Research Article

Discursive Inclusion and Exclusion of Transgressor(s) in English and Arabic Political Condemnations

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ABSTRACT

Political condemnations are expressive illocutionary acts enacted by political actors to publicly denounce and raise awareness of a certain moral transgression(s) committed by particular transgressors(s). The current article aims to cross-culturally investigate the linguistic devices deployed by politicians to include or exclude the identity of the transgressor(s) in selected English and Arabic political condemnation statements and to investigate how political affiliations and disaffiliations of political actors affect and influence the ways social actors are represented in political condemnations. The article mainly draws on Van Leeuwen's (2008) Social Actor Representation framework to analyze the selected dataset. The study concludes that in both languages, condemners adopt, more or less, similar linguistic devices and discursive strategies to including and excluding of transgressor(s). It was also found that unlike the English statements, whereby implicit inclusion, i.e. backgrounding is utilized, transgressor(s) in the Arabic statements is found to be either included or excluded in the condemnation statements. Moreover, transgressors' inclusion and exclusion were found to be, to a certain degree, ideologically motivated and deeply affected and mostly demarcated by the relationships between the condemners and the condemned parties on one hand, and between the condemning party and the parties affected by the transgression act(s).

Introduction

Political condemnations are a kind of political discourse dominantly enacted as reactions by governments, politicians or international organizations to explicitly denounce an event or set of events that breach human rights or international laws. Political condemnations in that sense are public (Searle & Vanderveken,1985, p.180), expressive illocutionary acts (Searle1979), with two major functions: first, they work on confirming the expected normative values that should not be breached in the international community. Therefore, it helps to re-establish "common moral ground" and raising awareness among general public (Márquez-Reiter & Haugh, 2019, p.2). Second, they give "a voice to the speaker's critical stance violation of a rule, a norm or a code of behavior committed by a specific actor or entailed by institutional policy" (Kampf & Katriel, 2016, p. 313).

As such, a political condemnation in this respective "is not a speech act, but a sequence of speech acts" (Griffiths, 2006, p.148) which are combined together to perform a macro (Van Dijk, 1997), i.e. a higher-level, act felicitously. Political condemnations may not be issued merely to denounce and publicize the violation of rules or norms, but they may also call for future actions, and criminalize the alleged transgressors' wrongdoing (Kampf & Katriel 2016, pp.316-317-318). Transgressors are distinctively included within "the addressivity structure of condemnations". They may be named and singled out, or discursively excluded from the condemnation statements (ibid,2016, p.314).

This article aims to explore the linguistic devices deployed by politicians to include or exclude the identity of the transgressor(s) in selected English and Arabic condemnation statements and to investigate how political affiliations and disaffiliations between the condemners and the condemned parties on one hand, and between the condemning party and the parties affected by the transgression act(s) are influenced the ways of social actors' representation within political condemnations. Thus, the analysis process will focus on how alleged transgressors are cross-culturally identified by the condemners in English and Arabic condemnation statements.

An Overview of Social Actors Representation

Based on the above discussion, political condemnation is an expressive act which enacted as a reaction to presupposed wronging doing event in the world. That is to say, one cannot issue a condemnation statement without identifying a particular transgression act committed by a specific social actor(s) or transgressor(s). However, transgressor(s), for political "diplomatic" or social purpose, may be included or excluded from the condemnation statements to "serve many different psychological, social or political purposes or interests on the side of the speakers or writers" (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p.47). As such, including or excluding the transgressor(s) from the condemnation statements can never be innocent and predominantly "endowed with social and political agency by means of different discursive moves" i.e. foregrounding, backgrounding, etc. (Krzyżanowski,2013, p.117).

To help "looking for the various ways, in which certain social and political actors are represented, portrayed and positioned in discourse" (ibid,2013, p.117), and moving by the notion of "background knowledge" identified by Levinson's (1983), and Brown & and Yule's (1983), Van Leeuwen (2008, p.23), proposes a referential system of representing social actors in discourse. In his pursuit to answer a question he proposed, "[h]ow can social actors be represented in English?", he adopts a *sociosemantic* inventory rather than a grammatical approach of how social actors might be represented in discourse. That is to say, that Leeuwen's referential approach "goes behind grammatical processes focusing on socio-semantic issues that deal with the semantic features of discourse" (Abdulkareem, 2017, p.7). Leeuwen's justification for his adaptation is that "the lack of bi-uniqueness of language", that is to say, "[t]here is no neat fit between sociological and linguistic categories". The second reason he provided is based on the "assumption that meanings belong to culture rather than to language and cannot be tied to any specific semiotic" (ibid,2017, p.4).

Van Leeuwen(2008, p.4) also differentiates between "social practices and representations of social practices" whereby "doing something" is different from "talking something". He considers discourse as "recontextualization of social practices" which consist of actions and participants, and many other context-dependent features like performance, presentation style, social structure, institutions, relationships, etc. Thus, social actors are represented differently in discourse.

Including and Excluding Social Actors

To suit particular purposes or interests, social actors may be included or excluded from the text. The degree of inclusions or exclusions of the actors might vary between radical exclusion and explicitly inclusion of the actors in the text. Although some exclusions might be "innocent" due to text producer's assumptions that the text recipients are already known the identity of the actor; in some other instances, the actor is radically excluded from the text for propaganda strategies (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.29),"depending on the purpose and ideology of the writer". (Abdulkareem, 2017, p.7). For Van Leeuwen, such radical exclusion is known as *suppression*.

Consider the following two condemnations examples of one event that delivered by two different political actors, whereas the English data do not directly name the actor, the Arabic data overtly name the transgressor (i.e. Saudi Arabia).

1. **"I am deeply concerned by reports of an airstrike hitting a funeral hall in the Yemeni capital Sana'a yesterday..."**

2. **"تدين الجمهورية العربية السورية بأشد العبارات الاعتداء الإجرامي الذي اقترفته آلة القتل السعودية..."**
   [The Arabic Republic of Syria strongly condemns the criminal assault that conducted by Saudi killing machine…]

In suppression the exclusion "leave[s] no traces in the representation, excluding both the social actors and their activities. Such radical exclusion can play a role in a critical comparison of different representations of the same social practice, [e.g.in English and Arabic] but not in an analysis of a single text" (Van Leeuwen,2008, p.29).

Moreover, Van Leeuwen (ibid,2008, pp.29-30) differentiates between suppression and backgrounding. Backgrounding is less radical exclusion, that is to say, the action is not directly associated with particular actors and, therefore, the actors may be

mentioned somewhere else in the text and purposely pushed into the background. Suppression may be realized "through passive agent deletion", and through non-finite clauses. Leeuwen's referential framework contains other elements. However, inclusion and exclusion are the most relevant aspects to this study.

Data and Methodology

The selected data are six international political condemnation events which happen to be negatively evaluated by some political actors for their breaching of certain human rights. The following are the names of the selected events in chronological order: "Charlie Hebdo Magazine Offices Attack, Nimr al-Nimr's Execution, Al-Karrada District Attack in Iraq, Funeral Hall Attack in Yemen, 2017Attack in Tehran, and Abha Civilian Airport Attacks". For each condemnation event, two condemnation statements issued by two different governments have been chosen, one is in English and the other one is in the Arabic language, which brings the overall corpus to 12 political condemnation statements. The selected English political condemnation statements are issued by leading British and American government officials, delivered in various institutional settings and published on their official websites as a reaction to the above-mentioned events. These statements are manually collected from readily accessible online websites

Arabic selected condemnations statements, on the other hand, are attributed to several Arab condemners purposely chosen to add diversity flavor to the data. The aim is to collect data to identify potential similarities and differences in the representation of social actors in English and Arabic political condemnations. As such, the researcher adopts a document-collection approach as the main data gathering method which "provide valuable information" to understand under investigation phenomena and have the privilege of "being in the language and words of the participants" (Creswell, 2012, p.223).

There are several reasons behind selecting these particular events, besides being compatible with the overall objectives of this study, and their comparability and availability in English and Arabic. Three of these events are non-controversial events and have enacted a wide range of condemnations in the international political sphere (i.e. Charlie Hebdo magazine offices Attack, Al-Karrada District Attack in Iraq, Yemen, the 2017 Attack in Tehran). While Nimr al-Nimr's execution reflects the regional sectarian differences, other events are related to the ongoing regional war between Saudi-led collation and Houthi Yemeni rebels which has its political effects on Medial East (i.e. Funeral hall attack in Yemen, Abha Civilian Airport Attacks).

Methodologically, the article is mainly draws on van Leeuwen's model (2008) of Social Actors Represenation discourse to qualitatively analyze the selected dataset. However, the following analytical procedures were followed to identify transgressor(s) representations across English and Arabic condemnations statements:

1. The selected condemnations statements of each event were prepared and organized into pairs (of English and Arabic).
2. Each two pairs were systematically analyzed by applying Van Leeuwen's (2008) system of inclusions and exclusion of social actors in discourse.
3. Each pairs of one event, in English and Arabic, were contrasted to detect the similarities and differences, and to recognize the inclusion and exclusion strategies adopted by each condemner.
4. The outcomes of the each contrasted pairs were explored to reveal the political affiliation and disaffiliation between the condemners and the condemned parties on one hand, and between the condemning party and the parties affected by the transgression act(s).

Findings and Discussion

The analysis revealed that the transgressor(s) was/were distinctively represented within the condemnation statements in English and Arabic. In the English statements, the transgressor(s) was/were included in two statements, backgrounded in two, and radically suppressed in two others. The transgressor(s) in the Arabic condemnation statements, on the other hand, was/were included in three statements and totally suppressed in three others.

Below is the thorough analysis of each condemnation pairs of the selected political events.

First Event "Charlie Hebdo Magazine Offices Attack"

The English version of this condemnation does not explicitly identify or indicate the transgressors' identities whose directly involved in the attack anywhere in the statement, however, the condemner utilizes particular criminalisation (Reisigl & Wodak 2001, p.52) referential strategies to frame the condemned party as being "deviant terrorists".

In a similar vein, there is a case of suppression (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.29), to the actors in the Arabic condemnation statement, more elaborately, the transgressors are a radical excluded from condemnation statement. The condemner does

not mention who committed the terrorist act; such exclusion may be innocent and not link to any propaganda strategies, because the condemner might assume the details are already known to the readers.

Second Event "Nimr al-Nimr's Execution"
This condemnation producer (i.e. Minister Tobias Ellwood the United Kingdom Minister for the Middle East 2014-2017) refers to the transgressor in three varied places with his statement. Ellwood attaches the plural noun *authorities*, in two positions with his statement (e.g. the Saudi authorities), to refer to the transgressor (i.e. Saudi government) which, in turn creates a sense of authoritarian legitimation by employing functionalization type reference (ibid,2008, p.40). However, these references do not overtly hold the condemned party responsible for the execution, even though it is frequently mentioned within the condemnation statement, more precisely, the transgressor is backgrounded.

Conversely, in the Arabic version of this condemnation the doer, "i.e. **Saudi authorities/ من قبل السلطات السعودية** ", of the transgressive act has been explicitly named and held responsible for violating human rights. The transgressor has been categorized in terms of the activity, its exercised function, and indirectly accused as being injustice regime that eliminates its opponents and violates human essential rights which should be valued and respected.

 Third Event "Al-Karrada District Attack in Iraq"
The producer of the English condemnation of this event explicitly includes and names the social actor of this transgression act by adopting an assimilation type of reference whereby the transgressor is identified as a specific group of individuals called *Da'esh,* ("**We condemn in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attacks carried out by Da'esh in shopping districts in Baghdad today").** Da'esh[ˈdaːʕɪʃ] is the Arabic language-acronym for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

The Islamic State has officially ordered its members and supporters to refer to it as the Islamic State. However, a recent study, conducted by Bodine-Baron et al. (2016, p. XI) revealed that ISIS opponents are intentionally utilize the term *Da'esh* to downgrade ISIS, in contrast with the organizations' supporters who underpin its full name *The Islamic States in Iraq and Syria.* A result like that may clarify why does Kirby utilize such kind of naming and why does he use the term *Da'esh* in five different times in his condemnation statement.

The selected Arabic condemner of this event, on the other hand, fails to explicitly include or name who carried out the attack. As in the example below:

3. **"إن التفجيرين المروعين اللذين استهدفا العاصمة العراقية بغداد أعمال إرهابية بغيضة ندينها ونشجبها بقوة"**

   [The two deadly attacks, which targeted the Iraq capital Bagdad, are appalling terrorist acts that we strongly condemn and deplore…]

Such radical exclusion is known as *suppression* in Van Leeuwen's (2008) terms whereby the social actor is totally removed and not mentioned anywhere within the statement. Agent deletion here may be justified in terms of the writer intentions to drive the readers' attentions into the transgression act rather than the transgressor(s).

Fourth Event "Funeral Hall Attack in Yemen"
Politically speaking, the UK government is accused of fuelling the war against Yemen through its continuing arms sales to the Saudi government (Loveluck, 2015), which indicates that the condemner's government is affiliated with the perpetrator and not in clean hands position. Accordingly, this condemnation is may heard as hypocritical (Kampf & Katriel, 2016, p.314) because the condemner is, on one hand, condemning the transgressive act, and his country is indirectly involved in that particular act. This in turn, may explain why the transgressor is background by the condemner here ("**I am deeply concerned by reports of an airstrike hitting a funeral hall in the Yemeni capital Sana'a yesterday"…).**

The question that may be asked here is "who did the killing?" However, the condemnation statement does not provide an answer. The Transgressor is mentioned in the condemnation statement (**"…I am raising my concerns with the Saudi Ambassador to London.."** but not explicitly hold accountable for the transgression act.

The Arabic condemner of this event, on the other hand, takes advantage of the occasion to publically assigning blames and accusations to the condemned party and discursively constructs a type of "public degradation ceremony" (Garfikel, 1956, p.241). However, the condemner here adopts particular referential strategies to accuse and ascribe negative evaluation to the transgressor (i.e. Saudi Arabia).

Firstly, the Saudi government is explicitly identified as responsible for the attack and a destructive criminalization(Reisigl & Wodak 2001, p.52), role is assigned to it .The transgressor, to condemner, represents a threat not only to the Yemenis but to

the whole Arab nation, as such, it represents a threat to the safety and security of the world (i.e. **الة القتل السعودي/ Saudi killing machine, والداعم الأساسي للإرهاب/ main supporter of terrorism**).

Secondly, The condemner refers to the Saudi regime by using cultural terms related to the Islamic sector followed by Saudis which considers by many as the main sector followed by most radical Islamic movements (i.e. **كالنظام الوهابي السعود / Saudi Wahhabism**).In Reisigl & Wodak (2001, p.50) terminology such cultural categorization is knowing as 'Religionisation' whereby reference related to the social actor is made in terms of a specific religion.

Thirdly, to stigmatize the reputation of the transgressor, the condemner refers to the Saudi regime in terms of its political activities and accuses it as being American and Jewish fellow concealing ill-intention to destroy Arab nation and seek to impose hegemony in the region. "خدمةً للمخطط الأمريكي الإسرائيلي لفرض هيمنته على المنطقة", such type of reference is knowing as political actionalisation (Reisigl & Wodak ,2001, p.50).

Fifth Event "the 2017 Attacks in Tehran"
The condemner here is extremely excluded the transgressors from the condemnation statement, to put it in Van Leeuwen's (2008, p.29) words it is a case of suppression. As in the following example:

The United States condemns the terrorist attacks in Tehran today..."

The condemnation producer fails to indicate who carried out the attack even though that Islamic State (ISIS) claims it responsibility of the attack (Zambelis, 2017, pp.16-18).

Contrastively, although the transgressors are included in the Arabic condemnation statement of this event, the condemner does not overtly use their explicit name as ISIS, instead a categorization reference is utilized by the condemner by which the transgressors are classified according to their adopted religious ideology and belief system **'الفكر الإرهابي التكفيري/ the terrorist Takfirist ideology'**.

Sixth Event "Abha Civilian Airport Attacks"
Ortagus (US Department of State spokesperson) is explicitly included and overtly named the transgressors in two varied positions within the statement. First, she uses a mixed type of reference whereby assimilation is attached to political categorization reference (i.e., Iranian-backed Houthis). Assimilation, according Van Leeuwen (2008,p.37) is the type of reference that describes actors in identifiable group which linguistically realized by plurality. The Political categorization that is utilized by Ortagus, is basically an ascription of supranational membership to another state which is Iran in this case (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p.51).

Second, the condemner utilizes an assimilation type of reference (i.e. Houthis) realize by plurality whereby the transgressors are referred to as one identifiable group of individuals knowing as the Houthis. As in the following example:

5.**"The United States strongly condemns today's attack by the Iranian-backed Houthis on Abha Airport in Saudi Arabia"**

Conversely, the transgressor in the Arabic condemnation is radically excluded and the action is not associated with any particular social actor or actors. Consider the following example:

6. **"تدين وزارة الخارجية العراقية الهجوم الذي استهدف مطار "ابها" المدني في المملكة العربية السعودية الشقيقة"**

[The Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemns the attack that targeted "Abha" civil airport in the brotherly kingdom of Saudi Arabia...]

The condemner condemns the attacks that targeted the Airport but s/he conceals and radically excludes the identity of the transgressors from the condemnation statement which indexes in an inexplicit way the relationship between the condemned and the condemned party.

Conclusion
As a conclusion of this study aiming at finding out the most common linguistic, interactional, and discursive patterns utilize by politicians to include or exclude the identity of the transgressor(s) in English and Arabic political condemnations, the researchers conclude that in both languages, condemners, adopt, more or less, similar linguistic devices and discursive strategies to including and excluding of transgressor(s) in political condemnations. Comparing the similarities and differences of including and excluding of transgressor(s) in pairs of selected English and Arabic political condemnation events revealed that, unlike the English statements, transgressor(s) in the Arabic statements is either included or excluded in the

condemnation statements, that is to say, that Arabic condemners tended to either singled out and explicitly included the transgressors within some condemnation statements (three occurrences), or radically excluded them from some others (three occurrences). Besides using excluding strategies to textually identifying the transgressor(s), English condemners, on the other hand, utilized the backgrounding strategy in identifying the transgressor(s) within the condemnation statements.

Furthermore, transgressors' inclusion and exclusion were found to be, to a certain degree, ideologically motivated and were deeply affected and strongly influenced by the political and cultural affiliation and disaffiliation between the condemners and the condemned parties on one hand, and between the condemning party and the parties affected by the transgression act(s).

Finally, the scope of the present study is limited to investigating how social actors (i.e. transgressor(s)) are representing in English and Arabic selected condemnation statements, thus, such limitation may lay ground for future researches whereby similar studies can be conducted to explore how transgressors are represented in English and East Asian languages.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX (1)

Links of condemnation statements comprising the English data (last accessed on September 15th 2019)

1. First Event:

https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/01/07/statement-president-attack-france

2. Second Event:

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-office-minister-ellwood-on-escalated-tensions-in-middle-east

3.Third Event:

https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/07/259303.htm

4. Fourth Event:

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-for-the-middle-east-statement-following-attack-on-yemen-funeral-hall

5. Fifth Event:

https://www.state.gov/terrorist-attacks-in-tehran/

6. Sixth Event:

https://www.state.gov/houthi-attack-on-abha-airport-in-saudi-arabia/

APPENDIX (2)

Links of condemnation statements comprising the Arabic data (last accessed on September 5th 2019)

1. First Event:

https://www.diplomatie.ma/arab/Politique%C3%A9trang%C3%A8re/Europe/tabid/1606/vw/1/ItemID/11597/language/en-US/Default.aspx

2. Second Event:

https://www.pmo.iq/press2015/2-1-2016.htm

3.Third Event:

https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/07/259303.htm

4. Fourth Event:

http://www.mofa.gov.sy/ar/pages763/%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86-

5. Fifth Event:

http://www.mfa.gov.lb/arabic/minister/announcments/ministry-annoucement-tahran

6. Sixth Event:

https://www.mofa.gov.iq/2019/06/?p=1586

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