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Intertextuality in online news coverage of the 2011 jasmine revolution: a comparison between al-jazeera and bbc arabic

**Intertekstual Revolusi Jasmine 2011 dalam Liputan Berita atas Talian:
Perbandingan antara Al-Jazeera dan BBC Arabic**

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Abstract

In remembrance of a decade after the so-called 'Arab Spring' (AS), which still attracted a lot of attention among researchers to examine the uprising from various perspectives. Media coverage of the event is one an essential topic among academicians since 2011. Before 2011, Tunisia, the birthplace of the AS was considered a 'quiet' country as it received little international media attention compared to other neighbouring countries, namely Egypt and Morocco. When the uprising emerged in December 2010, Tunisia received intensive media coverage and the country suddenly become the major headline in worldwide international news coverage. Hence, this article aims to critically examine the discursive strategies, particularly the intertextuality utilised by two prominent international Arabic online news outlets: Al-Jazeera and BBC Arabic, in their online coverage of the AS. These two prominent news agencies were chosen for their wide international coverage. Besides, Al-Jazeera of Qatar represents the Arab international media and the 'East', while BBC Arabic which is part of the BBC international news agency based in London, represents the 'West(ern)' media. This article utilises Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with a focus on the three-dimensional textual analysis framework of Fairclough (1992). The textual linguistics analysis is further enhanced with a link to Laclau and Mouffe (1985) Discourse Theory of power struggles for hegemony, which aims to reveal the power struggles between the 'in-group' (the government) and the 'out-group' (the antagonists) in discourse construction strategies. It is found that certain Tunisian social groups have been strategically included in each outlet's coverage, while other has been intentionally excluded. Thus, this article

compares the discourse strategy of intertextuality utilised by Al-Jazeera and BBC Arabic and discloses the hidden ideologies of discourse construction approaches. Finally, the article presents the conclusion and suggestions for future studies related to the AS.

Keywords:

Arab Spring; Critical Discourse Analysis; Intertextuality; Arabic online news; media discourse.

Abstrak

Memperingati berlalunya satu dekad kebangkitan Arab dalam 'Arab Spring' (AS), yang masih menarik banyak perhatian dalam kalangan para penyelidik untuk mengkaji peristiwa ini dari pelbagai perspektif. Liputan media berkaitan AS merupakan salah satu topik penyelidikan penting sejak 2011. Sebelum 2011, Tunisia, tempat kelahiran AS dianggap sebagai negara yang 'sunyi' kerana jarang mendapat perhatian media antarabangsa berbanding dengan negara jiran Arab yang lain Mesir dan Maghribi. Ketika AS bermula pada bulan Disember 2010, Tunisia mendapat liputan media yang meluas. Artikel ini mengkaji secara kritis strategi intertekstual yang digunakan oleh dua saluran berita dalam talian berbahasa Arab antarabangsa yang terkenal: Al-Jazeera dan BBC Arabic. Kedua-dua agensi berita tersebut horini dipilih kerana liputan antarabangsanya yang luas bukan sahaja oleh penutur asli Arab di Timur Tengah tetapi juga banyak pembaca bahasa Arab di seluruh dunia. Selain itu, Al-Jazeera dari Qatar mewakili media antarabangsa Arab dan media 'Timur', sementara BBC Arabic yang berpusat di London, mewakili media 'Barat'. Artikel ini menggunakan Analisis Wacana Kritis (AWK) dengan fokus pada kerangka analisis tekstual dimensi Fairclough (1992). Analisis linguistik tekstual ditingkatkan lagi dengan pautan ke Laclau and Mouffe (1985) Teori Wacana perebutan kuasa untuk hegemoni, bertujuan untuk mengungkap perebutan kuasa antara 'dalam kumpulan' (pemerintah) dan 'penentang' (antagonis) dalam strategi pembinaan wacana. Didapati bahawa wacana kumpulan sosial Tunisia tertentu telah dimasukkan dan digugurkan secara strategis dalam liputan berita setiap agensi. Sementara itu, kumpulan tertentu diberi akses sepenuhnya dalam kerangka penulisan berita, sementara agensi lain telah meminggirkan kumpulan yang lainnya. Oleh itu, artikel membandingkan strategi wacana intertekstual yang digunakan oleh Al-Jazeera dan BBC Arabic dan mengungkap ideologi tersembunyi di belakang setiap pendekatan pembinaan wacana. Pada akhirnya, artikel ini memberikan kesimpulan dan cadangan untuk kajian lain yang berkaitan di masa hadapan.

Kata kunci: Arab Spring, Analisis Wacana Kritis, Berita dalam Talian, Tunisia, Al-Jazeera, BBC Arabic.

1. Introduction

Almost a decade ago, the Arab world once again has been the centre stage of global attention for the unpredicted uprising event which later on resulted in huge social and political transitions in the region. The so-called 'the Arab Spring' (in Arabic الربيع العربي *al-Rabi' al-Araby*) literally refers to the wave of uprisings, demonstrations, protests, riots, turmoils and civil wars which occurred in many parts of the Arab world starting from December 2010. The Arab Spring is also known as the Arab uprising or Arab Revolution in the modern era of the 21st century. The event started on the 18th of December 2010 in Sidi Bouzid, a remote town in Tunisia (Harun et al., 2018). The Tunisian version of 'Arab Spring' is known by many names¹ and one of them is the '**Jasmine Revolution**' (**JR**). Although the Jasmine name is being chosen almost a year after the revolution, it was the most widely used by the international media for many reasons mainly because jasmine is the national flower of Tunisia. When the uprising started there is no specific name has been used to refer to the event. Besides, many media outlets are reluctant to name the event as 'revolution' waiting for the result of an uprising either successfully toppled the Arab autocratic rulers or not (M. Ismail, 2019). Hence, the term 'JR' has been used by the mass media to differentiate the Tunisian version of 'Arab Spring' from the other versions of the Arab Spring in countries like Egypt, Libya and Syria which each of these countries has its name of revolution.

In December 2010, when the revolution started, it was merely a peaceful march of protests joined by a small group of people. Most of the participants are residents, particularly young graduates, unemployed and farmers. By the end of December 2010, the protests have widely separated in almost every Tunisian town to become a massive crowd of demonstrations, chaos, clashes, riots and turmoils. Ultimately, the **JR** overthrew President Ben Ali and his associates after almost 23 years of autocratic rules in Tunisia (from 1988 until 2011). Since the 18th of December 2010, the international mass media has paid a lot of attention to JR's events. International media provided intensive coverage of the event even though it only began in a remote area of Tunisia and was participated by a small group of local youngster protestors. When the wave of protests reached Tunis, the capital city of Tunisia (situated 300km away from Sidi Bouzid) more than a week later, the '**JR**', has become front-page headlines of most news reports in the world.

The 'domino effect' of **JR** then influenced other Arab countries to start their uprising against their governments. Thus, it resulted in a massive wave of protests, strikes, chaos and clashes between people and the authority. The wave of 'Arab Spring' severely affected Tunisia's neighbouring Arab countries, namely Egypt, Libya, Syria, Sudan, Yemen, Morocco, Iraq and Jordan. Surprisingly, wealthy Arab countries in Arabian Gulf namely Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain were not exempted from witnessing at least minor protests calling for a severe solution to

¹Among other names which refer to the Revolution events in Tunisia are: Dignity Revolution, People Revolution and Youth Revolution

many political, economic and social issues. Hence, the Arab Spring dramatically changed the modern history of the Arab world, which led to political, social and economic reforms. Therefore, it is vital to study the discursive construction strategies around the 2011 **JR** in Arabic online news published by internationally well-known Arabic news agencies.

Thus, one of the discourse construction strategies is intertextuality which focuses on the inclusion and exclusion of different voices throughout a specific event. The intertextuality explains how various types of reporting namely direct, indirect, and strategic, have been utilised differently with each side of the 2011 **JR**. The Arabic news agencies have reported every detail of **JR** from a different point of view since the beginning of this very significant event. Thus, it is exciting to linguistically examine the discourses of **JR** in the Arabic online news by using textual-oriented **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)** methods and reveal the hidden ideologies of online news discourse construction approaches.

2. Problem statement

The theoretical framework for this article is inspired by two main theories of discourse analysis studies namely: The Discourse Theory (DT) of Laclau and Mouffe (1985). which is based on the social theories and secondly the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Fairclough (1988). with special addition from Van Dijk (1998) and Wodak (2001) contributions on the original Fairclough's discourse analysis framework. Wodak's contributions to Fairclough's three-dimensional textual analysis are vital, particularly in providing analytic tools for analysing mass media texts, while Van Dijk provides guidelines for linking media discourse with ideologies. The (DT) of Laclau and Mouffe (1985). offers a new concept of hegemony developed from Gramsci's (1971) ideas. Laclau and Mouffe's idea of hegemony helps reveal the ideology from the discourse construction strategies utilised by the news institutions. This new concept of hegemony can be effectively beneficial by linking it with Fairclough's textual-oriented CDA (Fairclough, 1995). Fairclough links the micro-analysis of texts with the macro-level of discourses using his three dimensions of textual analysis of text, discursive practice and social practice. Moreover, the concepts of intertextuality and interdiscursivity which link between text and discourse can be used to complement Fairclough's three-dimensional framework. Finally, to minimise the potential of critical bias, the integration of available knowledge about the historical background of the social and political fields in which discursive 'events' are embedded in the analysis of the discourse under study (Wodak, 2001).

Blommaert (2005) defines intertextuality as "whenever we speak, we produce the words of others, we constantly cite and recite expressions, and recycle meanings that are already available." In this regard, the analysis of intertextuality is part of the discursive practice, the second dimension of Fairclough's framework. There are two types of intertextuality, namely: manifest intertextuality and

constitutive intertextuality. While manifest intertextuality overtly draws on previous texts, constitutive intertextuality refers to the texts which are composed of heterogeneous elements such as generic conventions, discourse types, register and style (Blommaert, 2005). Hence, the constitutive intertextuality, also known as interdiscursivity. Relevant to this study, analysing how reported speech is selected and included in texts and vice versa is an important step in examining manifest intertextuality (Baynham & Slembrouck, 1999).

Richardson (2007) states that texts are composed of fragments of previous texts and cannot be produced in isolation from these previous texts. Specifically, in the news texts, a news story is embedded in that earlier versions of a news article (Bell, 1991). Therefore, a full understanding of a text is only possible when relating it first to other texts and other social practices. Intertextuality is an important part of media discourse as it is closely related to the process of constructing "fragmentary and ill-defined happenings" (Fairclough, 2001). News reporting involves a narration of events taking place, comments on these events from different sides, background information about the events, and opinions and views about them; thus, news articles are composed of fragments of other texts. Furthermore, reported speech which is known as sourcing in media studies is a vital aspect of news reports. By including voices, while excluding other and selecting what is to be reported, journalist controls the framing and ideologies expressed in the news.

Sourcing can become an effective tool to achieve hegemony in news discourse (Van Dijk, 1998). It is done by allowing the dominant groups such as the authorities, leaders, and rulers the only access to the news construction (ibid: 260). Furthermore, these dominant voices are treated as the ingroup and legitimised by associating them with authoritative quality of titles and credentials which promote their words as reliable and unquestioned. The outgroup, on the other hand, receives less news coverage compared to the ingroup, and when the outgroup's voices are reported, it was strategically "to criticise them or discredit them" (Rojo, 1995).

There are five types of reported speech which focus on news journalism (Richardson, 2007) First, is the direct quotation in which the journalist reports the exact words of the reported person in quotation marks. Second, strategic quotations or 'scare quotes.' It is normally used with phrases that are "contentious." By using scare quotes, a journalist can distance himself from the content of certain expressions. Third, indirect reporting, which can be done by presenting only a summary of what has been said or written (Fairclough, 2001). Fourth, using a transformed indirect quotation by dropping reporting clauses such as urged, vowed, mentioned, pledged, and alleged (Richardson, 2007). Fifth, ostensible direct quotation. This type of reporting speech is normally used to propose that "the view is too direct, extreme, or outlandish to have come from the source involved" (ibid: 105).

Previous studies (Eilders, 2000; McLeod et al., 1999; Mutz, 2001), have argued that the newspaper readership received a substantial impact on

encouraging political participation. Thus, political institutions have used the media to serve their ideas. Schudson (2002) and Leeson (2008) studied how the media has become a political tool to serve a certain political group. In the Arab region, the Arabic media plays a vital role in the political change in the Arab nations (R. Ismail, 2019; Lahlali, 2011). It started in the 1950s with the emergence of Arabic unity discourse and the transnational Arabic television broadcasting in the 1990s (Amin, 2002; Kharroub & Weaver, 2014; Lahlali, 2011; Sakr, 2007). Past studies have analysed the features of these Arabic media institutions particularly their ideologies, bias and independence of these various outlets (Fandy, 2007; Harun & Ismail, 2020; Harun et al., 2018; Ismail et al., 2018; Mellor et al., 2011; Miladi, 2006; Volkmer, 2008; Zayani & Ayish, 2006). Despite the claim made by these media institutions of impartial, objectivity, and privately-owned, they have been used as political tools and largely controlled by the government (Harun et al., 2018; M. Ismail, 2019; Ismail et al., 2018).

Hence, in this article, the intertextuality in media discourse under study is critically examined to depict the way journalists of ***Al-Jazeera(AJA)*** and ***BBC Arabic (BBA)*** produced their news stories in terms of selecting what to report and whom they considered newsworthy. It would also reveal which group has been classified as the in-group and which group was treated as the outgroup by using marginalisation and delegitimisation.

3. Methodology

This study aims to critically examine the intertextuality strategies utilised by two prominent modern standard Arabic (MSA) online news outlets, namely (AJA) and (BBA) in their news coverage of the 2011 **JR**. Hence, the qualitative approaches were used for this article based on the theoretical framework stated above with particular attention to the 'five ways of reported speech' introduced by Richardson (2007). The two well-established news agencies were selected for this article because of their extensive international coverage. In contrast, local Tunisian news outlets or most of the Arabic printed newspaper agencies tend to focus more on the news contains in the particular Arab country, hence lacking comprehensive international news coverage. In addition, AJA, which is based in Qatar, represents the Arab international media and the 'East', while BBA which carries the 'British views' represents one of the 'Western' media outlets. To make the analysis more specific adhering to the limitation of the paperwork size, the analysis in this article focuses only on the Arabic online news from AJA and BBA published from 18/12/2010 until 28/2/2011 (both dates are inclusive) which will be referred to as 'the time of crisis in Jasmine Revolution'.

These dates are considered the most crucial time for the **JR**. Furthermore, during these dates, at least four major historical events of the uprising happened which are considered the most important phases of the **JR**. These major events are:

- a) Tariq el-Tayyib Mohamed Bouazizi a young unemployed Tunisian graduate set fire to himself on 17/12/2010.
- b) The next day (18/12/2010) the first protest by residents of Sidi Bouzid was held to show their support for Bouazizi, who was later on crowned as the icon of Arab Spring.
- c) After three weeks of continuous major protests which almost paralysed the country, President Ben Ali left Tunisia for Jeddah of Saudi Arabia on 14/1/2011 and led toward the formation of a transition and unity government in Tunisia.
- d) Even after Ben Ali left Tunisia, the protests continue as many of Ben Ali's associates mainly Mohamed Ghanouchi (Ben Ali's prime minister since 1999) were still in power.

Thus, for this article, the corpus data consisting of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) online news texts of AJA and BBA during 'the time of crisis in Jasmine Revolution' has been compiled. The description of this specific purpose corpus data is highlighted in the table below:

Table 1: The Description of Online News Texts Corpus Data.

No.	Outlets	Number of News Articles	Words Count	Percentage
1	AJA	48	27,132	56.47
2	BBA	37	18,893	43.53
	TOTAL	85	46,025	100

Table 1 shows a total of 85 MSA online news articles which carry slightly over 46,000 words selected for this analysis. The composition of corpus data for these articles also indicates that AJA has a slightly bigger number of news articles compared to BBA. Al-Jazeera's online news texts also have a slightly higher number of words compared to BBC Arabic. Hence the outlet's online news article carries the bigger proportion in the corpus data at 57% compared to 43% for BBC Arabic. Despite, these differences, it is safe to say that the corpus data contains a quite balanced proportion of online news texts which can minimise any biased analysis towards each online news outlet.

From the online news textual analysis, it is revealed that each AJA and BBA have utilised the intertextuality strategies. However, this discursive strategy has been used differently by each of the two outlets, which reflected the differences in ideology hidden at the back of online news discourse construction. These differences have also been reflected by their choice in taking sides with one of the two sides (between the Tunisian government and the antagonists) of the power conflict in Tunisia.

4. Findings and discussions

The analysis of 85 MSA online news articles revealed that AJA and BBA differ in reporting the voices of the JR's social groups during the time of crisis. BBA

treated Ben Ali, his allies of the Tunisian government and their supporters as the 'in-group'. Thus, the outlet reported more frequently on the authority voices compared to the antagonists. Their voices have been reported by the outlet using, directly and indirectly, speech reporting methods since the first protest started in Sidi Bouzid (18/12/2010) up until 14/1/2011 when Ben Ali left Tunisia for Saudi Arabia.

By taking side with Ben Ali the dominant and the ruling group of Tunisia before the JR, BBA was trying to preserve the hegemony in Tunisia. On the opposite side, AJA considered the antagonists as the 'in-group' and brought forward antagonists' voices in the news coverage since day one of the JR. In contrast to BBA, AJA was promoting counter-hegemony discourses during the 23 years of Ben Ali's power dominance. Hence, it created a wave of competing discourses between the two sides of the Tunisian conflict. On the one side, BBA stands with the Tunisian government, which tries very hard to preserve the hegemony, while AJA launched a counter-hegemony discourse to challenge the dominant voice of Tunisian authorities.

Intertextuality in BBC Arabic Online News

The discussion in this sub-section presents how BBA has shown its biased toward Ben Ali and his associates by reporting the authority voices with details and marginalising the antagonist's voices. This indicated that BBA is trying to defend the hegemony of Ben Ali. BBA prefers to report on Ben Ali's voices and the Tunisian government using the direct quote. For example:

Table 2: Examples of Direct Quote in Reporting Ben Ali's Voices

<p>"ففي خطاب متلفز ألقاه الثلاثاء، قال بن علي "إن مثيري أعمال الشغب سوف يُعاقبون بشدة 28/12/10 <i>During Tuesday's television speech, Ben Ali said, "The rioters will be severely punished."</i></p>
<p>و كان الرئيس التونسي زين العابدين بن علي قد صرح في وقت سابق بالقول: "إننا نقول لكل من يعمد إلى النيل من مصالح البلاد... نقول بكل وضوح: إن القانون سيكون هو الفيصل." 9/1/2011 <i>Earlier Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali said: "We say to anyone who deliberately undermines our country We say it clearly: the law will be the determine upon them."</i></p>
<p>وقال بن علي "اتوجه اليوم إليكم على أثر ما شهدته بعض المدن والقرى بعدد من الجهات الداخلية من أحداث شغب وتشويش وإضرار بالأماكن العمومية والخاصة." 10/1/2011 <i>"I am speaking to you today after our towns and villages in the remote areas were facing the incident from rioting, unrest and damage to public and private property ..."</i></p>

These examples of news extracts show that the outlet was using the direct quote to report on Ben Ali's speeches, particularly his promises and warns. These promises aimed to calm the protestors. Thus, it indicated that the outlet is paying special attention to highlighting the importance of Ben Ali's speech. It also aimed

to legalise Ben Ali's words as the official source of information to counter the antagonist's voices. Besides, the voice of members of the Tunisian government which included the Tunisian ministries, and the security officials was also reported using a direct quote. Hence, indicated that the outlet is focusing on reporting much more authority voices to preserve the hegemony voices. For instance, BBA stated:

Table 3: Examples of Direct Quote in Reporting Tunisian Authority's Voices

<p>وأعلنت وزارتا التربية والتعليم العالي في بيان مشترك: "إثر الاضطرابات التي جرت في بعض المؤسسات فقد تقرر تعليق الدروس حتى اشعار آخر بداية من يوم الثلاثاء." 10/1/11 <i>The Tunisian two ministries of education and higher education announced in a statement: "As a result of the unrest situation in some educational institutions, it is decided to suspend the learning sessions beginning from Tuesday until further."</i></p>
<p>وأوضح وزير الاتصالات التونسي سمير العبيدي في تصريح لقناة الجزيرة ان ارسال وحدات من الجيش الى هناك تقرر "بغرض حماية المباني الحكومية وأنها لن تتدخل في مواجهة مع المحتجين." 10/1/11 <i>Samir al-Obeidi, the Communications Minister said to Al-Jazeera that sending army troops to the conflict was decided on the reasons "to protect government buildings and they would never join a confrontation with the demonstrators."</i></p>
<p>وقال مسؤول أمني إن "الشرطة فتحت النار على المحتجين دفاعا عن النفس، وذلك بعد أن كانت الأعيرة النارية التحذيرية التي أطلقت في الهواء قد فشلت بمنع حشد غاضب من مهاجمة المباني الحكومية." 9/1/11 <i>A security authority stated, "In an act of self-defence, the police open fire toward the protesters, before that, the police give the warning shots fired but it failed to prevent angry protestors from demolishing government's buildings"</i></p>

BBA emphasise that highlighting the authoritative voices during the time of crisis can be furthermore observed through the frequent use of indirect quotation. This indirect way of reporting speech comes from the strategic use of a positive verbal process. Hence, revealed BBA's journalist's attitude in supporting the Tunisian authority during the Tunisian uprising. For instance, BBA reported:

Table 4: Examples of Indirect Quote in Reporting Tunisian Authority's Voices

<p>واكدت السلطات ان الصدامات لم تكن سوى "حادث معزول." 24/12/10 <i>The authorities emphasised that the clashes were mere "an isolated incident."</i></p>
<p>أعلنت الحكومة التونسية مقتل 14 شخصا في المصادمات بين قوات الأمن والمتظاهرين في مدينتي تالة والقصرين في وسط غرب تونس، بحسب حصيلة رسمية جديدة أعلنتها الحكومة الاحد. 9/1/11 <i>Based on a new official statistic released on Sunday by the Tunisian government, the authority announced that 14 people have been killed in clashes between security personnel and protestors in the two cities of Tala and Kasserine located in central-western Tunisia.</i></p>
<p>وصرح وزير الاتصالات التونسي سمير العبيدي بأن عدد قتلى خلال الأيام الثلاثة الماضية بلغ 21 قتيلا. 11/1/11 <i>Samir Obeidi, the Telecommunications Minister of Tunisia declared that 21 people were killed in the past three days.</i></p>

It is observed that in these news extracts, although the Tunisian authorities' voices were reported using an indirect quote, which carries significantly less impact on the readers compared to the direct quote, the journalist has strategically utilised positive verbal processes such as 'emphasised', 'declared' and 'announced'. These positive verbal processes promoted a positive impression on the speakers and portrayed them positively. Hence, indicated a bias toward supporting the reported words and the speakers themselves. Similarly, Ben Ali's words also frequently being reported using indirect quotes. For example:

Table 5: Examples of Indirect Quote in Reporting Ben Ali's Voices

<p>حذر الرئيس التونسي زين العابدين بن علي من أن الاحتجاجات العنيفة ضد البطالة، والتي شهدتها تونس مؤخرا، تُعتبر غير مقبولة وتضر بصورة البلاد. 28/12/2010 <i>Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, the Tunisian President warned that violent protests against unemployment, which the country has recently witnessed, are considered unacceptable and severely tarnished the country's image.</i></p>
<p>ويأتي التعديل الوزاري غداة خطاب ألقاه بن علي مساء الثلاثاء اعلن فيه انه "يتفهم" الأوضاع التي أدت للاحتجاجات في منطقة سيدي بوزيد. 29/12/2010 <i>The cabinet reform came directly after Ben Ali's speech on Tuesday evening in which he announced that he "understands" the causes which led to the series of demonstrations in Sidi Bouzid.</i></p>

In comparison, the voice of Tunisian antagonists has not been frequently reported by BBA. BBA only reported on the voice of Tunisian unions during the early days of the protest. The voice of other Tunisian antagonists namely: the protestors, Tunisian youth, unemployed graduates, activists, human rights activists and the Tunisian 'illegal' oppositions were almost absent in BBA online news coverage. Furthermore, when the outlet reported on the Tunisian unions' voice it was done by using the indirect quote. Hence, indicated that the outlet is marginalising the counter-hegemony voices and downplaying the importance of these voices. It is worth noting that these unions which include labour unions, teachers, lawyers, engineers and doctors' unions have shown their support for the protestors' demands. For instance, BBA stated in the news report:

Table 6: Examples of Indirect Quote in Reporting Antagonist's Voices

<p>وقال المسؤول النقابي ان الشرطة استقدمت تعزيزات من سيدي بوزيد حاصرت مدينة منزل بوزيان ومنعت الدخول والخروج منها. وأضاف ان الشرطة قامت باعتقال عدد كبير من الاشخاص. 23/12/10 <i>The union authority mentioned that the police had taken the extra step of enforcement in the Sidi Bouzid area, the police are besieging Bouziane town and barred people from entering and exiting the city. The person also added that the police arrested many people.</i></p>
<p>وقال مسؤول نقابي لوكالة فرانس برس ان المتظاهر القتيل محمد عماري يبلغ من العمر 18 عاما وانه توفي اثر اصابته برصاصة في صدره. 24/12/10 <i>The union authority told AFP that the deceased known as, Mohammad Amari, age 18, killed with a gunshot on his chest.</i></p>
<p>وكان المئات من أعضاء الاتحاد العام التونسي للشغل قد احتشدوا في العاصمة تونس للتعبير عن حزنهم على مقتل خمسة أشخاص على الأقل كانوا قد لقوا حتفهم في التظاهرات 6/1/11 <i>Hundreds of the Tunisian General Union members gathered in Tunis to express their sorrow for the deaths of not less than five demonstrators recently.</i></p>

These examples indicated that BBA marginalised the voice of the antagonist for not only being explicitly reported on the Tunisian unions but also strategically reporting their words by indirect quote. The use of the indirect quote is open to any manipulation which gives the option for the journalist to not report the speaker's words in full. Furthermore, it is noticed that the journalist has strategically utilised neutral verbal processes such as 'mentioned', 'said' and 'called upon to report on the union's words. These verbs do not promote any unique impression on the speaker which his word being reported in the news article. This was the opposite practice when the journalist of BBA was reporting on the voice of Tunisian authorities by strategically utilising the positive verbal processes.

Intertextuality in Al-Jazeera Online News

The discussion in this sub-section, on the other hand, presents how AJA has shown its biased toward the Tunisian antagonists specifically the protestors by presenting ample reports of their voices and side-lining the protagonists' voices. Hence, indicated that BBA was trying to launch counter-hegemony voices against the dominance of Ben Ali and his allies. In contrast to BBA, AJA reported on the voice of antagonists was using a direct quote, for example:

Table 7: Examples of Direct Quote in Reporting Antagonist's Voices

<p>ورأت النقابة أن "غياب معلومة دقيقة ونقل موضوعي لما جرى خاصة في وسائل الإعلام العمومي فسح المجال للتأويل والإشاعة". 30/10/2010 <i>The union stated that "without accurate information and an objective coverage of what had happened, specifically in the media, give and opportunity for misinterpretation and propagation".</i></p>
<p>وقال الزعيم التاريخي للحزب أحمد نجيب الشابي في مؤتمر صحفي "إن الحزب يدعو إلى إقالة وزير الداخلي والاتصال اللذين يرمزان إلى سياسة التصلب والعنف والتعتيم الإعلامي 30/12/10 <i>The political senior leader Ahmed Najib al-Shabi said in a news conference: "The party urges for the resignation of two ministers of home affairs and communication, who promote the policy of rigidity and violence and media censorship.</i></p>
<p>وهتف المعتصمون بشعارات وأناشيد وطنية، ونددوا بـ"أعمال القمع المنظم الذي تمارسه الدولة، واستخدامها للتعذيب بشكل روتني، وقمع حرية الرأي والتعبير،". 12/1/11 <i>The demonstrators chanted slogans and song national anthems while condemning "the repression, torture, prohibition of expression and opinion"</i></p>

These news extracts show that the voice of antagonists was given priority in AJA news coverage of the JR compared to the BBA approach, which preferred to report on the voice of Tunisian authority. In reporting on the voice of the antagonist, AJA not only focused on the Tunisian labour unions but also cover the voice of 'illegal' Tunisian oppositions (being barred by Ben Ali's regime) and its leaders such as Rasheed Ghanouchi and Najib Cheby. The use of direct quotation to report on the words of antagonist's leaders indicates that their voice is important, hence, it needs to be reported with full attention. Furthermore, AJA prefers to accurately report the slogan used or chanted by the demonstrators. Hence, highlighting the importance of protestors' demands. For instance, AJA reported:

Table 8 : Examples of Direct Quote in Reporting Protestors' Demands

<p>وهتف المتظاهرون في المسيرة بشعارات معادية للتمديد مثل "حريات حريات.. لا رئاسة مدى الحياة"، وطالبوا برفع القيود عن الحرية وتشغيل العاطلين هاتفين "شغل.. حرية.. كرامة وطنية"، ونددوا بلجوء الشرطة للقوة ." 28/12/2010</p> <p><i>Demonstrators chanted slogans such as during their march, "freedom freedoms, no to a presidency for life," and they urged for lifting the restrictions on freedom and providing jobs, while many others called for "freedom ..preserve the national dignity," and denounced the brutal use of force by the police.</i></p>
<p>ورفعت شعارات لخصتها إحدى اللافتات قائلة: "خبز وماء.. وبين علي لا." 12/1/11</p> <p><i>...among the slogans which have been raised, one of them summarised their demands by saying: "Bread and water... say no to Ben Ali."</i></p>

Totally in the opposite direction from BBA, the voice of Tunisian authority, specifically Ben Ali was marginalised by AJA. Most of the time, his voice was reported using the indirect quotation. Even Ben Ali's televised speeches, which aimed to address all Tunisians and calm the protestors with many promises have been reported using an indirect quotations and scare quotes.

AJA only started to bring in the Tunisian authority voice on 25/12/2010, a week after Sidi Bouzid witnessed the first demonstration. Besides, the first official response from Ben Ali about the protests was reported days later on 29/12/2010. Table 9 shows examples of AJA's news extracts indicating that Ben Ali's words were reported by AJA on 29/12/2010, through the use of indirect quotations and indirect reporting.

Table 9: Examples of Indirect Quote in Reporting Ben Ali's Words

<p>اتهم الرئيس التونسي في خطابه أمس أطرافا سياسية وإعلامية بتوظيف الاحتجاجات وتضخيم أبعادها، 1)</p> <p><i>The Tunisian president blamed political groups and media agencies in his yesterday speech, for exploiting the protests and exaggerating it</i></p>
<p>وقال بن علي في مستهل خطابه إنه يأسف لما خلفته تلك الأحداث 2)</p> <p><i>At the beginning of his speech, Ben Ali mentioned that he regretted the incident protests.</i></p>
<p>وقال بن علي إنه يقدر شعور أي عاطل عن العمل، 3)</p> <p><i>And Ben Ali stated that he acknowledges the feeling of every unemployed man seeking a job.</i></p>
<p>وأردف أن المظاهرات والاحتجاجات وأعمال الشغب تضر بصورة تونس لدى المستثمرين وتؤثر على الاستثمارات فيها وعلى قطاع السياحة. 4)</p> <p><i>He adds that the protests and riots severely tarnished Tunisia's image in the eye of investors and harms investments and tourism activities.</i></p>

The first example in Table 9 indicates that indirect reporting was used to report on Ben Ali's speech by providing the summary of his first official speech in response to the protest events. The journalist opted to highlight that Ben Ali is blaming others, namely his political opponents and foreign media for exploiting the incident. In examples 2, 3 and 4, the neutral verbal process of "mentioned", 'stated' and 'said' was mostly used to report on Ben Ali's words, which provide an unbiased

impression of him. The use of indirect quotations and indirect reporting indicate that Ben Ali's words are not being reported in full and might be influenced by the choice of words by the journalist. Hence, revealed that the outlet does not give much attention to Ben Ali's speech during the 2011 JR.

AJA also utilised scare quotes to report on Ben Ali's voices. It was aimed to put a distance between the outlet and Ben Ali. For example, AJA reported on Ben Ali's speech in his official response to the widespread protests by using the strategic quote. It is done by selecting certain words used by Ben Ali and not the complete clause or sentence. For example:

Table 10: Examples of Using Scare Quote in Reporting Ben Ali's Words

<p>مشيرا إلى أن بلاده ستواصل ما سماه "السياسة التنموية ذات البعد الاجتماعي". <i>Ben Ali pointed out that his country will continue with what he named "the development policy with social interests."</i></p>
<p>لكنه يرفض "التوظيف السياسي لبعض الأطراف" التي لم يسمها لهذه الأحداث، <i>However, he refutes what he called the "political exploitation by some political groups" for these incidents, which he did not specifically name.</i></p>
<p>وكذلك ما قال إنه "تجن" يسيء لتونس "تبثه بعض التلفزيونات". <i>He also pointed out the propaganda which he labelled as "insulting" and very harmful to Tunisia, which was "broadcast by some television channels".</i></p>

Putting Ben Ali's words between commas or utilised terms such as 'what he (Ben Ali) called as', 'he labelled as' and named as, show that the journalist does not necessarily believe in Ben Ali's words and is not responsible of it. Hence, put the distance between the journalist and the words being reported. As a result, Ben Ali's voice has been marginalised by AJA in the news coverage of the 2011 JR event.

5. CONCLUSION

The analysis revealed the ideological stand of the two well-known news institutions of AJA and BBA during the 2011 JR. The use of intertextuality strategies by allowing the 'in-group' and ample access to the construction of online news discourse while marginalising the 'out-group' voices has revealed the bias practised by both news outlets. Although both online news outlets tried to provide balance reports on the JR events by providing news coverage on both sides of the conflict, it is however pretty apparent that each news agency has its agenda and ideology in reporting the event. Thus, the utilisation of intertextuality by AJA indicated the outlet stands with the antagonists and supports their demands for political reform and power transformation happened in Tunisia. Hence, the antagonists were treated as the 'in-group'. Their voices were reported through direct quotation and indirect quotation with the assistance of positive verbal processes, which add strong connotations to the reported voices.

On the other hand, AJA marginalised Ben Ali's voice and treated it as the voice of the 'out-group'. Ben Ali's words, specifically his speeches during the uprising were reported most of the time using an indirect quotation, indirect report, transformed indirect quotation and scare-quotation. These four methods of

reporting speech strongly indicate that the outlet was focusing on the specific part of Ben Ali's words or providing a summary of what was being said. Thus, Ben Ali's speeches were reported using the journalist's own words rather than Ben Ali's original words. Furthermore, the outlet only started to report on Ben Ali's feedback on the uprising on 29th December 2010, a week after the important event started. Ultimately, the reports on Ben Ali's speeches were aimed to critic and discredit his efforts in dealing with protests rather than highlighting his efforts to end the crisis. Hence, AJA's coverage of Ben Ali's speeches is short and brief and mostly followed by critics from the antagonists on his promises. These show the outlet's agenda to launch counter-hegemony discourse against Ben Ali.

Differing from AJA, BBA opted to treat Ben Ali and his allies as the 'in-group'. Hence, the voice of Tunisian authorities has been reported most of the time using a direct quotation and indirect quotation together with positive verbal processes. The antagonist's voice particularly the protestors, however, has been side-lined by allowing only the voice of Tunisian unions to be included in the online news report. Even though the voice of Tunisian unions has been reported by BBA, it was done using indirect quotations which come with neutral verbal processes. Unlike the positive verbal process, the neutral verbal process does not promote any unique impression to cast a positive impression about the speaker. Hence, indicated that BBA does not consider the voice of Tunisian unions as essential, which deserved to be well treated as the voice of Tunisian authority. Thus, it is revealed that BBA tries to preserve the hegemony of Ben Ali's power dominance in Tunisia during this hard time when the regime is having a severe challenge on their power dominant from the antagonist.

To sum up, the critical analysis of intertextuality strategies in AJA and BBA has revealed the outlet is biased toward one of the two sides in the 2011 Tunisian conflict. The analysis has revealed many forms of inequality faced by the Tunisian antagonists in their fight to defend their rights and voice out their demands. Hence, analysis of the discourses of power which reproduced and legitimated unbalance of power can offer a significant contribution to the struggles of resistance and change because of the power crisis which occurred during the wave of 'Arab Spring'. Therefore, critical discourse analysis through textual analytical tools may provide a formulation of effective counter-discourse and counter-ideologies for a better understanding of online news discourses.

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