

*The Representation of ISIS in The American Newspapers
in terms of Van Leeuwen's Social Actor Approach: A
Critical Discourse Analysis¹*

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Abstract

The emergence of 'the Islamic state of Iraq and Syria' (ISIS) was surprising not only because of its rapid expansion geographically across Syria and Iraq, but also because of its global influence. That is represented in its ability to attract large numbers of volunteers, from almost all around the world. Since June 2014 when Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, leader of ISIS, ceremoniously declared the formation of the Caliphate and himself as the self-proclaimed Caliph, the international media has reported on this group that become the talk of media, especially American media. This interest has motivated and drawn the attention of the researcher to study and analyze the image of ISIS in the New York Times (NYT) to show how it represents this organization linguistically by uncovering possible underlying ideologies. This study looks into 20 articles and analyzes these news articles will be done using van Leeuwen's (2008) Social Actor Approach. The analysis shows that the NYThas represented ISIS as an active dynamic social actor. Additionally, ISIS is portrayed as powerful social actor, and therefore, as the negative-other representation.

تمثيل داعش في الصحف الأمريكية على وفق مقارنة الممثل الاجتماعي**لفانليوين: تحليل نقدي للخطاب ١****الباحث****الأستاذ المساعد الدكتور****مصطفى عبد الصاحب عبد الكريم****علي قاسم علي****جامعة البصرة / كلية الآداب****المخلص:-**

كان ظهور الدولة الإسلامية في العراق وسوريا "داعش" مستغرباً ليس بسبب توسعها الجغرافي عبر سوريا والعراق فقط ولكن أيضاً بسبب نفوذها العالمي الذي يتمثل في قدرتها على جذب أعداد كبيرة من المتطوعين من جميع أنحاء العالم، منذ يونيو ٢٠١٤ معندما أعلن أبو بكر البغدادي زعيم تنظيم داعش بشكل رسمي تشكيل الخلافة، وتتويج نفسه الخليفة المزعوم لتلك الخلافة، فأصبحت هذه المجموعة حديث وسائل الإعلام الدولية، ولاسيما وسائل الإعلام الأمريكية. وقد حفز هذا الاعلان الاهتمام الدولي، ما جعله محط أنظار الباحثين وهذا ما لفت انتباه الباحث إلى دراسة صورة داعش في صحيفة النيويورك تايمز وتحليلها لظهور كيف أن هذه الصحيفة مثلت هذه المنظمة لغويًا من خلال كشف الايديولوجيات الكامنة المحتملة عبر استعمال تحليل نقدي للخطاب. أختيرت عشر مقالات اعتماداً على نهج فان ليوين (٢٠٠٨). مقارنة الفاعل الاجتماعي، ويظهر التحليل أن النيويورك تايمز قد مثلت داعش فاعلاً اجتماعياً ديناميكياً نشطاً. فضلاً عن ذلك، فأنة يصور فاعلاً اجتماعياً قوياً، ومن ثم، تمثيل سلبي لهذه المجموعة.

Key words: Critical discourse analysis, New York Times, Social actor approach, exclusion, inclusion

1-Introduction

CDA is a branch of applied linguistics, and it is closely linked to the pioneering works of analysts such as Roger Fowler, Norman Fairclough, van Dijk, van Leeuwen, and Ruth Wodak (Hart, 2010:3), and philosophers like Marx, Gramsci, Foucault, Althusser, Bourdieu, Habermas, Harvey, Halliday and Giddens (van Leeuwen, 2006:291). A research in the field of terrorism and media discourse has to be analyzed in terms of CDA. Therefore, this study uses CDA as both the theoretical framework and the method of study. According to van Leeuwen (2006:290), CDA is not related to a specific school of linguistics or discourse analysis, but it is influenced by different schools and theories like Halliday's systemic-functional linguistics, argumentation strategies, narrative analysis, conversation analysis, etc. Both of Critical Linguistics (CL) and CDA are often used interchangeably. In fact, CDA was known as Critical Linguistics that began at the University of East Anglia in the mid-1970s (van Leeuwen, 2009b:279). Van Dijk (2003:352) defines CDA as a kind of discourse analysis that tends to study how social practices as power abuse, dominance, and inequality are reproduced, and represented on the basis of written or spoken discourse in the social and political context. Van Leeuwen (2008:273) notes that CDA is a way of acting discourse analysis from a critical view that often concentrates on

concepts such as power, ideology and domination. CDA includes several different approaches. Among different approaches, however, the ones that belong to Norman Fairclough, Teun Van Dijk, Ruth Wodak, and van Leeuwen have the most fame. *"While we do not claim that these are the only approaches to CDA, we do argue that they are the best established, {...}"* (Waugh et al., 2015:75).

In the modern world, media occupy an essential position in any society and their presence is significant because they have used to tell people about everyday issues. Therefore, the international media undertake to cover important events like the emergence of ISIS. The NYT also covered the happenings after the period of fall Mosul (i.e. during the period of 10th June 2014) in its articles. The researcher believes that the language used to represent ISIS in the above newspaper embeds certain ideologies and does not only convey the actual event. These ideologies are able to shape the attitudes of people towards ISIS. Consequently, he decided to adopt this newspaper that has a global impact to show how it portrayed ISIS in its articles.

By employing mixed methods research: quantitative and qualitative approaches, this study examines 10 articles. Analyzing these news articles will be done using van Leeuwen's (2008) Social Actor approach to discover the representation of ISIS and investigate how it is realized linguistically by

uncovering possible underlying ideologies. Utilizing van Leuween's frameworks is due to the notion that discourse makers ideologically construct social actors in discourse to express their ideologies towards them. Therefore, it is set to explore the ways ISIS is represented in the mentioned newspaper.

2-Aims of the study

The study has more than one objective that helps in achieving the main purpose. The first objective is to expose the dynamic representation of ISIS in theNYT. The second objective is to identify the particular ways in which ISIS is manifested in thisnewspaper. Third, the study also seeks to reveal the ideological representation of the NYTtoward ISIS. Fourth, it also aims to answer the question "Is ISIS represented in the NYT in a special way? If so, does this style of representation show ISIS in a negative way or not?"

3-The Model

The 'Social Actor Approach' or 'Social Actor Network', as Wodak & Meyer (2009a:144) called it, focuses on the social agent rather than social structure. Therefore, it is based ontwo assumptions: first, the lack of bi-uniqueness oflanguage which can be realized in the way agency is analyzed; and second, meaning is culturally based (Abid, Manan & Amir, 2013:36),that is "*meaning belongs to culture rather than to*

language" (van Leeuwen,1996:32). Van Leeuwen (1993, 2008 and 2009a) calls his approach as 'Discourse as Recontextualization'. It is also described by van Leeuwen (1995) as 'a sociological grammar' and 'a socio-semantic inventory' (1996). Van Leeuwen's model is influenced by a wide range of sociological and linguistic theories. It also depends on different scholars and philosophers such as Bronisław Malinowski, Talcott Parsons, Basil Bernstein, Michel Foucault, Michael Halliday and Pierre Bourdieu. Basing on Foucault's concept of 'discourse'; Halliday's concept of 'register' and Bernstein's 'recontextualization'; van Leeuwen develops his analytical model (van Leeuwen, 2008:vii). It is influenced by Brown and Yule's (1983) and Levinson's (1983) work of "*background knowledge*" and the work of Martin (1984, 1992) (Waugh et al., 2015:83).

In 1993, van Leeuwen began his first work into the field of CDA through his Ph.D. thesis. Van Leeuwen, then, has modified his model in 1996 describing it as "*The representation of social actors*". Basing on his work in 1996;van Leeuwen develops his model in a book known as '*Discourse and Practice: New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis*' (2008).SAA can be defined as the way of how social actors described sociologically and critically before studying how they are aware linguistically (van Leeuwen, 2008:23).This means that van Leeuwen goes behind

grammatical processes focusing on socio-semantic issues that deal with the semantic features of discourse such as 'exclusion' for representing social practices (Rycker, 2014:49), (see van Leeuwen, 2009b:281). Therefore, the SAA model apparently depends on the sociological categories (such as agency) instead of linguistic categories (as passive sentence) (Waugh et al., 2015:84). Van Leeuwen describes social actors as human beings that are represented as participants in clauses and can be represented as subjects (agents) or objects (goals) in the clause (Baker & Ellege, 2011:133). Thus, an actor is represented as a particular individual or as a kind of a person that located in a discourse (van Leeuwen, 2008:6). Van Leeuwen uses the term 'Exclusion' and 'Inclusion' to refer to social actor. That is, social actors can be excluded or included depending on the purpose and ideology of the writer.

A-Exclusion deals with the process of deleting actors by some linguistic mechanisms for different reasons. Exclusion can be distinguished between two subcategories: suppression and backgrounding. The former deals with excluding both the social actors and their actions leaving no reference anywhere in a text. Backgrounding, on the other hand, means that social actors leave a trace in a text.

B-Inclusion is more common in any text which means that social actors are mentioned clearly in a text and they are put in

the centre of attention. Van Leeuwen (2008) classifies inclusion into different kinds. The following categories are used in the corpora:

1-Activation/Passivation: takes place when social actor is presented as the performer of action, that is considered as the active, dynamic forces in an activity. However, passivation happens when the social actor is the recipient action or is shown as undergoing the activity (van Leeuwen, 2008:32-33).

2-Genericization/Specification: the former takes place when the social actors are considered as groups or classes. Specification occurs when social actors are represented as specific and identifiable individuals (van Leeuwen 2008:35-38).

3-Assimilation: occurs when the actor is described in a group. Assimilation is described by plurality. It can be divided into two types: *aggregation* plays an essential role in different contexts, quantifies groups of participants treating them as "statistics" and is realized by definite or indefinite quantifier; and collectivization is represented by the first or third-person plural and collective words like 'this nation', 'the community' and so on (van Leeuwen, 1996:49).

4-Association refers to representation of groups made by participants or groups of participants, like 'politicians, bureaucrats, and ethnic minorities', without labeling them in the text (Caliendo & Magistro, 2009:182).

5-Indetermination: the former occurs in the text when the participants are described as unspecified or anonymous entities(van Leeuwen, 2008:40).

6-Functionalization/Identification: the former takes place when social actors are portrayed depending on their activity or something they performed instead of their person's features such as an occupation or a role. Identification, on the other hand, occurs when participants are represented in terms of what they are, rather in terms of what they do (van Leeuwen 2008:42-43).

7-Personalisation/Impersonalisation:Personalization occurs when the participants are described as a human being including the feature human.However, social actors can also be impersonalized when they are described by abstract nouns or concrete nouns that do not have the feature 'human', i.e., those objects that are not human(van Leeuwen, 2008:46).

4- The Representation of ISIS in NYT

After identifying van Leeuwen's categorization of social actors in discourse, the researcher tends to analyze the ways in which ISIS is referred to as social actor in discourse in the form of 'Social Actor Analysis'. The news reports of the relevant issue of the NYT contained 11,464 words and 443 sentences. Through its articles, the NYT has used 522 references to refer to ISIS. Due to the space constraints of this study, the researcher will focus only on 13 elements taken from the van Leeuwen's framework (2008) to portray how the articles chosen from the NYT represent ISIS by selecting some examples to clarify the main categories found in the given texts. The analysis of these

articles revealed that the NYT includes and excludes ISIS. These excluded and included representations are, of course, ideologically based.

4-1 Exclusion

The case in which ISIS is not explicitly represented in the text is known as exclusion. Under analysis, 39 cases of exclusion are observed and this is little compared with the inclusion of ISIS where it is mentioned 483 times. This inclusion is evident when there are negative incidents involving ISIS. According to the researcher's point of view, this exclusion does not serve any ideological position but it is just used to avoid redundancy and when the situation in which ISIS is known for readers. The NYT does rarely exclude ISIS in the suppressed form. Therefore, the NYT uses just backgrounding while representing ISIS.

4-1-1 Suppression

Here, ISIS is radically excluded leaving no reference anywhere in a text. That is, both social actor and its action are excluded. Suppression takes place in 19 occurrences through the texts. Suppression can linguistically be realized in two ways. First, through '*passive agent deletion*', or *passivization* in which social actor is null and not agentivized. Here, this linguistic realization tends to delete the real actor to drive the readers' attention into the victims. As in the examples below:

*1-Early Tuesday morning, militants stormed the offices of the provincial governor and later in the day, **dozens of army and police vehicles** were burning in the streets, witnesses said.*

*2-According to security officials and residents in the area, **the Kurdish forces** were routed from Zumar, from the Syrian border that also sits on oil fields, and then Sinjar.*

In the excerpts above, the social actor (ISIS) is null and not mentioned. Here, the NYT tends to use passivization instead of active structure to focus on the victims without any attention to the social actor 'ISIS'. The excluded social actor could have been included, for instance, through postmodifying phrases with *by, of, from, etc.*, but it has not been.

Nominalization is another linguistic process in which suppression can be realized. This process occurs when the verb is nominalized with excluding the actor of the activity, that is, verbs function as nominals. This linguistic process is defined, according to Halliday, as a resource for creating grammatical metaphors including verbs and adjectives that are reworded metaphorically as nouns instead of functioning in the clause. The following examples are illustrative:

3-The rising insurgency in Iraq seemed likely to add to the foreign policy woes of the Obama administration, which has faced sharp criticism for its swap of five Taliban officers for Sgt.

4-The assault was one of the most aggressive undertaken against Kirkuk in months by the Islamic State.

Concerning the excerpts above, the verbs '*assault*', and '*rising*', are nominalized. The social actor is removed and excluded from subject position with reference to its activity. In all examples above, ISIS is suppressed whenever there is a negative phenomenon. That is, all verbs used in the previous examples and those in the texts are utilized negatively.

4-1-2 Backgrounding

In this case, ISIS is excluded leaving a trace anywhere in a text. Backgrounded social actor, ISIS, takes place in 20 cases through the text. This backgrounding can linguistically be formed in different ways. It is realized through simple ellipses in nonfinite clauses with *-ing* or *-ed* participles. In all of these cases, ISIS is mentioned elsewhere in a text by its action. The following instances represent backgrounded social actor:

5-Exploiting *a foggy night as cover, Islamic State militants launched a surprise attack on Iraqi Kurdish positions on the outskirts of Kirkuk early Friday,*

6-Using *armored vehicles and suicide bombers, the militants attacked several pesh merga positions on the outskirts of the city.*

In the previous examples, the ‘*exploiting*’ and ‘*using*’ are reworded metaphorically to function as nouns and these nouns refer to excluded social actor that is mentioned elsewhere in a text. These verbs are realized as act clauses that are embedded clauses functioning as Head of the nominalised process. Such clauses function as Subject (Carrier) or Complement (Attribute). For instance, the embedded clause ‘*Exploiting a foggy night as cover*’ functions as Carriers, and can be substituted by it or the act. The examples above involve infinite clause with *-ing* with no reference to ISIS, but it is included elsewhere in the text.

Backgrounding can also be realized through paratactic clauses. This linguistic strategy occurs once through the texts, as seen in the following example:

7-*In areas that fall under **their** control, **the jihadists** work carefully to entrench their rule.*

The previous instance uses paratactic clauses. The first clause has a reference to social actor by utilizing 'its' and 'their'. Here, the reader will know exactly the specific actor 'ISIS' in the second clause. Therefore, it is not completely excluded.

However, removing ISIS in forms of backgrounding and suppression does not invite the reader to think of who social actor that would do such act of terrorism. Therefore, the readers can speculate on the suppressed social actor and its action because they share the genre who is authorized to perform such an action, but they cannot fix the actual social actor in the reports. Consequently, readers assume that the cause of such action in this context is ISIS. Although ISIS is excluded, but this does not neglect its negative action which is included whether the doer of this action is present or absent. Therefore, the excluding of ISIS cannot be ideologically motivated. Excluding social actor is to avoid redundancy on the one hand, and readers know that ISIS is irresponsible to such action on the other hand.

4-2 Inclusion

The NYT always tends to include ISIS in its article. ISIS is included about 483 times. This inclusion takes different representations depending on van Leeuwen's model. These representations are activation, passivation, genericization, assimilation, association, indetermination, functionalization,

identification, appraisal, personalization and impersonalization.

4-2-1 Activation and Passivation

The NYT always represents ISIS actively as a means of negative representation more than it is passivated, since activation is used in 369 cases. Activation can be realized through different processes. It is realized through *circumstantialisation* when social actor is preceded by prepositional circumstantials *by* or *from*. This linguistic feature rarely occurred, as seen in the following examples:

8-*The army responded to the rout on Tuesday by bombing at least one military base that had been captured **by the militants**.*

9-*For those coming **from the Islamic State** side, passing through the concertina wire is only the beginning of the crossing.*

ISIS can also be represented as active grammatical participant when it takes agent position and this process is frequently occurred in the texts. This means that NYT tends to agentivize ISIS and puts it as grammatical actor, as noted:

10-***Sunni militants** spilling over the border from Syria on Tuesday seized control of the northern city of Mosul*

11-***The militants** freed thousands of prisoners and took over military bases.*

Activation can also be linguistically realized by possessivation when the possessive pronouns are used to activate social actor.

Through the reports of the NYT, ISIS is possivatred in many cases, as seen in following examples:

*12-Abu Towfik from the Nouredin Zinky Brigade, said **its sophisticated tactics** made its fighters hard to dislodge.*

*13-The group's **social media campaign** was underway, with photos posted online showing militants patrolling the city.*

Postmodification is also another way to realize activation. it takes place when social actor is preceded by the preposition 'of', as noted in examples below:

*14-The apparent role **of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria** in Tuesday's attack helps vindicate those,*

*15-Since the arrival **of the Islamic State**, Kurdish suspicion of outsiders has risen considerably.*

Finally, activation can be realized via premodification when social actor is adjectivized, for example, with 'extremist' in 'extremist group'. This type of activation is numerously used. The following examples are illustrative:

*16-Sunni **militants** spilling over the border from Syria on Tuesday seized control of the northern city of Mosul*

*17-The United States has been working with the Iraqi government to drive **the extremist group** from Anbar.*

In general, ISIS is mostly represented as active and dynamic force throughout the whole texts that has decision-making in society. Participation is the main process through which the social actor gets the dynamic force in the texts. Giving such an active representation to ISIS illustrates the determining role

given to the actor. Therefore, this activation is ideologically motivated. Because ISIS always acts the action of terrifying, controlling or attacking other social actors and it is not affected by them, ISIS is portrayed as active social actor. In the NYT's reports, ISIS is put in agent positions and this means that this organization controls the actions in the areas under its control.

Although ISIS is frequently represented as active, however, there are 114 cases in which ISIS is depicted as passive social actor. Both kinds of passivation: 'subjection' and 'beneficialisation' are used. The former takes place when ISIS is treated as object in the representation. Here, subjected social actoris realized through different processes. First, through '*participation*' and this occurs when the passivated social actor is treated as goal. ISIS is rarely represented as a goal and this denotes that ISIS is always seen as an invader and raiderrather than invaded, as shown in the following examples:

*18-Critics fear such assessments will once again enmesh the United States in a protracted, hydra-headed conflict as President Obama appeals to Congress for new war powers to fight **the Islamic State**.*

*19-The seizing of the three towns in a triangle that stretches north and west from Mosul to the borders of Syria and Turkey allowed **the extremists** to expand their territory.*

Subjected social actor can also be realized through 'circumstantialization' when ISIS is followed by a prepositional phrase used with, for instance, '*against*' or '*for*', as in:

20-A victory ***against the Islamic State*** could take years,

21-The fall of Ramadi, ..., represented the biggest victory so far this year for ***the Islamic State***.

Possessivation is another way in which subjected social actor, ISIS is realized. This process occurs usually in the form of a prepositional phrase such as 'of' that postmodifies a noun, as in the following examples:

22-That battle was one snapshot of ***the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria***.

23-They destroyed a Shiite shrine, executed resisters, overran local security forces and hoisted ***the black flag of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, or ISIS***, above government buildings.

The second kind of passivation is *beneficialisation* that takes place when social actor negatively or positively benefits from the action. According to Halliday, there is a grammatical feature for distinguishing beneficiaries from goals. The former can take a preposition, while goals generally cannot. The following examples are illustrative:

24-Hours later, as the militants demanded that the city's residents swear allegiance ***to ISIS*** or be killed

25-The dam is on the Tigris River about 30 miles northwest of Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, which fell ***to ISIS*** on June 10.

Although ISIS is represented as passive social actor as noted in previous examples, but the readers can observe that this group

still has the lead on the ground or the decision-making. That is, ISIS is not represented, grammatically, in active construction but it is socially and conceptually active. In general, ISIS has the dynamic role and active operational force in occupying wide areas of Iraq and Syria whether it is represented in active or passive construction.

4-2-2 Genericization and Specification

In most cases, the NYT tries to genericize ISIS. This means that this newspaper avoids identifies ISIS in terms of its age, gender, work and etc. ISIS is mostly depicted as a group or class and not as specific identifiable individuals. The NYT always uses words like *Sunni militants*, *Islamic state*, *Islamic State of Iraq and Syria*, *insurgents*, *extremists*, *jihadists*, *Sunni Fighters*, *caliphate*, *ISIS* or *ISIL* to refer to this group. In the text under analysis, the NYT uses 176 representations to refer to ISIS in the plural form, 217 in the singular, and 89 in the possessive cases, totalizing 482 occurrences. Here, genericization takes place in 463 cases. ISIS in most of cases has also been referred to by a third-plural and singular pronouns. Of course, it should not be forgotten that the select of plural and singular pronouns that has led to the genericization of ISIS is an obligatory act in which no other options were remained for the writers to use. The following instances show the genericization of ISIS in the form of third-plural and singular pronouns:

26-They have attracted the most attention with their draconian enforcement of a fundamentalist interpretation of Islamic Shariah law

27-It controls territory greater than many countries

Although ISIS is portrayed as other group representation in the NYT, it can conclude that there may not any clear-cut evidence to betray that behind this kind of genericization a special negative or positive ideology is hidden.

Genericization is realized linguistically through different processes. First, when ISIS is referred by using plural nouns without a definite article as in the following examples:

28-Sunni militants spilling over the border from Syria on Tuesday seized control of the northern city of Mosul.

29-After militants captured Falluja at the end of last year, the United States rushed guns, ammunition and Hellfire missiles to Iraq.

The second situation occurs when the social actor is represented as singular nouns with the definite article or indefinite article. This can be seen in the examples below:

30-The militant group has fought with tanks captured from the Iraqi military.

31-The Islamic State trucks in fuel from Syria for cars and generators, but the fuel is expensive and fills the street with black smoke.

Although ISIS is always represented as generic, however, this does not mean that all representations of ISIS are equally often

genericized. In the corpus, there are only 19 instances whereby only important ISIS leaders are specified. For instance:

32- *“Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi!” the girls yell, giving the name of the leader of the Islamic State.*

33- *The Islamic State’s leaders in Syria and Iraq have practical control over its North African provinces.*

The systematic observation of the current study shows that genericization is highly overused and ISIS is genericized most often without any specific identification to ISIS apart from some situations in terms of its number. Because of the NYT is official and middle-class-oriented newspaper that tends to refer to government agents and experts specifically and ordinary people generically, it avoids describing ISIS specifically. Therefore, the genericization of this group is taken place because ISIS is considered as unknown group that has negative and anti-attitudes towards western countries. From this point, genericization of ISIS can play an important role in establishing 'us' and 'them' groups. The NYT treats ISIS as 'other' or 'them' group rather than as 'we' or 'us'. That is, ISIS is portrayed as unfavorably negative other-representation. This can be noted in the frequent use of the third pronoun 'they' or 'it'. Therefore, ISIS is seen as a negative representation of 'the other' and this is clearly manifested in the reports of NYT by using the negative adjectives and nouns to refer to ISIS considering its members as radicalists and extremists.

4-2-3 Assimilation

In this category of analysis, ISIS is depicted as a class or group in genericization without a specific referent and this feature is known as ‘assimilation’. In another word, ISIS is assimilated instead of individualized. This can be noted in the frequent use of the word ‘*group*’ that is used in 55 times throughout the texts. However, the NYT individualizes ISIS only when there is a reference to its elite persons, i.e. ISIS’s leaders (see examples 32-33 above).

The NYT uses both kinds of assimilation: *aggregation* and *collectivization*. The former takes place when social actor is quantified and treated as ‘statistics’ and can be realized by definite or indefinite quantifier. The social actor ISIS, throughout the corpus, is aggregated in 9 cases via indefinite and definite quantifiers. Such as:

34-*Hundreds of Islamic State fighters took part in the attack on Kirkuk early Friday,*

35-*Pesh merga commanders said they had recovered **the bodies of at least 107 Islamic State fighters: Some were tied to the back of vehicles by residents.***

Aggregation depicts social actor as ‘*horde*’ of individuals that is threatening the in-group. This is vividly depicted in the examples above. ISIS is aggregated and portrayed statistically in the corpus by using indefinite (like *hundreds* and *dozens*) and definite (*Five fighters* and so on) quantifiers which are arbitrary

measures. The measures are quantified; although they are not mostly in exact numbers. Aggregation occurs to represent the strength of ISIS. However, analyzing the texts has revealed that aggregating social actor or giving specialized status to it has been done unintentionally. Therefore, there may not a special hidden ideology behind this kind of aggregation.

The second type of assimilation is collectivization which occurs when social actor is depicted by using collective words as consensual group, community, or homogenous and this be also realized by the third-person plural. In the corpora, ISIS is collectivized more than it is aggregated, that is, is collectivized in 454 positions. This means that ISIS is frequently represented as a collective group and not as individuals. In the corpora, it can be observed that the social actor ISIS is collectivized by using expressions like *Islamic State, jihadists Sunni fighters, militants, Islamic Police or insurgents* as well through the third-plural and singular pronouns (As it was pointed in the previous sections, instances 281-286). The following examples confirm the just mentioned fact:

36-*The militants freed thousands of prisoners and took over military bases, police stations, banks and provincial headquarters.*

37-*In areas that fall under their control, the jihadists work carefully to entrench their rule.*

Concerning the excerpts above, ISIS is portrayed as a homogeneous and consensual group by using expressions like *Islamic State, jihadists Sunni fighters, militants, Islamic Police or insurgents*. These expressions tend to correlate the reader with the overall community of ISIS for the purpose of revealing the aims, activities and power of this group.

4-2-4 Association

This feature occurs when social actor links together with another group constituting a group without necessarily being labeled. The NYT used different terms to refer to ISIS, but these terms cannot be considered as association because social actor has to be associated only in relation to a specific action and do not need to be member of a particular group.

The NYT has associated ISIS with different groups in 16 cases. In another word, these groups have joined and associated with ISIS. Of course, this happens because the power that ISIS gains after its control of wide areas. In the reports under analysis, the NYT associates ISIS with other groups activated in countries like Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt and Libya as well as its base in Syria and Iraq establishing militant affiliates in these countries.

Association can be linguistically realized through coordinated nominal groups. The following examples confirm the just mentioned fact:

38-The Islamic State's attraction, even in the West, was proved when Amedy Coulibaly, one of the gunmen in the Paris terrorist attacks last month, **declared allegiance to the group**.

39-But tensions peaked in November, when a faction of Qaeda fighters there **swore loyalty to Mr. Baghdadi**.

Association can also be linguistically realized by "circumstances of accompaniment" when two social actors link together by using the preposition 'with'. In this case, the association is, perhaps, even more fleeting and unstable. For instance:

40-Ansar Beit al-Maqdis began adopting the Islamic State's signature medieval punishment, ..., the group's online videos and statements claiming responsibility for attacks began to take on more of the sophistication and gore **associated with** its new parent group.

41-In neighboring Libya, at least three distinct groups have declared their affiliation **with** the Islamic State,

The NYT tends to draw an image for the readers that ISIS has become more power and authority than before after the occupation of Mosul. After this period, it began controlling wide areas, huge money and numerous fighters from different countries. Therefore, different groups decided to join to ISIS. These groups find their benefits through following ISIS to achieve their aims.

4-2-5 Indetermination

Indetermination takes place when social actor is represented as unspecified and anonymous individuals or groups. There are about 61 cases of indetermination available in the given texts by

using both indefinite pronouns and exophoric reference. Indetermination can be linguistically aggregated by using indefinite pronouns, such as *somebody*, *someone*, *some*, *some people*, *a few*, *some*, etc., either alone or together with the names in which the number of social actor's members is unknown, as in:

42-Another video showed it training a few dozen young boys in black uniforms to fight with knives and carry rifles.

43-Many of the recruits are drawn by its extreme ideology. But others are lured by the high salaries.

Indetermination can also be realized by the use of generalized exophoric reference like 'they' referring to unknown others who are never specified. In this case, social actor gains a kind of impersonal authority (see examples 26-27 above).

Using such structures leads to minimize the importance of the individual identity of ISIS while emphasizing its actions of killing and destruction to the readers. Hence, such instances emphasize that the actions of ISIS can be a threat to the residents and security forces. Although ISIS is always depicted as powerful force, but this group is still unknown and ambiguous in term of number. Therefore, the NYT avoids giving specific information about its members. In other words, the identity of the social actor is always vague and this can be realized through indetermination.

4-2-6 Functionalization and Identification

This process takes place when social actor is described in terms of its activity, that is, in terms of something it does. The representation of ISIS in terms of its function is approximately taken place in 139 cases. Functionalization is linguistically realized in three ways. First, by a noun, formed from verbs, via suffixes such as *-er*, *-ant*, *-ent*, *-ian*, *-ee*, or *-ian*. The following examples are illustrative:

44-The militants freed thousands of prisoners and took over military bases, police stations, banks and provincial headquarters.

45-The ISIS fighters who captured Mosul in June pushed north during the weekend.

Second, functionalization can also be realized through nouns which closely interrelated to an activity and this can be represented by the suffixes *-ist* and *-eer*. According to Halliday, these nouns form the “*range of that activity*”. This can be seen in the following examples:

46-The extremists sent a message to teachers: Report for work or lose your jobs.

47-In areas that fall under their control, the jihadists work carefully to entrench their rule.

Finally, functionalization is also realized by the compounding of nouns that closely associated with an activity and highly generalized categorizations by adding ‘man’, ‘woman’, ‘person’. For instance:

48-One man, Khalid, said that **gunmen** came to his house in July while his family was eating breakfast and arrested his father

49-**Gunmen** check IDs and search men's cellphones, looking for secular songs or chats with girls.

Concerning the examples above, the functionalization of ISIS is so clear. The authors frequently and explicitly use words that denote radicalism and extremism. These words, like *insurgents*, *militants* and *fighters* as well as *jihadists*, are given a negative meaning to them. In fact, most of these words have been similarly defined by Oxford Dictionary as a force used to achieve ideological aims, especially social and political changes. This means that ISIS is depicted as a force that aimed to make radical political and social changes.

Of course, the functionalization of ISIS in the NYT is negatively oriented. The terms that denote the functionalization of ISIS depict a scenario of how ISIS assaults another group of social actors. Therefore, ISIS fighters are more frequently portrayed as attackers. In the inspection of word list, it can be observed that the verbs like *control*, *capture*, *seize attack*, *fall*, *assault* and *kill* occur 116 times in the texts. This leads to the idea that ISIS fighters are treated as invaders and offenders. Hence, stressing the need for the reader to support any form of resistance against ISIS because of its negative actions.

Unlike functionalization, identification takes place when social actor is defined in terms of what it rather than of what it

does. As mentioned, ISIS is represented as indistinct group. That is, there is no specific reference to its members in terms of their age, gender, etc., except little cases. The NYT used about 149 cases of identification in its articles. Two types of identification: *classification and relational identification* are used in the texts.

In the case of classification, social actor is represented in terms of the major identity categories by means of which a given society or institution differentiates between classes of people. These categories, like age, gender, provenance, class, wealth, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and so on, are linguistically realized by a closed set of nouns. Under analysis, the NYT only classifies ISIS in terms of its religion. It always tends to link this group to the radical part of Islam. In other words, the NYT gives more identification to ISIS in terms of religion referring to it as a Sunni group not just as an Islamic one. In the given reports, religion plays a major role to highlight the ideology of ISIS. Phrases like *Sunni group* and *Sunni jihadists* are mostly used through the texts. The NYT numerously refers to ISIS as *Islamic State*, *Islamic (Shariah) law*, *Islamic courts*, *a Shariah court*, *Islamic Militants*, *Islamic Police*, *radical Muslims*, *Islamists* and *jihadis* where these terms are uttered 137 times. The following examples are illustrative:

50-The fighting in Minbej took place six months ago, but the methods the **Islamists** used so effectively in northern Syria

helped set the stage for their blitzkrieg in Mosul, Tikrit and other important Iraqi cities this week.

*51-After a summary trial before one of the group's **Islamic courts**, Mustafa was sentenced to death.*

Concerning the excerpts above, the frequent use of terms like *Sunni, Islamic, Islamists* and so on leads to the idea that the NYT links ISIS to Islam, especially Sunni sect. This extremist group claims that it represents Islam. For this reason, the NYT tries to be neutral in depicting ISIS by considering it as Islamic group. It wants to say that ISIS raises the flag of Islam and tries to apply the Islamic Shariah law. Therefore, As if it wants to say that it just plays a role of describer to this situation. In this case, the NYT conveys a negative situation regarding Islam and Muslims for the reader.

The second type of identification is relational identification. This type of identification occurs when social actor is realized in terms of its personal, kinship, or work relations to each other. It is linguistically realized through a closed set of nouns with a possessive pronoun, a genitive or postmodifier with *of*. Under analysis, ISIS is identified by its leaders, especially Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi who has mentioned in 8 cases throughout the texts (see examples 32-33 above).

4-2-7 Appraisal

This process deals with the use of words that assess social actor as in negative or positive, loved or hated, admired or

pitied. Appraisalment can be carried out by the set of nouns and idioms that indicate appraisalment. The NYT usually uses nouns or adjectives that evaluate ISIS. Of course, ISIS is evaluated negatively in the NYT. Appraisalment is always accompanied with terms such as *extremists, terrorists, panic, a dire threat, the notoriety of the Islamic State, brutal, their draconian, extreme ideology*, and so on. The analysis focuses on 32 cases that contain words categorized as appraisalment. These terms mostly appear in the form of nouns and modifiers as a form of adjectives, as seen in the following examples:

52-They have attracted the most attention with their **draconian** enforcement of **a fundamentalist interpretation** of Islamic Shariah law, including the execution of Christians and Muslims deemed *kufar, or infidels*.

53-The Islamic State's use of **violence** as a tool of political control, reportedly including rape and public executions, has sowed **panic** as the group has advanced.

Concerning the excerpts above, ISIS is represented negatively by using nouns and adjectives that indicate cruelty of this group. However, the NYT elsewhere used structures, such as *most powerful and active jihadist group, formidable jihadist movement, its sophisticated tactics*, to refer to the power of ISIS. But this power is still negatively depicted.

4-2-8 Impersonalisation and Personalisation

Personalized and impersonalized features of the social actor ISIS can be seen in the texts as well. In most cases, the NTY

tends to impersonalize ISIS, that is, it uses non-human nouns to refer to this group. In the texts, impersonalisation is occurred in 223 cases as nouns used to refer to ISIS. Impersonalisation can be realized via *objectivation* or *abstraction*. The former takes place when nouns that denote a place or thing are closely associated with social actor. In other words, objectivation is described by metonymical reference. In the case of *abstraction*, Social actor is realized by abstract nouns with the lack the human feature.

In the texts, ISIS is almost always abstracted more than being objectivated. Therefore, the impersonal references to ISIS in the given texts are represented via abstract nouns because they are mainly referred to as quantity. Under analysis, the NYT uses words like *force*, *state*, *checkpoint*, *violence*, *black flag*, *a caliphate*, *the attack*, *siege*, *organization*, *strongholds*, *the group*, *Islamic State* or *ISIS*, to refer to this group. The given sentences are illustrative:

54-Violence had forced the couple from their home in Sinjar, a town in Nineveh Province, to Mosul.

*55-Although **the group**, also known as **ISIS** or **ISIL**, presents itself as a liberating, governing **force** for the region's Sunnis.*

The impersonalization of ISIS serves different purposes in the texts as obscuring the identity of ISIS' members. Such aforementioned terms are used to depict ISIS as powerful

organization for the reader. Most of these words denote violent physical activities used to achieve a particular aim. Therefore, the NYT through these terms reports the reader that ISIS has a violent action to obtain something. Although the NYT hides ISIS's identity, but it tries to give impersonal force to it. However, this force is still depicted as negative force used against residents and security forces. However, ISIS is not completely impersonalized, there are a number of cases in which ISIS is personalized, especially when there is a reference to the group's leader and some of its members. Personalization takes place in 19 cases (see examples 32-33 above). The following table represents the statistical representations of ISIS in the NYT.

Table 5-1: The statistical representations of ISIS in the NYT:

| Categories | | NYT |
|------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Exclusion | Suppression | 19 (48%) |
| | Backgrounded | 20 (51%) |
| | Activation | 369 (76%) |
| | Passivaization | 114 (23%) |
| | Genericization | 463 (95%) |
| | Specification | 19 (3%) |
| | Aggregation | 9 (1%) |
| Inclusion | Assimilation collectivization | 454 (94%) |
| | Association | 16 (3%) |

| | | |
|--|-------------------|-----------|
| | Indetermination | 61 (12%) |
| | Functionalization | 139 (29%) |
| | Identification | 149 (31%) |
| | Appraisalment | 32 (6%) |
| | Impersonalization | 223 (46%) |
| | Personalization | 19 (3%) |

5- Conclusions

This study arrives at the conclusion that ISIS is included more than excluded. The researcher believes that excluding ISIS by the NYT does not lead to special hidden ideology in both cases: backgrounding and suppression. But these structures are just used to avoid irrelevancy and redundancy. In addition, the readers already know that ISIS is responsible for terror because they share the genre who is responsible to perform such an action. However, ISIS is depicted as active social actor and this activation is ideologically motivated. This activation is due to the fact that ISIS has a dynamic force and it is responsible for the decision making practice. The active representations of ISIS fighters imply that they are the real agents of all misfortune, displacement and agony in the areas it occupied. Although ISIS is mostly portrayed as active social actor; many representations reveal that ISIS is represented as passive. The researcher finds that although ISIS is grammatically represented in passive construction but it is socially active. Using the categories genericization, assimilation, association, indetermination,

identification, and impersonalization are used to refer to the strength of ISIS. This is ideologically significant in the sense that ISIS is portrayed as powerful social actor. The NYT tends to draw an image for the readers that ISIS has become more power and authority than before.

Although the NYT acknowledges the power of ISIS and its ability, but this does not mean that ISIS is depicted in a positive way. That is, ISIS uses the negative power in its occupation which can be called, in the researcher's term, as negative or unfavorable occupation force. In addition, putting ISIS into agent positions emphasizes the negative representation of this social actor. Furthermore, the NYT treats ISIS as 'other' group rather than as 'us'. This can be noted in the frequent use of the third plural and singular pronouns 'they' and 'it'. By using van Leeuwen's categories, appraisal and functionalization, ISIS is represented negatively via the frequent words or phrases that indicate cruelty of this group and construct it as the negative-other. This negative attitude comes from the idea that the NYT mostly portray ISIS fighters as attackers through frequent use of the verbs *control*, *capture*, *seize attack*, *fall*, *assault*, *kill* and so on. This leads to the idea that ISIS fighters are treated as invaders and offenders. In sum, ISIS is referred as a powerful social actor which victimized the less-powerful agents like residents and security forces and hence, it is constructed as the negative-other representation.

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Appendix

The reports of NYT

1- *S unni Militants Drive Iraqi Army Out of Mosul*

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/11/world/middleeast/militants-in-mosul.html?_r=0

2- *Sunni Fighters Gain as They Battle 2 Governments, and Other Rebels*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/12/world/middleeast/the-militants-moving-in-on-syria-and-iraq.html>

3- *Sunni Extremists in Iraq Seize 3 Towns From Kurds and Threaten Major Dam*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/04/world/middleeast/iraq.html>

4- *Islamic State Imposes Strict New Order in Mosul, and Deprivation Is a Result*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/14/world/islamic-state-imposes-strict-new-order-in-mosul-and-deprivation-is-a-result.html>

5- *Back and Forth, Wearily, Across the ISIS Border*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/21/world/middleeast/isis-islamic-state-iraq.html>

6- *Sunni Militants Draw Iraqi Forces Into Intense Battles on Several Fronts*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/25/world/middleeast/sunni-militants-draw-iraqi-forces-into-intense-battles-on-several-fronts.html>

7- *Islamic State Says It Plans to Issue Its Own Currency*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/15/world/middleeast/islamic-state-says-it-plans-to-issue-its-own-currency-.html>

8- *Islamic Militants Surprise Kurds in Iraq, Killing a Commander in a Day of Attacks*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/31/world/middleeast/isis-launches-surprise-attack-on-kirkuk-killing-top-kurdish-commander.html>

9- *Islamic State Sprouting Limbs Beyond Its Base*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/15/world/middleeast/islamic-state-sprouting-limbs-beyond-mideast.html>

10- *Key Iraqi City Falls to ISIS as Last of Security Forces Flee (MAY 17, 2015)*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/18/world/middleeast/isis-ramadi-iraq.html>