

*GAZA; between abusive violence and discursive
connivance. Case of the French digital newspaper "Le
Monde"*

*GAZA : Entre violence abusive et connivance discursive.
Cas du journal numérique français "Le Monde"*

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Abstract:

In this article we will look at the media discourse of the French digital newspaper «Le Monde» about what happened, what is happening and still persists in Gaza as violence. Our objective is to show what can bring the analysis of digital discourses more precisely, theories of argumentation as elements of rethinking the questions advanced in the title of this article namely: Would there be a discursive connivance on the part of this digital newspaper with one of the parties involved in this conflict? If so, how does she express herself in her speeches?

Key words: digital media discourse; discursive connivance; violence in Gaza; analysis of digital discourses; theories of argumentation.

ملخص:

في هذا المقال سنلقي نظرة على الخطابات الإعلامية المنشورة في الجريدة الرقمية الفرنسية "لوموند" حول ما حدث ولا يزال يحدث من عنف في غزة. هدفنا هو ابراز أهمية

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تحليل الخطاب الرقمي وبالأخص النظريات الحججية منه في اظهار مدى تواطؤ وممالة هذه الجريدة الرقمية الفرنسية مع أحد أطراف الصراع. أعني بذلك الطرف المعتدي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: خطاب الوسائط الرقمية - التواطؤ الخطابي - عنف في غزة - تحليل الخطابات الرقمية - النظريات الحججية.

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1. INTRODUCTION

What the Gaza Strip has known as violence for more than four months has not left the press indifferent around the world. Here from us but also around the world, the entire press has taken charge of saying it. Being bound by a “contract of speech”(CHARAUDEAU, 1983, p. 173) which binds it to its readers, the press had and must fulfill its essential role, that of informing and assuming by the same, its primary mission that of “to provide information and comments on political and general, local, national or international news on a permanent basis, aimed at informing the judgment of citizens”(CPPAP). Therefore the objective that we have set for ourselves through the analytical work that we undertake is, to see to what extent the digital press has complied or on the contrary has deviated from its primary mission, that of informing and the contract that binds it to its readers.

The choice of the French mass digital press, in this case the digital newspaper «Le Monde», as a corpus of research is not a trivial choice, it is based on several considerations namely that:

- From a historical point of view, France is considered the leading country in the print media.
- It is a country that has always claimed to be a defender of freedom, human rights and democracy, which has made it the standard-bearer of Western countries.
- The newspaper «Le Monde» is a daily press title that holds a certain notoriety, a certain “power” (BOURDIEU, 1991, p. 126) and a certain value on the discursivity market, whether in France or elsewhere.

And the reflection on the discursive complicity and on the bias of this press title with the oppressor as an object of research emanates from this paradox which revealed itself to us after reading several titles, spreading over three months, devoted by this daily newspaper to what is happening in Gaza.

Indeed, on the one hand, connivance is defined in dictionaries in these terms “a form of secret or tacit agreement between persons” (LAROUSSE). And on the other side, it is defined by Thierry HERMAN as "the desired result of a form if not of abolition, at least of reducing the constitutive distance between the newspaper and its reader. Its presence and its maintenance (connivance) make it possible to match as much as possible the journalistic product to the interests of those who consume it and to create or maintain a community of thought thus strengthened.”(BURGER & HERMAN, 2008, p. 184) However, what was revealed to us from the first reading of the headlines of this daily is a connivance not with the readers of this newspaper but rather with a third party that is not involved in this contract of speech.

Also, remember, this readership, this community of thought is bound by a «social contract» (Le pastourel & Testé, 2011) which is defined by EDWARDS and KARAU in these terms «the social contract designates a system of normative values considered just by society»(Edwards & Karau, 2007) and it is these normative values that govern the “communication contract” (CHARAUDEAU, 1997, p. 174) defined by GHIGLIONE in these terms “the individual will only be able to recognize an intensity if he has identified the issue (or stakes) that binds him to the interlocutor (the journalist)”.

Thus, these observations and reflections led us to ask ourselves whether this connivance with the oppressor is not synonymous with manipulation on the part of this speaker towards his readers. Since de facto, the notion of connivance, as Thierry HERMAN explained, “finds its roots in the Aristotelian rhetoric of which one of the first postulates is the need for persuasive discourse to take into account the audience.” (Lepastourel & Testé, 2011) This does not seem to be true at first sight and has therefore led us, through this research, to verify it.

2. The epistemological framework:

The epistemological framework that we have adopted for this analysis is the track of the discipline analysis of discourse, more precisely, we intend to exploit, fundamentally, the tools proposed to us by the theories of «argumentation in discourse»(AMOSSY, 2021) because, as J-B. Grize explains, "To argue, in the common sense of the term, is to provide arguments, therefore reasons, in support of or against a thesis. Thus, arguing refers to justifying, explaining, supporting (...) But it is also possible to conceive the argument from a broader point of view

and to hear it as an approach that aims to intervene on someone's opinion, attitude, or even behaviour." (GRIZE, 1990, p. 40) We hypothesize that this approach and aim that a speaker undertakes to accomplish in order to act on the opinion rests on the exploitation of the latter of the three components of the rhetoric namely, ethos, pathos and logos: "Ethos, logos, pathos without them, there is no rhetoric or argument. But they have too often been ignored to favour only one of them. Yet they are equal." (PAVEAU, 2015, p. 145).

We also intend to make a detour on what the editorial statement proposes as elements of analysis, among other things, "hybridization" (PAVEAU, 2015, p. 145) of the "screen writings" (PAVEAU, 2015, p. 145) and the resulting "text image". In the hope of providing other elements of interpretation, our corpus is made up of digital discourses.

As such, we intend to analyze the headings (statements) we have collected in light of these components.

3. The argumentative analysis

We begin our analysis of the statements (titles) that form our corpus by:

3.1. Analysis of: Prior ethos

The newspaper «Le Monde» has built an image and a reputation of a daily newspaper that has an editorial quality without reproach; at least among its readership. This identity, which he has acquired over decades, must always be validated in his editorial line through the articles he publishes: "the ethos in journalistic discourse and journalistic writing as an immediate

inscription in the limited social space, which in classical antiquity was considered the City. Ethos because membership implies a form of identification and validation of the image that the journalist and, more broadly, the newspaper gives of itself” (BURGER & HERMAN, 2008, p. 184)

- *Prior ethos discursive marks analysis*

- **Hamas attack on Israel, a politico-security earthquake**

The unprecedented attack launched by the Palestinian movement from the Gaza Strip aims to reshuffle the cards of the conflict with Israel.

- **Gaza: why Hamas decided to break the status quo and challenge Israel.**

For the first time since the birth of the Jewish state in 1948, Palestinian commandos carried out a coordinated attack on Israeli localities on the edge of Gaza.

In these two articles published successively on October 7 and 8, 2023, i.e., at the very beginning of the conflict. Both titles evoke the facts in a neutral tone. In the first article, the use of the noun phrase “Hamas' attack on Israel” is strictly informative. This is also the case with the second noun «A politico-security earthquake». From the same perspective, the subtitle provides information for an overview of the ins and outs of this conflict. We note the degree of objectivity in the term “the Palestinian movement” attributed to “Hamas”.

The second article published two days later (9/10) is in the same informative and explanatory logic. The title taking the interrogative form invites the reader to reflect on the causes inherent in this attack although the subtitle although it goes in

this objective direction, it inserts the noun «localities» which we consider disinformation since it suggests that the attack perpetrated by Hamas was against civilian settlements outside, according to the statement of the spokesman of the Israeli army, this was not the case.

3.2. Analysis of: The connivance ethos:

The digital newspaper «Le Monde» relied on the notoriety acquired by its readership to take a position in its approach to media information. In his conniving strategy with the oppressor and not to alter the link that binds him with his readership without losing his image and his status of a serious and impartial daily, he alternates the publication of his articles, between informative and disinformation articles.

- *Analysis of the discursive marks of ethos as a tool of connivance:*

- **Israel-Hamas war: preventing humanitarian access to Gaza could be “a crime,” says ICC**

“Israel must ensure immediately that civilians receive food and medicine,” said the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, which is investigating “the crimes committed on 7 October” and “the ongoing events in Gaza and the West Bank.” (29/11)

The title of the first article of (29/11) begins with a nominal phrase separated by two points from the next part of the statement. This header will be repeated later in several articles that support saying what is happening in Gaza. This stubborn noun phrase is intended to make it possible to admit that what is happening in Gaza is a war between two armies and two states.

The two points that separate the two statements have the function of reducing the seriousness of the purpose of what will be stated thereafter. A way of saying do not be offended because in any case, it is normal that there are atrocities since it is war. Another way to mitigate the seriousness of what is stated in this second part of the title is to relegate its utterance to a third person. The shifter “could” in this context serves to discredit the whole idea that preventing access to humanitarian aid is not a crime but it could be in conditions, which?? We have no answer!

In the statement that refers to the subtitle of the first article. The enunciator will, through several processes, deflect the point and at the same time, mitigate the gravity of the facts that «an entire people is under embargo». Thus, one, the verb phrase “shall ensure” has no depreciative significance since the injunction to perform this action is dependent on the one who will perform it and in this case it is the direct responsibility of this action that is asked to ensure its cancellation. Two, the noun “the prosecutor of the International Court”, quoted by the speaker, although he “said”, came to “investigate” “crimes committed by Hamas”. a subjective shifter with a high emotional dose that provokes an emotional and compassionate reaction in the reader. According to the journalist always, he will then investigate and second priority «on the current events in Gaza» a neutral shifter to avoid saying «massacres» or «atrocities» or «genocide». «in progress» the enunciator through this name fails to specify who is responsible for the actions committed in Gaza.

- Jabaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza Strip bombed by Israeli army.

The strike, confirmed by Israel, which claims to have killed a Hamas commander, also resulted in the deaths of at least fifty people, according to the enclave's health ministry, administered by the Islamist movement. (30/11)

The enunciator in this second article of (30/11) informs his readership that «Jabalyia refugee camp» was bombed by the Israeli army. Information at first glance neutral except that, this title does not say everything, it leaves suspended the essential to know, are there victims or not? What the enunciator deliberately omitted to point out.

The subtitle contains four techniques that denounce the connivance of the enunciator in a fact and a crime against the Gazaouis peoples.

The word “**kill**” associated with the noun “**a commander of Hamas**” suggests that this strike is legitimate because it killed a soldier.

This strike has «**caused death**» a verb with neutral connotation not to say that it «killed» or to say that it is collateral damage.

It caused the death of «**people**» another shifter with neutral connotation, not to say that they were «civilians» or «women and children».

It «**caused the death of at least fifty people, according to the ministry of health of the enclave, administered by the Islamist movement**» to suggest that these figures are not reliable since it is the ministry of health of the «Islamist»

movement a subjective shifter with a high emotional content that arouses a sense of mistrust on the part of the reader.

- ***Editorial enunciation: The image of text at the service of the connivance ethos.***
 - **Israel-Hamas war: 1,040 anti-Semitic acts and 486 arrests in France since the beginning of the conflict, according to Darmanin.**

Invited to the 20 hours of France 2 on Sunday, the interior minister estimated that «the number of anti-Semitic acts has exploded» since October 7, the day of Hamas' attack on Israel. Europe's Jews "live in fear again," the European Commission says. ((5/11))

- **Israel-Hamas war: images of the Al-Maghazi refugee camp after the bombing**

At least forty-five people died as a result of airstrikes on the Al-Maghazi refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip (5/11)

As a technique of connivance of the speaker with the oppressor, we noted this particular layout of the information that fits into the denotation «editorial enunciation» or the name proposed by Thierry HERMAN namely «the topography».

It consists in highlighting the discursive element considered by the newspaper as the most important except that, in this case, this law of selection of information is exploited not for purposes that fall within the editorial line but, rather, to agreements that are part of the connivance. Thus, we note that as soon as it was a serious event that took place in Gaza, the newspaper rushes to a second-rate fact that it will try to sacralize it to put it at the top of the poster and then relegate the article that relates the most

important information to the drag of the page. This was the case with these two illustrative articles:

This first article of victimization plays on the chord of pathos is a diversion to the main information located in the second article and that the daily will first mask, through the diversion that constitutes this first article relegated at the end of the web page news the second article entitled:

3.3. Analysis of the discursive marks of pathos as a connivance tool:

- **Hamas attacks in Israel: videos and photos of atrocities have been pouring into the networks without filters since Saturday.**

This flood of images, instrumentalized and traumatic, circulates on different platforms. What to do with fear? How to show these images and inform without participating in «terrorist» propaganda?

The title of this article, published on 10/12, is introduced by a catchy statement beginning with a subjective noun with a strong pejorative emotional value and an axioloized prepositional shifter of an affective value “Hamas attacks in Israel.” The author of this article intends to convey the message that, “Hamas is at fault because it crossed the border of a country called Israel and carried out attacks on its territory. However, these lands that the author states are part of Israeli territory are part of Gaza and were annexed illegally and forcibly by Israel according to the UN. Moreover, Israel does not recognize sovereignty for the Palestinians over what remains of their

territory, whether over the enclave of Gaza besieged on all sides by walls or the West Bank.”

The author in the second statement slips a complement of the subjective name "atrocities" with great pejorative emotional value by calling the "photos" of war. Given that it was a military operation (qualified as such by the spokesman of the Israeli army) of the armed arm of Hamas armed fractions and an occupying army (Israel). War photos described by this author as «atrocious» and which he does not bring evidence guaranteeing their atrocities, this is his only «ethos» as a journalist for the newspaper «Le Monde». We are tempted to ask ourselves: war has always been synonymous with violence between soldiers. We only talk about atrocities when there are overflows and this violence affects civilians or, according to the spokesman of the Israeli army, this attack targeted Israeli army barracks 45 military bases in total and that the number of soldiers killed is 394 soldiers and 59 policemen.

In the subtitle, the enunciator uses a subjective adjective “**traumatic**” with a strong negative emotional value for the purpose of; one, to make his co-enunciators (his readers) adhere to the cause he defends and to make it appear “true” what will follow in his statement that, the «**images**» are «**instrumentalized**» by Hamas which he will now call «**terrorist**» a subjective substantive with pejorative evaluative value. For the record, Hamas is not considered by the UN to be a terrorist group.

- **Israel-Hamas: West Bank settlers mobilize**

In the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, the October 7 attack was a shock. Their inhabitants strengthen the defenses of their colonies.

In this article published on 23/11, the author begins, with the noun separated by two points of the next part of the statement. This stubborn noun phrase, as we explained earlier, is intended to make it admitted that what is happening in Gaza is a war between two regular armies and two states as is the case between Russia and Ukraine when this is not the case. Since facing the regular Israeli army with all its arsenal of war, ships, planes and tanks we have men armed with small arms.

The author in the following statement informs us that there are settlers in the other enclave «the West Bank» and that they «mobilize». The verb «to mobilize» in this statement is a subjective axiological verb with an affective value. Through this verb the author wants to convey the message that the Jewish settlers are afraid and for this, they mobilize themselves to ward off any attack. It does not tell us how and by what means do they mobilize?

The 1-year subheading statement can be considered a guiding statement. Its role is to reduce the harshness of the words that will be stated in Statement 2. Indeed, the author introduces in the first statement the subjective noun with great negative emotional load «shock» to say that the October 7 attack was a source of great fear for Israeli settlers in the West Bank. To further mitigate the remarks he will use an objective adjective «occupied» not to say that these territories are stolen from the Palestinians and that they were driven from their territories by

force. He will also use the “since” preposition in “since 1967” to establish the idea that since this long time these territories have been occupied by these settlers it is normal that it be considered as their own and therefore, what will be stated in 2 and more normal.

In the second statement, the objective noun phrase “their inhabitants” replaces the subjective phrase “settlers” in order to convey the message that it is quite normal that defenseless “inhabitants” civilians may arm themselves to defend themselves from possible attack, although this is not a territory bordering Gaza.

- Israël-Hamas war: testimonies of two former Israeli hostages on their living conditions in Gaza

Mia Schem and Chen Almog-Goldstein, abducted by Hamas on October 7, recounted in two separate interviews the ordeal they experienced in captivity in Gaza (29/12)

The same technique of a buffer statement to introduce the message in this article published on 30/12; two months after the beginning of the counter-attack and a month and a few days after the release of the hostages.

The author through this catchy title, invites his co-enunciators (his readers) to read the following in the subheading statement. The subjective noun «calvary» with strong pejorative emotional value plays on the emotional motion for the purpose of making the readers adhere to the thesis of the victim abused by these barbaric terrorists of Hamas.

The author and behind him, the entire editorial line of the newspaper, by a Machiavellian technique wanted to give a

pretext to what the Israeli army committed atrocities in Gaza by omitting to quote the person responsible for their captivity, namely, Hamas deliberately replacing it with the prepositional phrase “in Gaza” and thus justify these atrocities by implying that the Israeli army has the right to do whatever it takes as long as there are prisoners and prisoners there.

4. CONCLUSION:

The work we started and finished was primarily aimed at answering a number of questions about the role of the press in general and more particularly, the digital press in what is happening as unprecedented violence in Gaza.

Especially since this objective seemed more insistent to us after we sketched the different titles of the main digital dailies here and around the world where we realized that there was some connivance on the part of the dailies Western digital not with their potential readers with whom they are bound by a social contract or even a moral contract and which they are supposed to honor, but with the oppressor. Something that pushed us to go further in our questioning and therefore, in our research work to prove the existence of this supposed connivance through the linguistic tools at our disposal, more precisely, those specific to the analysis of discourse in their argumentative component and of less interest those specific to the analysis of digital discourse.

Our choice of the research corpus was based on the French digital newspaper “Le Monde” for the reasons we listed above. The results obtained after analysis of the corpus composed of a fairly large number of articles of the digital daily «Le Monde»

and spanning three months (from 7/10/2023 to 7/1/2024) allowed us to affirm our assumptions made in introduction.

Thus, and through the tools specific to discourse analysis, more precisely the argumentative strategies, we were able to discover the techniques used by the journalists of this newspaper to divert, modify or falsify information for the purpose of conniving with the oppressor, via subjective shifters, nouns, verbs and adjectives to move or make its co-enunciators adhere to a cause that is by essence not theirs.

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