



Media Representation of the Assassination of Martyr Hassan Nasrallah; A Case Study: CNN Persian, BBC Persian, Al Arabiya Persian, and IRNA

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ABSTRACT

Objective: In the era of global communications, the media play a crucial role in explaining, interpreting, and framing international events, to the extent that the manner in which news about a phenomenon is presented and disseminated can significantly shape the beliefs and perceptions of audiences. One of the most important Middle Eastern events in 2024 was the assassination of Martyr Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah on September 27, which received extensive media coverage. Given the importance of this issue, the main question of this article is: 'How has the assassination of Martyr Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah been represented in four media outlets, CNN Persian, BBC Persian, Al Arabiya Persian, and the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA)?'

Method: This study adopts a qualitative research method with a descriptive-analytical approach. Data were collected using library-based research. Van Dijk's Ideological Square theory constitutes the theoretical framework of the study.

Findings: The findings indicate that each of the four media outlets employed ideological discourse and utilized categories such as lexical selection, polarization, mental schemata, association, and indoctrination in representing the assassination of Martyr Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah. In the representations by CNN Persian, BBC Persian, and Al Arabiya Persian, Hassan Nasrallah is positioned as the "Other" in opposition to the "Self," portrayed as an actor whose actions led to instability in the region and Lebanon, and whose assassination is framed as ushering the region into a new era. The central axis of all three media outlets is the legitimization of Israel's action. In contrast, IRNA positions Hassan Nasrallah as the "Self," depicting his assassination as a result of Israel's weakness and the aggressive nature of this regime. This media outlet portrays the Resistance Front as legitimate and the opposing side as illegitimate, while presenting a hopeful future for the resistance.

Conclusion: The ideological discourse of media outlets and their connections to their respective societies have a direct impact on how domestic and international events are covered. In fact, each media outlet presents a particular discourse in representing events based on its ideological objectives. In other words, the media do not function merely as mirrors reflecting reality; rather, they influence the social construction of reality. They seek to promote narratives shaped by power, ideology, and the dominant state discourse, and through this process, they shape public opinion.

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Introduction

The growth and diversification of news media in today's world indicate the increasing importance of media on the global stage. Media are not merely passive observers of events; rather, through intelligent use of media and psychological operations, they both construct events and direct them in line with the interests of power holders. In reality, media act as intermediaries between individual awareness and broader social structures, serving as meaning-makers. They do not operate as neutral mirrors of reality, but instead influence the social construction of reality (Mahdizadeh, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 9). Media selectively reflect reality in ways aligned with their preferences. In other words, due to their affiliation with specific ideological discourses, media attempt to construct and represent events in social, political, and other spheres.

One such event in which media played a significant representational role was the assassination of Martyr Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah by Israel on September 27, 2024. Nasrallah's importance as the Secretary-General of Hezbollah and his role in supporting the Resistance Front, particularly Palestine following the Al-Aqsa Flood operation, turned this assassination into a global media bombshell. For an extended period, political analysts and officials commented extensively on the event; perhaps more significant than the physical assassination itself was the character assassination of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah through media interpretations and analyses. Each media outlet, based on its target audience, adopted a distinct news and analytical line in portraying and interpreting the event.

One key audience for these media outlets was Persian-speaking populations in Iran and neighboring countries, who constitute a substantial part of the Resistance Front. These media outlets sought to promote their ideological discourses within this audience through the context of Nasrallah's assassination. Accordingly, the main research question is: 'How was the assassination of Martyr Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah represented in CNN Persian, BBC Persian, Al Arabiya Persian, and IRNA?'

The research hypothesis is that each of these media outlets represented the assassination within the framework of its ideological discourse and political interests. To test this hypothesis, a descriptive-analytical method and Van Dijk's discourse analysis approach were employed.

1. Literature Review

Numerous studies have examined the role of media in representing political news and phenomena. Among them are the following:

Ferdows Agha Golzadeh (2012 AD/1391 SH), in the article "Describing and Explaining Ideological Linguistic Structures in Critical Discourse Analysis," examined newspaper headlines to demonstrate that all texts can potentially contain ideological structures conveying meanings beyond their linguistic forms.

Sayyid Mehdi Sharifi and Nafiseh Ansari (2016 AD/1395 SH), in the article "Iranophobia in CNN News Dialogues: A Study Based on Critical Discourse Analysis," investigated the linguistic structures used by CNN's GPS host Farid Zakaria to promote anti-Iranian ideology. They analyzed 19 programs broadcast in 2013 related to Iran, applying Van Dijk's theory across textual (meaning, style, argumentation) and social-contextual (access and participants) dimensions.

Hossein Mohseni et al. (2022 AD/1401 SH) analyzed the critical discourse of the representation of Martyr Qassem Soleimani's assassination in "Asharq Al-Awsat." Their findings suggest that the newspaper portrayed the Middle East as an unstable environment in which Soleimani was an active agent, interpreting his actions as part of Iran's regional dominance in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon.

Christine Ogan et al. (2013) analyzed anti-Islamic narratives in Fox News programs, finding that audiences who trusted these programs were more likely to perceive Islamic values as conflicting with American values.

Zoran Jevtovic (2019) conducted a qualitative analysis of international media coverage of NATO's aggression against Yugoslavia, highlighting the role of global media propaganda in hybrid warfare.

Manar Amir Saleh (2021), in her master's thesis, examined the representation of the assassinations of Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis in Iranian and American news using critical discourse analysis. The study showed that newspapers in both countries framed the events according to their ideological positions, using linguistic strategies such as activation, suppression, and lexicalization.

Unlike previous studies, the present research focuses on the representation of the assassination of Martyr Hassan Nasrallah in the news discourse of CNN Persian, BBC Persian, Al Arabiya

Persian, and IRNA. The topic, theoretical framework, and methodology distinguish this study from earlier research on media influence.

2. Theoretical Framework: Van Dijk's Ideological Square

Critical discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary field that examines language as a form of social practice, emphasizing how social and political power is reproduced through text and talk. From this perspective, language does not neutrally reflect worldviews, identities, and social relations; rather, it actively shapes and transforms them (Soltani, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 36). Events are thus narrated from specific perspectives. Consequently, critical discourse analysis focuses on uncovering underlying ideologies embedded in language and discourse (Agha Golzadeh, 2012 AD/1391 SH: 56).

The concept of "Self" and "Other" has long been explored across disciplines and remains complex. Individuals construct images of the "Other" through personal experience, education and socialization, and psychological positioning. Michel Foucault considers the self–other dichotomy a "Constructed Opposition," arguing that the Self can only be understood through the Other (Richardson, 2007: 65–66).

Teun A. van Dijk, one of the most prominent theorists in this field, argues that ideologies are primarily expressed through the ideological square. According to this model, emphasizing the positive aspects of "Us" and the negative aspects of "Them," while downplaying our own negatives and their positives, allows for ideological influence and gradual cognitive change. For Van Dijk, the general strategy of talking about others involves positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation (Agha Golzadeh, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 45-47).

Cognition includes both individual and social cognition, encompassing beliefs, goals, evaluations, emotions, behaviors, and all mental representations. Society consists of microstructures (individual interactions) and macrostructures (intergroup relations) (Van Dijk, 2001: 96–99).

Van Dijk refers to his approach as "Socio-Cognitive Discourse Analysis," emphasizing the triangle of "Society, Cognition, and Discourse." In this framework, discourse is understood as a communicative event encompassing spoken interactions, written texts, gestures, facial expressions, layouts, images, and all forms of semiotic and multimodal representation (Van Dijk, 2000: 58–59).

Van Dijk argues for a robust logical framework to study the relationships between cognition, power, and discourse, as cognition has significant social dimensions. Social cognition processes profoundly shape the content and structure of collective mental representations. Examining social aspects of cognition and schemata, such as self-schemata and group schemata, reveals how individuals perceive, interpret, and act toward themselves and others, how they influence and are influenced, and how minds are controlled. This underscores the importance of adopting a socio-cognitive discourse analysis approach. Ideology influences mental structures in both discourse production and comprehension; thus, lexical choices and stylistic preferences are more influenced by ideology than by purely grammatical considerations (Van Dijk, 2001: 96–99).

In other words, lexical items are arranged alongside one another based on personal viewpoints and ideological affiliations, thereby forming discourse. Therefore, if we wish to return to the nature of ideologies, we must gain a deeper understanding of self-schemata and group-schemata. We must also examine the kind of image each individual and group holds of themselves and their group. According to Van Dijk's framework, when individuals think about themselves and their group, or when they are in conflict with other groups, they resort to a general discursive strategy to defend themselves and their in-group. This principle shapes the framework of ideological discourses and determines how people speak and write about themselves and others. Based on this principle, one is encouraged to say positive things about "Us" and negative things about "Them." (Van Dijk, 2000: 129–132)

Van Dijk believes that if we accept that ideologies are acquired, expressed, and reproduced through discourse, then this process must occur through a number of discursive structures and strategies (Agha Golzadeh, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 7). Accordingly, he introduces a conceptual tool known as the "Ideological Square," which is based on four pillars:

- A) Emphasizing the negative characteristics of the other;
- B) Emphasizing the positive characteristics of the Self;
- C) De-emphasizing the negative characteristics of the Self;
- D) De-emphasizing the positive characteristics of the Other (Van Dijk, 2000: 4344).

This ideological square is realized through various signs and strategies such as emphasis, foregrounding, active and passive constructions, and other mechanisms operating at different levels of discourse (Van Dijk, 2001: 98–99), encompassing a very broad domain. These four principles are not applied solely in intergroup conflicts and interactions with opposing groups;

rather, they often govern our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, consciously or unconsciously, even when we think about ourselves and others (Van Dijk, 2000: 43–44).

Within this theoretical framework, Van Dijk places particular emphasis on the concept of ideology, demonstrating that ideologies are primarily articulated through the ideological square. The term "Ideological Square" explains the dualistic and oppositional nature of dominant discourses in societies. The concept is derived from a four-sided structure that justifies social inequalities by polarizing individuals into "In-groups" (the Self) and "Out-groups" (the Other), through a dual process of foregrounding and marginalization (Agha Golzadeh, 2015 AD/1394 SH: 105). In fact, ideological discourses emphasize the positive attributes and actions of "Us" and the negative attributes and actions of "Them," while simultaneously downplaying the negative aspects of the in-group and the positive aspects of the out-group. In this study, Van Dijk's ideological square is employed to explain the media representation of the assassination of Martyr Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah (Van Dijk, 2008 AD/1387 SH).

2.1. The Role of Media in the Production and Representation of Phenomena

Representation refers to the informational dimensions of media productions, including their symbolic and innovative aspects. In the public sphere, representation addresses fundamental questions such as "What" content should be selected for reflection and "How" it should be presented to audiences (Hall, 1997: 20-21). The concept of representation is heavily indebted to the work of Stuart Hall. From his perspective, we reconstruct the world through representation. Hall defines media as part of the "Politics of meaning-making" and argues that media assign meaning to events occurring in the world. He maintains that media define reality; rather than merely transmitting existing meanings, they create meaning through the selection, presentation, reproduction, and re-articulation of events (Hall, 2003: 132–134). Since every reality contains multiple potential meanings, media, by virtue of their power, decide which meanings to assign to events.

In critical communication studies, representation is defined as the production of meaning through conceptual and discursive frameworks. What we call "Reality" does not exist outside the process of representation. This does not imply the absence of a material world; rather, it underscores the necessity of assigning meaning to that material reality (Williams, 2003: 145-146). Stuart Hall argues that nothing meaningful exists outside discourse. Therefore, the task

of media studies is not to measure the gap between reality and representation, but to understand how meanings are produced through discursive practices and formations. Representation, in essence, is the production of meaning through conceptual and discursive frameworks (Calvert et al., 2002: 200). In reality, we construct and reconstruct the world through representation.

Hall categorizes theories of representation into three approaches: "Reflective, intentional, and constructive." The reflective approach assumes that meaning resides in objects, people, ideas, or events in the real world, and that language functions as a mirror reflecting their true meaning. The intentional approach argues that meaning is imposed by the author or speaker through language; words mean what the speaker intends them to mean. In contrast, the constructionist approach holds that neither objects and events nor language users alone can fix meaning; objects and events have no inherent meaning. Rather, meaning is constructed through systems of representation. Social actors use conceptual and linguistic systems, along with other representational systems, to construct meaning, give the world significance, and communicate meaningfully with others (Hall, 2012 AD/1391 SH: 356-359).

News production, as a form of social construction of reality, is influenced by numerous factors and forces. Intra-organizational and extra-organizational factors, as well as dominant discursive elements within societies, all contribute to the construction of news. This is particularly evident in television news and in the representation of foreign events (Harrison, 2006: 71). Media systems, as representational systems, are themselves managed and controlled by powerful structures that legitimize certain meanings while delegitimizing others. Consequently, some ideas and meanings are amplified while others are marginalized. From this perspective, representation can be considered ideological, as media representation can construct biased narratives in favor of dominant ideological interests (Laughey, 2007: 79).

In this context, Hall defines media as part of the "Politics of meaning-making," arguing that media assign meaning to events occurring in the world. In other words, media distort reality; instead of merely transmitting existing meanings, they create meaning through selective presentation, reproduction, and re-articulation of events (Williams, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 176). Accordingly, dominant groups seek to maintain their hegemony by controlling media as tools of representation, overseeing the formation of social representations, the structuring of models, and the production of actions and discourses to preserve power (Hall, 2003: 48-49).

Thus, through the process of representation, dominant discourse assigns meaning to news events based on its cognitive ideology, reproducing and sustaining itself in the process.

In news production, representation refers to the process that leads to the construction of news; more precisely, representation is a “flow of messages” that are socially constructed (Laughey, 2007: 79). Rather than debating the degree of correspondence between text and reality, it may be more appropriate to examine how news media contribute to constructing versions of reality. Media practices reproduce hidden beliefs, ideologies, and discourses; however, in order to maintain consensus and the appearance of free choice, these activities remain concealed or fundamental values and structures are obscured. These foundational structures, ideologies and discourses, remain hidden, assumed to be correct, and are disseminated in everyday discourse as common sense (Bicharanlou, 2012 AD/1391 SH: 38).

Accordingly, it appears that the media representation of the assassination of Martyr Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah is not based solely on factual reality, but is influenced by the ideological discourses of each media outlet. Each outlet, in line with its objectives, constructs a distinct representation of the same reality based on the following components:

First, lexical selection involving words with positive or negative evaluative connotations. Different types of discourse, depending on their subject matter and objectives, align with specific lexical choices. Lexical analysis has traditionally been central to ideological and linguistic studies, as selected vocabulary reflects values and norms and serves as a tool for evaluative judgment (Motamednejad and Mahdizadeh, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 21).

The second characteristic is polarization or otherness making. This component includes two subcategories: "How the Self or in-group and its associated values are described and presented, and how the other or out-group and its associated values are described and presented in news texts." Identifying the position and function of pronouns used in the text assists researchers in recognizing polarization and otherness making, as pronouns reflect the text producer's attitude toward others (Forghani, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 51).

The third component consists of presuppositions or mental schemas that are taken for granted and influence an individual's judgment, evaluation, and definition and conceptualization of realities. Schemas emerge through language and repeated interactions in the form of discourse. Discourses are always produced on the basis of mental schemas, and discourse producers reveal only part of these schemas. According to Van Dijk, the reason for employing mental schemas is that they are perceived as correct and provide a model for interpreting events (Nishida, 1999: 758-759). Therefore, in critical discourse analysis, all schemas enter textual propositions strategically and indirectly.

Norman Fairclough argues that presuppositions are not inherent features of a text, but rather part of the text producers' interpretation of the intertextual context. Many formal features of a text point to these presuppositions. At the level of textual interpretation, Fairclough considers definite articles and subordinate clauses to be two important features in this regard (Fairclough, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 43).

The fourth component is implicit meanings of the text (implication and suggestion). At the stage of text analysis and interpretation, identifying implicit concepts and connotations helps the researcher to determine what non-explicit and hidden meanings exist in a given proposition, what intentions the textual actor has in using such meanings, and what implications or connotations their use entails (Forghani, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 51).

3. Research Methodology

This study employs Van Dijk's theoretical approach to critical discourse analysis and a qualitative descriptive–analytical method to examine the representation of the assassination of Martyr Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah. Data were collected through library research from printed and online sources during the period from September 2024 to February 2025, drawing on four news agencies: "CNN, BBC, Al Arabiya Persian, and IRNA." The reason for selecting these four outlets was to examine the coverage of four prominent media organizations from the United States, Europe, the Arab world, and Iran that produce content for Persian-speaking audiences. From each outlet, two news texts were randomly selected in accordance with Table (1) and analyzed based on four indicators: lexical choice, polarization, mental schemas (presuppositions), and implication and suggestion.

Table (1): Statistical Population of the Study

Publication Date	News Report Title	News Agency
29 December 2024	Israel's intelligence penetration: the fall and destruction of Hezbollah's super-terrorist	CNN
23 February 2025	Israel's decisive message over the funeral ceremony of Hassan Nasrallah	CNN
29 September 2024	Reactions to the killing of Hassan Nasrallah; from celebrations in Brussels to symbolic funeral in Baghdad	BBC Persian

28 September 2024	Hassan Nasrallah; an Iran-affiliated cleric who held Lebanon in his grip	BBC Persian
30 September 2024	Hezbollah: the shield that slipped from Khamenei's hand	Al Arabiya Persian
14 February 2025	Ban on Iranian aircraft landings and clashes between the Lebanese army and Hezbollah elements around Beirut airport	Al Arabiya Persian
1 October 2024	The blood of Martyr Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah strengthens the Resistance Front	IRNA
9 November 2024	Hezbollah is alive: the path of the great figures of resistance is unbreakable	IRNA

Source: Authors, 2024 AD/1403 SH

4. Representation of the Assassination of Martyr Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah in Four Media Outlets

4.1. Representation in CNN Persian

CNN is the most important news media outlet in the United States and one of the most widely viewed news networks in the world. This agency reflects the political atmosphere prevailing in the White House and U.S. global governance. Consequently, in its discourse, the world is depicted in a binary of friends and enemies. On the one hand, the United States is presented as the true representative of the world, entrusted with the mission of leading it and guiding it through various crises; on the other hand are opponents of the American order, who are portrayed as the cause of turmoil, unrest, and instability in different regions of the world. From this media's perspective, Iran and its allied groups fall into the latter category. With this background, we examine CNN's representation of the assassination of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, an individual who, from this outlet's viewpoint, is considered a representative of Islamist currents opposed to the United States and Israel and a regional ally of Iran.

Table (2): Representation of the Assassination of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah in CNN Persian

Functional Category		Text No. 1: Israel's intelligence penetration: the fall and destruction of Hezbollah's super-terrorist	Text No. 2: Israel's decisive message over the funeral ceremony of Hassan Nasrallah
Lexical Choice)	Positive	Israel's intelligence dominance, Israel's victory parade	Israel's intelligence penetration, Israel's legitimate right to self-defense, execution of justice
	Negative	Super-terrorist, man wanted by the United States, the decline of Hezbollah's star	A large funeral due to Hezbollah's need to display power
Polarization	In-group	Israel, the United States, Lebanese society	Israel, the United States, Lebanese society
	Out-group	Hezbollah, Iran, resistance groups	Hezbollah, Iran, resistance groups
Mental Schemas		The main assumptions of this text are that Israeli intelligence penetration is an example of Israel's upper hand against Hezbollah. Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah has been killed as a wanted super-terrorist.	The main assumptions of this news: Despite Hezbollah's display of power at Hassan Nasrallah's funeral, the flight of Israeli planes demonstrated Israel's decisive superiority.
Implication and Suggestion		The text seeks to create the image that Israel's action in assassinating Hassan Nasrallah was within the framework of legitimate	The text seeks to create this image; after the killing of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah and other Hezbollah commanders,

	defense, because Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah has always threatened Israel's national security. Also, with the killing of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, justice was served in his case.	Israel now has a decisive advantage over Hezbollah, and Hezbollah is now in a precarious position.
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Source: Authors, 2024 AD/1403 SH

In analyzing CNN's ideological discourse, it can be argued that mental schemas have influenced this outlet's orientation toward the assassination of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah in two dimensions. First, the mental schema that frames Hezbollah as a terrorist organization leads this network to portray Israel's action as legitimate and even as an instance of justice. From this perspective, Hezbollah's missile attacks on Israel and its role in political tensions in Lebanon and the Levant are highlighted as examples of Hezbollah's negative political consequences. Consequently, this media outlet attempts to depict the assassination of Martyr Hassan Nasrallah as a positive and desirable action by Israel. In this regard, influenced by its ideological discourse, the outlet establishes a boundary between "Us" and "Them." The in-group includes Israel and Western society (which this media equates with the global community), while Hezbollah and the Resistance Axis led by the Islamic Republic of Iran are placed in the out-group. Furthermore, to marginalize the massive funeral ceremony of Martyr Hassan Nasrallah, CNN Persian emphasizes Israel's show of power through aircraft flights, portraying Israel as superior to the Resistance Axis (emphasizing the positive aspects of the in-group and downplaying the positive aspects of the out-group).

4.2. Representation in BBC Persian

The BBC, as one of the most important media outlets affiliated with the British government, has for more than half a century sought to safeguard Britain's interests across the world. The dominant discourse of this media is based on the superiority of the white Western human over others and on the binary classification of countries as developed and underdeveloped. Within this discourse, underdeveloped countries are expected to follow the Western path to achieve development, and what the West, and its representative, Britain, has done over two centuries

in different parts of the world is framed not as colonialism and exploitation, but as the promotion of democracy and civilization. In this media outlet as well, the Middle East is depicted as a realm of good versus evil, with the West and Britain positioned on the side of good, and Iran, Hezbollah, and other groups affiliated with the Resistance Front placed on the side of evil. Within this discursive framework, the media representation of the assassination of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah by BBC Persian is evaluated.

Table (3): Representation of the Assassination of Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah in BBC Persian

Functional Category		Text No. 1	Text No. 2
		Reactions to the killing of Hassan Nasrallah; from celebratory drinking in Brussels to a symbolic funeral in Baghdad	Hassan Nasrallah; an Iran-affiliated cleric who held Lebanon in his grip
Lexical Choice	Positive	Israel's military power, celebratory drinking in Brussels, distribution of sweets, political jokes, mockery and sarcasm regarding the manner of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah's assassination	Israel's precise and targeted strike, succession dilemma, Israel's message to Iran, shift in the balance against Iran, decline of Hezbollah's power
	Negative	Symbolic funeral, myth-making	Iran's interference in Lebanese affairs, Nasrallah's influence on Lebanon's political equations, man wanted by the United States
Polarization	In-group	Israel, the global community	Israel, the global community
	Out-group	Hezbollah, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraqi resistance groups, the Houthis	Hezbollah, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraqi resistance groups, the Houthis
Mental Schemas (Presuppositions)		The main presupposition of this text is that the global community, and even Arab societies, with the exception of	The main presuppositions of this text are that the assassination of Hassan Nasrallah demonstrates Israel's high operational

	resistance forces, is pleased with the assassination of Hassan Nasrallah.	capability and that, beyond creating a succession crisis, it will reduce the political weight of Hezbollah and Iran in Lebanon and the region.
Implication and Suggestion	The text portrays reactions to Nasrallah's assassination in a way that suggests the global community is happy about the killing of a violent and warmongering individual. Within this framework, the symbolic funeral held by Iraqi resistance groups is depicted as an unsuccessful attempt at myth-making.	The narrative suggests that the assassination of Hassan Nasrallah, considered a powerful arm of Iran in Lebanon and the Levant, has weakened Hezbollah's position in Lebanese political equations and shifted the balance of power against the Islamic Republic of Iran in Lebanon and the region. The succession crisis further intensifies this situation.

Source: Authors, 2024 AD/1403 SH

The approach of BBC Persian toward Hezbollah and the assassination of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah is similar to that of CNN Persian, although it adopts a more moderate tone. Based on its binary in-group/out-group framework, this media outlet identifies the global community, the Arab world, Hezbollah's internal opponents, and Israel as the "in-group," while Hezbollah and resistance forces led by the Islamic Republic of Iran are classified as the "out-group." Accordingly, the actions of the in-group, including the assassination of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, are portrayed as desirable actions aligned with the interests of the global community and the Arab world. By highlighting the happiness of the global community over Israel's action, the outlet attempts to legitimize the assassination.

Furthermore, by critically addressing the myth-making surrounding Hassan Nasrallah in the Arab world (for example, the symbolic funeral in Iraq), BBC Persian seeks to undermine the positive aspects of the Resistance Axis. On the other hand, by emphasizing Hezbollah's negative aspects, such as the succession crisis, its declining role in Lebanon's political equations, and the regional shift in balance against the Islamic Republic of Iran (emphasizing the negative traits of the "Other"), the outlet attempts to convey the image that Hezbollah's

loss has altered the regional balance of power to the detriment of the Resistance Axis (the "Other") and to the benefit of Israel. This shift is presented as one that could advantage the global community (the "In-group"). Overall, as in CNN's discourse, support for Israel and its actions, along with efforts to demonize Hezbollah and portray it as responsible for developments in Lebanon and the region, are clearly evident. The world depicted by these two media outlets is one in which the world and the region, without Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, would be a better place filled with peace and progress.

4.3. Representation of the Assassination of Martyr Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah in Al Arabiya Persian

Al Arabiya Persian is a television channel affiliated with the government of Saudi Arabia that began its activities in 2008. This outlet was established in opposition to Qatar's Al Jazeera network and Iran's Al-Alam, with the aim of providing media coverage for Saudi Arabia's regional policies. Through this media outlet, Saudi Arabia seeks to advance its political discourse, including the promotion of Wahhabism, hostility toward Iran and Shiites, the promotion and advertisement of Saudi Arabia's spiritual and political leadership in the Islamic world, and antagonism toward the Resistance Front in the region. The negative outlook of this media toward the Resistance Front has resulted in representations of resistance-related events that differ from those of other regional media. Below is an examination of how the assassination of Martyr Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah is represented in this outlet.

Table (4): Representation of the Assassination of Martyr Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah in Al Arabiya Persian

Functional Category		Text No. 1	Text No. 2
		Hezbollah: the shield that slipped from Khamenei's hand	Ban on Iranian aircraft landings and clashes between the Lebanese army and Hezbollah elements around Beirut airport
Lexical Choice	Positive	Weakening of Hezbollah, weakening of the Islamic	Security measures of the Lebanese government,

		Republic of Iran	intervention of the Lebanese army to suppress Hezbollah unrest
	Negative	Hezbollah fighters, Hezbollah's dependence on the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hezbollah's negative role in Lebanon's political equations	Setting people's cars on fire, attack on a convoy belonging to UNIFIL forces
Polarization	In-group	Arab world	Arab world, United Nations forces
	Out-group	Iran, Hezbollah, Israel	The Islamic Republic of Iran and Hezbollah
Presuppositions		The main presupposition of this text is that Hezbollah acts as an agent of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Levant, and that the assassination of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah inflicted a severe blow to Iran's interests in Lebanon.	The main presupposition of this text is that Hezbollah is the primary cause of tension in Lebanon's political developments, and that the Lebanese government is the main opponent of Hezbollah's rise to power.
Implication and Suggestion		This news item emphasizes Hezbollah's destructive role in the political developments of Lebanon and the Arab world, seeking to demonstrate Hezbollah's responsibility for political unrest in Lebanon.	This news item seeks to imply and instill the discourse that the assassination of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah has weakened the Resistance Axis (the "Other") led by the Islamic Republic of Iran vis-à-vis the Arab world and the Islamic world, and that this event could be considered a positive outcome for Lebanese society

		and the Arab world.
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4.3.1. Ideological Discourse Analysis of Al Arabiya Persian

Al Arabiya Persian's approach to the assassination of Martyr Hassan Nasrallah is based on a binary division of "In-group," which includes the Arab world and Hezbollah's internal opponents, and "Out-group," which includes the Resistance Axis led by the Islamic Republic of Iran and Israel. The main difference between Al Arabiya's discourse and that of CNN and BBC lies in this polarization. Unlike the two aforementioned media, Al Arabiya does not place Israel in the "In-group" but, influenced by Arab public opinion, considers Israel as part of the "Out-group." From this perspective, Hezbollah and its commanders, due to their ties to the Islamic Republic of Iran, are considered the most influential variable in Lebanon's political unrest. Therefore, in choosing vocabulary, Al Arabiya uses terms such as "Fighters" and "Iranian proxy forces" for Hezbollah members and "Rebellion" and "Instability" to describe their actions. Consequently, the assassination of Martyr Hassan Nasrallah and the subsequent weakening of Hezbollah could reduce the Islamic Republic of Iran's influence in Lebanon and the Levant. Additionally, the outlet portrays post-Nasrallah events by emphasizing Hezbollah's negative role in political unrest (e.g., confrontations with the Lebanese army).

4.4. Representation of the Assassination of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah in IRNA

IRNA is the official news agency of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This agency seeks to cover domestic news independently of political currents and perspectives. Its dominant discourse is aligned with the official Islamic Revolution. Therefore, it aims to reflect the Iranian government's view of regional developments within the framework of principles such as opposing oppression and tyranny, maintaining independence, supporting the oppressed, combating colonialism, exploitation, and arrogance, and promoting justice and morality globally. Since supporting Hezbollah is consistent with the principle of supporting the oppressed and the ideals of the Islamic Revolution aimed at defeating Israel, IRNA represents the assassination of Martyr Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah differently from the previously discussed media outlets.

Table (4): Representation of the Assassination of Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah in IRNA

Functional Category		Text No. 1	Text No. 2
		The blood of Martyr Hassan Nasrallah strengthens the Resistance Front	Hezbollah is alive: The path of the resistance elders is unbroken
Key Propositions	Positive	Martyr's blood – strengthening the resistance discourse – culture of sacrifice – steadfastness	Hezbollah's power – invincibility – continuity of the resistance path
	Negative	Israel's occupation – attacks on civilians	Israel's fear of Hezbollah – brutal assassination – aggression
Polarization	In-group	The Islamic Republic of Iran, Hezbollah, and other resistance groups	The Islamic Republic of Iran, Hezbollah, and other resistance groups
	Out-group	West, Zionist regime, and conciliatory forces	West, Zionist regime, and conciliatory forces
Mental Schemas (Presuppositions)		The assassination of Martyr Hassan Nasrallah will not weaken the Resistance Axis; instead, the culture of sacrifice and martyrdom strengthens Hezbollah and ensures the continuity of the resistance path.	The path and influence of Hezbollah in the Resistance Axis continue despite the martyrdom of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah. Ultimately, victory in the confrontation with the Zionist regime belongs to the Resistance Axis.
Implication and Suggestion		This text seeks to imply that, despite attacks by Israel; Hezbollah	This text implies that due to Hezbollah's strong organizational structure and

	remains a powerful institution and can continue to play a significant role in the Resistance Axis and regional developments.	the culture of martyrdom and sacrifice, the assassination of senior Hezbollah commanders will not weaken Hezbollah. The assassination reflects Israel's fear of Hezbollah's power.
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4.4.1. Explaining IRNA's Ideological Discourse Regarding the Assassination of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah

IRNA's polarization revolves around the confrontation between the Resistance Axis and Islamic movements in the Muslim world (in-group) versus the Zionist regime and its supporters, including the United States, the West, and conciliatory forces (out-group). The main assumption of this media's ideological discourse emphasizes the righteousness of the Resistance (highlighting in-group positives) and the falsehood of the opposing side (highlighting out-group negatives). From this perspective, the assassination of Martyr Hassan Nasrallah will not weaken the Resistance Axis (minimizing in-group negatives); instead, the culture of sacrifice and martyrdom (highlighting in-group positives) ensures the continuity and cohesion of Hezbollah. Furthermore, the assassination does not indicate Israel's strength (marginalizing out-group positives) but demonstrates Israel's weakness and fear of Hezbollah's power (emphasizing out-group negatives). In describing Israel, this media uses the term "Zionist regime" and "Assassination" to describe its actions, while for Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah it uses terms like "Martyr," "Leader of the Resistance," and "Jihad in the path of God," which carry exalted religious meanings.

Conclusion

The type of ideological discourse in media and its ties to society directly affect the coverage of events domestically and internationally. Each media outlet, based on its ideological objectives, presents a specific discourse in representing events. The findings of this study confirm that the representation of the assassination of Martyr Hassan Nasrallah in CNN Persian, BBC Persian, Al Arabiya Persian, and IRNA is shaped by their ideological discourse.

Moreover, the categories that indicate the type of representation can be analyzed through four components: lexical choice, polarization into "In-group" and "Out-group," mental schemas, and implication/suggestion.

The study's findings show that, given CNN and BBC's ideological connections to Western world values and norms, their approach to representing the assassination of Martyr Hassan Nasrallah frames it as a desirable outcome for the global (Western) order. These media consider Western order as a model and portray actors challenging this order as engaging in undesirable behavior. By minimizing in-group negatives (the assassination by Israel) and highlighting Hezbollah and Nasrallah as the out-group, these outlets seek to legitimize Israel's actions while delegitimizing Hezbollah and Nasrallah.

Al Arabiya Persian also considers Hezbollah as the out-group, but unlike CNN and BBC, it also includes Israel in the out-group. From this perspective, the Arab world, including Hezbollah's internal opponents in Lebanon and the global community, is considered the in-group, while the Resistance Axis led by the Islamic Republic of Iran and Israel is the out-group. By emphasizing Hezbollah's negative role in Lebanon's political unrest and its dependence on Iran, Al Arabiya seeks to convey that Nasrallah's assassination, by weakening the Resistance Axis, benefits the Arab world.

Finally, IRNA's representation demonstrates a different and contrasting ideological discourse from the other three media. From this perspective, the assassination of Martyr Hassan Nasrallah not only highlights the weakness and fear of Israel (emphasizing out-group negatives) but will not weaken Hezbollah (minimizing in-group negatives). The culture of sacrifice and martyrdom in Hezbollah (highlighting in-group positives) is considered the most important factor for the vitality of the Resistance Axis and Hezbollah.

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