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**Critical Discourse Analysis of Covid-19 Vaccine News in the English and Arabic Media**

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**Abstract:** The virus takes a toll on people worldwide regarding the economy and social life, control the spread of this virus and taking the vaccine are most problems faced by the governments. This article examines the news coverage of the Coronavirus vaccine, focusing on the Covid-19 vaccine and how it has been exploited politically and ideologically in the English and Arabic media (BBC and Al-Jazeera). Since there are limited researches of CDA on the vaccine discourse in the media (how the vaccine is portrayed), this study aims to contribute to the researches in CDA about Covid-19 vaccine discourse. Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional critical discourse analysis was utilised as a foundational framework to investigate the amount to which power is linguistically expressed persuasively in every discourse of different media genres using particular lexical, rhetorical, and pragmatic methods. A qualitative approach was used to analyse the selected data (two discourses from each media type). The findings revealed that the governments, through media, had used linguistic features to persuade people's minds, convincing them to take the vaccine as the only solution. The ethical appeal, cultural, societal and religious is very well generated in the discourse of both media genres.

**Keywords:** Arabic media, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Covid-19, Vaccine, English media

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**Introduction**

Broadcast, print, and internet media all have a considerable effect on public opinion and serve as crucial means of communication between decision-makers and the general public. The potential of the media to influence the crystallisation of our thinking gives it power. Accepted or rejected media, regardless of whether it is a good or bad alteration, has the capacity to work all day to build views, manipulate people, and shift convictions. (Catalan-Matamoros & Elías, 2020). Media is critical in keeping the public informed about scientific and medical concerns, as it is generally recognised that the general population does not maintain fluent contact with scientists or healthcare experts. The information people get through the media has the ability to influence the public's perceptions of topics and events, as well as their opinions, attitudes, and behaviours (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 1988). As a result, the media is widely regarded as the most widely used source of scientific information by the general public and the only source of science and medical information for the vast majority of people, such as Covid-19 news.

Covid-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) as a disease is caused by a new type of coronavirus. It was first reported on December 31 2019, in Wuhan, China. Covid-19 can cause symptoms like fever, cough, and shortness of breath in humans. Close contact and droplets can pass Covid-19 from one person to the next (Nhamo et al., 2021). The Covid-19 pandemic is resurgent, and debates over resuming lockdowns, civil liberties, and societal survival are heating up. Vaccines have emerged as the most promising hope for resolving the world's worst health and economic crisis in recent memory (El-Elimat et al., 2021). Beyond the complicated logistics of vaccine development and testing, mass manufacturing, and distribution, the public's trust and acceptance of vaccines are unclear and changing rendering achieving herd immunity challenging

(Lin et al., 2021). The core lies in the problem of trust, and people have doubts about vaccine safety which leads to vaccine hesitancy. Vaccine hesitancy refers to the delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccination despite vaccine availability (Mendoza, 2020). This point is going to be a significant challenge to be resolved by health care providers, policymakers, community leaders, and governments to increase the widespread acceptance of vaccines (El-Elimat et al., 2021). Accordingly, the governments used the media to persuade people to take the vaccine, that is there is a power used by the governments linguistically in media discourse and there is dominance towards those who are not taking the vaccine (Chadwick et al., 2021). As a result, because it is related to and may describe a public health perspective that previous researches have not clearly detailed, this study is significant and crucial in the population's understanding of vaccine discourse and risks.

Although many researches are focusing on the Coronavirus vaccine such as Abbas (2021); Catalan-Matamoros and Elías, (2020); Mendoza (2020); Thompson (2021); Wu et al. (2021), but up to date, there are limited critical discourse analysis studies on Covid-19 vaccine discourse in the media. Accordingly, there is a gap in the literature about the Covid-19 vaccine and how the power is used in media discourse. In particular, the two most popular media worldwide, namely the BBC and Al Jazeera as they represent two different cultures. To shed light on the role of the media and its discourse around vaccines in the context of the pandemic, thus, there is a need for an investigation into how governments represent power linguistically in the media discourse and how vaccine news is used politically and ideologically in the English (BBC) and Arabic (Al Jazeera) media. These media types are generally considered the leading and elite global broadcasting in their regions and worldwide (Azeez, 2019; Hanan, 2017; Høeg & Tulloch, 2019). CDA is considered an established method of investigating the language and ideology of media discourse, the policy they followed and the government's role or influence (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 1980). The extent to which power is linguistically portrayed persuasively by means of specific lexical, rhetorical, and pragmatic methods in every discourse of various media was investigated using a three-dimensional critical discourse analysis of Fairclough (1995) as a foundational paradigm. Thus, this study aims:

- To show the extent to which the power is linguistically represented in the discourse of English and Arabic media (BBC & Al-Jazeera).
- Examine the ideological differences that can be reflected in both media.

Accordingly, the research questions are:

- What the extent of power which is linguistically represented in the discourse of English and Arabic media (BBC & Al-Jazeera)?
- Are there ideological differences reflected in these both media?

## Literature Review

### 1. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

CDA is a type of discourse analysis research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in social and political contexts (Van Dijk, 2004, p. 352). For Widdowson (2008), CDA is a social and political method of analysing language in use that assigns ideological interpretations to texts based on linguistic characteristics. In contrast, Van Dijk (2001) sees it as a type of analytical research that focuses on how language encodes power in texts and conversations in various political and social situations.

Van Dijk (1993) asserted that CDA aims to analyse the various discourse aspects of power (rhetorically and physically) and how this power is used to produce injustice and inequality. In order to distinguish it from other types of legitimate and acceptable power, such as the authority of parents over their children and the power of instructors over their pupils, power abuse can be defined as "dominance" (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 255). That is, the importance of language used in media about vaccines and the media's reinforcement on power as well as hegemonic ideologies of the governments are highlights for critical analysis.

## 2. Vaccines in the Media

Vaccines are one of history's most significant advancements and achievements, as they have eliminated numerous infectious illnesses. El-Elimat et al. (2021, p. 2) defined vaccines as "one of the most reliable and cost-effective public health interventions ever implemented that saves millions of lives each year". Due to safety issues and controversies, vaccines have received large media coverage (Kwon et al., 2021). Catalan-Matamoros and Elías (2020) opined that media is crucial for disseminating vaccine-related information, raising public awareness, and educating people to make well-informed health decisions. As a result of the increased media interest, academics and researchers have to examine vaccine-related media content and shed light on the nature of vaccine discourse in all media kinds.

Different conspiracy theories related to vaccine have circulated since the beginning of the spread COVID-19 and became a pandemic, including that pharmaceutical companies produced the virus to promote a vaccine (Catalan-Matamoros & Elías, 2020; El-Elimat et al., 2021). Also, many Antivaccine opinions as well as groups that appeared on social media refuse to take the vaccine and spread fake news and facts about the side effects of the vaccine which make people hesitate to take it (Thompson, 2021). Governments around the world considered some processes to encourage people to take the vaccine such as the need for a vaccine card to travel abroad.

## 3. The Notion of Power in Discourse

Power is an essential factor to consider while researching and analysing conversations. Many linguists in the field of discourse analysis have explored power, including (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 1980; Wodak, 2001). Linguists focus and concentrate on the relationship between discourse and power, saying that speech contains latent power relations that must be studied and disclosed via linguistic and ideological research. Van Dijk (1994) stated that "Power is concerned with the relations between social groups, institutions or organisations. In this regard, power has a social dimension". While Chouliaraki and Fairclough (2010) distinguish between two sorts of power, the first is manifested in discourse, and the second is manifested outside of discourse. Language does not provide power, but it may be used to alter views of reality, resulting in societal change. (Wodak, 2013).

## Methodology

### 1. Corpus

The data taken from two major media channels in Arabic area and Europe, namely BBC and Al-Jazeera, were obtained using the purposive sampling technique of news reports on the Covid-19 vaccine published from January 2021 to December 2021. The specific focus of all the analysed news reports was on how the virus spread in different nations and how the vaccine is necessary to control it. The first criterion for choosing this year was that the governments and health organisations worldwide have started calling people to take the vaccine to defeat the virus. Additionally, all media genres worldwide shifted their attention from the virus to the vaccines developed to stop its spread (Dezhkameh et al., 2021). The second good reason for choosing these two media channels was that both channels' reports are in English, so the target audience of both are English visitors.

In the case of Al-Jazeera, the focus is on the English channel and the target audience is primarily the persons who speak English, either Arabic citizens or foreigners living inside the Arabic area. On the other hand, the BBC has been chosen for its range of visits, its visitors ranging from academics to workers, its reports for British and Europe people and global people who speak English. Finally, these media channels were chosen because they are considered the two most visited and circled media in the world. In other words, the BBC and AJE were chosen as dynamic, global, and multilingual outlets and as representatives of the global North and the global South. It has to be noted that they are both elite sources within their contexts. As hegemonic international news organizations, they contribute to constructing the political agenda on global issues such as Covid-19 and Vaccines whilst often adopting different stances (Høeg & Tulloch, 2019). According to Høeg and Tulloch (2019) the former colonial influence of the BBC still exercises a soft power in different parts of the world, while Al Jazeera, representing Arabic media, is clearly critical of global North

power politics particularly on its Arabic language website. Thus, the data was collected from these two media online websites, focusing on the discourses related to the novel coronavirus vaccine. For each media channel, two discourses were chosen. The researchers used rhetorical and lexical pragmatic strategies to evaluate the data and disclose the discourse's intended meaning.

## 2. Method

This research employed a qualitative method, accordingly, the data gathered for this research was put through qualitative analyses. Wyse (2011) states in his study that qualitative research is utilized to expose hidden meanings and look deep into the problem. Also, the study used Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional critical discourse analysis models as a basic model to investigate the extent to which power is linguistically represented in the discourse. The qualitative analyses focus on studying the selected news reports from the two different media broadcasting (BBC and Al-Jazeera) based on Fairclough's (1995) model as mentioned earlier, and examples have been used to represent and discuss in the findings and discussion section. Thus, macrostructure and microstructure analyses of the selected discourses were considered.

## 3. Data Analysis

The macrostructure of the discourse is concerned with the themes of the discourse. In contrast, the microstructure is concerned with the analysis of the linguistic choices made by both BBC and Al-Jazeera to demonstrate the extent to which power is linguistically represented persuasively in the discourse of these media genres through lexical (euphemism, positive self & negative others), pragmatic (speech act), and rhetorical (metaphor, repetition) aspects of discourse.

For Fairclough (1989), Euphemism is when specific vocabulary is used in the discourse to avoid the negative values pertaining to the offensive meaning of these words. The positive self & negative others strategy is considered one of the most valuable ways of analysing forms regarding the lexical power (Van Dijk, 1997). According to Van Dijk (1988, 1997), this strategy means "self-glorification" and "negative other-presentation". The pragmatic level discusses some pragmatically-based CDA strategies that are relevant to the study of power media discourse regarding the coronavirus vaccine. These discursive strategies include: speech acts, particularly the speech act of threat and command. Searle claims that there are five primary types of actions that human beings can perform by using language. They are representative, declarative, directive, expressive and commissive. For the sake of this study, the analysis will be on the commissive aspect, particularly "threat and command". Van Dijk (1995) asserts that having access to the speech act of command and threat implies, enacts, and validates the speaker's social power. Metaphor and repetition are examples of rhetorical elements that help focus readers' attention on the message and purpose of their use in texts. (Van Dijk, 1980; 1988). The main aim of such devices is to make the message more effective and persuasive for the recipients (Hanan, 2017). That is, all news reports will be analysed qualitatively to study of relationships that exist between language-in-use, power and the social world (Dezhkameh et al., 2021).

## Results and Discussion

Tables 1 and 2 below give a quick overview of the selected news reports from both broadcasting sources. The tables compare and contrast BBC and Al-Jazeera stories in terms of headline selection, length, and significant characteristics.

Table 1. BBC Report Summary

<b>First news story: published 13 May 2021</b>	
Heading	Covid-19 vaccines have saved 11,700 lives and 33,000 hospital admissions.
Length	415 words

Key features	The report talked about how Coronavirus vaccines have saved 11,700 lives and stopped 33,000 people becoming seriously ill with Covid-19 in England. Also it talked about the increase of vaccination clinics that set up in different parts of UK and the big percentage of people getting vaccine.
<b>Second news story: published 25 June 2021</b>	
Heading	Covid-19: Mask wearing law could go in Wales if all adults vaccinated, says FM
Length	1142 words
Key features	This report discusses the government promise about facemasks and how it could be just advice and not legal once all adults (in Wales) have had a second Covid-19 jab. Warning them that rising case numbers in the third Covid-19 wave could peak in July and confirmed a delay in more lockdown easing.

Table 2. Al-Jazeera Reports Summary

<b>First news story: published 25 Feb 2021</b>	
Heading	What are 'vaccine passports' and should we have them?
Length	1556 words
Key features	The report talks about the vaccine and the persons who has vaccinated will get passport (document or certificate) approved that he is healthy. Also the report talked about the importance of this passport especially in travelling from one country to another, you will asked about before enter the country.
<b>Second news story: published 3 Mar 2021</b>	
Heading	Saudi Arabia says Covid-19 vaccination mandatory for Hajj 2021
Length	257 words
Key features	The report discusses the Saudi declaration about having a coronavirus vaccine is a must in order to participate in this year's Hajj. It talks about how the vaccine is mandatory for those willing to come to the Hajj and will be one of main conditions for receiving a permit to come.

Fairclough's concept of thematisation is used to demonstrate the themes (macrostructure) discovered to construct the vaccine discourses on the news for better outcomes and in accordance with the present study's aims. Fairclough (1995) recognises thematisation as a crucial technique in recognising particular ideological themes deployed in various representations of subjects, situations, and occurrences. As a result, it may be used

to deal with concerns such as coronavirus and vaccines. The following topics were discovered to be the most prevalent and are present in BBC and Al-Jazeera news reports:

## 1. BBC Reports

### Macrostructure Analysis (Themes)

#### *Themes in BBC Discourse: Report (1)*

The BBC's initial article begins with the title "Covid-19 vaccinations have saved 11,700 deaths and 33,000 hospital admissions." Without question, headlines are critical in conveying a news story's primary themes or issues. One may figure out what the tales are about by looking at the headlines. As starting with the first headline, the phrasal verb 'saved 11,700 lives' means the effectiveness of the vaccine in saving people's lives from the effects of the virus. So, the first theme that can emerge from this report is "Vaccine save lives". The noun phrase in the headline (33,000 hospital admissions) approved the fact that the vaccine is active in defeating the virus. Another conclusion that may be drawn from this headline is that the vaccinations are effective and that the number of individuals vaccinated is large. They have been spared from being gravely ill due to Covid-19 in England. The vaccine cuts the risk of infection and severe illness and death by spreading the virus, therefore protecting the hospitals.

In microstructure analysis and in term of lexical level (Euphemism), the government use euphemistic terms in an attempt to mask reality, legitimise the use of power, its process and at the same time to limit the people's ability to criticise. The euphemism is used to persuade people to take the vaccine and follow government rules.

*"It will also significantly reduce your chances of getting infected and infecting others"*

*"It is vital to get both doses of your vaccine when you are offered it"*

Moreover, the negative-Others representation is reported clearly by blaming unvaccinated people (refusing to take vaccine), people who do not vaccinate yet, and people who do not follow government rules. With this strategy, the government tends to misrepresent others to weaken their position. Simultaneously, the administration deployed rhetorical strategies to demonstrate its competence and capacity to lead the country through the pandemic. This tactic is utilised in the discourse to reflect power persuasively.

*"The public Health England analysis, up to the end of April, found people in their 70s and had seen the biggest fall in deaths and hospital admissions"*

In this example, the word "people" refers to the person who do not vaccinate yet as Other, consisting of "fall in death" and "hospital admissions" to blame them for the bad result of not taking the vaccine decision, and the superlative adjective "biggest" to show the high percentage of persons found in the hospitals.

At pragmatic analysis, this level discusses some pragmatically-based CDA strategies that are relevant to the study of power media discourse regarding the coronavirus vaccine. The discourse of BBC shows power and dominance through the use of speech acts of command and threat, it is an indirect way that all the citizens should be totally subject to absolute state authority and rules(using this strategy to reflect the power). According to Van Dijk (1995), whether we assert, promise, accuse, inquire, threaten, or demand something or someone, the meaning of the uttered sentence contains a lot of information about the nature of the speech act (s).

*"Getting a vaccine is one of the most important things you will be asked to do in your lifetime. (threat speech as"*

The indirect threat act in this discourse shows the dominance by the government over the persons who do not accept to take the vaccine. Using the modal verb (will) to refer to the vaccine issue will take a long time, and the person will be asked about the vaccine in the future in many aspects of his life. Besides threat

and command, there is a promise act to refer to the better life of those who take the vaccine to avoid death or becoming ill from the virus.

*“As these figures highlight, getting your vaccine could save your life or stop you becoming seriously ill from Covid-19. (Promise)”*

Another threat and command acts in this discourse represent (future) actions of the speaker (more lockdown process, no travelling to other places), and accusations or criticism pertain to past actions of the hearer (not following the government rules, crowded, not wearing masks, and not taking vaccine).

The report is not devoid of metaphor (metaphor) in terms of rhetoric (which is a powerful tool that can be invested for ideological purposes).

*“One dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine cuts the risk of infection by as much as 70%, and serious illness and death by even more”*

Although the government report is based on evidence from the UK rollout, the report is equipped with some exaggerated statements and ideas and not totally real since the scientist (and the vaccine companies) say that one vaccine jab is not enough to defeat the virus. The vaccine and taking it is compared to lockdown, illness and death. The government process is battling the coronavirus outbreak. The governments used rhetorical devices to practice their power persuasively as an authority and system that should follow. Rhetorical devices are considered to be an indirect way of demanding something. People with strong rhetorical skills frequently utilise them to persuade their audience to accept their claims. (Khafaga, 2019).

Regarding repetition, the government's propaganda has been repeated to emphasise the importance of the vaccine, all types of vaccine and take all vaccine jabs. The government's processes in providing medical supplies to control the virus are also repeated many times in the reports. The government's propaganda of repetition is to convince people that taking the vaccine can reduce the chances of getting infected, infecting others and saving lives. Thus, repetition is used as a persuasive power strategy.

### *BBC Report (2)*

The headline of the second report started with “Covid-19: Mask wearing law could go in Wales if all adults vaccinated, says FM”. The first part of the conditional sentence, “Mask wearing law could go”, invites the reader to believe in the idea (proposition) that people can return to their ordinary lives and leave the mask and many complex rules related to the coronavirus. But the second part, “Wales if all adults vaccinated”, referred to the condition for doing that is vaccination and all adults take the vaccine. Another theme that emerged from the report is “Vaccination or falling ill and hospitalisation”, which means that people have to choose between taking the vaccine or falling ill in hospitals and may die. It is clear that the rise of cases spread of new generations such as Delta may reach to the third Covid-19 wave and could peak soon if people are not vaccinated. It can be said that the significant increase in new cases rises on hospital admissions make the government invite people to hurry up in taking the vaccine. In general, there is a hidden power in the discourse to enforce people to vaccinate.

Euphemism used in this report to persuade people to take all vaccine jabs was evident in the government propaganda and news reports about the vaccine and the percentage of the people who take the vaccine.

*“...wearing facemasks could be just advice and not legal” and “more than half of Wales fully vaccinated”*

That is, the government tends to persuade people that half of Wales is fully vaccinated, giving an optimistic view to the next half to vaccinate. Additionally, remember that if all of them take the vaccine, the facemasks will not be compulsory in public places. Thus, it is power and persuasive strategy at the same time. The following strategy used in this report which is Positive-self, as shown in this example:

*“When everybody has had two doses, we will have a much clearer understanding of the relationship between vaccination and falling ill and hospitalization.”*

The speaker used the verb phrase "when everybody" and matched it with the use pronoun "we" to say that people who take the vaccine follow the government rules and are with the government in this process. They are the positive-self group (government+ vaccinated people). In contrast, the others (unvaccinated people) are the negative group due to their decision toward the vaccine and the danger they may cause through spreading the virus.

The speech act of threat is also noticed in this report many times, warning people about the increasing number of cases and the appearance of new generations of the virus. That is, threatening them that there would be no changes to the restrictions in the following days. The use of this strategy in this report convinces another person of the acceptability of the government's standpoint. Eemeren and Garssen (2016) indicated that acceptance (with a threat) could be part of controllable and rule-governed behaviour.

*“...there would be no changes to the restrictions over the next three weeks because of the spread of the Delta variant in Wales and across the UK”*

Moreover, the government broadcast reports of unity and sacrifice (people and government) signify the danger of not taking all vaccine jabs, spreading the virus, and breaking the government's lockdown rules. Metaphors such as "contributing factor" and 'Big gap' are mentioned with inverted commas to make the reader pay attention to two points: the danger of the spread of this virus. The second point is that taking the vaccine and following the government's rules could be the best or only way to avoid infection, illness and death. Besides metaphors, the repetition strategy is employed overuse in this report, such as rising cases, children and young people, vaccination, falling ill and hospitalisation. The speaker used this strategy to convince readers and listeners of the virus's dangerous consequences in the country.

## **Al-Jazeera Reports**

### **1. Macrostructure Analysis (Themes)**

#### *Themes in Al-Jazeera Discourse: Report (1)*

In terms of macrostructure, the first headline entitled (What are 'vaccine passports' and should we have them?) is a term that refers to the importance and necessity of having a vaccination passport. In fact, the theme "vaccine passports" basically refers to one main point: taking the vaccine, then having the passport, which is becoming a fundamental certificate in travelling and other activities in many countries. While the interesting part in the headline is (should we have them?) With a question mark, it signifies that persons must have the vaccination in order to travel and participate in previous activities. The headline implies the following proposition: people should vaccinate, or they will be discriminated against or dominated. There is a power hidden in the discourse to persuade people to take the vaccine.

Regarding microstructure and in a term of lexical analysis, the speaker in the report uses euphemism to hide the fact of the little number of people who take the vaccine. The report tries to avoid the negative connotations associated with the words "percentage" or "numbers of vaccinated people" instead of assigning positive connotations to his speech by using the word "population" in an attempt to persuade people that many people have received the vaccine and that there are few who have not.

*“threshold of the population being vaccinated, so their bodies combat the illness effectively before it has a chance to make them sick and, crucially, pass it on to others”.*

The negative Others representation is reported by referring to unvaccinated people as they are responsible for spreading the virus and hurting the around persons. The use of the "you" pronoun refers to the people (refuse to take the vaccine) as Others or out-group. They have to understand the dangers of not taking the vaccine on themselves and the persons around them, such as older people, parents, friends, and families. The use of this strategy by the government to shift the responsibility of spreading the virus and increase the



number of infected and dead persons on the “others” who refuse or hesitate to take the vaccine in order to weaken their position in front of the society. This strategy is used in the discourse to reflect the power persuasively.

*“If you choose not to have the vaccine ... you must understand that it affects not only yourself but those around you.”*

Pragmatically, the report shows the use of threat speech acts more than command. Many threat acts appeared in the report revealed the power and dominance in the discourse by the government towards the people who refuse to vaccinate. The report reflects the attitude of the government on the vaccine issue and the obligation process to enforce people to take the vaccine despite the government's announcement that taking the vaccine is optional, not obligatory.

*“For those who say, “ ... I can refuse the vaccine and I will be part of the 10 or 20 percent who are not vaccinated ...”, this is not a valid line of reasoning”. (threat)*

Moreover, in terms of rhetoric, this report of Al-Jazeera is not free from metaphor. Many metaphors in the report “the argument of free will stand up”, “scratch beneath the surface”, “find fertile breeding ground” are noticed. Although the government said that the vaccine is not mandatory, it can be inferred from the report that the free of taking the vaccine is not going for a long time. The report refers that the governments want people as possible to take up the vaccine and have set up campaigns encouraging us all to do so. The government wants people to take the vaccine to prevent the spreading of the Covid-19, Delta variant, and other generations of the virus. The government considered future large social gatherings without the risk of infecting (Football World Cup) and (Hajj). Then reports talked about the governments’ steps of making the vaccine compulsory, for example, to enter the country or to attend events or coming to Hajj.

*“We do not live in individual silos, we live in a society where our individual choices affect others”.*

While in repetition, the government's propaganda has been repeated to emphasise the importance of the vaccine. The report also refers to the spread of the virus among not vaccinated people. At the same time pose a risk to children who cannot yet receive the vaccine or older people who have at risk.

#### *Al-Jazeera Report (2)*

The second headline, entitled (Saudi Arabia says Covid-19 vaccination mandatory for Hajj 2021) means that Saudi Arabia is not going to deal with unvaccinated people from any country, not giving a permit to come, in sum, no Hajj for them. The headline is written in the present simple tense to make it more factual and convincing. The theme in this report is “vaccination mandatory”. It can be inferred that the discourse was used as a religious appeal to persuade people to take the vaccine as it is vital to visit the holy places. The part "vaccination mandatory for Hajj" means every adult should take the vaccine because it has become mandatory in many places and countries to attend many activities (especially Hajj). The proposition here is that people should take the vaccine. The power is clearly represented in this discourse.

The microstructure, lexical analysis shows the use of euphemism in the report persuasively. The report states that only vaccinated people will be allowed to attend the Hajj this year instead of mentioning that the unvaccinated people will not be allowed to travel to Saudi Arabia to attend the Hajj. The reason behind this is the consideration of older people, children, and sick people who may become unable to take the vaccine and the future process that may change by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia out of Hajj season (Umrah, for example).

*“Only people who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 will be allowed to attend the Hajj this year.”*

The negative-other is observed in this report to refer to the fact that unvaccinated people may cause coronavirus transmission to other countries and places. This strategy is used to persuade people to vaccinate

and not become a reason to hurt others because it is prohibited in Islam (primarily through doing the Hajj). So, it is a religious appeal used in this report to convince and enforce people to take the vaccine. Albertson (2011) indicated that religious language could affect political attitudes and influence citizens without their awareness through implicit processes.

*“millions of pilgrims from around the world can be a major cause of coronavirus transmission.”*

The pragmatic aspects of speech acts (threat and command) are also used in the report. The media channel used acts of threat and command in this report as persuasive strategies and power devices to force the citizens who want to travel or attend activities to take the vaccine as fast as possible; otherwise, they will be not allowed. Another speech act type is noticed in the report: the act of warning. The article noted that vaccination is one of the key requirements (for obtaining a visa), alerting people that vaccination is becoming required in many nations and locations. They must get the vaccination in order to avoid various complications when travelling.

Analysis of the second report of Al-Jazeera shows using of rhetorical strategies such as metaphor and repetition in the news discourse. The report uses metaphors like "vaccination mandatory," "smooth organisation," and "dramatically reduced" to describe Saudi Arabia's methods for preventing the spread of the coronavirus during the Hajj season. The report mentioned the vaccine as a first procedure to show its significance and importance in attending Hajj and preventing the virus's spread. This persuasive strategy tells people that they are Muslims and they have to follow the government's process if they want to visit the holy places (Mecca and Medina). While regarding repetition, the words "vaccine" and "Covid-19" are repeated many times in the report, in equal numbers. The ideology behind repeating these words in the report is to say that the vaccine is the only way to defeat the virus and prevent spreading it among people. Thus, as people are Muslims (mostly in Arabic countries), they have to take the vaccine since it is necessary and mandatory to attend Hajj and Omrah. That is, there is linguistic power in the report to persuade individuals to vaccinate as a condition of allowing them to practice their religion.

The results of the foregoing study reveal that power is used to persuade in the selected discourse, and they back up Lakoff's (1982, p. 26) conclusion that "non-reciprocity is one major factor of technically persuasive speech." Based on Lakoff's clarification, if all participants cannot participate in all conversational practices as their counterparts, discourse is described as persuasive. In the context of media discourse on the coronavirus vaccination, exercising power as persuasion necessitates one powerful person holding the floor and certain control over the communicative act (the governments). As a result, power as persuasion might be defined as non-reciprocal discursive practices.

On a lexical level, the study reveals that CDA methods such as euphemism, positive self-presentation (ability, process), and negative other-presentation are utilised to increase persuasive power (criticism, blaming). Power is also pragmatically applied to the persuasive component, which is represented through threat and command speech actions, according to the findings. Based on Van Dijk's (1995) opinion, having access to the speech act of command and threat implies, enacts, and confirms the speaker's social authority, in the context of this research, the powerful or speaker is the government.

Obviously, this indicates that persuasive power, on the one hand, is representative in the lexical level (13 occurrences of BBC out of 21, while 8 occurrences of Al-Jazeera out of 21) Persuasive power, on the other hand, is also representative in the pragmatic level (7 occurrences of BBC out of 13 while 6 of Al-Jazeera out of 13). Most of power representatives in the pragmatic level were threat speech acts (8) more than command (6) speech acts. That is, show the extent to which the power is linguistically represented persuasively in these media discourse. The threat speech acts were found in Al-Jazeera reports more than in BBC and that reflects the ideological differences between these media channels in reporting Covid-19 vaccine in their news.

## **Conclusion**

According to data analysis, the coronavirus vaccination has unquestionably been politicised and utilised ideologically. In other words, the vaccine was politicised by the two selected media, the BBC from the

United Kingdom in Europe and Al-Jazeera from Qatar in the Arabic area, to suit the interests and ideologies of the nations they represent.

Both media invested the two main discourse structure, namely macrostructure and microstructure ideologically in their reports. These media gave more emphasis and prominence for two points; firstly, the positive stories and reports related to coronavirus vaccine. And negative stories about the spread of the virus, Delta variant, unfollowing government rules, un taking the vaccine (all vaccine jab) by people. The analysis displayed that the governments used the power persuasively in their arguments (in media discourse) that often depend on facts, logic and past experiences. The primary concern of using the power in the media discourse is to persuade the recipients (people) into complete compliance to the speaker (government).

Al-Jazeera put more emphasis on taking the vaccine and focuses on the government's propaganda in the area or around the world regarding taking the vaccine, travelling and vaccine passport. Al-Jazeera reports were more rigorous than the BBC regarding taking the vaccine. Although the reports refer that the vaccine is not mandatory, it can be inferred that reports talked about the government's process of making the vaccine compulsory in the future (regarding the citizens) and now at this time for visitors to enter the country. BBC used the command speech act more than Al-Jazeera which used a threat speech act mostly, that reflects the ideology of media by using power which is linguistically represented persuasively in order to convince the people to take the vaccine. BBC focus on the spread of the virus among children and older people, Delta variant, people who are still hesitant to get vaccinated. BBC in their report refers the importance of the vaccine, and how it saved lives and the government promises for easier lockdown restrictions. In contrast, the reports in Al-Jazeera were more talked about the threat of not taking the vaccine, no entry to any country, not going to the Hajj (no attending to holy events), the reports talk about the danger of not taking the vaccine and the risks to society. Al-Jazeera used ethical societal and religious aspects in its discourse, while the ethical appeal, cultural, societal is clearly noticed in the discourse BBC.

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