The Representation of the Algerian Hirak Protest Movement in the International Media: France 24 and Al-Jazeera

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Abstract: This study is an attempt to examine how France 24 and Al-Jazeera represented the Algerian Hirak movement. The study at hand draws on Fairclough’s (1995) three-dimensional framework and Van Dijk’s ideological square to compare and contrast the depiction of both media outlets at the textual and discursive levels. The sample consisted of 24 articles taken form the two media outlets. In order to analyse the aforementioned news articles, the researchers opted for Van Dijk’s Ideological Square (1998) and Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Model (1989, 1995). The findings revealed that both media outlets recognised the Algerian protestors as "the ingroup" and the regime’s figures as "the outgroup". This was evident in the absence of any negative predication or reported speech that may delineate the protest or the protestors as illegal. However, while Al-Jazeera highlighted the peacefulness of the Algerian movement, France 24 kept focusing on the presence of the police and the protestors’ detention. Moreover, Al-Jazeera depicted the Algerian movement explicitly and held a relatively more objective stance than France 24. The latter tended to manipulate the events, such as exaggerating the reaction of the police particularly in the first three months of the Hirak movement. The hidden ideology of France 24 was evident and it could be seen in the foregrounded elements in the passivized constructions, the repetition of sensitive topics, such as the Amazigh flag and the extensive use

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This study examined how the Algerian protest movement “The Hirak” was represented by two media outlets, namely France 24 and Al-Jazeera. The study showed that they identified the Algerian protestors as the ingroup while the regime’s figures as the outgroup, which reflects the media ideology. However, while Al-Jazeera highlighted the non-violent feature of the Algerian movement, France 24 focussed on the violent aspects, such as the presence of the police and the protestors’ detention. France 24 tended to manipulate the events by exaggerating the police reaction in the first three months of the Hirak movement. The hidden ideology of France 24 was evident in the passivized constructions, the repetition of sensitive topics, such as the Amazigh flag and the extensive use of presupposition and indirect speech, compared to Al-Jazeera.
of presupposition and indirect speech, compared to Al-Jazeera. The socio-political analysis revealed a number of historical, economic and political reasons that were behind the difference in the representation of the Algerian protest movement by Al-Jazeera and France 24.

**Subjects:** Language & Linguistics; Applied Linguistics; Language & Media

**Keywords:** The Algerian Hirak; Protestors; Hidden ideology; Critical discourse analysis; media discourse

1. Introduction

The Algerian Hirak movement, also known as the “Revolution of Smiles,” is a peaceful democracy movement that started off on 22 February 2019 in Algiers, then expanded to encompass all of the 48 districts in Algeria. The Hirak was directed mainly against the ousted president Bouteflika’s fifth mandate, which reflected a direct violation of the constitution due to his health condition that did not allow him to fully exercise his constitutional duties. According to Hamidou (2019), a number of features have distinguished the Algerian protest movement. First of all, its unanticipated nature as it was a quick reaction to the social mobilization and protest calls circulated on social media, namely Facebook and Instagram led by Algeria’s youth against Bouteflika’s fifth mandate (Hamidou, 2019). It is noteworthy that the Algerian protest movement was not affiliated to any particular individual, quarter or political party as it had been organized peacefully by the general public every Friday and by students every Tuesday. Secondly, its geographic and demographic diversification as it was born by a broad alliance between all social segments regardless of age, gender, professional background or ethnic group, Arabs and Amazigh, across 48 distinct districts against the regime. In fact the role of social media in bridging the social and geographical distance, fostering collaboration and controlling the behaviour of protesters during the Hirak cannot be underestimated (Hamidou, 2019). A further hallmark of the Algerian revolution was the military support, under the leadership of Algeria’s army chief Gaid Salah, for the Algerian protesters to meet their demands and to practice pressure on the ex-president and his inner circle to step down. The main incidents that followed the waves of protests include the resignation of the ailing president Abdelaziz Bouteflika on 2 April 2019, nomination of Abdelkader Bensalah as Algeria’s interim president for 90 days, the arrest of the ex-president’s brother Saïd Bouteflika and numerous prominent former ministers, businesspeople and politicians most of whom were close allies of the ousted president, cancellation of the 4th of July presidential elections, the announcement of new presidential election for 12 December 2019 and the five presidential candidates (the former Prime Ministers Ali Benflis and Abdelmadjid Tebboune, former Tourism Minister Abdelkader Bengrine, Abdelaziz Belaid, head of the El Mostakbal Movement party and former Culture Minister Azzedine Mihoubi), the death of Algeria’s army chief Ahmed Gaid Salah, announcement of Abdelmadjid Tebboune as the winner of the presidential election, among others.

The non-violent nature of the Algerian mass demonstrations featured as a trend in many international TV channels and news articles (e.g., BBC, CNN, France 24). Commenting on the Algerian movement, Guemar et al. (2019) stated that “On the 22 February 2019, Algerians launched one of the most impressive social movements for democracy the world has seen—and one which is largely unreported in the West”. Such non-violent representation of this movement trended throughout its first month (e.g., BBC, CNN, France 24). However, some scholars claimed that media coverage of sensitive events tends to be not just a narrative depiction but ideologically biased (Fairclough, 1995; Rabab’ah & Alali, 2020; Rabab’ah et al., 2019; Van Dijk, 1985).

It is widely accepted that mass media have a potential impact on public opinions and perceptions; therefore, they have a responsibility for the realities they depict and the ideas embedded in their news. Abdi and Basarati (2016) examined the representation of the Yemeni revolution in 63 newspaper headlines that were chosen from Tehran Times, Iran Daily, IRNA (Islamic Republic
News Agency) and Iran on-line (representing the Iranian media); Al-Jazeera and Al-Shaaf Al Awsat (representing the Arab media); and News Week, Telegraph, New York Times and USA Today (Western media). The results divulged that both the Arab and Western newspapers portrayed the Houthis as insurgents who paved the way for turbulence and terrorism in Yemen. Accordingly, the Saudi regime was shown to play a defensive role countering the rebels and, thus, the Saudi-led coalition attacks were legitimated and supported. The Iranian media, on the other hand, focused more on Western and Arab military operations in Yemen, depicting them as intrusion; meanwhile, the same newspaper headlines marginalised the Houthis and supported the Iranian and other regimes’ insistence on solving the Yemen crisis.

As can be seen, the language of the media tends to be carefully chosen to fit the ideology of the channel. It is, thus, the aim of the present study to fulfil two main goals. Foremost, it aims at comparing the representation of the Algerian Hirak by France 24 and Al-Jazeera news networks at both the textual and discursive levels. Moreover, the study seeks to reveal how discourse was constructed to fit the channel’s ideology. In light of the stated objectives, the following four questions are, therefore, addressed in this study: (1) How did the news outlets exploit the textual and discursive strategies to portray the Algerian Hirak in Al-Jazeera and France 24? and (2) What are the hidden ideologies that shaped the representation of the Algerian protest movement by the above-mentioned two TV channels.

2. Literature review

2.1. The application of CDA to media

Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, an extensive number of studies were devoted to the study of power relations and disclosing issues related to hegemony, racism, power abuse, sexism and other forms of social inequality that might be embedded in media following the main influential approaches of critical discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 1988, 1998, 2015, 2009; Fairclough, 1992, 1995, 2009; Richardson, 2007).

Teo (2000) scrutinised two Australian newspapers, the Sydney Morning Herald and the Daily Telegraph, with regard to racism. The study drew on news reports about a Vietnamese gang in Australia who received considerable attention from the Australian newspapers. The study revealed that both newspapers displayed and supported the marginalisation of Vietnamese immigrants in Australia. This was evident in the use of us-and-them polarization to describe the Vietnamese minority and the white majority.

Another study conducted was by Samaie and Malmir (2017) who combined critical discourse analysis with corpus linguistics to examine the pervasive depiction of Islam and Muslims in US news media stories. The findings unveiled that Muslims are associated with religious radicalism, Islamic extremist militancy, extremism, and murderousness. The results of this study are in line with previous research which has pointed out that Muslims still suffer from religious bias and hostile representation imposed by the press (Kabir, 2006; Saeed, 2007).

Nasab and Dowlatabadi (Sivandi & Dowlatabadi, 2016) examined the discursive strategies at both the micro and macro levels in the negotiation of the Iranian nuclear program as represented in the American and Iranian press: Los Angeles Times and Tehran Times. The study indicated that both newspapers relied on negative-other representation and self-positive representation in reporting the Iranian-American negotiations. The Tehran Times newspaper depicted Iranian politics as the most honest and wise one, whereas the USA was described as deceitful and dishonest. In a similar way, the Los Angeles Times described the American and Israeli policy positively, but tended to invoke the idea that the Iranian’s political intentions show flip-flop behaviour.

Following Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework and Halliday’s functional grammar, Zhang (2014) analysed the reports presented by the New York Times concerning the American-Iraq war.
The findings showed that the reports highly criticised Saddam Hussein who was depicted as an enemy for the USA, whereas the American leader George W. Bush was supported for his military intervention in Iraq, reflecting the reporter’s ideology towards both states, and serving the interests of his nation. In a very recent study, Torkington and Ribeiro (2019) examined the role of news media discourse in shaping the social representations of groups of people who are considered part of “us” and are positioned as “outsiders” from headlines. It was found that the Portuguese press was trying to reinforce positive “us” representation. The corpus headlines showed that immigrants were impersonalized, passivized and were not given voice.

2.2. Studies on Arab movements

The series of protests and social movements across the Middle East and North Africa have been the center of much research (Afzal & Harun, 2015; Fornaciari, 2012; Al Humaidi, 2013; Al Nahed, 2015; Yehia, 2011). These studies focused mainly on how the Arab and Western media framed these critical incidents. For example, Fornaciari (Fornaciari, 2012) adopted a content analysis to explore how Al-Jazeera English and the BBC depicted the Egyptian Revolution. The findings indicated that both media outlets had the same disposition to concentrate on the attribution of responsibility and conflict frames, ignoring matters of morality, human interest, and economy. However, the researcher found that Al-Jazeera English had a tendency to report the crisis by distancing itself and providing a neutral coverage that does not emphasize instances of power abuse or take a stance apropos the unfolding events. Al Humaidi (2013), however, reported findings that contradicted Fornaciari’s findings as regards to Al-Jazeera’s coverage of the Revolution. He opted for critical discourse analysis of Al-Jazeera and Al-Ahram’s online coverage of Egypt’s 2011 revolution to reveal how these channels used discourse to depict the Egyptian uprising. The study revealed that Al-Jazeera and El-Ahram framed the Egyptian uprising from different angles, particularly as regards to group polarization. At the beginning of the crisis, the outgroup for Al-Ahram was the demonstrators and the ingroup was the authority and this could be seen in the negative vocabulary used to describe the demonstrators (Baltajiya), but after Feb.2, 2013 the channel underwent a total shift; thus, its credibility is questioned. Contrary to the Egyptian channel, the ingroup in Al-Jazeera was the protestors and the outgroup was the Egyptian government. Accordingly, Al Humaidi (2013) concluded that Al-Jazeera reported this critical incident with an explicit stand and its representation of the voice of the Egyptian people is part of its endeavour to advocate democracy in the Arab world.

Adopting Van Dijk’s model at the ideological square, Afzal and Harun (2015) examined how the Libyan and Syrian revolutions were represented by the news international of Pakistan and the Arab News of Saudi Arabia. The study concluded that the Arab News of Saudi Arabia treated both the Libyan and Syrian governments with more rigour than the news international of Pakistan. However, the two channels, despite some discourse variation, directly criticised the resistance from the governments via negative other representation and highly supported the protestors through the self-representation of events.

Some researchers went even further by examining how the media represented the Arab spring, but on the impact of media on individuals during the uprisings. Alshareif (Al Shareif, 2016) selected critical discourse analysis and systemic functional linguistics to analyse articles from Al-Jazeera and the BBC in order to unveil whether the channels have embedded any opposing political ideologies during the Egyptian, Tunisian and Libyan revolutions. Additionally, he interviewed teachers and students in Libya to find their attitudes towards the channels. The analysis showed that Al-Jazeera and BBC reported the uprisings in almost a totally different way. Al-Jazeera tended to exaggerate when reporting the unlawful acts done by the Libyan, Egyptian, or Tunisian governments, but at the same time acknowledging any attempt done to remedy the situation. Alshreif (Al Shareif, 2016, p. 203) considered this an “invocation and trigger of locals against the existing regimes and destroyed any trust between the two parties”. The BBC, on the other hand, used to be generally more professional as it reported the incidents as they happened without manipulating the language, being biased or bringing any irrelevant events.
The literature review has revealed that media outlets tend to provide different narratives and hold a non-fixed opposition on the same event. Accordingly, this study is expected to be another link to the chain of studies employing CDA to reveal the underlying conflict between ideologies and discourses during the Arab protest movements. Moreover, the current study is a further addition to the repertoire of research studies examining media discourse particularly in times of crisis and may be the first study, to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, to address media representation of the Algerian Hirak protest movement. Accordingly, this research might open up new horizons for further studies on the representation of the Algerian Hirak by international media networks.

3. The study

3.1. Corpus and sample of the study
The corpus of this study consisted of all online news articles published in Al-Jazeera and France 24 from the first week of Algerian’s Hirak protest movement on 22 February 2019 until the announcement of the new Algerian President on 13 December 2019. Based on some criteria, a total of 24 news articles were selected; 12 articles were taken from France 24 and 12 articles were taken from Al-Jazeera with closely related themes (See Appendices A and B). Two selection criteria were followed by the researchers. First, the articles must cover the main events that follow the Hirak movement, namely the first two weeks of the march protest, the resignation of the ex-president Abdelaziz Bouteflika, cancellation of the 4th of July presidential elections, the announcement of the new presidential election for 12 December 2019 and the announcement of Abdelmadjid Tebboune as the winner of the presidential election, among others. Secondly, the events which were not covered by both media outlets were excluded. The researchers considered the whole article in the analysis from the headline to the text.

The rationale behind choosing Al-Jazeera is that it is one of the most powerful media outlets in the world and represents the leading news network in the Arab world with roughly 24 million viewers per day (Al Samrin, 2018), which is a huge audience whose views and perceptions could be shaped by the kind of realities presented by this news outlet particularly if we consider the fact that “the credibility of Al Jazeera was questioned by the Arabic population in respect to the network’s coverage of the Arab Spring outbreak in Syria, Eastern Saudi Arabia and Oman” (Alalawi, 2015, p. 3). Moreover, due to the sensitive historical and political relation between Algeria and France, France 24 was also selected to see how this relation affects the representation of the Algerian protest movement.

3.2. Theoretical framework and data analysis
In order to analyse the sample of the study, the researchers adopted Van Dijk’s Ideological Square (Van Dijk, 1998) and Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Model (Fairclough, 1989, 1995). The former encapsulates the notions of ingroup positive depiction “Us” and outgroup negative depiction “Them”. Simply put, “positive referential and predicational strategies are associated with Us and negative ones are associated with Them” (Al Humaidi, 2013, p. 61). The framework was chosen mainly to demonstrate how France 24 and Al-Jazeera affiliated themselves with the crisis sides: Algerian protesters and Bouteflika’s regime. This was achieved via applying the concept of Ideological Square on the data gained from the textual and discursive analysis associated with Fairclough’s Three-dimensional model. According to Fairclough (1995), spoken/written discourse is a discursive event that cannot be separated from the discursive practice and the wider socio-cultural context. Therefore, he advanced the Three-Dimensional Model, which consists of three main stages; description (textual analysis), interpretation (discursive processing analysis) and explanation (social analysis). The following explains how the data was analysed.

4. Stage 1. description stage (textual analysis)
This stage involves the analysis of the linguistic features of discourse. It covers a number of analytic tools including: lexicalization (i.e., predicational and referential strategies used to depict the crisis sides), transitivity (nominalization and passivisation), and repetition (Al Humaidi, 2013;
Weiwei & Lui, 2015). Analysis at the micro-structural level helps to show which group each media outlet affiliates itself with.

5. **Stage 2. Interpretation stage (discursive analysis)**
The processing analysis (discursive practice) “is concerned with socio-cognitive aspects of text production and interpretation … analysis involves both the detailed moment-by-moment explication of how participants produce and interpret the text.” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 134). This stage involves examining presupposition, intertextuality, and topic selection. Generally speaking, presupposition entails that the content of an utterance is asserted, unquestioned, and taken for granted. The focus of this study was on lexical presupposition which involves the presence of certain kinds of adjectives and verbs such as; old, again, as usual, angry, regret, etc. (Fairclough, 1989). In addition to presupposition, discursive analysis necessitates examining intertextuality. Simply put, intertextuality refers to the interaction between texts through the use of direct speech, indirect speech, and score quotes, i.e., reported speech (Richardson, 2007).

6. **Stage 3. Explanation stage (socio-political analysis)**
The third stage of Fairclough’s three-dimensional model is based on the assumption that a discourse constitutes an element of social practice. The main aim behind explaining the socio-political context is to reveal the hidden ideology in the reported news and shed light on the relation betwixt language, ideology, and power (Fairclough, 1989, 1995). This stage helps determine the reasons behind any difference revealed from the description and interpretation stages.

7. **Results and discussion**
The analysis of the articles is divided into three sections. In section 5.1, we analyse three textual components: lexicalization, passivisation, and repetition. In section 5.2, presupposition and intertextuality as discursive strategies are analysed, discussed and exemplified. The socio-political analysis is discussed in section 5.3.

7.1. **Textual analysis**

7.1.1. **Lexicalization**
Lexicalization entails the analysis of referential and predicational strategies used by Al Jazeera and France 24 news writers. Reisigl and Wodak stated that “referential strategies are the way of people name or construct the target individuals or groups. Along with referential strategies, the predicational strategies are the way these names are described in terms of qualities or characteristics that are attributed to them.” (2001: 44). Naming is realized via the use of proper names and forms of address whereas predications in discourse are manifested through certain aspects, such as attributes, predicative nouns which provide more details about the person, pronouns, adjectives, etc. (Ibid.) Table 1 presents the naming and predications used by Al Jazeera and France 24 news reporters to describe the Algerian protest movement and the protestors.

As Table 1 clearly shows, France 24 did not give any negative attributes to either the movement or the protestors. The movement is referred to using objective terms as fresh demonstration and mass movement. The Anti-Bouteflika protest was also identified in a number of articles, a term which indicates the main motive for the Algerian movement. What can be noticed is the use of the term “Million Man anti-Bouteflika march”. It refers to the significant number of people in the Hirak, which in fact was more than 10 million protestors. This term is correlated with the use of scare quotes which according to Fairclough (1992) are used by news writers to keep a distance from such naming to lead readers to question the truth of the term. The protestors were described using common and general lexicon as demonstrators and pro-democracy protestors, implying that people are seeking more democracy.

As for Al Jazeera, almost the same kind of predicates were recorded, such as demonstration, mass protest and rallies. The difference lies mainly in the fact that Al Jazeera assigned positive
attributes to both the movement and the protestors. This can be noticed in the use of democratic celebration and peaceful popular movement. The message behind such predications is that the Algerian movement is a non-violent one led by a peaceful and civil society. The term Hirak was absent in France 24, but in Al-Jazeera it was used with scare quotes.

What can be concluded from the above results is that both media outlets affiliate themselves with the Algerian protestors as the ingroup, and this was supported by the absence of any negative attributes as illegal, banned, rebellion, etc. However, France 24 tended to show the Algerian movement as any social movement where people are against the regime and seek for their rights. Al-Jazeera, on the other hand, provided a positive and real image of the Hirak as peaceful, nationwide and popular. Table 2 presents naming and predications used by the two media outlets to describe the regime’s figures.

As shown in Table (2), the regime’s figures can be classified into two main sides, namely, the former president and his proponents on one side, and the late chief army as the other side. France 24 delineated the former president almost negatively and this can be observed in the absence of honorific titles, and the utilization of terms which entail his senectitude and deficiency as “The 82-year old president” and “The ailing octogenarian”. The same case was recorded in Al-Jazeera where we find instances of Bouteflika without any title that shows at least his previous status as president like “The 82-year old ruler”, “Bouteflika”, and “The ailing Bouteflika”. The analysis shows that a predication that was absent in France 24, but present in Al-Jazeera is the long-standing ruler. This simply refers to the 20 years spent by the former president in the ruling.

The five election candidates were explicitly depicted in both France 24 and Al-Jazeera as proponents of Bouteflika and candidates that represent the rejected system. Al-Jazeera utilized predications, such as the former political system and former PM, but France tended to use metaphor “children of the regime”, which explicitly involves attacking the candidates and casting doubts regarding their legitimacy. Nevertheless, the writer used the metaphor within scare quotes to distance himself/herself from the truth of such expression and to avoid any criticism or
Table 2. Naming and predications used by France 24 and Al-Jazeera to describe the regime’s figures

| The main figures       | France 24                                                                 | Al-Jazeera                                                                 |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The ex-president       | • Ailing president Abdelaziz Bouteflika                                  | • The 82-year old ruler                                                    |
|                        | • The 82-year old leader                                                 | • The 82-year old head of the state                                       |
|                        | • The 82-year old president                                              | • Ailing head/leader                                                      |
|                        | • The former president Bouteflika                                        | • Bouteflika                                                              |
|                        | • The ailing octogenarian                                                | • Ex-leader/president                                                     |
| The late army chief    | • Ahmed Gaid Salah, the head of Algeria’s army                           | • Ahmed Gaid salah                                                        |
|                        | • The most powerful figure                                               | • Salah                                                                   |
|                        | • The powerful army chief                                                | • The army chief                                                          |
|                        | • The powerbroker                                                        | • Top broker in Algeria                                                   |
| The five election      | • Children of the regime                                                 | • The powerful military chief                                             |
| candidates             | • The candidates.                                                        | • Algeria’s powerful army chief                                           |
|                        |                                                                          | • Algeria’s defacto strongman                                              |
|                        |                                                                          | • Powerful chief of the staff                                             |
| The new president      | • Bouteflika-era PM Teboun                                               | • Former PM.                                                              |
|                        | • Candidate of the system                                                |                                                                           |

responsibility over the expression. As far as the late army chief is concerned, Al-Jazeera tended in several articles to downgrade him particularly when using his first name alone Salah, or providing a neutral depiction by saying “Army Chief Gaid Salah”. However, this was until September, when Al-Jazeera started assigning positive predication to him as: “Top broker in Algeria”, “The Powerful Military Chief”, and “Algeria’s Defacto Strongman”. This implies the inconsistency in views regarding the regime’s figures. Put simply, after the resignation of the former president, the former army chief became the only decision-maker in Algeria and this was clear mainly in September. Accordingly, the Al-Jazeera stance towards the regime’s figures can be associated with this fact. So, the ingroup for Al-Jazeera was the protestors and the army chief at the same time, a figure that is depicted as a regime’s antagonist. The same was revealed in France 24 where the army chief was treated respectfully and associated mainly with power. However, while in Al-Jazeera this was only after confirming his powerful status in September, France 24 depicted him in this way in earlier stages of the movement.

7.1.2. Passivisation
Passivisation is one of the main linguistic tools of language transformation (Weiwei & Lui, 2015). From a critical discourse perspective, the analysis of news reporters’ use of passivisation helps to reveal the ideological stance of media outlets. Some instances of passivisation from both Al-Jazeera and France 24 media outlets were selected and analyzed:

(a) “The protest movement has been led by students” (France 24)
(b) “The demonstration has been organized by students” (France 24)

The use of passive voice in the above examples reflects the reporters’ tendency toward backgroundering the agent “the Algerian students” and foreground the theme. Strictly speaking, the Algerian students had a momentous role in organising and leading the Algerian protest movement particularly on Tuesday, a day which became known as the students’ movement. According to Koueider (Kouider, 2020), though the role of students’ union cannot be underestimated during the Algerian protest, most students involved in the Hirak were not affiliated either with students’ unions or political parties. This demonstrates the Algerian students’ political awareness, and hence the pivotal and effective role of the Algerian youth in leading the Algerian revolution of smiles. Al-Jazeera, on the other hand, resorted to passive voice when talking about the Algerian finance as it is illustrated in the following example;

(a) “Algeria’s finances have been hurt by the global drop in oil prices” (Al-Jazeera)

The shift from the agent to the process can be seen as a result of the serious brunt of the fall in oil prices on the Algerian economy, which depends crucially upon the revenues of gas and oil. In other words, the actor (i.e., oil slump) in this context is less important than the action (the Algerian permanent economic crisis).

The analysis revealed the use of passivisation by both Al-Jazeera and France 24 concerning the same topic; i.e., Amazigh flag as shown in d, e and f:

(a) “Demonstrators carrying Berber flags were arrested” (France 24)
(b) “Thirty-four protestors bearing the flag of the Berbers have been arrested”

(France 24)
(a) “41 people have been arrested in recent days for flying the Berber flag”

(Al-Jazeera)

As shown in the examples (d, e, and f), news reporters of both Al-Jazeera and France 24 resorted to “agentless passive construction” via removing the agent. However, what can be noticed in both (e) and (f) is that much focus was given to the reason of arresting the protestors via foregrounding “bearing the flag of the Berbers” and “carrying Berber flags”, as opposed to Al-Jazeera which left “for flying the Berber flag” at the end of the construction. This reflects, for historical reasons, the background knowledge that France 24 reporters have about this sensitive issue and its impact on the Algerian public particularly during the Hirak. It should be pointed out that, during the Algerian protest movement the Berber flag which represent the Amazigh identity of the indigenous peoples of North Africa, has become a controversy between the Amazigh community and some political activists who considered the flag as a sign of regionalism and divisiveness. The Amazigh ethnic group, on the other hand, asserted that the decision of prohibiting the Berber flag during the demonstration was no more than an ideological game to separate the Algerians. Thus, the France 24 implicit ideology seems evident particularly if we consider the sensitivity of the Berber flag issue during the Algerian political crisis.

7.1.3. Repetition
Repetition involves repeating the same idea using either the same words or paraphrasing. From a critical discourse perspective, the strategy of emphasising a given idea is implemented intentionally with the aim of influencing the readers’ views. According to Van Dijk (2008), repetition “may have the specific function of drawing special attention to specific meaning and hence to enhance the possibility that these are being constructed as important parts of intended event models” (p. 192). Thus, the focus of the researchers was on proposition types emphasized in each
media outlet by means of repetition. These media outlets showed a tendency to repeat certain prepositions that reveal their hidden ideology. It should be noted that this study is qualitative but it supports its findings with simple statistics. The following instances present the main ideas repeated more than twice in several articles from Al-Jazeera and France 24.

a. “Protestors are dispersed by the police who made several arrests” (France 24)

b. “… amid a heavy police presence” (Al-Jazeera)

c. “Protestors have been arrested for bearing the flag of Berbers” (France 24)

d. “Peaceful demonstrations were also held in at least a dozen other cities” (Al-Jazeera)

e. ‘Algeria’s finances have been hurt by the global drop in oil prices” (Al-Jazeera)

7.2. F. “The army is now the main player in Algeria’s politics” (France 24)

The examples above (a—f) show the main repeated propositions in each media outlet. What can be noticed is that the repeated ideas are not the same in France 24 and Al-Jazeera, each one is highlighting different ideas with the exception of (a) and (b). Considering the role of the police during the protest movement, each media presented it in a totally different manner. Since the first week of the Hirak, France 24 presented a picture of violent demonstrations full of arrests, inhibition and police encirclement. This was achieved via repeating the phrase “police arrested” and “the protestors were arrested” in almost the first paragraph of each article so as to influence the readers’ views regarding the Algerian Hirak. Al-Jazeera, on the other hand, though it talked about the presence of high security as in (b) and the arrest of protestors, the dominating image was that the Algerian Hirak is a peaceful and civilized protest movement.

The second most repeated and emphasized proposition by France 24 is the arrest of those who bear the Berber flag (c). As is explained above, the topic of Amazigh, or Berber community in Algeria has been politicised over years to the extent that the subject deviated from being a matter of language and identity to an ideological issue (Layachi, 2014). Taking this point further, “France's relationship with Tamazight cause is one of the contentious issues that is often, unfortunately, ideological extremism, in which each side loses a hail of grief against the other side” (Bin Antar, 2016). Therefore, France 24 played the ideological game by emphasising the arrest of Berbers for carrying their identity flag.

Another emphasis of Al-Jazeera was on the impact of the global oil slump on the finances of Algeria (e). Al-Jazeera emphasised this point further to imply that the country’s government will struggle to appease the protestors’ anger as the social welfare depends on the oil price elevation.

France 24 also highlighted the military intervention during the Hirak and its role in political decision-making (f). By repeating this point several times throughout the articles, France 24 immaculately insinuates that Algeria’s regime is no more democratic, but rather an authoritarian military one. It is important to note that the military interference before the presidential election was highly criticised by the Algerian protestors. As a result, the army chief claimed that Algeria is a People's Democratic Republic and that its intervention is due to the current political vacuum that Algeria is facing.

7.3. Discursive analysis

7.3.1. Presupposition

Van Dijk (1998) asserted that the analysis of presuppositions may reveal a lot about writers’ or speakers’ ideology and beliefs about what they want the reader/hearer to take as a given.
Therefore, presuppositions in critical discourse are value-laden. The focus of this study is on lexical presupposition.

7.3.1.1. Lexical presupposition. Lexical presupposition was considered as the most important type in critical analysis as it reflects the channel's doctrine (Fairclough, 1989). When the speaker uses a word, it is implied that another meaning will also be understood. Saying “He did it again”, presupposes that he did it before.

The analysis of presupposition revealed that France 24 highly relied on presupposition (72%) compared to Al-Jazeera (28%) as shown in Table 3. The use of such type of inference by France 24 and Al-Jazeera is clearly manifested in the following excerpts (a-d) taken from different articles:

(a) “The demonstrators were again dispersed by the police” (France 24).

b. “State media only started covering the protests on Tuesday” (France 24).

c. “Pro-democracy movement” (Al-Jazeera).

d. “Protestors are demanding that the police stop arresting demonstrators” (Al-Jazeera).

In (a), the news writer is implying that the police used to disperse the protestors. Example (b) presupposes that in Algeria there is media censorship and even private channels are not independent; they are still influenced and controlled by the government. Thus, Algerian protestors suffered from media blackout in their first marches. Considering public dissent as a taboo in Algeria implies that Algerians used to be repressed and deprived of their right to demonstrate. This term “pro-democracy” in (c) presupposes that the main objective behind the Algerians’ demonstrations is seeking democracy. That is to say, democracy was absent and Algerian people were seeking it. In example (d), the change of the state verb stop implies that the police used to arrest the protestors during the Hirak movement.

The presuppositions utilised by news writers of France 24 provide an image of a country where Algerians are subject to power abuse from the police and media blackout. Moreover, over the years the Algerians were suffering from the regime’s corruption because they have no right to demonstrate. Al-Jazeera news writers tend to be almost direct and this can be noticed in the number of presuppositions used. All in all, both media outlets used this strategy to describe the Algerian regime (out-group) negatively and show sympathy towards the protestors (ingroup). However, as it is claimed by Van Dijk (1998) the more the media relies on presupposition the more instances of hidden ideology are evident. In this analysis, this can be reflected in France 24 and not to Al-Jazeera.

7.3.2. Intertextuality

Intertextuality is a discursive strategy that involves producing “fragmentary and ill-defined happenings” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 84). Reporting news involves a combination of different prior-present discourses to construct a well-narrated event. Richardson (2007) suggested that examining intertextuality implies the analysis of different types of reported speech, including direct speech, indirect speech and scare quotes.

| The media outlet | Frequencies | Percentages |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|
| France 24        | 18          | 72%         |
| Al-Jazeera       | 7           | 28%         |
7.3.2.1. Direct and Indirect speech. Both direct and indirect speech reporting involves transmitting what others have said. The difference lies in the way the speech is reported. Copying the exact words of the speech being reported is referred to as direct speech (Richardson, 2007). Conversely, indirect speech implicates paraphrasing “the content of what was said or written, not the actual words used” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 49).

As shown in Table 4 and 5, France 24 tended to overuse the indirect speech (34 occurrences) compared to the direct one (19 occurrences). In fact, the indirect speech eliminates the gap between the representing discourse and the represented; the accuracy of the content is questioned as the news writers may manipulate the language of the reported person. Therefore, though the news writer may appear to be objective via including sources, ideologically the loaded lexicon may be utilised to fit the channel interests. One of these interests might be showing sympathy with the protestors but at the same time reflecting an image of violent repression of protestors as shown in the following example;

a. Agence France-Press journalists reported witnessing at least 10 people injured after clashes between police and groups of youth …

With regard to the direct speech, France 24 news writers selectively included the protestors’ voices as it can be noticed in b and c.

| Reported voices          | Direct speech |                   | Indirect speech |                   |
|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
|                          | Frequency     | Percentage        | Frequency       | Percentage        |
| Franco press journalists | 3             | 14.28%            | 8              | 23.52%            |
| The opposition           | 2             | 9.52%             | -              | -                 |
| The protestors           | 11            | 52.38%            | 15             | 44.12%            |
| The government           | 3             | 14.28%            | 9              | 26.48%            |
| The Algerian state media | -             | -                 | 2              | 5.88%             |
| French experts           | 2             | 9.52%             | -              | -                 |
| Total                    | 21            |                   | 34             |                   |

| Reported voices          | Direct speech |                   | Indirect speech |                   |
|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
|                          | Frequency     | Percentage        | Frequency       | Percentage        |
| The protestors           | 32            | 50%               | 7              | 36.84%            |
| The opposition           | 4             | 6.25%             | 1              | 5.26%             |
| The government           | 12            | 18.75%            | 5              | 26.31%            |
| Foreign experts          | 10            | 15.62%            | 3              | 15.79%            |
| Foreign senior officials | 4             | 6.25%             | -              | -                 |
| The Algerian state media | -             | -                 | 3              | 15.79%            |
| Presidential candidates  | 2             | 3.12%             | -              | -                 |
| Total                    | 64            |                   | 19             |                   |
b. Sid Ali, a 48-year-old merchant in Algiers, said: “I support the Hirak (protest) movement but it needs to end. I lost 70 percent of my turnover and many traders are in my situation”. (France 24).

c. Unrest also erupted in the northern mountain region of Kabylie … “ransacked the ballot boxes and destroyed part of the electoral lists” a resident said (France 24).

The above examples (b and c) clearly support the assumption that reported speech whether direct or indirect, is used in a way that frames protesters as persecuted and the Hirak as violent and non-civilized. Interestingly, although both sides of the conflict were reported, still the government representatives’ voices were marginalised and backgrounded in the text particularly those calling for restraint.

As opposed to France 24, Al-Jazeera news writers resorted to topic variation when reporting speech as shown in d-e below;

d. Bala told Al-Jazeera that “People are marching into the streets … and distributing roses and candies … today is very special” (Al-Jazeera).

e. “Security forces cordoned off the square and prevented other protestors from entering in”, the witnesses said (Al-Jazeera).

f. “We must adopt a solution that helps us out of this crisis … a solution that respects and adheres to the constitution so that it’s a suitable one for all sides” chief army said.

As shown in example (f), Al-Jazeera foregrounded the voice of the late chief army who promised the Algerian protestors to find a solution that fits them and at the same time conforms to the constitution. Additionally, though Al-Jazeera addressed the reaction of the police toward the protestors and the presence of high security during the protests, it didn’t hesitate to show the world the impressive and peaceful movement of the Algerians (d).

Contrary to France 24, Al-Jazeera resorted extensively to the direct speech (64 occurrences) compared to the indirect one (19 occurrences). Accordingly, it is most likely that Al-Jazeera reporters’ voice is less embedded in the reported speech. Though Al-Jazeera emphasized the voice of the protestors (32 occurrences), when reporting the government officials there was no tendency to background their voices or opting for the indirect reporting which eliminates the boundary between the voice of the person being reported and the reporter’s voice.

Additionally, a difference in sourcing practice between both media outlets becomes clearly evident when considering the international voices being reported. In that, while France 24 included voices representing the protestors, opposition, government officials and some France 24’s Franco-Algerian journalists, Al-Jazeera reported both sides that belong to the crisis as well as the secretary-general of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, and foreign senior officials including the United States and Russia. Therefore, it stands to reason that Al-Jazeera overtly highlighted the international echo of the Algerian protest movement, contrary to France 24 which selectively included national voices while excluded the international community peaceful calls which cannot be neglected in an incident like that. This may be attributed to the tendency to restrict the scale of the Algerian movement to the local level and exclude the foreign voices which may not serve its ideology.

7.3.2.2. Scare quotes. Van Ginneken (2002) postulated that direct and scare quotes are almost the same; however, the factuality of direct speech is unquestioned but in scare quotes the reported expression or term are indirectly questioned. The examples beneath present instances of scare quotes, which were recorded in Al-Jazeera and France 24 news articles;
a. On Friday, protesters also chanted slogans against any elections organised by a “mafia gang” (Al-Jazeera).

b. “No to dictatorship” Algerians rally on independence days (Al-Jazeera).

c. “Regime murders” groups of flag-waving demonstrators chanted … (France 24).

d. On Friday, mass demonstrations dubbed “the million-man march” (France 24).

e. They cried forth perennial “free Algeria” (France 24).

As shown above, Al-Jazeera resorted to this strategy with some sensitive expressions to distance itself from the reported expressions. Examples of this include “mafia gang” which refers to the regime’s figures. Another example is “No to dictatorship” which might be used for either of these reasons; to keep distance from the claim that the regime is a dictatoral one or to question the existence of dictatorship in Algeria.

The main concepts France 24 questioned their truth and/or possibility of happening, are free Algeria and new revolution. The use of scare quotes with these concepts in particular may entail a lot. Taking the sensitive relation between France and Algeria into consideration, it would be reasonable to assume that France 24 editors are aware that France will be the only loser if protestors achieve new revolution and freedom. Accordingly, it reports these concepts using scare quotes to show that this will not be easy to achieve. Reporting “the million-man march” with the use of scare quotes provides support for what it is already claimed above that France plays intelligently as regards the Algerian crisis. On the one hand, it shows sympathy with the protestors via including the voices of the protestors and reporting a lot about the alleged extreme violence of the police; on the other hand, it avoids showing the significant scale and peacefulness of the Algerian Hirak.

7.4. Socio-political analysis

The socio-political analysis entails relating the general findings derived from the previous stages, namely, textual and discursive, to the wider socio-political context. In this respect, the historical, political and economic contexts are considered. Explaining the socio-political contexts is aimed to unveil the hidden ideology in the news articles, and explain the difference in the way the Algerian Hirak was depicted. The hidden ideology of France 24 was conspicuous and this was reflected in the foregrounded elements in the passivized constructions, the repetition of sensitive topics, such as the Amazigh flag and the extensive use of presupposition and indirect speech, compared to Al-Jazeera. This difference can be ascribed to a number of reasons, which are discussed below.

Economically, though Algeria in the last years tried to get rid of the economic hegemony of France, it is still Algeria’s second-largest economic partner after China. According to Kahhal (2019), French investments enjoy privileges that no other country receives, especially during the era of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. Kahhal (2019) added that most of the biggest French companies invested in Algeria violated the “Algerian Investment Law” which obliges foreigners to hold only 49% in any investment. Therefore, France is the main loser if the Algerian Hirak succeeded, especially that the protesters threatened to keep demonstrating if the regime does not cut off relations with France entirely.

From a political perspective, experts expected a strained relation between Algeria and France due to the current interior situation in Algeria. Khreis (2019) pointed out that the level of tension between Algeria and France recently increased particularly after the provocative speech of the president Emanuel Macron about the victory of president Tebbou in the last Algerian presidential election. Unlike the USA, Italy, Spain, Russia and other Arab and African countries, France did not issue a congratulatory message after the declaration of Tebbou as a president, a stance that has never been recorded.
Moreover, it would be tempting to assume that the negative depiction of the Algerian Hirak was directly influenced by “the Yellow vests movement” that began in France in 2019 as a revolution against the government of Macron and mainly against raising fuel prices (Irish & Pennetier, 2020). “According to French Mediapart website, 11 people were killed, five lost their hands due to use of grenades and 23 lost their eyesight. Some 2,000 people were injured at the demonstrations” (Ozcan, 2019). Therefore, the unusual peaceful movement in Algeria provoked the French government and media that advanced a fierce scenario for the Algerian movement and hence tried to transmit this view through its news reporting.

Conversely, Al-Jazeera held a neutral stance regarding the Algerian protest movement and did not fish in troubled waters. Al-Jazeera’s neutral position can be attributed to the friendly relation between Algeria and Qatar, the owner of Al-Jazeera media network (Abu Rizk, 2020). The relation has been strengthened more after the nonaligned position that Algeria took in the Gulf crisis, which was described by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar as “honorable” (Abu Rizk, 2020). According to CNN (CNN in Arabic, 2017), the Algerian Foreign Ministry stressed the need to adhere to the principle of good neighbourliness, not to interfere in the internal affairs of states, and to respect their national sovereignty in all circumstances. Despite the excellent diplomatic relation that Qatar enjoys with Algeria, it is noteworthy that Al-Jazeera office in the Algerian capital was frozen in 2004 by the Algerian authority.

8. Conclusion
To the researchers’ best knowledge, no study to date has examined the international media coverage of the Algerian protest movement (2019–2020) from a critical discourse perspective. Therefore, the present piece of research might open up new horizons for further studies on the representation of the Algerian Hirak by international media networks. The present inquiry examined a sample of news articles published by two influential and popular media outlets, namely Al-Jazeera and France 24. The selected articles were analysed under the banner of Van Dijk’s Ideological Square (Van Dijk, 1998) and Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Model (Fairclough, 1989, 1995). The research at hand supports previous claims that media discourse analysis provides insight towards the hidden ideology and propaganda that media intend to transmit (Fairclough, 1992, 1995; Van Dijk, 2009). The findings of this study go along the same lines with Fornaciari (Fornaciari, 2012) and Al Humaidi (2013) who concluded that Al-Jazeera provided professional and credible reports via holding a neutral stance. However, further studies are required as regards the framing of either the Arab spring in Egypt, Libya, Syria, Tunisia, etc. or the Algerian protest movement by France newspapers. The results of the present inquiry have implications for the Arab readers in general, and the Algerian news readers in particular. In that, readers must pay attention to the content of news articles particularly those related to sensitive issues, and be aware of the hidden ideologies that media outlets intend to transmit.

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Appendix A
Titles of articles taken from France 24
1. Algerians throng the streets for “Million Man” anti-Bouteflika march.
2. Fresh protests break out as Algeria’s Bouteflika submits re-election bid
3. Algerians keep up pressure on Bouteflika with more mass protests
4. Braving police and heat, Algerians take to streets pressing for real change
5. Algeria popular movement remains “strong”—but fears “business as usual”
6. Algeria announces presidential election for December 12
7. Thousands of Algeria protesters defy army chief’s clampdown
8. Algerians rally against presidential election backed by army
9. Algerians take to streets, call for “new revolution” on independence anniversary
10. Algeria announces presidential election candidates despite protesters’ opposition
11. France Algeria’s contested presidential election sees historically low turnout of 40%
12. Bouteflika-era PM Tebboune declared winner of Algeria’s presidential election

Appendix B
Titles of articles taken from Al Jazeera
1. Algerians protest against Bouteflika’s bid for fifth term
2. Algerians mobilise for mass anti-Bouteflika protests
3. Algeria army chief demands Bouteflika be declared unfit to rule
4. Bouteflika asks forgiveness as Algerians demand more change
5. “No to dictatorship!”: Algerians rally on independence day.
6. Algerian army chief: Won’t back any leader in presidential polls
7. Algeria presidential election: Five candidates announced
8. Algerians protest election plan, mark independence war
9. Algeria election: Four questions answered
10. Polls close in Algeria election denounced by protesters as “sham”
11. Former PM declared Algeria president, but thousands protest again
