

Ideological Features and Language Manipulation Strategies in French and English: The Syrian Crisis

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Abstract—The present study investigates language manipulation strategies and ideological features in online news headlines in France24 and RT broadcasting channels in French and English, respectively. The researchers investigate how news about the Syrian crisis is viewed from two different points of view, namely French and Russian. Headlines in the two languages are analysed according to the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Results show that both France24 and RT news headlines report news about the Syrian crisis using different choices of vocabulary, leading to different, ideologically driven interpretations. In other words, France24 news headlines select specific terminology to depict France and its allies as "peacemakers" in Syria. Conversely, Russia- along with its allies- are described in France24 headlines as "instigators of chaos". However, in RT news headlines, the vocabulary selection describes Russia as a "conflict resolver" in Syria, whereas rival countries of Russia are viewed as "rogue interveners".

Index Terms—language manipulation strategies, ideological features, CDA, Syrian crisis

I. INTRODUCTION

As far as France24 and Russia Today (RT) are concerned, news is reported from a French point of view (France24.com) as well as from a Russian point of view (RT.com). The present study takes into consideration headlines concerning the Syrian crisis from two different points of view, which certainly apply lexical choices that reflect the different ideologies of both sides.

In this study, ideological features and language manipulation strategies are investigated in France24 and RT news channels. The focus is on events related to the Syrian crisis and how both news channels depict these ongoing events. Undoubtedly, the two news channels differ in numerous ways. They do not share the same worldviews and ideas related to the Syrian crisis because they simply do not share the same ideological backgrounds. Thus, the study analyses news headlines about the Syrian crisis from two different viewpoints, namely French and Russian.

Van Dijk (1988) provides two attributes to the function of the headlines, which are cataphoric and informative. In other words, their fundamental function is to sum up the content of an article, news, and texts. He holds that:

"Each news item in the press has a *Headline*, and many have a *Lead*, whether marked off by special printing type or not. The elementary rule here is that Headline precedes Lead, and together they precede the rest of the news items. Their structural function is also clear: Together they express the major topics of the text. In other words, they function as an initial summary. The semantic constraint is obvious: Headline and Lead summarize the news text and express the semantic macrostructure". (Van Dijk, 1988, p. 53).

Van Dijk (1988) believes that headlines "define the overall coherence or semantic unity of discourse, and also what information readers memorise best from a news report" (p. 238). News headlines are a summary of the general information of an event. He claims that readers tend to memorise and to recall the information that they have seen in the summary (Van Dijk, 1988).

Cook (1989) defines discourse as "language in use or language used to communicate something felt to be coherent, which may or may not correspond to a correct sentence or series of correct sentences" (p. 6-7). In other words, he believes that discourse must not necessarily be grammatically formed to be coherent. It could also be anything from a grunt or simple expletive, through short conversations and scribbled notes, to a novel, or a lengthy legal case. That is to say, conformity to rules is neither important nor fundamental in the formation of discourse, but rather the way it is able to coherently communicate with its receivers.

Moreover, Stubbs (1983) views Discourse Analysis (DA) as "a conglomeration of attempts to study the organization of language and therefore to study larger linguistic units, such as conversational exchanges or written text" (p. 1). This clearly emphasises the idea that DA is not only about organising the grammatical and linguistic components of a text,

but also its cohesion, message, ideas, as well as the social and cultural components, which a particular party or a group of individuals aim to deliver to their audience.

Scholars of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) share with Halliday (1978) and Critical Linguistics the belief that the vocabulary choices and grammar usage of speakers are consciously or unconsciously principled, and they are driven by ideological predisposition. Fiske (1994) claims that our choice of words can never be neutral. As such, they certainly reflect a hidden identity, knowledge, values, and beliefs, and they are purely politicised.

Chomsky (2004) sees that manipulation may categorically influence the formation or change of unique personal mental models and approaches. The aim of manipulative discourse is to control the shared social representations of groups of people because these social beliefs are also controllers of people's actions and behaviors. After having people's attitudes controlled and influenced, for instance on terrorism, little or no further manipulation attempts may be necessary for people to act according to these attitudes, for example to vote in favour of antiterrorism policies.

In a similar vein, Heather (2000) argues that the use of CDA in inspecting discourse studies in a religious context, for instance, would be very convenient, because group members who aim to identify their beliefs are certainly required to convey ideologies and ideas that are meant to convince and to persuade. CDA could also be applied in other disciplines and fields, such as media, sermons, cinema and even literature.

CDA assumes that manipulation is a type of argumentative discourse, which leads to the possibility of yielding and strengthening the power of certain political parties and groups of individuals. Apart from that, it is a crucial instrument for the manipulator, who provides influence through a manipulated discourse (Heather, 2000).

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

There are many rigorous theoretical frameworks in the field of CDA. Fairclough's (1989) model for CDA, referred to as the "three inter-related dimensions of discourse" has been adopted in this research. This is by virtue of its flexibility in analysing all the levels and methods of language: cognitive, interactional, societal, and cultural. These three dimensions are as follows:

1. The object of analysis (including verbal, visual, or verbal and visual texts).
2. The processes by means of which the object is produced and received (writing/speaking/designing and reading/listening/viewing) by human subjects.
3. The socio-historical conditions which govern these processes.

According to Fairclough, each of these dimensions requires a different kind of analysis:

- **Text analysis (description):** linguistic features such as choices of vocabulary, grammar (transitivity, passivization) as well as the structure of the text (thematic choice, turn-taking system) should be analysed in a systematic manner.
- **Processing analysis (interpretation):** this has to do with the relationship between the discourse and its production. In other words, attention should be drawn to other factors such as speech act and intertextuality.
- **Social analysis (explanation):** According to Fairclough (1989) "Explanation is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context with the social determination of the process of production and interpretation, and their social effects"(p. 26). That is to say, the historical, social, and cultural contexts should all be analysed.

Another theoretical framework, that of Van Dijk (2004) "ideological square" is also applied in the research. This is to categorise the ideological features and the language manipulation strategies after the analysis.

Van Dijk (2000) proposes four principles to analyse ideology. He refers to this as "ideological square". The four principles are:

1. Emphasise positive things about Us.
2. Emphasise negative things about Them.
3. De-emphasise negative things about Us.
4. De-emphasise positive things about Them. (p.04).

III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Ethelb (2016) discusses the notion of ideological features in the Arab World and abroad. He analyses how news translation can be heavily laden with hidden ideologies. He concludes that ideological features occur less frequently in Arabic translations of news. This perplexity of translating news is due to the richness of ideology and the indirect uses of language. His paper primarily investigates the impact of ideology in mediating news headlines from English into Arabic. In the study, the focus was on Hatim and Mason's (1997)' singularity of the impact of ideology on translation to fulfill the desire of some institutions who aim to fix certain ideas and beliefs in the society.'

Data in his study examine 32 news headlines produced by Reuters covering Egypt's post-Arab Spring revolution. 22 news headlines are taken from Al-Arabiya news channel and 10 by Aljazeera news channel. Both are taken from the official websites of the channels. The paper concludes that the collected news headlines have been ideologically mediated. In other words, they were completely different from what the original texts reported. They were rather designed to meet the requirements of the news organizations' political/ideological proclivity. This also leads to the conclusion that all news headlines are ideologically modified before they are translated.

In a similar vein, Daria (2018) investigates in a critical way the language used in online news headlines to report the Stoneman Douglas High School shooting, which took place on February 14, 2018 in Florida, the United States. She analyses 50 online news headlines published by five of the most popular national and local news outlets. She attempts to show how the words chosen by the journalists contribute to creating meanings, or representations of the event, and how these representations might reveal hidden ideologies. Daria adopts Fairclough's critical discourse analysis with Van Dijk's socio-cultural approach to analyse her collected data. Results show that despite the anticipated neutral stance of news journalists, dictated by professional values such as integrity and objectivity, hidden meanings and ideologies necessarily transpire in the language used to describe the violent event while representing both the victims and the offenders.

Amoussou and Aguessy (2020) implement a multi- disciplinary method to investigate ideological features in the speech of Donald Trump, concerning ongoing events about the Corona Virus. They explore how discourse could be a crucial device to deconstruct realities using linguistic manipulation strategies. They find that discourse is indeed a major instrument to shape the public opinion and a crucial tool for politicians to convey desired ideas to recipients.

From what has been discussed above, one could note that CDA is a crucial means to analysing media discourse, in that it allows us to analyse hidden meanings behind linguistic manipulation and the application of ideological features. Moreover, in all the above-mentioned studies, news headlines and political speeches are from a neutral point of view. However, news headlines in France24 and RT are reported from two different 'Western points of view'. This would contribute to the appearance of conflicting and opposing viewpoints. In the meantime, headlines are analysed in two languages, namely French and English. Therefore, different structural requirements, points of view, cultural ideologies and different types of linguistic manipulation may appear during the analysis. Apart from that, the selected news headlines in this research tackle events about the Syrian crisis, which could be highly rich in world views, ideological inferences, and the use of language manipulation strategies.

IV. METHOD

A. Tools of Data Collection

In this qualitative and quantitative research, ten (10) news headlines from France24 and ten (10) news headlines from RT tackling issues on the Syrian crisis are selected. The standard language of selection in France24 is French, meaning headlines from France24 are taken in French as a reference language (the official language of the channel and France), and then their ten (10) counterparts from RT are presented in English. The purpose of selecting English as a reference language from RT is because it is the "lingua franca". Presenting another language from another different family (West-Germanic) would offer more chances to find different linguistic aspects. The ten (10) English news headlines from RT and the ten (10) French news headlines from France24 are selected from their web sites (France24.com) and (RT.com) from the period December 2018- February 2022. The purpose of the selected period is to provide recent headlines, noting that the Syrian crisis began in 2011 and still has not been resolved. All selected news headlines are taken as they are from (France24.com) and from (RT.com) online news. TV, radio, and live news are not considered in the analysis. All selected news headlines in the research are stored online in (France24.com) and (RT.com) in written forms.

B. Data Analysis

Data are analysed according to Fairclough's (1989) model for CDA. English news headlines from RT are to be first analysed according to the three dimensions of discourse namely, **description**, **interpretation**, and **explanation**. The same process is applied to analyse the correspondent news headlines from France24 in French. After the analysis of news headlines in both languages, conclusions are drawn according to the tenets of the framework, in addition to the **choice of vocabulary**, as well as the **structure of the text** (thematic choice, turn-taking system) and the **relationship between the discourse and its production**. More broadly, the focus is not only on the structural requirements of the text, but also on elements beyond text level, namely **speech act** and **intertextuality**. Finally, the **cultural and historical background** of each news headline is analysed.

A percentage is scored for each application of language manipulation strategy or ideological features. If language manipulation strategies or ideological features are detected in the French news headline from France24, whether in favour of France and its allies or against Russia and its allies, a percentage is provided to cover the extent of using them throughout the analysis. The same thing applies to the English news headlines from RT. Ideological features and language manipulation strategies are to be detected after the analysis, using Van Dijk's "ideological square" to figure out which news channel uses more ideological features and language manipulation strategies. News headlines from both channels are chronologically ordered, from most recent to oldest.

V. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

- What are the ideological features and language manipulation strategies found in France24 and RT news headlines?
- To what extent do news headlines in France24 and RT reflect ideology and language manipulation about the Syrian crisis?

VI. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To begin with, the selected ten (10) news headlines from RT tackling issues on the Syrian crisis are to be analysed. It is worth mentioning that the data analysis should abide by the tenets of the three inter-related dimensions of discourse (as explained in the theoretical framework section), of Fairclough's (1989). In other words, analysis should encompass the three following levels: **text analysis (description)**, **processing analysis (interpretation)** and **social analysis (explanation)**.

A. RT News Headlines Tackling Issues on the Syrian Crisis

RT headline 01: (Jun. 03, 2021)**Pentagon admits 23 civilian deaths by US military operations in 2020 – far fewer than claimed by NGOs**

Text analysis: in this headline *pentagon*, which is a supreme defence institution in the US, seems to have *admitted* that *23 civilians* were killed by *US military operations*. The headline uses a hyphen to refer to a fallacy declared by the NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations).

Processing analysis: RT news headlines continue to defame the image of the US in Syria. The mentioned number 23 is a significant number. Besides, the focus is always on civilians who happen to be defenceless and cannot even defend themselves against any kind of hostile attack. The hyphen in the headline explains that this number of civilians is less than the actual number claimed by NGOs, so that the US covers its crimes committed against civilians.

Social analysis: the extracted themes from this headline should be *defamation*, *roguery*, *crime coverage*, *accusation*

RT headline 02: (Jun. 08, 2021)**Explosions over Damascus: Syrian air defences light up sky in response to 'Israeli aggression' – state media**

Text analysis: the headline consists of many key terms that indicate the use of language manipulation strategies and ideological features. The word *explosions*, *Syrian air defence*, and the expression between inverted commas 'Israeli aggression'.

Processing analysis: the ultimate goal of the headline is to continue blaming Israel for its continuous raids and crimes in Syria. This time, Israel seems to have bombarded the capital city of Syria, Damascus. The expression "Israeli aggression" clearly indicates that Israel is a real aggressor and a party that spreads chaos and despair in Syria.

RT headline 03: (Jul. 22, 2021)**Russian-made air defence systems shot down ALL Israeli missiles targeting Syria's Homs – military**

Text analysis: the headline consists of a compound noun "*Russian-made*" air defence system, which has *shot down* missiles launched by *Israel*. These missiles have targeted *Syria's Homs*. Besides, the word *ALL* was fully capitalised.

Processing analysis: the headline attempts to continue drawing the bad image that Israel has in Syria, and their hostile acts of bombarding civilians. In addition, Russia constantly continues to depict itself as the "HERO" that defends Syria and its people and brings peace to the entire region.

Social analysis: recurring themes are dominant in the Syrian crisis. One could clearly see that *roguery*, *accusation* and *peace-making* are the themes that could be extracted from this headline.

RT headline 04: (Jul. 23, 2021)**The bombs rain down as I visit the Idlib frontlines, and witness the atrocities committed against civilians by NATO-backed terror**

Text analysis: This headline continues to attack the West and their backed organisations. The headline comprises of key words that defame the West. Terms such as *bombs*, *rain down*, *atrocities*, *against civilians*, *NATO backed-terror* are used here.

Processing analysis: again, the ultimate objective of this headline is to shed light on the "atrocities" committed by NATO in Syria. This is so readers view these acts as 'inhumane' which are driven by a bunch of terrorists who have greedy desires in Syria. Besides, the term "civilian" is to exaggerate the atrocities committed by NATO, and to say that these crimes are committed against civilians who are defenceless people.

Social analysis: the extracted themes from this headline are: *defamation*, *roguery*, *Western intervention*.

RT headline 05: (Jul. 26, 2021)**Syrian air defence units intercept Israeli missiles near Damascus, thwarting THIRD raid in a week – Russian Defence Ministry**

Text analysis: again, headlines continue to use the word *Syrian air defence*, and continue to attribute *missiles* to *Israel*. Besides, the headline uses words like *thwarting*, and *THIRD*, all capitalised, as well as the use of the word *raid*.

Processing analysis: Russian defence compliments the great efforts of Syrian air forces and continues to attack Israeli forces as a hostile party. The word *THIRD* is written in capital letters to stress and emphasise the number of raids committed by the Israeli forces and to show that this is not the first time Israel bombards Syrian territories.

Social analysis: *defamation*, *accusation* and *roguery* are the extracted themes from this headline.

RT headline 06: (Aug. 20, 2021)**Syrian air defences downed 22 Israeli missiles fired from Lebanese airspace – Russian Defence Ministry**

Text analysis: headlines continue to support the Syrians and to attack Western countries. One should highlight the following key words: *air defence*, *Israeli missiles*, *Lebanese airspace*.

Processing analysis: this headline shows how RT condemns such silly attacks operated by the Israeli forces (an ally of the US and Western countries). It also shows how Israel uses other airspace from neighbouring countries to attack Syria.

Social analysis: themes from this headline revolve around ideas like *defamation, accusation, roguery*.

Social analysis: the extracted themes from this headline are: *roguery, accusation and self-defence*.

RT headline 07: (Sep. 27, 2021)

As US troops continue to quietly occupy Syria's oil fields, Russia-Turkey talks could help bring calm to nation devastated by war

Text analysis: obviously, the US continues its atrocities in Syria, as RT diffuses. In this headline, a certain choice of vocabulary should be highlighted: *US troops, Occupy Syria's oil field, Russia-Turkey talks, bring calm, devastated by war*.

Processing analysis: Russia is constantly accusing the US of causing chaos in Syria and describing its greedy intentions towards oil fields. On the other hand, Russia attempts to develop a positive self-image of efforts provided, together with its allies, to find solutions in Syria, which was ravaged by the war. Indirectly speaking, ravaged by the West.

Social analysis: one can clearly see that themes such as *defamation, greed, roguery, accusation and pacifying role* are always mentioned whenever the word 'US' is found in an RT headline.

RT headline 08: (Nov. 14, 2021)

US military covered up its 'war crime' in Syria – NYT

Text analysis: the use of inverted commas is present in this headline as well to describe the expression *war crime*. Additionally, other key vocabulary such as '*US military*' and *cover up* are used.

Processing analysis: the headline attempts to describe the atrocities committed by the US military in Syria, and how the US hides these crimes and never reports them.

Social analysis: the extracted themes from this headline are *defamation, accusation*.

RT headline 09: (Dec. 28, 2021)

Syrian air defences respond to 'Israeli aggression' targeting port city – state media

Text analysis: in this headline, the word *defence* is used to describe the Syrian party, rather than other terminologies. Besides, the expression between inverted commas '*Israeli aggression*', and the expression *port city* should also be highlighted.

Processing analysis: it is obvious that Israel in this instance is a rival country of Russia, whereas the Syrian defence is an ally of Russia. As such, the ultimate objective of this headline is to tarnish the reputation of "Israel" and to depict it as a party that targets civilians by attacking a port in the city.

Social analysis: the Russian campaign against the "West" is constantly evolving, even when tackling issues about the Syrian crisis. Therefore, the extracted themes from this headline should be: *defamation and roguery*

RT headline 10: (Apr. 16, 2020)

Syrian militants 'trained at US base for sabotage & terrorism' try to surrender & get ambushed by OTHER US-backed extremists)

Text analysis: the use of inverted commas is still present to refer to some expressions. In this headline, one should highlight the following key words (*militant, trained at US base, sabotage and terrorism, US backed extremists*).

Processing analysis: regarding the American presence in Syria, the Russian campaign continues to accuse the West. The objective of this headline is to depict the US as a trainer of extremists and militants who fight on its side, and who are responsible for the sabotage of good actions that promote peace and ensure unity.

Social analysis: the extracted themes from this headline are *defamation and accusation*.

After the analysis of the ten (10) RT news headlines, we should now mention all the extracted themes (from the social analysis) and the number of occurrences of each one, as well as its percentage among the other themes. The focus is on the social themes because they provide a general summary of what was reported in a headline. Therefore, ideological features and the application of language manipulation strategies would be easy to detect. After the whole analysis is finished, a comparison is made between frequencies of use (language manipulation strategies and ideological features) of both channels.

The following table shows all the extracted themes in which ideological features and the application of language manipulation strategies are implemented in RT news headlines which tackle issues about the Syrian crisis.

TABLE 1
EXTRACTED THEMES IN RT NEWS HEADLINES

Social themes	Number of occurrences	Percentage
Conflict resolution	1	3.57
Roguary	8	28.57
Defamation	7	25
Pacifying roles	1	3.57
Greed	1	3.57
Western intervention	1	3.57
Accusation	8	28.57
Crime coverage	1	3.57
Total	28	100

We notice that the following three (03) themes notoriously prevail:

- **Roguary and accusation** with 8 occurrences and with a percentage of 28.57% for each. This gives (16) as a total number of occurrences and 57.14% as the total percentage.
- **Defamation** with 7 occurrences which represents a percentage of 25%.
- These three mentioned themes represent a percentage of 82.14%.

Clearly, one notices that RT news headlines rely heavily on accusing the West, namely the US and its allies, for committing crimes and running amok in Syria. RT news headlines rely also on defaming the reputation of the West, mainly the US, and accusing them of serious acts of war and roguary that would certainly push readers to view the West as "evil" and as "rogue invaders".

- On the other hand, the other remaining themes (**crime coverage, western intervention, conflict resolution and greed**) are mentioned once, with a percentage of 3.57% for each. This results in a total percentage of 17.85%,

Showing that news headlines in RT rely on some themes to "expose the crimes covered by the West and depict them as "barbaric interveners". Conversely, RT news headlines depict Russia as a party that strives to find solutions for different types of conflicts in Syria.

Table 2 below provides a classification of all the themes that emphasise positive things about Russia and its allies and all the themes that emphasise negative things about the West, namely the US and its allies. A percentage will be provided for each of the themes.

TABLE 2
CLASSIFICATION OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE SOCIAL THEMES (RT)

Positive things about US	Negative things about THEM
Conflict resolution (3.44%)	Roguary (28.57%)
	Western intervention (3.57%)
	Greed (3.57%)
	Crime coverage (3.57%)
Pacifying roles (3.44 %)	Defamation (25%)
	Accusation (28.57%)
Total: 6.89%	Total: 93.11%

We notice that RT news headlines emphasise positive things about Russia and its allies with a percentage of (6.89%). However, negative social themes with a high percentage (93.11%) are used to emphasise negative things about the West. This indicates that RT news headlines try to defame and attack the West to an even larger degree than giving Russia a positive image.

B. France24 News Headlines Tackling Issues on the Syrian Crisis

France24 headline 01: (Feb. 04, 2022)

Syrie: l'Etat islamique affaibli par la mort de son chef, mais toujours bien présent dans le pays

English translation of the headline: Syria: Islamic State weakened by the death of its leader, but still very present in the country

Text analysis: the headline has no particular use of capitalisation or of peculiar punctuation marks, but the choice of vocabulary makes it appealing. Keywords such as: *l'Etat islamique, affaibli, mort de son chef, présent* should be highlighted.

Processing analysis: the headline shows how the US plays an important role in eliminating one of the most notorious ISIS chiefs in Syria in its campaign against terrorism. Yet, the country is still exposed to terrorist attacks, which will require the intervention of the US to fully eradicate it.

Social analysis: the extracted themes from this headline are: *fight against terrorism* and *peace-making*.

France24 headline 02: (Feb. 3, 2022)

Le chef de l'organisation État islamique " éliminé " dans une opération américaine en Syrie

English translation of the headline: Islamic State leader 'eliminated' in US operation in Syria.

Text analysis: the headline has some choice of key words that draw a particular image in the mind of readers. One could notice that the word "éliminé" [eliminated] is placed between two quotation marks. Besides, words such as *état islamique*, *opération américaine* also have an impact on readers. This will be discussed in the processing analysis.

Processing analysis: the aim of the headline is to develop a positive self-image about the US as the "Hero" who fights terrorism all over the world. In this instance, ISIS supreme chief was killed in an anti-terrorism operation led by the US army. As for the word "éliminé", this is to show that the US does not negotiate with terrorists, but rather fights them with an aggressive mindset.

Social analysis: the extracted themes from this headline are: *fight against terrorism, peace-making*.

France24 headline 03: (Feb. 3, 2022)

Une opération anti-jihadiste des forces américaines fait plusieurs morts en Syrie

English translation of the headline: Anti-jihadist operation by US forces kills many fighters in Syria.

Text analysis: the headline has no specific use of capitalisation or peculiar use of punctuation marks. However, it comprises a catching choice of vocabulary, such as *opération anti-jihadiste, force américaine, plusieurs morts*.

Processing analysis: the headline shows how the US is continuing its furious fight against terrorism, but this time, the US is a victim of an attack that killed several people in Syria. However, the US has successfully responded to it.

Social analysis: again, the headline stresses the two themes mentioned in the previous headline, namely *fight against terrorism and peace-making*.

France24 headline 04: (Feb. 26, 2020)

Syrie : 14 pays de l'UE appellent la Turquie et la Russie à la "déescalade" à Idlib

English translation of the headline: 14 EU countries call on Turkey and Russia for "de-escalation" in Idlib.

Text analysis: in this headline, the word "déescalade" is written between two quotation marks. Moreover, the choice of vocabulary is used against Russia and Turkey, namely: *14 pays, Turquie, Russie*.

Processing analysis: the headline shows how 14 European countries denounce the Turkish-Russian reckless actions in Syria and call for an immediate de-escalation. The headline launches a serious accusation against this Turkish-Russian co-operation.

Social analysis: the extracted themes from this headline are: *Russian-Turkish intervention, roguery, accusation*.

France24 headline 05: (June 3, 2020)

Syrie : raids russes sur le nord-ouest du pays, la trêve du 6 mars menacée

English translation of the headline: Syria: Russian raids on the north-west of the country, the truce of March 6 threatened.

Text analysis: the headline comprises a specific use of vocabulary which makes it intriguing. As such, one finds expressions such as *raids russes, la trêve, menacée*. The headline uses no peculiar type of capitalization and punctuation marks.

Processing analysis: the headline attempts to accuse Russia of carrying out some raids on the Syrian territory, which may threaten the truce signed on March 6th by and between the world superpowers and the Syrian regime. This is also to accuse Russia of taking destabilisation actions in Syria.

Social analysis: the extracted themes from this headline are: *accusation, defamation, roguery, Russian-Turkish intervention*.

France24 headline 06: (Oct.25, 2020)

Washington va renforcer son dispositif militaire en Syrie pour protéger les champs pétroliers

English translation of the headline: Washington will strengthen its military forces in Syria to protect the oil fields.

Text analysis: no peculiar use of capitalisation or punctuation marks in this headline, but the choice of vocabulary makes it appealing. One should highlight some keywords such as *Washington, renforcer, dispositif militaire, protéger, champs pétroliers*.

Processing analysis: the headline highlights the idea of how the US is reinforcing its troops in Syria to protect the oil fields in the country from being attacked by any potential threat. This is to emphasise the remarkable US role in maintaining peace and protecting both the Syrian soil and its resources.

Social analysis: the extracted themes from this headline are: *peace-making, fight against terrorism*.

France24 headline 07: (Feb. 04, 2019)

Jihadistes détenus en Syrie: les États-Unis incitent les autres pays à les rapatrier

Translation of the headline: Jihadists detained in Syria: the United States encourages other countries to repatriate them.

Text analysis: the headline has no peculiar use of capitalisation or specific use of punctuation marks, but one should highlight certain use of vocabulary: *jihadistes, détenus, États-Unis, autres pays, rapatrier*.

Processing analysis: the US is inciting other countries to foster mutual relationships of fighting terrorism. The headline shows the important role of the US in fighting terrorism by all means, and how the US urges the world to repatriate those terrorists to their homelands.

Social analysis: the extracted themes from this headline are: *fight against terrorism, peace-making*.

France24 headline 08: (Dec. 12, 2019)

Syrie: Donald Trump appelle Damas, Moscou et Téhéran à cesser les combats à Idleb

English translation of the headline: Syria: Donald Trump calls on Damascus, Moscow and Tehran to stop fighting in Idlib.

Text analysis: the headline shows no particular use of capitalisation or peculiar punctuation marks. However, the choice of vocabulary renders it attractive. The keywords that should be highlighted in this headline are: *Téhéran, cesser, combats*.

Processing analysis: again, as in the previous headline, former US president Donald Trump urges Russia, Turkey and Iran to stop causing trouble in Syria. Trump is directly accusing the three countries of destabilising national peace in Syria.

Social analysis: the extracted themes from this headline are: *peace-making, roguery and Russian-Turkish intervention*.

France24 headline 09: (Jul. 07, 2019)**Frappes aériennes de Washington contre un camp d'al-Qaïda dans la province d'Alep en Syrie**

English translation of the headline: Washington airstrikes on an al-Qaeda camp in Syria's Aleppo province.

Text analysis: the headline uses a specific choice of vocabulary to describe the US as "Hero" again. Keywords such as: *frappes aériennes, Washington, camp d'al-Qaïda* should be highlighted.

Processing analysis: the headline shows the remarkable role of the US in fighting against terrorism. This time, by targeting al-Qaida base in Syria, which is a notorious terroristic group that was created in 1988. Besides, the headline shows how the US is playing a crucial role in maintaining peace in Syria.

Social analysis: the extracted themes from this headline are: *fight against terrorism and peace-making*.

France24 headline 10: (Dec. 12, 2018)**Moscou et Ankara poursuivront leur coordination militaire en Syrie après le retrait américain**

English translation of the headline: Moscow and Ankara will continue their military coordination in Syria after the American withdrawal.

Text analysis: the headline has no peculiar use of capitalisation or punctuation marks, but the use of vocabulary should be taken into consideration. Keywords that should be highlighted in this headline are: *Moscou, Ankara, poursuivront, coordination militaire, retrait américain*.

Processing analysis: the headline shows the military co-operation between Russia and Turkey, who try to expand their troops and their military presence in Syria. This was after the American withdrawal from Syria. The headline attempts to shed light on the opportunities that Russia and Turkey are racing to take. Certainly, not to maintain peace, but to destabilise peace in Syria.

Social analysis: the extracted themes from this headline are: *Russian-Turkish intervention, hegemony imposition and greed*.

All the extracted themes (from the social analysis) and the number of occurrences of each theme are to be mentioned, as well as the percentage of each occurring theme. The focus is always on the social themes, because, as was mentioned earlier, a social theme offers a whole summary of what was reported in a headline.

Table 3 below shows all the extracted themes in which ideological features and the application of language manipulation strategies are implemented in France24 news headlines.

TABLE 3
EXTRACTED THEMES IN FRANCE24 NEWS HEADLINES

Social themes	Number of occurrences	Percentage (%)
Peace-making	7	29.16
Russian-Turkish intervention	4	16.66
Fight against terrorism	6	25
Roguery	3	12.5
Defamation	1	4.16
Hegemony imposition	1	4.16
Accusation	2	8.33
Total	24	100

One could clearly notice that three (03) themes are remarkably prevailing in the table:

- "peace-making" with 7 occurrences which represents a percentage of 29.16%.
- "Fight against terrorism" with 6 occurrences, representing a percentage of 25%.
- "Russian-Turkish intervention" with 4 occurrences, amounting to a percentage of 16.66%.
- the three themes represent a total percentage of 70.82%.

France24 attempts to depict the US and its allies, including France, as "superheroes" that rush to settle peace and to end all types of military strives, and to depict themselves as "fighters against terrorists".

Other themes that are of a less frequent occurrence are also found in the headlines. This includes the following:

- "**Roguery**" with 3 occurrences and with a percentage of 12.5%.
- "**Accusation**" with 2 occurrences and with a percentage of 8.33 %.
- "**Hegemony imposition**" and "**defamation**" occur once with a percentage of 4.16 for each.

- These four themes, namely "roguery", "accusation", "hegemony imposition" and "defamation" represent a total percentage of 24.99%

This shows how some news headlines in France24 contribute to the accusation of Russia and its allies of being "rogue" and of being parties that attempt to impose their powerful position and rule on the Syrian people.

Table 4 below provides a classification of all the positive themes about the West and all the negative themes about Russia and its allies.

TABLE 4
CLASSIFICATIONS OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE SOCIAL THEMES (FRANCE24)

Positive things about us	Negative things about them
Peace-making (29.16)	Russian-Turkish intervention (16.66%)
	Roguery (12.5%)
	Defamation (4.16%)
Fight against terrorism (25%)	Hegemony imposition (4.16%)
	Accusation (8.33%)
Total: 54.16%	Total: 45.84%

One could clearly observe that France24 news headlines choose to "emphasise positive things about the West (54.16%) over emphasising negative things about Russia and its allies (45.84%). This indicates that, unlike RT news headlines that choose to defame the West more than to emphasise positive things about Russia, France24 news headlines choose to emphasise positive aspects about the West over defaming the reputation of Russia and its allies.

VII. CONCLUSION

To answer the first research question, and with proven results, it is no wonder that the found ideological features and the application of language manipulation strategies in France24 news headlines are (peace-making, Russian-Turkish intervention, fight against terrorism, roguery, defamation, hegemony imposition and accusation). On the other hand, the found ideological features and the application of language manipulation strategies in RT news headlines are (conflict resolution, roguery, defamation, pacifying roles, greed, western intervention, accusation, and crime coverage). The language manipulation strategies adopted in the two languages confirm the findings of (Al-Shuaibi, 2019) and (Al-Saleh Al-Shuaibi; Sharab & Al Momani, 2020) that two different systems with different structures show linguistic affinities supporting the universality of human language.

To answer the second question, there can be no doubt that both France24 and RT apply language manipulation strategies and ideological features to represent ongoing events in Syria. However, there are some crucial conclusions that emerged after the analysis which explain the extent of using both ideological features and the application of language manipulation strategies:

- RT news headlines defame the reputation of the West more than France24 news headlines defame the reputation of Russia and its allies.
- RT news headlines, depict Russia and its allies as "solvers" of conflicts in Syria.
- RT news headlines depict the West, in most cases, as "rogues" in Syria.
- France24 news headlines focus more on emphasising the good things about the West than on defaming the image of Russia and its allies.
- France24 news headlines depict the US and its allies, in most cases, as "peace makers" and "fighters against terrorism" in Syria.
- France24 news headlines depict Russia and its allies, in most cases, as "rogue interveners".

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