sheer visual presence of the emerging patterns in a concordance page (p.86).

Partington (2003, p. 12) presents a panoramic examination of the usage of CL methodology to carry out CDA.

> At the simplest level, corpus technology helps find other examples of a phenomenon one has already noted. At the other extreme, it reveals patterns of use previously unthought-of. In between, it can reinforce, refute or revise a researcher's intuition and show them why and how much their suspicions were grounded."

Similarly, Biber (2011, p. 16) comments on the importance of using corpus analysis saying that it "includes consideration of language use, including the study of lexical and grammatical variation, discourse patterns, spoken and written register variation".

The advantage of using CL with CDA lies in the fact that thousands of words are checked and scanned automatically using computers. Thus,

very sophisticated kinds of calculations can be done to get all the grammatical and lexical items and provide the kind of texts in detail.

As for the present paper, the researcher makes use of CL to investigate and identify the use of the passive voice in the two newspapers in portraying Middle East politics in a feasible way. In fact, CL is a time-saving methodology that analyzes and compares language varieties in native and non-native English editorials.

.7. Criteria of Analysis

7.1 Active and passive sentences

According to Van Dijk (2000), "the order of words may signal whether the meaning expressed by some words is more or less emphasized, and it needs little argument that such emphasis or lack of emphasis has ideological implications" (p. 55). He proves his point of view by citing an example about passivization. He states that "the agent may be completely left implicit, for instance, in such passive sentences as 'The demonstrators were arrested" (p. 55). As a result, there are three options that can be used manipulatively by various writers to mention the doer of the action; i.e. whether the doer is foregrounded, or back grounded or deleted.

Fairclough also affirms this point of view (1989) by stating that the attempt to foreground or hide agent is in some cases to avoid redundancy, but in some other cases the aim is the "obfuscation of agent and causality." (p.125). This is done through (a) deleting agency; (b) reifying; (c) positing reified concepts as agents; (d) maintaining unequal power relations." (p. 6) as Billig, (2008) argues about the ideological features of related to nominalization and passivization.

Van Dijk (1998a, p.203) has discussed this point, by stating that "agency and responsibility for actions may similarly be emphasized or de-emphasized, for example by active or passive sentences, explicit or

implicit subjects, as well as word order." In fact, making use of these technique could, in many cases, be manipulative and carry ideological meaning.

Stephen King, the famous American writer, states that passive voice is the choice of uncertain people who preferred the safest expressions of their thoughts. He claims that it is fragile, circular, and in many cases indirect. (King, 2000). In fact, the use of the passive voice draws the reader's attention to the object of the sentence. The use of active and passive sentences is ideologically loaded because "such choices, which the language system both enables and forces us to make in every utterance, are precisely the points at which the operation of ideology can and does occur" (Xie, 2013, p.42).

Hence, the passive is employed in many cases to conceal identity and responsibility which could marginalize certain groups or highlight positive acts of the in-group and deemphasize any positive traits of the others by stigmatizing their practices through the use of the passivization technique.

0.8 **Analysis**

By tracking the concordance lines in both corpora, it becomes clear that both newspapers have used this grammatical technique to express their own point of view concerning the various events that are happening in the Middle East. The following chart reflects that 21 % of the *New York Times'* editorials are in the passive voice compared to 28 % of *Al Ahram Weekly's* editorials. These percentages need to be fully and precisely analyzed to realize whether the use of the passive voice is a characteristic of editorial writing or it is used to reflect certain ideological stance towards various political events. Accordingly, the researcher examines the sentences to see if the actor is unidentified or extraneous, or

the passive voice is intentionally used to make the responsible agent vague and unambiguous. Moreover, it is important to investigate if the passive voice is used to deal with a general truth or to highlight the person or thing acted on.   Chart 1: percentage of passive voice in both newspapers

Percentage of Passive Voice sentences (New York Times) 21%

Percentage of Passive Voice sentences (Al Ahram Weekly) 28%
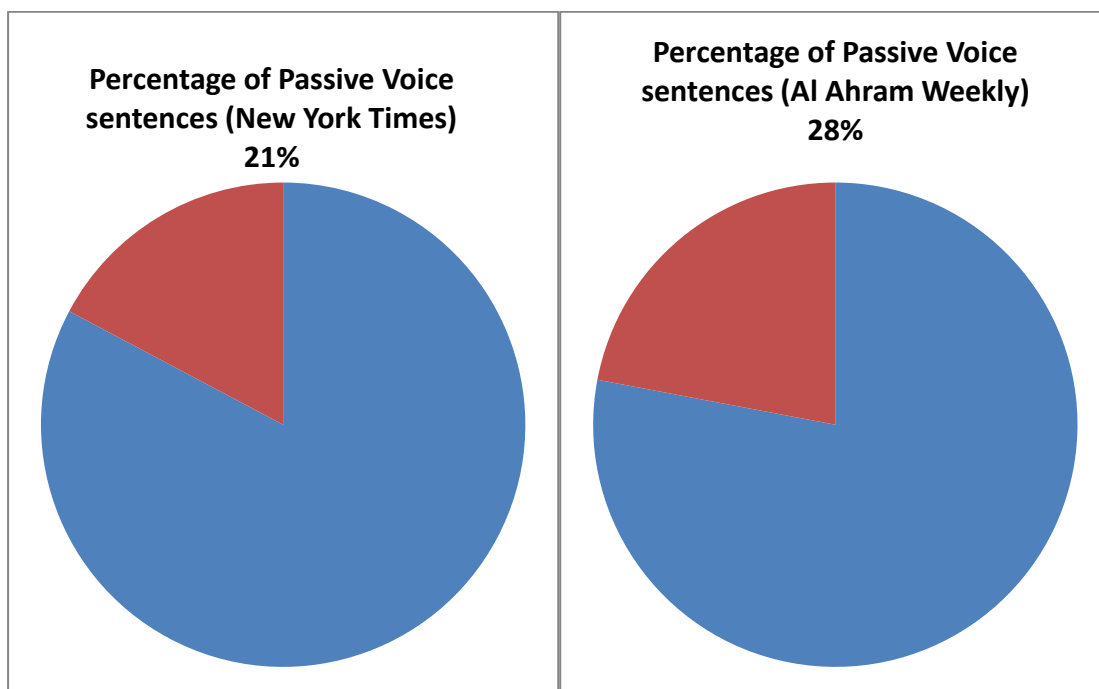
New York Times

The writers successfully use the passive voice to achieve many aims. For instance, in leaving the doer or the responsible agent unknown and vague, the writers make use of this technique in many instances as in:

- By incrementally increasing its combat role in a vast, complicated battleground, the United States **is being sucked** into a new Middle East war. Each step in that direction can only breed the desire to do more. (Concordance hit 108, New York Times).
- He told lawmakers that despite some setbacks, progress **is being made** in the military campaign. But his startling

responses to questions from senators offered no reason to believe that is true. (Concordance hit 203, New York Times).

- The military campaign that began more than a year ago, and has cost more than $4 billion, **is still being waged** under the authority of the congressional authorization passed to pursue the perpetrators of the Sept. 11 attacks. (Concordance hit 111, New York Times).

- The initial plan was dubious. The new one is hallucinatory, and **it is being rolled out** as the war enters a more perilous phase now that Russia has significantly stepped up its military support of Mr. Assad's forces. (Concordance hit 185, New York Times).

There are two remarks concerning the above examples that tackle the situation of the American military forces in Syria. The first remark is about the tense. The writers tend to use the present continuous tense to show that the actions are happening during the current time and thus the United States is still "sucked" in this war and is still "waged". So this gives excuse to the American leaders because according to the newspapers "progress is being made" in war for Syria. The second remark, in referring to the progress or the setbacks of the American military forces or any future plans for the uncertain situation in Syria, the passive voice is used to avoid any responsibility, because the situation in Syria is unclear yet, and they want no one to be blamed, and thus directing the public mind to believe such facts.

The passive voice is also used in referring to "efforts" and "actions" that must be implemented by the United States to settle down the situation in Syria. The writers influence the public mind by leaving the situation vague without showing who is supposed to exert the effort or to

put into action. This again reflects the situation in Syria which is controlled by various forces, and no one knows precisely his role in this war or who is ready to bear the responsibility. These claims can be validated in the following examples:

- Every effort **should** thus **be made** to ensure that institutions in Syria continue to function once Mr. Assad **is moved out** of the government. Mr. Obama told the United Nations he was willing to work on Syria with Russia and Iran, which **had** previously **been excluded**. (Concordance hit 139, New York Times).

- **Firm and coordinated action is** also **required** to deprive the Islamic State, also known as ISIS or ISIL, the enormous sums of money it requires to sustain its reign of terror. (Concordance hit 216, New York Times).

- On Monday, America and France expanded intelligence-sharing; other countries **should be included**. Even before the killings in Paris, the United States last week intensified attacks on facilities that help finance the Islamic State through the sale of oil. More **effort must be made** to shut down all revenue streams to ISIS; the porous Turkish border with Syria remains a huge problem on this front.(Concordance hit 131-132, New York Times).

The passive voice is also utilized in referring to the shattering and devastating situation of the Arab countries in which some of them are "divided" in their decisions and their people are "killed". The writers back ground the responsible agents. Nevertheless, in some instances, the doer or the agent is mentioned clearly especially when it is related to the other camp, "Russia", "Iran", "Al-assad" and the "Jihadists". This camp, according to the newspaper's policy, is responsible for the killing of the

Syrian people. The passive voice is used to focus on their brutal actions. Moreover, mentioning numbers also helps in persuading the readers of their point of view, as it adds credibility to their claims. This is clear in the following examples:

- One major problem is that Arab countries **are divided** on who the main enemy is, making it impossible to focus resources on defeating ISIS. (Concordance hit 108, New York Times).

- The Islamic State has launched its all-out assault on civilization in our time, and in a region where local authority **has been damaged by civil war**, **and outside powers**, notably the United States, have intervened without success. (Concordance hit 51, New York Times).

- **The dictator**, **armed and aided by Russia and Iran**, retaliated with his air force and barrel bombs, fueling a civil war in which some **200,000 Syrians have been killed and countless towns destroyed**. (Concordance hit 20, New York Times).

- People who **have been tortured** and **threatened by the same jihadists,** the United States now battles. They are families, they are old people and they are children, who **might be given** a chance for an education and a future. (Concordance hit 65, New York Times).

- In the meantime, **millions of Syrians have been killed, maimed or forced to flee** to Europe, and **countries of the region are being further destabilized by the endless violence.** (Concordance hit 32, New York Times).

According to Oil and Gas Journal, Syria is considered one of the major crude oil generating country in the Eastern Mediterranean region that

comprises Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian territories. Thus, crude oil plays a vital role in the American policy. However, in dealing with this issue, the passive voice is merely used to conceal and hide the responsible agent and to focus only on the process of selling and transporting the crude oil. This is illustrated in the following examples:

- **Crude oil is sold** to middlemen and smugglers with customers in Iraq and Syria, including the Syrian regime, and beyond. (Concordance hit 158, New York Times).

- The **oil is transported** mainly in tanker trucks and oil drums; most of the transactions are in cash, which makes them hard to track and disrupt. (Concordance hit 221, New York Times).

- Hundreds of tanker trucks, carting oil to markets in Turkey and Iraq, **have also been bombed** as part of a plan to cripple production. Apart from this effort, the challenge now is attacking the group's sources of revenue that extend far beyond oil. (Concordance hit 43, New York Times).

In the Israeli-Palestinian long conflict, the passive voice is also employed to create complex and vague expressions in speaking about the political situations and the victims of this conflict. It is also clear from the following examples that the writers in the *New York Times* mainly link the Israeli and the Palestinian people in one subject, as if they are both suffering from the same humanitarian problems, and they are struggling to achieve their rights. They do not bear in mind the severe humanitarian conditions of the Palestinians as a result of the brutal Israeli occupation. This is clear in:

- Israelis and Palestinians **are trapped** in political hothouses of their own making, incapable of surprising each other with

anything positive, and desperately in need of a friendly third-party dose of common sense. (Concordance hit 13, New York Times).

- Since October more than 20 Israelis and more than 100 Palestinians **have been killed** in what some are calling a third intifada. This is the status quo. (Concordance hit 1, New York Times).

Al-Ahram Weekly

The writers effectively use the passive voice for many purposes. By tracking the concordance hits, the researchers finds out that the passive voice, in addition to emotive and metaphoric language, is used heavily in speaking about the struggle of the Palestinian people. Narrating stories in the passive voice is excessively used as a soft power to arouse emotions in *Al-Ahram Weekly* as an evidence of the agony of the people in Palestine. This can be shown in many instances, as in:

- An entire generation **has been born and grown up in darkness**. It is also a generation that has witnessed three wars in less than six years. It is a **generation that has been left alone** in its struggle to overcome the trauma and psychological damage caused by 51 days of Israeli aggression. Meanwhile, **the parents of these children are denied the right to rebuild**, let alone deal with their own losses and pain. (Concordance hit 9-10-11, Al-Ahram Weekly).
- Scattered across the Middle East and prevented by Israel from returning home, Palestinian landowners who overnight **had been turned into refugees** did not need to ask about the fate of their homes. **The broken bodies and spirits of the hundreds**

of thousands who had been forced into exile answered their question: Palestine was no more.(Concordance hit 44-45, Al-Ahram Weekly).

- **But the story of Mohamed and the words of his father also represent the story of a grand nation with a rich culture and history, one that has been abandoned by humanity** but that has given rise to a determined people with aspirations and an unshakable belief in their rights and cause. The refugees are resilient and steadfast despite the horrors to which **they have been subjected**. They are still able to question and to look for alternatives. (Concordance hit 46-47, Al-Ahram Weekly).

- The refugees have started to address publicly the reality that many of them have shared privately, namely that the **Palestinians are being erased** not just by Israel, but also by the powers that endorsed the 1948 tragedy and that have allowed it to continue unchallenged. They **are being further harmed by the silence** of complicit governments. (Concordance hit 111-112, Al-Ahram Weekly).

- **Torrents of pure hatred have been directed by soldiers, police and civilians against Palestinians** accused of stabbing Jewish Israelis, many of them East Jerusalem or West Bank settlers. **Unarmed Palestinians have been killed**. Even **children have been shot dead or wounded**, with **one cursed by onlookers** even as he lay in a pool of his own blood. (Concordance hit 91-92-93, Al-Ahram Weekly).

It is also noteworthy that *Al-Ahram weekly* writers have used the passive structures with the verb "brainwash" five times, and at the same time, the agent has been explicitly provided, which is "the Zionist

propaganda". On the other side, there has not been any trace of this verb in the *New York Times* editorials. Actually, it is clear that one of the main goals of the newspaper is to prove that it is not against the Jews but it adopts a clear and a firm stance toward Zionism as a movement. This is shown in the following examples:

- This is why I have always regarded the Jews as being the intellectual elite of the Western world. And that in turn is why I am amazed that many **Jews have allowed themselves to be brainwashed by Zionist propaganda** and are beyond reason on the matter of justice for the Palestinians as a consequence. (Concordance hit 1, Al-Ahram Weekly).

- Born in Tel Aviv in 1953 to Czech parents who fled the Nazi Holocaust, **Levy** started life as a normal Israeli, **brainwashed by Zionist propaganda.** (Concordance hit 2, Al-Ahram Weekly).

- The truth is that **most Israeli Jews have been brainwashed by Zionist propaganda** to the point where they are beyond reason on the matter of justice for the Palestinians. (Concordance hit 3, Al-Ahram Weekly).

- The nuclear-armed Zionist (not Jewish) state of Israel is the regional superpower and not remotely interested in peace on terms the Palestinians could accept. **The vast majority of its Jews have been brainwashed by Zionist propaganda** and, as a consequence, are not open to rational and reasoned discussion about justice for the Palestinians. (Concordance hit 4, Al-Ahram Weekly).

- The values reflected by those realities are welded together in **many Israeli Jews who have been brainwashed by Zionist**

propaganda, of which Netanyahu, with his sickening self-righteousness, is the master. (Concordance hit 5, Al-Ahram Weekly).

The borders between Gaza and Egypt have been problematic for a long time. The Rafah border crossing is the only crossing line between Gaza and Egypt. The Egyptian government shuts and opens the borders according to many security measures such as smuggling tunnels or militants, or for humanitarian cases. The writer omits the agent which is very important for the readers so as to create a complete idea of the situation and to comprehend the underlying meaning behind this decision. This omission may be used by the writers to adopt a biased stance towards all parties, as the newspaper is governed and financed by the government. This is clear in:

- The Rafah crossing into the outside world the Gazans' only escape route not controlled by Israel **has been shut** most of the past year. Officials apply strict criteria when determining who **will be allowed** to leave. Since the beginning of 2014, this crossing **has been mainly closed**, except for a few sporadic days when it was partly open. (Concordance hit 11-12, Al-Ahram Weekly).

Similar to the *New York Times*, *Al-Ahram Weekly* resorts mainly to the passive voice in speaking about the gross toll of victims in the Syrian conflict. This is clear in

- Considering that more than 3**00,000 Syrians have been killed** in the war so. **Those who perished in Syria have been victimised by all warring parties**, and **the bullets** that killed, **the shells** that devastated neighborhoods, and the rockets that

randomly toppled homes originate from too many directions to count. (Concordance hit 153-154, Al-Ahram Weekly).

- Today, and since July in particular, refugees has come to refer to **12 million displaced Syrian persons**, **eight million of whom have been driven from their homes to other parts of Syria** and four million of whom have fled abroad, especially to Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt. (Concordance hit 149, Al-Ahram Weekly).

- Moreover, it is no longer always certain where the refugees came from exactly, as **many have been displaced a number of times**. (Concordance hit 150, Al-Ahram Weekly).

9. Conclusion

In conclusion, it appears that *Al-Ahram Weekly* has used the passive voice more than the *New York Times*. As explained in the previous examples, the passive voice is used by the two newspapers to express a certain ideological message to the readers. Both of them have utilized it to deliver a certain political and conceptual messages regarding the conflict in the Middle East, based on the ideology these newspapers adopt or the institutions they belong to. It is also important to show that in 2015 The *New York Times* pays much time and space to tackle the Syrian war unlike *Al-Ahram Weekly*, that allocates most of its time in defending the Palestinian rights. Finally, it is hoped that this research fills a gap in the field of CDA and CL and in the examination of newspapers

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APPENDIX

The headlines of the editorials which are taken as a source of this study are mentioned in this section. By inserting the headline in the search box of the website, the editorials can be found.

A- www.nytimes.com

1- The Assassination of Israel that works.

2- Ripples of the Iran Deal.

3- Telling Mideast Negotiators, 'Have a Nice Life'.

4- The Vatican and the Palestinians.

5- Accounting for the Benefits of Mideast Peace.

6- Afghanistan, Empires and the Grateful Dead.

7- Buried Truths About Nazi Mass Murder and the Allied Victory.

8- Keeping Palestinian Hopes Alive.

9- Shifting Realities in Syria.

10- Russia's Dangerous Escalation in Syria.

11- The Danger of a Quagmire in Iraq and Syria.

12- The Military Escalation in Iraq and Syria.

13- Mr. Putin's Mixed Messages on Syria.

14- Russia's Risky Military Moves in Syria.

15- Putin and Obama have profound Differences in Syria.

16- Retroactively Authorizing War.

17- What It Will Take to Bankrupt ISIS.

18- Why Is Money Still Flowing to ISIS.

19- Mr. Putin's Motives in Syria.

20-   The Security Council Wakes Up on Syria.

21- An Incoherent Syria War Strategy.

22- Mrs. Clinton's Syria Strategy.

23- An Opening for Diplomacy in Syria.

24- The Elusive Truth About War on ISIS.

25- A War Zone's Ancient Past at Stake.

26- The Islamic State's Most Recent Victims.

27- To Hurt ISIS, Squeeze the Cash Flow.

28- Obama Seeks an Expansive War Authorization to Combat ISIS.

29- How to Fight ISIS.

30- The Crimes of Palmyra.

31- Turkey's Shift on Syrian War.

32- What Libya's Unraveling Means.

33- What Will Come After Paris.

34- The Morning After the Iran Deal.

35-**Refugees From War Aren't the Enemy.**

36- A Better Safeguard Against Threats From Abroad.

37- Piercing the Denial on Refugees.

38- The Crimes of Terrorists.

39- Doubts About Saudi Arabia's Antiterrorism Coalition.

40- One Jet Closer to a Wider Confrontation.

41- **After Paris Attacks, Vilifying Refugees**.

42- Spain Yesterday, Syria Today.

43- **Mr. Erdogan's War Against the Kurds.**

44- Who Threatens America Most?

45- **The Escalation of Unauthorized Wars** .

46- A Tiny Crack in the Russian Ice.

47- **The Importance of Retaking Ramadi.**

48- Iran's Role in the Syrian Crisis.

49- **For Hope in Trump's America, I Read Sojourner Truth.**

50- **President Obama's Tough, Calming Talk on Terrorism.**

B- http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/

1- Pro-Palestine parliaments.

2- Is there a peace partner in Israel?

3- Bring the Palestine National Council Back.

4- No 'Happy New Year' in Gaza.

5- A reflection on the 'delegitimisation' of 'Israel'.

6- Anti-Israelism and anti-Semitism.

7- Giving Netanyahu leverage.

8- Netanyahu's legacy.

9- Israel's gaming of the 'Iranian threat'.

10- Naked Bibi.

11- Israel's Arab List steps up.

12- How will Israel's election affect the Arab Summit?

13- New chapter on the horizon.

14- Netanyahu's 'flip-flop'.

15- EU's out-of-touch Israel-Palestine policy.

16- Holding onto postponed dreams.

17- Remembering the crime of the Nakba.

18- The Nakba and Palestinian strategy.

19- Sixty-seven years of the Nakba.

20- The Truth about Israel.

21- A reflection on the 'delegitimisation' of 'Israel'.

22- Normalising' the Israeli occupation.

23- No Worse then Before.

24- A New beginning in Palestine?

25- Talk peace but prepare for Doomsday.

26- No Morality in Zionism.

27- The Truth Behind Zionism.

28- Zionism's double ghettoization.

29- Palestinians need hope, not 'calm'.

30- Pushing Israel to peace.

31- Syria and the rediscovery of nationhood.

32- Syria: Forward, without illusions.

33- A war of Two Against One.

34- Syria and the War on Terror.

35- Naming and shaming in Yarmouk.

36- Majdal Shams.

37- The plight of Syria's refugees.

38- The ongoing horror in Syria.

39- Listen to Syrians.

40- Ending the Syrian dilemma.

41- Responding to the challenge of Russia in Syria.

42- Folly or Calculated Risk.

43- Resolving the Syrian Crisis.