Précis of

Social Representations of 'IAM' in two Australian Newspapers before and after 9/11: A Tri-Semantic Framework

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A review of the literature of the (social) representation of Islam, Arabs, and Muslims (collectively, IAM) in the media specifically after 9/11 shows that this topic has attracted growing international attention and has become an ongoing debate among academics in different fields. Indisputably, the problem of representations in media discourse has its own complexities. It needs to be addressed in a more inclusive way that examines its various levels to depict the crucial features, especially when a change takes place. Accordingly, this study trails a triangulated analytical model, namely tri-semantic framework, which puts a premium on investigating different levels of discourse and connecting them to the higher level of discourse as well as the overall socio-political changes. In other words, it creates a situational context in order to reveal the ideologies behind the social representations of 'IAM'. This model draws on different analytical frameworks that can be used for a higher-level analysis, and combines both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis, as well as a bottom-up analysis to examine texts within their social context. The model incorporates three subtypes of semantics, namely lexical (corpus linguistic features), interpersonal (the appraisal framework, Martin & White, 2005), and attentional (Marchetti, 2003), to reveal and present a comprehensive assessment of the ideologies that have operated behind the representations of 'IAM' before and after 9/11, from a lexical perspective. Hence, the lexical choices employed by the texts under examination are examined on the micro, meso, and macro levels. On the micro level of discourse, lexical semantic analysis was conducted to examine frequency of lexical choices, collocations, and lexical priming, from a lexical perspective within the framework of Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS). On the meso level, the APPRAISAL framework was employed to reveal the different attitudes that are implicit in the discourse and the ideology of the writers from an interpersonal perspective. Finally, on the macro level, attentional semantics was utilized to examine the linguistic

aspects that affected and changed the representations of 'IAM' after 9/11 in terms of attention.

The analysis was conducted on four different corpuses collected from *The Australian* and *The Age* newspapers. The first two corpuses, which functioned as a reference corpus, consisted of news articles from both newspapers collected during the year preceding 9/11. The second two corpuses, on the other hand, are the target corpuses and they consisted of articles collected after the events of 9/11. An important finding in the current study is that in the discourse under investigation, there were two versions of ideologies operating on two different levels of discourse independently, namely the micro and meso levels, at the same time during both periods of time. In addition, this study argues that the changes of the lexical semantic features on the micro level are ideologically crucial, because the changes that took place on this level may have largely influenced the public as a result of being easily recognizable. On the meso level, however, ideological bias is more hidden and needs some further examination to be uncovered by the public; yet, even if it is not recognized, it is always influential. After 9/11, the ideology that operated on the micro level has changed in both newspapers through the employment of a number of significant collocates that indicate the ideology of the newspapers. On the other hand, the ideology on the meso level remained constant, regardless of the increase and decrease in the attitudinal values. It should be noted that the socio-political events changed the context of the ideology on this level. In short, as Grewal (2008) suggests, "[t]he meso and micro-levels of analysis help to reinforce the arguments presented in the macro-level analysis" (p. 112). The findings of the analysis on these two levels are re-examined on the macro level. The use of attentional semantics on the macro level revealed how the focus of readers' attention changed after 9/11 on the level of discourse; thus, their ideology and attitude towards 'IAM' changed accordingly. That is, examining the changes of attention on the discourse level uncovered the aspects the newspapers aimed to attract attention to as well as distract attention away from during both periods of time. These selected attentional aspects helped in framing the mind of the readers and reconstruct the image of 'IAM' according to the ideology of both newspapers during the selected timeframes. The applicability of the combined methods was demonstrated by analyzing the construction of the images of 'IAM' in these corpuses, and the discursive function of these images in a socio-political context.