
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

“More Bad News”: Gossip, Scandalization, and Deception in Algerian Online Foreign-Affairs Hard News

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ABSTRACT

This article examines gossip, scandalization, and deception in Algerian online foreign-affairs hard news. Conceptualized within Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), it addresses a gap in existing research: while foreign-policy media discourse has been studied through framing, propaganda, and ideology, far less attention has been paid to how gossip migrates into the hard-news genre of foreign-affairs reporting. Grounded in a three-year longitudinal investigation forming part of a broader doctoral thesis on disinformation discourse in Algerian online news, the study argues that routine hard-news practices in two major Algerian online outlets — Algeria Press Service (APS) and Radio Algérienne — produce systematically biased, gossip-laden accounts of international events, falling short of media-ethics standards of accuracy, balance, and source fidelity. Drawing on an integrated framework of Critical Discourse Studies, Critical Linguistics, Systemic Functional Linguistics, and the concept of gossip, and applying Richardson's (2007) model of newspaper discourse analysis at micro-, meso-, and macro-analytical levels, the study analyses three representative articles covering two foreign-affairs dossiers: the Iran–Israel–United States military confrontation (two APS articles) and Morocco–Israel bilateral relations (one Radio Algérienne article). A forensic-linguistic verification procedure compares the outlets' quotations against independent institutional records — including UN statements, IAEA reports, and U.S. governmental communiqués — to establish where sources are recontextualized or distorted, and to construct the historical archive that enables a Foucauldian genealogical engagement with Algerian foreign-affairs discourse. The analysis demonstrates that evaluative language is systematically mobilized to transform diplomatic events into moralized narratives of betrayal, conspiracy, and aggression. In the APS articles, gossip surfaces through negative naming, the scandal frame, and a forensically documented quotation-integrity violation in which an ideologically loaded expression is interpolated into António Guterres's UN statement — words absent from the original source text. In the Radio Algérienne article, gossip is realized through transitivity and nominalization: action processes activate the Moroccan state as an agent of "repression" and "betrayal," while nominalized forms condense political choices into morally marked categories. In the Iran–Israel–United States case, gossip converges with the discourse-historical construction of an enemy image (Feindbild), in which a complex geopolitical configuration is personified into a single, blameworthy actor organized around a Manichean division between the innocent and the guilty. At the macro level, the study argues that these practices are organized by an institutional order of discourse — a Foucauldian *dispositif discursif* — that governs who may speak, what may be said, and which meanings are privileged as legitimate. This order exhibits deep political parallelism between government and media. The study further identifies an internal contradiction within this order of discourse on the Moroccan Sahara issue, where two presidential statements — one adopting a cautious, UN-deferential register, the other dismissing the Moroccan autonomy plan as a French-born myth (*kharafa*) — reveal a hegemonic instability that, read through Fairclough's (1992) theory of discourse change, signals the potential for future discursive realignment under structural diplomatic pressure, including UN Security Council Resolution 2797 (2025). Theoretically, the study makes three contributions. First, it extends gossip as an analytical concept beyond celebrity and tabloid culture into the hard-news genre of foreign-affairs reporting, operationalizing it through three co-occurring criteria: absent-third-party orientation, reputational-moral evaluation, and community-building. Second, it provides forensic-linguistic evidence that deceptive source recontextualization constitutes a structural feature of the Algerian government–media nexus, not an isolated journalistic lapse. Third, it applies Fairclough's (1992) social theory of discourse change to project the conditions under which an ideologically overdetermined order of discourse may undergo hegemonic realignment. The article concludes that Algerian foreign-affairs coverage functions as "bad news" in a double sense: it reports crisis while simultaneously enacting bad professional practices — gossip, scandalization, and deceptive source recontextualization — that fall short of media-ethics standards and distinguish reporting from propaganda.

KEYWORDS

Forensic Linguistics — Gossip — Scandalization — Deception — Enemy image (Feindbild) — Political parallelism — Order of discourse — Discourse change — Algerian online hard news — Critical Discourse Studies — Critical Linguistics — Systemic Functional Linguistics — Ideolinguistics.

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1. Introduction

Foreign-affairs reporting is hard news that "provides us with general knowledge about general interests" (Poেকে, 1988: 37) and "knowledge from within and about the Other" with a special emphasis on diplomacy, war, security, state interests, international law, and foreign policy. It is therefore often distinguished from soft-news genres such as celebrity journalism, tabloids, gossip columns, and entertainment media, or what is generally referred to as the sensational press. This refers to "the press of

those who undergo politics and who can only put their emotions against the rationality and the reflexivity of the first discourse." According to Poecke, the "first discourse" denotes hard-news reporting: "the press of those who make policy, either through their words and ideas, or through their deeds and who can do this with the necessary distance" (Poecke, 1988: 34).

However, this distinction becomes less evident when foreign-policy coverage relies on gossip, rumor, scandalization, moral evaluation, and claims about hidden relations fed by conspiracy theory, i.e., the claim that "events are secretly orchestrated toward nefarious ends" (Brotherton, 2019: 3). Scholars argue that "war coverage, as any other, is often driven by selection criteria (news values) that are tied to media companies' profit orientation (or clickthrough rates), which is not always congruent with the interests of society" (Molek-Kozakowska & Terian, 2026: 2). In such cases, hard news may adopt discourse features commonly associated with gossip: speculation about absent actors, concern with reputation, and moral judgments.

These features can also contribute to the production of a negative "they-image" of foreign actors, in which blame-gossip circulates as a way of marking outsiders as suspicious, immoral, disloyal, or threatening. As Elias and Scotson (1995: xlvi) argue, "the flow of blame-gossip and the stained they-image of the outsiders can be regarded as standing features of this kind of figuration." In this sense, gossip in news discourse does not simply report on international affairs; rather, it contributes to the symbolic construction of external enemies by attributing blameworthy qualities to them, even when similar attitudes or practices are treated more positively when associated with the in-group.

This article examines gossip in Algerian online news coverage of foreign affairs. It argues that Algerian online news does not simply report foreign-policy events; it recurrently transforms them into morally loaded narratives involving suspicion, betrayal, loyalty, sovereignty, resistance, threat, and hidden alliances. Gossip in news discourse is not concerned with reporting newsworthy events which may involve what Gans (1979/2004) refers to as the "Knowns": actors who "could be political, economic, social, or cultural figures; they could also be holders of official positions or powers behind thrones who play no official roles" (p. 8). Rather, through gossip, such actors are also constructed as moral characters: aggressors, accomplices, victims, traitors, defenders of sovereignty, agents of foreign interests, or symbols of resistance.

This study conceptualizes media gossip as a discursive practice that depends on the strategic misuse of evaluative language to morally frame political actors and events. In the Algerian media landscape, such practices raise significant ethical concerns, as they blur the boundaries between professional journalistic reporting, scandalization, propaganda, disinformation, and manipulation.

If news producers are assumed to focus on information rather than entertainment, since citizens in democracies need to be informed rather than entertained, gossip in Algerian news discourse extends beyond the boundary of entertainment to deploy power "from below" and disseminate stances and attitudes through appraisal language structured into the discursive systems of attitude: construing emotional reactions (Affect), assessing behaviour (Judgement), and construing the value of things (Appreciation) (see Martin & White, 2005).

At the macro level, this study seeks to demystify how prominent Algerian online news outlets, operating under the control of the Algerian ruling political order, are mobilized and weaponized to denounce specific subjectivities within the political realm (Herschinger, 2011). In doing so, it shows how news is transformed into a discursive battlefield where legitimacy is selectively assigned to some actors, while others are discursively excluded, stigmatized, stereotyped, or rendered politically suspect.

Having established the broad discursive context in which gossip migrates into hard news, the following sections develop the rationale, conceptual framework, and methodology that underpin the analysis. In doing so, the article establishes its central contribution: showing that gossip is not confined to soft-news or interpersonal talk but operates as a structured, ideologically functionalized discursive strategy within the hard-news genre of foreign-affairs reporting.

2. Aim and Rationale of the Study

2.1 Conceptualizing Gossip from a CDS Perspective

The novelty of this research lies in its engagement with gossip as a fuzzy, socially variable, and context-dependent concept. Gossip means different things to different people and is conventionally associated with casual conversation, informal interaction, and everyday talk within interpersonal networks, including friendship and women's talk, which Rysman, cited in Noon and Delbridge (1993: 24), described as "a negative stereotype used against women." As a behavioral genre of everyday life, gossip is widely recognized across cultures, which explains why it "has attracted attention from a variety of academic disciplines including psychology, sociology, anthropology and linguistics" (Shen & Montgomery, 2023: 48).

In media studies, gossip is generally associated with celebrity journalism, understood as media artifacts that cover "media individuals, institutions, products, and practices that produce and manage celebrity" (Feeley, 2012: 467). Gossip also serves

as a "counter-discourse for subjugated groups — it is a way of sense-making when people find that facts they consider to be relevant get routinely ignored or minimized in conventional media and discussions" (Adkins, 2017: 26); it is also a form of doing power "from below" (Besnier, 2009). Scott, describing power from below, uses a military metaphor: "it is only here that the terrain is *relatively* favorable to the meager arsenal of the disadvantaged" (Scott, 1985: 27, original emphasis).

Although gossip was historically dismissed as "trash" media — that is, as "unimportant, and certainly not newsworthy" (McDonnell & Silver, 2023: 3) — this study argues that gossip should not be reduced to entertainment culture. Its mechanisms of insinuation, moral judgment, reputational evaluation, and scandalization can also migrate into hard-news genres such as foreign-policy reporting. It extends this understanding by examining gossip not as private talk, informal interaction, or celebrity-oriented discourse, but as a mediated discourse practice selectively integrated into Algerian online foreign-policy news through the agenda-setting logic of news production (McCombs, 2004), and by providing deeper insight into the ideological uses of language within Algerian ideological-discursive formations (Fairclough, 1985).

This coupling of gossip with conspiracy, suspicion, and hidden relations is not incidental. Birchall (2006) treats conspiracy theory and gossip as adjacent forms of "popular knowledge" — ways of knowing whose status is uncertain and unverified, officially discredited yet enjoying mass circulation. Reading the two together is analytically productive here, since Algerian foreign-affairs coverage mobilizes precisely such unverified, morally charged knowledge while clothing it in the authority of institutional hard news. Birchall's account also illuminates the source dynamics examined below: because gossip "establishes an authority without an author" (Brown, 1977: 579, cited in Birchall, 2006: 96), it circulates claims whose warrant cannot be traced to a verifiable origin — an operation reproduced, as the analysis shows, when the outlet's evaluative voice is fused with and attributed to authoritative institutional sources.

For linguists working within CDS, these elements are significant because they are embedded in systems of attitude and verbal behaviour, both of which are central to evaluation and are primarily realized through language (van Leeuwen & Han, 2023). As Vološinov (1986: 10) argues, "[e]very sign is subject to the criteria of ideological evaluation (i.e., whether it is true, false, correct, fair, good, etc.)."

Gossip is inherently a form of evaluative language-in-use, especially in the production of news discourse. In this context, meaning cannot be separated from evaluation, nor can evaluation be treated as a secondary accessory to meaning. As Vološinov (1986: 105) argues, "the disjuncture between referential meaning and evaluation is totally inadmissible. It stems from failure to note the more profound functions of evaluation in speech." He further emphasizes that "[r]eferential meaning is molded by evaluation; it is evaluation, after all, which determines that a particular referential meaning may enter the purview of speakers — both the immediate purview and the broader social purview of the particular social group."

This paper, while distinguishing between two types of gossip — "gossip which makes reference to aspects of the occupational role of a public figure" and gossip which "makes reference to the private lives of public figures," viewed as mere small talk, or even worse, as "illegitimate and irrelevant snooping" (Levin & Kimmel, 1977: 172) — focuses on the former type of gossip. Like informal gossip, this type of gossip often has a moral or normative orientation (Levin & Kimmel, 1977), but it is approached here from a different perspective, one that assumes that the migration of gossip into hard-news discourse is the result of a complex process of entextualization: the decontextualization and recontextualization of gossip-discourse features within the context of media news. In this process, discourse — "the theoretical horizon on which objects are constituted: all objects are objects of discourse, as their meaning depends on a socially constructed system of rules and significant differences" (Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000: 3, cited in Herschinger, 2011: 13) — becomes the framework through which gossip is used to express public condemnation of the 'Other' from the polarized paradigm of 'Us' versus 'Them.'

We also argue that Algerian online news operates within dominant ideological-discursive formations (IDFs) that organize what can be said, how political actors can be represented, and which meanings become naturalized as common sense (Fairclough, 1985). The influence and power of these formations are exercised through the process of meaning-making, including the production of what media theory describes as a "preferred reading" (Chandler, 1995: 5). This is particularly clear in Hall's (1980/2005: 123, original emphasis) account of "*dominant or preferred meanings*": "The different areas of social life appear to be mapped out into discursive domains, hierarchically organized into *dominant or preferred meanings*."

From a Vološinovian/Bakhtinian perspective, meaning is not reducible to linguistic form. Vološinov (1929/1973: 100, original emphasis) defines meaning as "*the technical apparatus for the implementation of theme*," while the theme of an utterance is used here to underline that gossip in hard news discourse is not simply about informing in the conventional journalistic sense, but about meaning-making through the implementation of a particular set of themes. These themes require more than a linguistic account of the forms that, according to Vološinov, comprise them — "words, morphological and syntactic structures, sounds, and intonation" — because they are also shaped by "extraverbal factors of the situation" (Vološinov, 1929/1973: 100).

The rationale for focusing on gossip rests on the assumption that “the boundary between gossip and political news has become so transparent” (McDonnell & Silver, 2023: 3). Accordingly, gossip is not used here in the trivial sense of entertainment talk, but as an analytical category for examining how foreign-policy news circulates suspicion, insinuation, moral judgment, and claims about hidden relations.

The article addresses a gap in existing research. Foreign-policy media discourse has often been studied, for example, through framing (Entman, 2004; Norris et al., 2003), propaganda (Herman & Chomsky, 1988), or ideology (van Dijk, 1988; Fairclough, 1995). Gossip, by contrast, has usually been studied in relation to interpersonal communication, celebrity culture, tabloids, scandal, or entertainment journalism. Less attention has been paid to how gossip migrates into hard news coverage of foreign affairs. This article addresses that gap by examining gossip and related phenomena occurring through language and discourse, namely rumor, moralization, scandalization, and suspicious hidden relations in Algerian online news discourse.

Gossip in this study is understood as part of an ideological-discursive practice through which foreign-policy news engages in illegitimate manipulation (van Dijk, 2008). Rather than simply informing readers about international affairs, it organizes moral meanings around categories such as blame, suspicion, loyalty, betrayal, victimhood, and legitimacy. When entextualized within news discourse practice, gossip becomes integrated into media frames that serve to stigmatize actors and delegitimize their claims and actions (see also McDonnell & Silver, 2023). In this process, Algerian online news can transform hard news into a moralized narrative field, where some actors are presented as legitimate while others are repeatedly delegitimized. Delegitimization works through gossip that constructs the alleged “sins” (Levin & Kimmel, 1977), failures, or misconduct of neighboring actors as if they were obvious facts. Over time, such representations may become normalized, taken for granted, and reproduced through stereotypical scripts. Therefore, gossip in media discourse may function as “a powerful mechanism of socialization and social control” (Levin & Kimmel, 1977: 169).

This article contributes to Critical Discourse Studies, by investigating how gossip can work as a discursive mechanism in hard news. In Algerian online foreign-affairs reporting, political actors and events are often presented not only as matters of policy or diplomacy, but also through moral frames of suspicion, betrayal, sovereignty, resistance, and threat. The study also contributes to the analysis of Algerian online news by examining how regional and international affairs are represented through practices that raise questions about journalistic ethics and professional standards. In this sense, gossip is understood not only as a deformed representation and construction of reality, but also as a problematic journalistic practice that may distort public understanding and undermine professional journalism ethics and standards.

Because Critical Discourse Studies is a transdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary field of research rather than a single, self-contained method, it deliberately articulates whatever conceptual and analytical resources are relevant to the problem under investigation. The frameworks mobilized here — Systemic Functional Linguistics, Critical Linguistics, the socio-cognitive and discourse-historical approaches, the representation of social actors, and the conceptual vocabulary of gossip, scandalization, and ideolanguage — are therefore convened not as a survey of competing paradigms but as complementary tools selected for their analytical purchase on the research questions and the statement of the problem. This orientation is operational and problem-driven rather than meta-theoretical, faithful to the CDA tradition, which is “*not interested in investigating a linguistic unit per se but in studying social phenomena which are necessarily complex and thus require a multi-disciplinary and multi-methodical approach*” (Wodak & Meyer, 2009: 2, original emphasis). The study does not, therefore, set out to adjudicate between philosophical, epistemological, or paradigmatic positions, but to integrate what each framework contributes to describing, interpreting, and explaining how gossip is constructed in Algerian online foreign-affairs discourse.

The main premise, then, is that by blurring the boundaries between journalistic reporting, diplomatic restraint, and ideological positioning, the Algerian media order of discourse does not merely report conflict and crisis; rather, it projects power through propaganda, constructing its readership by imposing preferred ideological readings.

3. Context of the Study

3.1 Trying to Make Press Freedom in Algeria “with Words”

The relevance of the study of gossip in Algerian foreign-affairs news discourse becomes clearer when placed against the background of official political discourse on freedom of expression. In a televised interview broadcast on AL24News,¹ Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune asserts that freedom of expression is formally guaranteed but conditionally restricted (Algeria

¹AL24 News. (2026) اللقاء الإعلامي الدوري للرئيس الجزائري عبد المجيد تبون مع ممثلي الصحافة الجزائرية [Periodic media interview of Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune with representatives of the Algerian press] [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIZ_zM7PuZs.

Press Service, 2026, May 3),² stating that **"there is absolute freedom, but within the limits of respecting others"** and that **"your freedom ends where the freedom of others begins"** (authors' translation). However, this ostensibly liberal framing is immediately undermined when potential dissent is associated with social disorder, insult, foreign manipulation, and threats to Algeria's social cohesion. The president's statement does not simply define freedom as a legal right; it redefines it through moral and national limits, whereby certain voices are represented as lacking roots or legitimacy, acting under foreign dictation, belonging to a **"fifth column,"** or seeking to return the country to **"the chaos that existed before 2019"** (authors' translation).

Conspiracy and betrayal are evident in the President's statement; however, they are expressed through agentless constructions and deliberately opaque and hidden implications. The overlap between the said and the unsaid constitutes the discursive strategy through which the Algerian President justified his reaction against Boualem Sansal's statement concerning Algeria's borders — specifically the Eastern Sahara, which Boualem Sansal argued was part of the Kingdom of Morocco's territories prior to French colonization — a statement (see **Figure 1**) that prompted Sansal's arrest and was subsequently used to depict him as an "impostor" serving a foreign agenda.

Blanchard, a journalist at BFMTV, writes: « Fin décembre, face au parlement, le président algérien Abdelmadjid Tebboune a évoqué pour la première fois l'arrestation de l'écrivain franco-algérien, en le qualifiant d' « imposteur » envoyé par la France, selon le [site d'information algérien TSA](#) ». ³

Figure 1: Source: FRANCE 24.⁴



President Abdelmadjid Tebboune's statements before journalists are important for the present study because they provide a political grammar through which Algerian online foreign-policy news can be understood. The same oppositions that organize the presidential discourse — freedom versus insult, loyalty versus betrayal, national unity versus disturbance, sovereignty versus foreign interference, and authentic conviction versus dictated ideas — also appear in the news discourse under analysis. In this sense, gossip does not emerge only from journalistic deviation or limited access to evidence; it is also connected to a wider

²Algeria Press Service. (2026, May 3). *President Tebboune: Free speech guaranteed with due respect for Republic laws*. <https://www.aps.dz/en/presidency-news/mopfn7yu-president-tebboune-free-speech-guaranteed-with-due-respect-for-republic-laws> .

³Blanchard, F. (2025, January 6). *Boualem Sansal, Sahara occidental... Pourquoi les relations se tendent à nouveau entre la France et l'Algérie*. BFMTV. <https://www.bfmtv.com/international/afrique/algerie/boualem-sansal-sahara-occidental-pourquoi-les-relations-se-tendent-a-nouveau-entre-la-france-et-l-algerie-AN-202501060664.html>.

⁴FRANCE 24. (2024, November 27). *Décryptage : arrestation de l'écrivain Boualem Sansal en Algérie* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/KIDaUn9dqbo>.

ideological-discursive formation in which political actors are evaluated according to their presumed loyalty, origins, intentions, and hidden affiliations.

The paradox is that the President's discourse begins by affirming freedom of expression, but then narrows that freedom through moralized categories of suspicion. Expressions of dissent may be reclassified not as legitimate political disagreement but as insult, division, foreign interference, or conspiracy, "attempts to explain the ultimate causes of significant social and political events and circumstances with claims of secret plots by two or more powerful actors" (Douglas et al. 2019: 4, cited in Demata et al., 2022:1).

The shift from liberal discourse about rights and freedom of expression to accusatory moral classification is central to the logic of gossip in the Algerian media landscape. It transforms political speech into a question of character, loyalty, and hidden belonging. Thus, the presidential interview is a useful prelude to the study because it illustrates the ruling order of discourse within which Algerian news discourse is constructed and operates. This includes Algerian foreign-affairs news, which also constructs local and foreign social and political actors as loyal or disloyal, legitimate or illegitimate.

In the case of Algerian online news, gossip, rumor, and scandalization cannot be explained solely by limited access to sources or evidence. Rather, they are situated discursive practices, that is, practices "situated in the historical context" (Benke & Wodak, 2003: 118). They must therefore be situated within a broader political and media history marked by authoritarian control, the centrality of the military-security apparatus in state formation and political power, the legacy of the "décennie noire," « le « péché originel » de l'été 1962 » (Gèze, 2005: 176), and the role of media discourse in manufacturing internal consent and legitimizing the existing social order. As Malmvig (2006: 105) writes, "[t]his was a war without a name; without a signifier. A war filled with uncertainties, where nobody knew the identity of the killers, where no one could find a rationale or political motivation behind the brutal acts."

Freedom of the press in Algeria, including the existence of a free or independent press, appears to be more of a myth than a reality, as suggested by some studies addressing the issue: "the Algerian written press experienced a short period of free journalistic practice between 1990 and 1991. It was subsequently subject to legal proceedings because of press offences committed by some private newspapers, particularly those related to defamation, the publication of preliminary information, and other matters" (Lahdiri, 2022: 176, authors' translation). The question of freedom of the press has also had significant implications for legal texts, leading "the Algerian authorities to enact the 2001 Penal Code. The latter became the subject of controversy because several of its articles were seen as defamatory or restrictive with regard to the practice of the journalistic profession. Since the promulgation of this Penal Code, the state of press freedom in Algeria has been marked by various obstacles and constraints" (Lahdiri, 2022: 176, authors' translation).

Researchers have emphasized the historically central role of the army in Algerian politics, including the spin of military leaders and the militarization of political life, while studies of Algerian media describe a restrictive media environment shaped by state control, legal pressure, and limits on press freedom (Lahdiri, 2025). As Gèze (2005: 175) observes, "nul n'ignore que les chefs de l'armée et de ses services secrets, la puissante Sécurité militaire, jouent un rôle occulte majeur, jusqu'à ce jour, au cœur du pouvoir, ce qui questionne a priori leur prétention à représenter la nation." In this context, Algerian news outlets function not only as information producers but also as producers of discourses of political legitimation, in which rumor, moral judgment, and accusations of hidden relations become part of a propaganda logic that distinguishes loyalty from betrayal, sovereignty from interference, and national unity from internal or external threat. The Algerian media landscape thus reveals political parallelism, defined as: "the process of aligning the media system with the political party system" (Sampedro et al., 2018: 258).

This echoes Herman and Chomsky's (1988) argument about the manufacture of consent, while also drawing on Wittgenstein's (1953/1999) conception of language as social practice. For Wittgenstein, a language-game is meant "to emphasize the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life" (Wittgenstein, 1953/1999: 15, original emphasis). Meaning, therefore, is not produced by words in isolation, but through their repeated and rule-governed use within specific social, political, and institutional contexts. This is especially relevant to news discourse, since political language operates through recognizable patterns of naming, evaluating, classifying, and legitimizing events and actors. Wittgenstein's (1953/1999: 14-15, original emphasis) argument that there are "*countless* kinds; countless different kinds of use of all the things we call "signs", "words", "sentences". And this diversity is not something fixed, given once for all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten" suggests that language practices are historically variable and socially organized. In the same vein, Algerian online foreign-affairs coverage can be read not simply as reporting, but as a historically situated language-game of struggle over power and legitimacy.

Accordingly, the logic at work in this coverage cannot be reduced to simple censorship, denial, or exclusion. As Foucault (1978: 12) argues, such "negative elements — defenses, censorships, denials" are only local and tactical components within a broader "transformation into discourse, a technology of power, and a will to knowledge." In this sense, Algerian news discourse

does not only silence alternative geopolitical meanings; it actively produces a discursive field in which legitimacy, threat, loyalty, resistance, and sovereignty are constituted as objects of knowledge and power. Thus, Algerian coverage of foreign affairs can be read as a language-game of legitimacy, in which recurrent narratives of conspiracy, betrayal, resistance, and sovereignty serve as discursive tools through which Algeria foregrounds its status as a geopolitical actor, exerting influence and projecting power abroad (Junes et al., 2018).

4. Statement of the Problem, Research Questions, and Hypothesis

4.1 Statement of the Problem

Foreign-policy news is commonly associated with serious reporting on diplomacy, security, war, international alliances, and state interests. It is therefore treated as part of "hard news," distinct from softer genres such as gossip columns, celebrity journalism, tabloids, or scandal-oriented media. However, the Algerian online news coverage examined in this study suggests that the boundary between hard news and gossip-like discourse is blurred. From a Bakhtinian perspective, this indicates that foreign-policy discourse is dialogically heterogeneous, comprising what Bakhtin (1981: 261) describes as "several heterogeneous stylistic unities, often located on different linguistic levels and subject to different stylistic controls." It thus brings together different voices, tones, and evaluative positions rather than belonging exclusively to a single journalistic genre: news understood primarily as a means of informing the public. This heterogeneity becomes particularly visible when journalists report on distant foreign countries, where they may sometimes rely on slender evidence, especially when covering "allegations about criminals, or culturally and politically deviant groups, because they believe such allegations to be true" (Gans, 1979/2004: 274).

Furthermore, hard news is not an unrestricted discursive space: it is regulated by professional rules and ethical norms, including objectivity, neutrality, balance, and impartiality. These norms, however, are always relative and conditioned by editorial lines and broader institutional constraints. As Iggers (1999: 53) argues, "[t]he principle of objectivity is typically acknowledged at the level of the individual reporter and the individual news story, but not at the level of institutional conduct."

In the Algerian case, however, the presence of gossip in the corpus suggests that professional and ethical regulation is subordinated to ideological and political functions, which are backgrounded or even erased. Language is not used solely to inform; rather, it becomes a form of ideolanguage (Epstein, 1991), through which discursive power is exercised. From a CDS perspective, which mainly "*focuses on social problems*" (Rasti & Sahragard, 2012: 730, original emphasis), the manipulation of language in Algerian online news discourse is particularly problematic. In this context, language is used to scandalize events, attack or delegitimize political actors, mislead audiences, and reproduce state propaganda under the appearance of hard news. Therefore, the main research question is formulated as follows:

How are rumor, moralization, scandalization, and claims about hidden relations discursively actualized through linguistic choices in the construction of foreign-policy actors and events as matters of betrayal, sovereignty, resistance, threat, conspiracy, and moral legitimacy?

4.2 Research Questions

How is gossip linguistically manifested in Algerian online foreign-policy hard news discourse?

How do Algerian online news texts use scandalization to represent foreign-policy events and actors as morally problematic or politically illegitimate?

4.3 Hypothesis

This study argues that Algerian online foreign-affairs reporting often turns hard news into gossip by scandalizing events, spreading rumors, morally classifying political actors, and presenting international relations through stories of betrayal, conspiracy, loyalty, aggression, resistance, and foreign manipulation.

In this respect, the study hypothesizes that gossip traces in Algerian online foreign-policy hard news discourse are neither random nor arbitrary; rather, they are structurally embedded within the government-media nexus (Entman, 2004), which is regulated by a dominant order of discourse organized according to predefined rules and norms. These traces function as strategic discursive resources through which foreign-policy events are scandalized as a means of delegitimizing the political actors involved. They are linguistically manifested through explicit evaluative lexical choices, including adjectives, nominations, and labels. From a Foucauldian perspective, this institutional *dispositif* discursif constructs political actors as morally blameworthy, politically illegitimate, threatening, conspiratorial, or involved in hidden relations. Thus, gossip in hard news does not simply reflect the dialogic heterogeneity of discourse; rather, within the Algerian government-media nexus (Entman, 2004), it appears as a politically

functionalized form of heterogeneity. This heterogeneity is dialogic in form but monologic in function — subordinated to a single ideological background.

5. Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

In this research paper, gossip is viewed as “verbal behaviour” (Jones, 1980), as a form of situated talk and text produced by news outlets within an institutional setting and as mediated discourse. In this sense, discourse is understood both as a social practice (Fairclough & Wodak 1997), where “local and the more global aspects of discourse are involved in the accomplishment of social practices”⁵ (van Dijk, 1997:6) with “ideological effects and hegemonic processes in which discourse participates” (Dremel & Matic, 2014: 158) and as a “tool for claims and imputations of social identity” (Jones & Norris, 2005: 4).

According to Fairclough (2003: 25), “the relationship between these different elements of social practices is dialectical”. Within this dialectical perspective, discourse is understood as a social practice because social relations “are partly discursive in nature” and “discourse is partly social relations” (Fairclough, 2003: 25). Accordingly, the task of the critical discourse analyst is to conduct empirical investigation in order to describe, analyze, and interpret the interrelationship between these elements and the ways in which they are textually and discursively manifested in the target corpus.

According to Franklin (1997: 72), “the press has always provided a ‘medium for satisfying the human appetite for gossip.’” Gossip in media discourse is understood here as a discursive practice through which news producers classify the world in terms of what people ought or ought not to do. In this study, media gossip is developed as a concept for analyzing media discourse in which the focus is not primarily on the unusualness or unexpectedness of events (see Caple, 2018), but rather on the interpersonal categorization of such events and related actors as either ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ ‘moral’ or ‘immoral,’ ‘acceptable’ or ‘unacceptable,’ within a particular order of media discourse and frames.

This study does not fully agree with the claim that “news shares many of the imperatives of gossip — the instincts to confide, conspire and empathise within a social environment” (Higgins, 2023: 28). While this view usefully points to the affinity between news and gossip, it does not fully account for the specific dynamics of Algerian online foreign-affairs coverage. In the target corpus, gossip is not just a spontaneous or interpersonal feature of news communication; rather, it functions as a discursive strategy embedded in the schematic superstructure and macropropositions of news discourse (see van Dijk, 1985; 1988). It is actualized in headlines, leads, quotations, source selection, intertextual references, actor nomination, transitivity, nominalization, and through appraisal language (Martin & White, 2005).

With regard to the texture of the target news articles and the broader context of situation of news production and reception, the Algerian media order of discourse is interpreted as a site in which “the combination of gossip’s bad reputation and its aim at power relations” (Adkins, 2017: 4) is articulated. In some instances, gossip “becomes hidden and redirected,” while in others it is explicit and violent, depending on “the position of those doing the gossiping” (Adkins, 2017: 4).

Media gossip is not only about events themselves, but also about the moral interpretation and evaluation of those events. Gossip, in the context of news discourse, may be understood as “the ways in which mass media function as a site for moral reflection.” (Rossi & Soukup, 1994: x). Their work emphasizes “the power of mass media to symbolize and express a moral order” (Rossi & Soukup, 1994: x). Gossip thus operates as a mechanism of social control. In ethnographic literature, it is likewise linked to social control, since it involves controlling behavior, mainly “when the people who gossip exercise other forms of social control over its victims” (Merry, 1984: 272). Gossip as an aspect of power abuse, involving discourse, is also one of the many ways in which language is misused, particularly through “discursive manipulation, misinformation, lies, slurs, propaganda and other forms of discourse that are aimed at illegitimately managing the minds and controlling the actions of people with respect to the reproduction of power” (van Dijk, 2008: 8).

Rumor is central to this process because foreign affairs often involve uncertainty, secrecy, intelligence activity, diplomatic ambiguity, and limited public access to evidence. Under these conditions, media texts may rely on allegations, anonymous sources, indirect attribution, speculation, and insinuation. As noted by Bird et al. (1976: 115), “rumors spread and gain common currency when news is absent or ambiguity exists.” Császai (2020), referring to gossip and rumor in media as “The Rituals of Popular Media,” notes that Donald Bird first proposed that “the media performs the same social role in modern times that folklore did in the traditional era”. He explains the social and hegemonic role of media: “by way of spreading rumor, hearsay, and gossip, it informs, entertains, and regulates the public, or simply put, it mediates a value system, while building and maintaining a community.”

⁵ The notion of social practice is used to refer to the articulation of action and interaction, social relations, persons with beliefs, attitudes, and histories, the material world, and discourse (Fairclough, 2003: 25).

Another phenomenon related to gossip through rumors is scandalization, a practice that journalists use while intending to persuade the public that there is a scandal (Graßl et al., 2021). Scandalization is defined as "a communication process in which alleged transgressions or failures of public figures, groups, organizations, or institutions are denounced with the aim of eliciting public outrage" (Geiß, 2017:1, cited in Graßl et al., 2021: 2567), implying that a given moral or ethical norm has been violated, though "not all violations of all norms are scandalous" (Thompson, 2000, cited in Graßl et al., 2021: 2568), suggesting that "*scandal' refers to actions or events involving certain kinds of transgressions which become known to others and are sufficiently serious to elicit a public response*" (Thompson, 2000: 13, original emphasis).

Moralization is equally important because it transforms diplomatic or geopolitical issues into judgments about 'right' and 'wrong,' 'loyalty' and 'treason,' 'sovereignty' and 'interference,' 'dignity' and 'humiliation,' and 'resistance' and 'aggression.' When rumor and moralization combine with claims about hidden relations, foreign-policy discourse can take the form of media gossip. This is notable because "gossip is idle talk, tittle-tattle, malicious tales, scandal and rumour" (Noon & Delbridge, 1993:24). This also relates to what Bennett (2018) refers to as moral talk, which "relates to the ethical and political life of language." In the context of news discourse, this involves the use of language "not just to perform social actions for their own sake but to achieve particular ethical and political goals" (Bennett, 2018: 3).

The term "gossip" is used here analytically rather than colloquially. It does not refer to trivial talk or entertainment news. Instead, media gossip is understood as mediated discourse about hidden relations, reputational conduct, and moral judgment. In the corpus examined in this study, gossip appears when Algerian online news circulates uncertain or insinuated claims about secret alliances, foreign manipulation, dissident loyalty, espionage, or geopolitical betrayal, while morally evaluating the actors involved.

Operationally, a passage is treated here as media gossip only when three conditions co-occur. First, the discourse is oriented toward an absent third party — a state, regime, or actor who is talked about rather than addressed and who is given no turn in the exchange. Second, the talk performs reputational and moral evaluation, judging the conduct, loyalty, or character of that absent party against shared normative expectations rather than simply reporting an event. Third, the discourse is community-building: it positions readers as a moral in-group aligned against the evaluated party, thereby exercising social control and boundary-making "from below."

These criteria distinguish media gossip from adjacent categories with which it overlaps but is not identical: from scandalization, which centers on a specific transgression made public in order to provoke outrage (Thompson, 2000; Graßl et al., 2021); from propaganda, which need not turn on the reputational judgement of an absent third party; and from framing, which organizes salience without necessarily moralizing character or constituting an evaluative community. Gossip may recruit rumor, scandal, and framing as resources, but it is identified in this study by the simultaneous presence of these three criteria.

This process also involves the discursive representation of social actors, in van Leeuwen's sense, since news discourse does not just name actors but positions them through categories of inclusion and exclusion, activation and passivation, nomination and categorization, and legitimation or delegitimation (van Leeuwen, 1996, 2008). Such representations are organized through normative parameters that distinguish legitimate from illegitimate conduct and morally "good" from "bad" actors. In this sense, they also correspond to van Dijk's (2011) ideological square, through which discourse tends to emphasize "Our" good actions and "their" bad actions, while downplaying "our" bad actions and "their" good actions (van Dijk, 1998; 2006).

The analysis of hard-news discourse also involves ideology as a central component of any discursive practice and social interaction. According to van Dijk's sociocognitive approach to Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), "ideologies are relevant in situations of competition, conflict, domination, and resistance between groups, that is, as part of a social struggle. This also explains why many of the mental structures of ideologies and ideological practices are polarized on the basis of an ingroup– outgroup differentiation, typically between Us and Them, as ideological discourses also show" (van Dijk, 2006: 730).

A further conceptual resource for analyzing the representation of foreign actors is the notion of the Feindbild, or "enemy image." In their discourse-historical study of anti-Sorosism, Richardson and Wodak (2022) show how an out-group is discursively constructed as an enemy through a recurrent set of strategies: nomination and predication that draw a Manichean division between 'us' and 'them'; the externalization and reversal of blame; the construction of conspiracy; and legitimation through appeals to common-sense topoi. Such enemy images function, in Volkan's terms, as "reservoirs of permanent externalization" (Volkan, 2013: 216, cited in Richardson and Wodak, 2022: 401), onto which guilt and blame can be continuously displaced. Crucially, the process personifies complex political and economic phenomena: rather than locating responsibility in structures, it generates a single, nameable culprit. Accordingly, "the fault lies with people, rather than systems" (Richardson & Wodak, 2022: 397).

The present study mobilizes the Feindbild as an analytical category in order to show, in the analysis below, how Algerian foreign-affairs discourse constructs Israel as an enemy image, operationalizing the strategies of nomination, predication, externalization, and conspiracy identified in the discourse-historical literature.

5.1 Gossip as Discursive and Ideological Practice

The ethical dimension is central here, since the analysis evaluates these linguistic practices against the standards of good journalistic practice, including accuracy, balance, fairness, source plurality, transparency, and the distinction between factual reporting and ideological commentary. Gossip is thus understood as an entextualized practice, a “recycling” process “involving two related processes: decontextualization — taking discourse material out of its context — and recontextualization — integrating and modifying this material so that it fits in a new context” (Leppänen et al., 2014: 115).

From this perspective, political foreign affairs in particular, and political issues in general, once they are mediatized, are themselves ideological, as mediatization is intrinsically ideological “since media are said to constitute the primary locus where political power is symbolically claimed and contested” (Kissas, 2017: 198). Kissas’s idea of the “metamorphosis of political discourse,” which includes personalization, conversationalization, and dramatization, is more than a conventional process of entextualization of selected sources, issues and information, as these are common in journalistic routines. Instead, the process is ideologically driven, and the argument for this claim is what the paper aims to defend and empirically substantiate through an analysis of gossip in hard-news discourse.

5.2 The Linguistic Apparatus: Transitivity, Ideology and SFL, and Nominalization

This study brings CDS and SFL into synergy through what Hasan (2015: 122) describes as “the experiential, realised as transitivity and reference and construing our experience of the world around and within us”. Transitivity is defined as part of the meaning potential through which our experience of processes is encoded. It is related to the experiential component of the ideational metafunction and is among the resources of meaning-making in social events, enacted through texturing, that is, through the making of texts (Fairclough, 2003). In other words, transitivity is concerned with how a clause represents experience: who does what, what process is involved, who or what is affected, and under what circumstances. This situates transitivity within the experiential component of Halliday’s broader ideational metafunction, which includes both experiential and logical functions, since it represents experience and events.

From a CDS perspective, transitivity, which Fairclough (1992a: 27) defines as “the aspect of the grammar of a clause or sentence that relates to its ideational meaning, that is, the way it represents reality,” concerns the types of processes that are coded in clauses, and the types of participants involved in them (in this study, participants are referred to as social actors; see also van Leeuwen, 2008). Transitivity is dealt with in terms of the linguistic choices through which actors are represented and events are selected. These choices are not only conditioned by specific rules of news-making; other extralinguistic factors also intervene in the process of texturing and news discourse production, notably ideology.

In order to make sense of the world for society, media work “to shift readers from adherence to ideological positions, or to cement them more firmly in their allegiance to ideological affiliations. In other words, the media attempt to shape and influence the ideological structure of the society in which they act” (Kress, 1983). This explains why CDS focuses on “how discourses contribute to achieving and sustaining the dominance or hegemony of particular strategies and practices, and the social forces who advocate them and whose interests they serve” (Fairclough, 2006: 15).

In Critical Linguistics, “ideology involves a systematically organized presentation of reality” (Kress & Hodge, 1979: 15) through linguistic choices and selection. Given that, from SFL perspective, language is a social activity, the development and use of language—including the functions expressed through language structures—are considered as “a response to the demands made by society and as a reflection of these demands.” Halliday explains: “The nature of language is closely related to the nature of the demands we make on it, the functions it has to serve” (Halliday, 1970: 141, cited in Hasan, 2015: 122).

From the perspective of language as social semiotic, Systemic Functional Linguistics approaches language in terms of the multifunctionality of texts: “texts simultaneously have ‘ideational’, ‘interpersonal’ and ‘textual’ functions” (Fairclough, 2003: 26).

For Critical Linguistics, the representation of events cannot be treated as a neutral linguistic operation. For instance, Kress (1983) proposes two levels of analysis and interpretation in his critical linguistic approach to news discourse: the social level and the linguistic level. On the social level, the organization of reality is shaped by ideological and political purposes (Kress, 1983). On the linguistic level, the experiential function of language, through which events are classified and represented, is also oriented toward interpersonal effects. Language is involved in the two levels “not only because of the parallel or analogical nature of processes on the social and the linguistic plane, but because ideological systems exist in and are articulated by the categories and processes of a given language” (Kress, 1983: 45).

The way reality is encoded through lexical choices and transitivity patterns is influenced by the communicative aim of positioning readers toward the preferred reading (Chandler, 1995) and the dominant preferred meaning (Hall, 1980/2005), thereby shaping attitudes and aligning them with a particular ideological stance. Thus, the selection of processes, participants, and categories is not purely descriptive; it also serves evaluative and persuasive purposes, mainly because "syntactic transformations can be used to obfuscate agency in discourse" (El Biadi & Zih, 2021: 685).

This is where nominalization becomes theoretically interconnected with transitivity. If transitivity examines how experience is represented through processes, participants, and circumstances — that is, who does what, to whom, and under what conditions — nominalization intervenes in this representation by transforming a process that could be expressed through a verb into a noun. Nominalization is a collapsed form (Fowler et al., 1979: 34) and a process of transformation through which "sentences, or parts of sentences — descriptions of actions and the participants involved in them — are turned into nouns, or nominals" (Kress & Hodge, 1979). A simplified definition of nominalization is provided by Fairclough (1992a: 27) as "the conversion of a clause into a nominal or noun."

According to Fairclough (1992a: 179), "transitivity feature is the degree of 'nominalization' in the sample. Nominalization is the conversion of processes into nominals, which has the effect of backgrounding the process itself — its tense and modality are not indicated — and usually not specifying its participants, so that who is doing what to whom is left implicit."

As a result, what might have appeared as an action involving clear participants can be recast as an abstract entity. This transformation is ideologically driven because it can background agency, reduce responsibility, and present political actions as fixed facts or abstract realities.

6. Methodology: Critical Discourse Analysis and Media Gossip

The study examines two foreign-affairs representations in Algerian online news discourse: the Iran–Israel–United States military confrontation and Morocco–Israel bilateral relations. These cases involve uncertainty, moral judgment, and claims about hidden political relations, making them suitable for examining how foreign affairs are constructed as gossip in Algerian online news.

The corpus is deliberately restricted to official, state-aligned outlets — Algeria Press Service, the national news agency, and Radio Algérienne, the public broadcaster — because the object of analysis is precisely the discourse of institutions operating within the government–media nexus, rather than the Algerian press in general. Owing to constraints of space and to the fine-grained, qualitative character of the analysis, the corpus is intentionally small: the aim is an in-depth, source-verified reading of how gossip is textually constructed and ideologically organized, not a statistical account from which system-wide generalizations could be drawn. This scope, and its consequences for generalizability, are addressed explicitly in the limitations and recommendations set out in the conclusion, which outlines further studies — across additional dossiers, outlets, languages, and time periods — through which the present findings could be tested and extended.

Beyond the corpus articles themselves, the analysis draws on a set of primary and institutional sources — among them the original statement of the United Nations Secretary-General, the IAEA verification report, the relevant Security Council resolution, the U.S. governmental communiqués, the Maersk statement, the AL24 News presidential interview, and the Reuters and Anadolu dispatches. These materials are adduced not as secondary literature but as verification sources: their purpose is to establish, against an independent external record, the accuracy of the claims and quotations reproduced in the target news discourse. This procedure follows a principle of forensic linguistics, which holds that determining whether news is genuine or distorted often requires independent investigation of the events being reported (Grieve & Woodfield, 2023). Because such sources differ in status and function from the scholarly works informing the analysis, they are listed separately.

Drawing on Critical Linguistics — an approach to language study developed at the University of East Anglia (see Fowler et al., 1979; Kress & Hodge, 1979) — and on Critical Discourse Studies, the paper examines the linguistic mechanisms through which Algerian online news transforms foreign-policy hard news into gossip. Critical discourse analysis is not concerned with language solely as "a natural phenomenon, a given and unchangeable characteristic of the human species," but with language as "the instrument of human action" (Chilton, 1988: 17). Language is therefore treated as a form of social practice: it acts, evaluates, legitimizes, excludes, accuses, and constructs moral judgment.

In the context of journalism, this means assessing how news discourse names foreign-policy actors, distributes agency and responsibility, constructs victims and aggressors, authorizes claims through sources, and frames events as legitimate, illegitimate, scandalous, threatening, or morally "bad".

Accordingly, the analysis examines whether and how foreign-policy events are scandalized and political actors morally classified, attending to patterns of nomination, transitivity, modality, intertextuality, presupposition, metaphor, and moral evaluation. The analysis is concerned with “the knowledge that is made explicit, detailed, emphasized, implied, presupposed, suggested, hidden, or manipulated in and by discourse” (van Dijk, 2018: 35).

This study is concerned with the first half of Galtung and Ruge’s (1965: 64-65) chain of news communication (see **Figure 2**), namely the movement from world events to their media image. Following this model, we argue that gossip and rumour emerge within the processes of selection and distortion, where events are filtered, emphasized, interpreted, and transformed into news discourse.

Figure 1. *The chain of news communication*

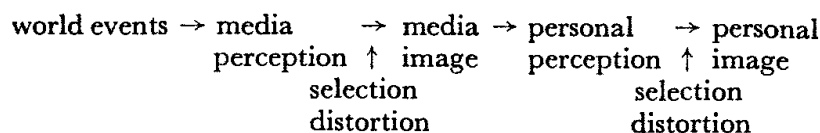


Figure 2: Galtung and Ruge’s chain of news communication (1965:65)

Based on Fairclough’s theoretical understanding of discourse as social practice, and Wodak’s (2001: 65) principle of triangulation, a “methodical way for critical discourse analysts to minimize the risk of being biased,” the analysis follows Richardson’s (2007: 46-47) model of newspaper discourse analysis, which moves from micro-textual to macro-textual levels. At the micro-analysis level, referred to as description, the analysis focuses on the linguistic features of the text, such as words, expressions, or sentences. The aim is to identify how actors are named — that is, “how participant identities and relations are constructed” (Fairclough, 1995: 39) — and how events are represented. It also examines how agency is distributed in news discourse and which strategies of meaning-making are deployed.

From Critical Linguistics, the analysis covers “the role of vocabulary choices in processes of categorization” (Fairclough, 1995: 27). At the meso-analysis level, which corresponds to the interpretation phase of CDA (Gölbaşı, 2017), the focus is on the transformation of texts across “intertextual chains” of discursive practices (Fairclough, 1992a: 79; 1992b) and on interdiscursivity (for further discussion of the concept of interdiscourse, see Pêcheux, 1982). Interdiscourse/Interdiscursivity is defined as “the discursive formation consisting of a package of relations to other discursive formations,” and its analysis requires “observing how linguistic elements, such as words, expressions, or sentences, circulate among different discursive formations” (Fabricio et al., 2020: 77). This is generally noticed in reported voices, the voices of institutional actors, and the voices of actors with symbolic power, such as experts and information sources. At this level, the analysis also traces entextualization, understood as “the trajectories that texts follow when they leave a particular contextual anchorage and get recited in other semiotic environments” (Fabricio et al., 2020: 82). This process helps explain “the heterogeneous and shifting discursive practices of the media” (Fairclough, 1995: 52) including “discursive creativity, hybridity, and heterogeneity” (Fairclough, 1995: 61).

In other words, describing and interpreting “the paradigms of alternative discursive practices available within the order of discourse of the media, and the conditions governing selection amongst them” (Fairclough, 1995: 64). Following Foucault’s (1969/2004: 93) concept of ‘discursive formations,’ the analysis seeks to “grasp the statement in the exact specificity of its occurrence; determine its conditions of existence, fix at least its limits, establish its correlations with other statements that may be connected with it, and show what other forms of statement it excludes.”

At the macro-analysis level, which corresponds to explanation, taking into account what Fairclough (1995: 55) refers to as “the order of discourse of a social institution or social domain,” the analysis considers the Algerian media order of discourse and how it is dialectically influenced by the social structure, the very abstract entity of the Algerian political order, and the ruling order of discourse that produces and reproduces it. Power and control of society and beyond (in the context of international relations) are maintained and exercised through Althusser’s (1971/2004) “Ideological State Apparatuses,” and through the institutional regulation of discourse, following Foucault’s (1971) notion of the order of discourse.

This suggests that the grammar of news language is “systems of ‘options’ amongst which speakers make ‘selections’” (Fairclough, 1992a: 26). From a CDS perspective, such choices of form are meaningful because they are shaped by the predefined purposes of discursive practice.

Richardson’s model suggests that the analysis should begin with lexical analysis, that is, with the examination of the choice and meaning of words in news discourse. For Richardson (2007), the study of particular words used in a newspaper text is usually the first stage of textual or discourse analysis because words do not simply denote objects, actors, or events. They also carry social values, ideological assumptions, and evaluative meanings. Nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs are especially important because they often convey both denotative and connotative meanings. In other words, lexical choices do not simply describe reality; they classify and evaluate it. A word may identify an actor or an event, but it may also position that actor or event as legitimate or illegitimate, threatening or victimized, moral or immoral.

Rather than treating words as isolated vocabulary items, the analysis considers how lexical choices combine with grammatical structures to produce patterns of naming, evaluation, agency, blame, legitimacy, and delegitimization. This is particularly relevant to the concept of gossip, since the study examines how foreign-policy events are discursively scandalized through accusation, insinuation, hidden relations, and moral suspicion. Because such events involve social actors, transitivity then distributes agency and responsibility: some actors are constructed as aggressors, conspirators, traitors, threats, or sources of disorder, while others are represented as victims, responders, defenders, or are backgrounded and left outside explicit blame. Lexico-grammatical analysis therefore allows the study to identify how scandalization moves from the event to the actors involved, and how foreign-policy news organizes political meaning through word choice, phrase structure, agency, and recurring evaluative formulations before moving to the broader context of situation of news discourse production and reception.

The power of CDS lies in providing theoretical tools to investigate institutional practices, such as news discourse, particularly the way language is used within such social institutions, and in revealing how discursive practices maintain and reproduce power relations. Algerian online discourse is then explained in terms of how it is transformed into an ideolanguage (Epstein, 1991), or into an ideological discourse shaped by the dominant ideology, and how it constructs individual and group identities through the strategy of agenda setting, mainly through polarization, scandalization, gossip, and rumors. Such analysis may contribute to demystifying some aspects of the Algerian political order, which is now engaged in a large campaign of power projection through its global strategy of propaganda and “hybrid war,” defined as “a style of warfare that combines the political, economic, social and kinetic in a kind of conflict that recognizes no boundaries between civilian and combatant, covert and overt, war and peace” (Galeotti, 2018: 18).

For empirical requirements of this research, the corpus is collected from the following prominent Algerian French-language online news outlets: *Algeria Press Service* (henceforth, APS), and *Radio Algérienne*. The study uses the term “online news” to refer to news texts published by web-based news outlets, including digital newspapers, online news platforms, and other news websites.

7. Data Analysis and Results

7.1 The Iran–Israel–United States Conflict Narrative

7.1.1 Algeria Press Service (APS): « Agression sioniste contre l’Iran : appel à une désescalade suivie d’une trêve »⁶

7.1.1.1 Lexical Naming and Ideological Framing of the Conflict

The article, also relayed by AL24 News,⁷ reports a military conflict between two parties: Israel versus Iran. The news discourse introduces the military confrontation through the term “**aggression**” while simultaneously reporting an appeal for de-escalation and a ceasefire.

The headline is the main macroproposition of the news discourse, directly expressing its macrosemantics — that is, the “*theme, topic, gist, upshot, or point*” of discourse (van Dijk, 1980: 5, original emphasis). The texture, however, is complex once we consider the heterogeneity of texts in meaning, form, and style (Fairclough, 1992a). This complexity arises mainly through intertwined voices that blur the boundaries between the news outlet’s voice — APS — and the cited source’s voice, namely the statement of António Guterres, the United Nations Secretary-General.

The headline already represents the event through evaluative language: « **Agression sioniste contre l’Iran** ». Through naming (Richardson, 2007), the headline represents Iran as the “victim” of military operations, while Israel is labelled a “Zionist

⁶ Algérie Presse Service. (2025, 19 juin). *Agression sioniste contre l’Iran : appel à une désescalade suivie d’une trêve*. Algérie Presse Service. <https://www.aps.dz/fr/monde/monde-arabe/md33ncjw-agression-sioniste-contre-l-iran-appel-a-une-desescalade-suivie-d-une-treve>.

⁷ AL24 News. (2025, June 19). *Agression sioniste contre l’Iran : M. Guterres appelle à une désescalade suivie d’une trêve*. <https://al24news.dz/fr/agression-sioniste-contre-liran-m-guterres-appelle-a-une-desescalade-suivie-dune-treve/>.

entity” and the attacks are designated as “aggression.” The nominalized token “agression,” co-occurring immediately with the adjective “sioniste,” forms a constructed collocation: when taken together, the collocated words not only assign blame to Israel; they also reinforce the negative evaluation of the attacks from an ideological standpoint.

The article does not use the neutral state name Israel but instead employs « **l’entité sioniste** » and « **l’agresseur sioniste** ». Naming the event as “agression” produces what Blommaert refers to as indexical meaning. Blommaert (2005: 11, original emphasis) explains that, “[a]part from referential meaning, acts of communication produce *indexical* meaning: social meaning, interpretative leads between what is said and the social occasion in which it is being produced.” In the present context, “agression” does not simply denote a military event; it indexes a social and moral evaluation of that event, casting Israel as the culpable initiator of the attack while legitimizing Iran’s retaliation.

Indeed, the outlet writes: « **l’entité sioniste a lancé des attaques contre l’Iran** » ; « **[l’]Iran a immédiatement riposté en tirant des missiles et des drones sur l’agresseur sioniste** ». The verb *riposter* (to retaliate) is itself an evaluative choice: it presupposes a prior wrongful act and thereby encodes Israel’s guilt while framing Iran’s strikes as a justified response rather than aggression.

The event is reported through the frame of scandal, since “scandal involves actions or events which transgress or contravene certain values, norms or moral codes” (Thompson, 2000: 14). The news discourse constructs war as a scandal, imposing a moral interpretation and reception of the event. Israel is not simply represented as a belligerent party but as an illegitimate one. Referring to Israel as the “Zionist entity” explicitly excludes it from the category of a legitimate state actor within the international order, while Iran is repositioned not as a passive victim but as a sovereign state exercising legitimate self-defense.

Exclusion is likewise implied in the news discourse since, “by choosing one social category over another, [news producers] include them within one category and exclude them from others — or perhaps choose to foreground one social category over equally accurate alternatives” (Richardson, 2007: 49). The referential strategies (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001) at work here can also be understood as a projection of meaning and social values, or what (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001: 45, original emphasis) call “*nomination strategies* by which one constructs and represents social actors: for example, ingroups and outgroups.”

Accordingly, the expression “Zionist aggression” functions as a derogatory alternative to “Israeli military action,” deploying a negative value that operates within the internal structure of the news discourse. This semantic projection does not just describe or categorize Israel’s actions (see van Leeuwen, 1996; 2008); rather, it constructs Israel through moral and ideological connotations, marking it as the source of aggression, violence, and guilt. By contrast, Iran is represented as the victim, establishing a clear opposition and polarization — positive self-representation and negative other-representation in discourse (van Dijk, 2011).

The polarization between victim and aggressor is not, however, only a matter of attribution; read through the discourse-historical concept of the *Feindbild* (Richardson & Wodak, 2022), it amounts to the discursive construction of an enemy image.

The nominations « *l’entité sioniste* » and « *l’agresseur sioniste* » fuse reference and predication, assigning Israel a negative essence rather than reporting a contingent action, so that aggression and illegitimacy are presented as defining attributes of the actor itself — the predicational move by which qualities are assigned to social actors and events as if they were inherent (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, cited in Richardson and Wodak, 2022). The APS discourse thereby externalizes blame onto Israel, while the erasure of Iran’s responsibility — and of its nuclear dossier — performs the victim-perpetrator reversal that the discourse-historical literature identifies as a core function of the *Feindbild* (Richardson & Wodak, 2022). What emerges is the Manichean division of an innocent in-group from a blameworthy out-group that conspiracy-laden enemy images characteristically produce.

7.1.1.2 Exclusion, Polarization, and Enemy-Image Construction

In the target discourse, exclusion is evident. Van Leeuwen (2008: 29) argues that “[s]ome exclusions leave no traces in the representation, excluding both the social actors and their activities.” Exclusion, or what Trew (1979) names suppression, is not always ideologically neutral, as it influences and structures how social actors and their actions are constructed in discourse.

Representation in APS news discourse can be understood as a form of language-games (Wittgenstein, 1953/1999), in which signifiers are neither selected nor omitted randomly or accidentally; nor do these processes result merely from the constraints of a rule-governed language system. Rather, they are embedded in a discursive practice in which social action is rationalized and “proceduralized, turned into a step-by-step method” (van Leeuwen, 2008: 3).

In this discourse, to adapt van Leeuwen’s (2008: 3) argument, the question is no longer “Is it true?” or “Is it good?”; rather, the questions become “Does it work?” and “Does it achieve its purposes?” Thus, the issue is not simply the relevance of the

news story in terms of informing the public, but the extent to which the language-game serves specific representational and discursive functions. In a broader context, Hansen (2006, p. 188) asserts that “[q]uestions of representation are therefore not merely, or even predominantly, a matter of who are formally included in national or international institutions, but rather of the constitution of the subjectivity of the Other.”

For example, the APS discourse is silent about Iran’s nuclear program, including Iran’s decision in June 2022 to remove all JCPOA-related IAEA surveillance and monitoring equipment. As the IAEA (2025) reports, the Agency has been unable to carry out JCPOA-related verification and monitoring activities for more than four years and has lost continuity of knowledge regarding Iran’s production and current inventory of centrifuges, rotors and bellows, heavy water, and uranium ore concentrate (see International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA], 2025).⁸

The exclusion of this kind of information is significant for the way Iran, Israel, and the actions of each party are represented. Reporting on Iran’s nuclear program and its geopolitical actions is not only newsworthy but relevant for understanding the present conflict, most importantly because *“Iran’s nuclear program and its support of terrorists pose a serious threat to the United States, Israel, and other Western countries”* (Ledeer, 2006: 10, original emphasis). Bauder (2006: 7) also argues that *“Iran seems increasingly likely to acquire nuclear weapons, giving the country the ability to menace other countries in a way that it never could before.”* Such information provides readers with necessary background and essential contextual grounding for interpreting the ongoing conflict between Iran and Israel.

APS discourse excludes the background of the conflict, providing almost no explanation or interpretation and establishing no connection with Iran’s actions. This exclusion leaves no explicit traces in the news report, while Israel’s actions are foregrounded through expressions such as: **« l’entité sioniste a lancé des attaques contre l’Iran, notamment contre ses installations nucléaires. L’Iran a immédiatement riposté en tirant des missiles et des drones sur l’agresseur sioniste »**

The positive bias in ideological self-schemas (van Dijk, 2001) within APS discourse is manifested in the positive representation of Us (Iran) and the negative representation of Them (Israel) at all levels of the news discourse. This ideological polarization is deeply ingrained in the Algerian order of discourse, reinforcing Entman’s (2004) “projections of power” in foreign-affairs news coverage. It also aligns with Entman’s hegemonic approach to political communication, which analyzes “the government–media nexus in foreign policy” (Entman, 2004: 4) in terms of control and the construction of ideological boundaries.

APS discourse can be further read from an ideolinguistic perspective. Epstein’s (1991: 3) thesis that language is “the most honest witness of ideological contradictions,” together with his discussion of ideology as a “pathology of language” involving “deep-rooted misunderstandings and logical mistakes in word usage” (p. 5), provides a useful framework for analyzing APS discourse. From this perspective, APS discourse shifts from ordinary news communication to ideologically saturated reporting. In this context, the lexical item “sioniste” functions less as a neutral descriptor than as an ideologically loaded token that condenses a negative moral evaluation. It can therefore be understood as an ideologeme: a fundamental unit of the ideolanguage system in APS discourse.

7.1.1.3 Intertextuality, Source Distortion, and Strategic Silence

Intertextuality (see Fairclough, 1992c), meaning that “all relations between utterances are necessarily intertextual” (Todorov, 1984: 61), is indirectly inferred in the headline and explicitly present in the direct reported speech attributed to António Guterres, the UN Secretary-General. The effect of intertextuality is the fusion of APS’s voice and Guterres’s voice, with the latter foregrounded through direct quotation, or what Todorov (1984: 60) describes as discourse “confined between quotation marks.”

In the article’s lead, we read: **« Le Secrétaire général de l’ONU Antonio Guterres a appelé mercredi à une désescalade immédiate de l’agression sioniste contre l’Iran afin de pouvoir établir un cessez-le-feu »**. In direct quotation: **« Je demeure profondément alarmé par l’escalade militaire au Moyen-Orient entre (l’entité sioniste) et l’Iran. Je réitère mon appel à une désescalade immédiate suivie d’un cessez-le-feu », a déclaré M. Guterres dans un communiqué »**

If direct quotation creates a strong expectation of verbatim fidelity — defined as the extent to which a text preserves “the exact wording, formatting, and order of the original text at the word level” (Kim et al., 2025: 2) — then the APS article raises a serious problem of quotation integrity. In controversial cases, forensic linguistics recommends that “[o]ften the only way to verify if news is real or fake is to conduct additional independent investigation into the events being covered” (Grieve & Woodfield, 2023: 2).

⁸ International Atomic Energy Agency. (2025, May 31). *Verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015): Report by the Director General* (GOV/2025/24 <https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/25/06/gov2025-24.pdf>).

Through a close investigation of the article, two main components can be identified. First, the article provides an assessment and evaluation of the event and the actors involved within the ideological framework of APS. Second, it foregrounds the UN's position by directly revoicing António Guterres's appeal for a truce and a ceasefire.

While Guterres's statement refers to the escalation "between Israel and Iran" and calls for "immediate de-escalation leading to a ceasefire," the APS lead reformulates this as « **l'agression sioniste contre l'Iran** ». This lexical substitution shifts the statement from a diplomatic appeal concerning two named state actors into an ideologically marked representation in which aggression is assigned to one side, while Iran's responsibility is entirely erased.

The expression « **l'entité sioniste** », although placed between parentheses, remains visually and grammatically inside the quotation attributed to António Guterres. This expression does not occur in Guterres's statement on the United Nations website, which instead refers to the escalation "between Israel and Iran": "**I remain profoundly alarmed by the ongoing military escalation in the Middle East between Israel and Iran**" (United Nations Secretary-General, 2025).⁹ The parenthetical insertion therefore functions not as a neutral clarification but as an ideological interpolation within reported speech.

At this point, the issue is no longer only lexical; it also becomes a problem of source misrepresentation. Though rumor is not produced through anonymous sources or unverifiable claims, it is constructed here through APS's transgression of the verbatim fidelity principle, which is concealed by the use of authoritative source discourse. By invoking António Guterres and the United Nations as institutional voices, APS gives the article the appearance of factual hard-news reporting; however, Guterres's voice is subordinated to APS's own discursively predefined voice.

The distortion of the original source's voice and statement is deceptive for readers, notably because the reader's primary source of information is often the media. This issue is problematic, as Reah (2002: 54) notes when she argues that "it is easy to resist a particular viewpoint or ideology when you know it is being presented to you, but not so easy to resist when the viewpoint or ideology is concealed."

APS discourse is not primarily about the event as it unfolds in reality; rather, it is a discourse about the event from the ideological standpoint of the news outlet. Through the voice of the news outlet, APS indirectly and implicitly positions the Algerian government within the conflict, making visible what otherwise remains invisible. In his critical study of invisible censorship in mass media, Bourdieu (1998: 15) writes: "It's true that politics intervenes, and that there is political control (particularly in the case of hiring for top positions in the radio stations and television channels under direct government control)."

The manipulation of visibility — specifically, whose voice is made visible — is also consistent with the broader constraints of war reporting, since "[t]he reporting of war is constrained by matters such as limited funding, access to conflict zones and demands of militaries and governments that reporting be subordinated to their interests" (Matheson, 2023: 269). In this sense, the reporting of the event, in the APS discourse, results from the combination of descriptive and evaluative meanings that together form a single lexical meaning, thereby transforming the discourse into ideologically marked textual sequences and ideologemes.

The investigation also reveals that some voices and actors are absent from this article — particularly the United States, even though it is also involved in the war. This omission is not simply textual; it can be read as a form of strategic silence. This silence becomes more meaningful in light of Algeria's own diplomatic stakes, which become visible in a parallel dossier where Algerian and U.S. interests diverge: the Moroccan Sahara;¹⁰ UN Security Council Resolution 2797, adopted on October 31, 2025, renewed MINURSO's mandate, calling for negotiations based on Morocco's autonomy plan under the Kingdom of Morocco's

⁹ United Nations Secretary-General. (2025, June 18). *Statement by the Secretary-General—On the need for a ceasefire between Israel and Iran*. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statements/2025-06-18/statement-the-secretary-general-the-need-for-ceasefire-between-israel-and-iran>.

¹⁰ On terminology and positionality: throughout this article the disputed territory is named Moroccan Sahara rather than "Western Sahara." This is a declared analytical standpoint, not an unmarked assumption, and it is consistent with the critical and committed orientation of Critical Discourse Studies, in which the analyst's position is constitutive rather than incidental (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2008; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). From the perspective of the Discourse-Historical Approach (Wodak), referential and nomination strategies—together with their historical sedimentation—are themselves objects of analysis rather than neutral descriptors. The naming of the territory has shifted historically, moving from "Spanish Sahara" to Moroccan Sahara in the wake of the 1975 Madrid Accords, prior to the proclamation of the so-called "Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic," which was initially supported by Libya and Algeria before the question became a national cause for Algeria. Institutional usage—including that of the United Nations and its resolutions—does not constitute a neutral baseline either; for a critical analyst it is itself a positioned discourse traversed by power relations. This point is reflexively confirmed by the very government-media nexus examined here: the Algerian army's monthly magazine *El Djeich* devotes a standing rubric to the « *cause sahraouie* », an institutional nomination strategy that elevates the issue into a national cause

sovereignty;¹¹ Reuters described it as a U.S.-drafted text, with Algeria not participating in the vote.¹² Later reporting also noted U.S.-facilitated discussions involving Morocco, the Polisario Front, Algeria, and Mauritania on the implementation of Resolution 2797.¹³ In this context, the silence on the United States in this article may reflect the limits of explicit moral evaluation when diplomatic, security, and economic relations with Washington are at stake.

The contradiction between strategic silence on the United States in the first APS article and its explicit inclusion in the second article is precisely the discursive tension that the following section examines.

7.1.2 Algeria Press Service (APS): « L’Iran riposte aux frappes américano-sionistes par des salves de missiles »¹⁴

Nevertheless, the discourse changes dramatically: the Algerian official news outlet does not remain silent on Washington’s role. Unlike the previous news article, in which the United States was absent, APS explicitly includes Washington in the headline: « **L’Iran riposte aux frappes américano-sionistes par des salves de missiles** ». In the headline, the compound adjective « **américano-sionistes** » is important as it directly links U.S. and Israeli agency. The article no longer frames war as only « **sioniste** »; it presents it as a combined “American-Zionist” action against Iran.

7.1.2.1 Naming Strategies and Ideological Labelling

Naming (Richardson, 2007), as discussed in §7.1.1.1 above, is a strategic process in discourse that projects meaning onto social actors and assigns them particular values. In the APS article, Iran is referred to in terms of its military action and as the “victim” of aggression, while the United States and Israel are represented through ideologically loaded labels such as « **américano-sionistes** » and « **entité sioniste** ».

Gossip features in APS news discourse can be explained in terms of the workings of power “from below,” a perspective based on the assumption that “gossip can be seriously understood only if it is embedded in a larger context of social relations and symbolic dynamics” (Besnier, 2009: 1). In this case, gossip in news discourse is far from being solely a form of resistance to foreign powers. Rather, gossip can, “in very specific and targeted ways reveal dishonesties and hypocrisies” (Adkins, 2017: 20).

7.1.2.2 Diplomatic Discourse vs. Media Discourse: An Internal Contradiction

The macro-level context is important because it allows the analysis to move beyond a simple binary opposition between official diplomacy and media discourse. On the one hand, the U.S. Embassy’s statement about Algerian-American relations involves diplomatic discourse emphasizing partnership, cooperation, counterterrorism, military collaboration, and shared regional-security interests.¹⁵ On the other hand, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune describes these relations as historically positive, strategically useful, and increasingly developing: « **les relations ont été toujours bonnes [...]à chaque visite elles s’améliorent plus** ».¹⁶

He also recalls the United States’ role in internationalizing the Algerian War of Independence: « **c’est grâce aux États-Unis d’Amérique que le dossier de la guerre d’Algérie a été déposé [...] ; pris en charge par l’ONU** ». In so doing, the US challenged the French colonial claim that the conflict was an internal matter. The President also stresses that the United States recognizes Algeria’s strategic weight in Africa — « **les Américains savent que l’Algérie a son poids en Afrique** » — and notes that American investment extends beyond hydrocarbons: « **en dehors du pétrole, bien sûr !** ».

His statement that Algeria has « **dépassé tous les clivages idéologiques** » is particularly significant: it implies that Algeria’s foreign policy is pragmatically driven and interest-based. This pragmatism is further reinforced when he declares: « **moi, je travaille pour le peuple algérien, pour le bonheur du peuple algérien, pour le développement de notre pays** ». At the

¹¹ United Nations Security Council. (2025, October 31). *Resolution 2797 (2025) (S/RES/2797)*. [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2797\(2025\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2797(2025)).

¹² Reuters. (2025, October 31). *UN calls for Western Sahara talks based on Morocco’s autonomy plan* [News article]. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/un-calls-western-sahara-talks-based-moroccos-autonomy-plan-2025-10-31/>.

¹³ Aydogan, M. (2026, February 9). *US says it facilitated talks on Western Sahara with regional parties in Madrid: Discussions focused on implementation of UN resolution 2797 on Western Sahara, says US mission to UN*. Anadolu Ajansı. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/us-says-it-facilitated-talks-on-western-sahara-with-regional-parties-in-madrid/3825266>.

¹⁴ Algérie Presse Service. (2026, February 28). *L’Iran riposte aux frappes américano-sionistes par des salves de missiles*. <https://www.aps.dz/fr/monde/monde/mm6br01m-l-iran-riposte-aux-frappes-americano-sionistes-par-des-salves-de-missiles>.

¹⁵ U.S. Mission Algeria. (2026, April 20). *Advancing U.S.–Algeria cooperation on trade, security, and energy*. U.S. Embassy in Algeria. <https://dz.usembassy.gov/advancing-u-s-algeria-cooperation-on-trade-security-and-energy/>.

¹⁶ AL24 News. (2026) *اللقاء الإعلامي الدوري للرئيس الجزائري عبد المجيد تبون مع ممثلي الصحافة الجزائرية* [Periodic media interview of Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune with representatives of the Algerian press] [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIZ_zM7PuZs.

same time, he carefully qualifies this rapprochement, asserting that Algeria will not abandon its other partners: « **on n'abandonnera jamais nos autres amis** ».

By describing Algeria as « **un bon intermédiaire, grâce à notre crédibilité** », the President presents the country as an autonomous diplomatic actor. He claims that Algeria's voice at the UN Security Council on the Palestinian question was: « **très respectée par les États-Unis** », marked by « **un respect profond** ».

Therefore, at the macro level, both the U.S. Embassy discourse and presidential discourse construct Algerian–American relations through the language of strategic cooperation, mutual respect, and pragmatic partnership. Diplomatic discourse constructs the United States as a diplomatic partner; however, in the headline « **L'Iran riposte aux frappes américano-sionistes par des salves de missiles** », the United States is represented in contradiction to and in opposition to that diplomatic discourse. The expression « **américano-sionistes** » integrates American agency into Israeli agency, allowing a semantic and connotative extension of the negative representation to govern America as well.

The President's statements denote a policy of diversification rather than alignment with Washington. Algeria is thus represented as a sovereign actor capable of deepening cooperation with the United States while maintaining its traditional partnerships and non-aligned diplomatic identity.

7.1.2.3 Gossip as Discursive Mechanism: Double Standards and Enemy-Image Construction

Gossip therefore does not simply circulate informal or sensational claims; it functions as a discursive mechanism that provides evidence of the double standards of journalism in Algeria. The United States appears simultaneously as a partner in the Algerian diplomatic order of discourse and as an aggressive geopolitical player in its media order of discourse.

The comparison of the diplomatic and news discourse, and the internal contradiction between legitimacy and illegitimacy as constructed in discourse, reveals that gossip operates as a discursive practice through which dishonesty and hypocrisy are enacted across different orders of discourse. The migration of gossip into news discourse in the reporting of political foreign affairs leads Adkins (2017: 123) to emphasize that “there is good reason to recognize the ways in which hypocrisy and inconsistency play a necessary role in political strategy and debate.”

The article also produces gossip through collocation and joint labeling. By fusing two actors into one accusatory category, suggesting alliance, coordination, and shared responsibility (« **américano-sionistes** »), the discourse scandalizes not only the Israeli actor but also the United States by placing both within the same moral grammar of aggression.

The compound « **américano-sionistes** » can likewise be read as a mechanism of enemy-image construction. By collapsing two actors into a single accusatory category, the discourse personifies a complex geopolitical configuration — an alliance, a war, a set of competing state interests — into one nameable culprit, in the manner that conspiracy-oriented enemy images “generate a personal enemy with a human face who can be challenged” (Wall, 2003: 120-21, cited in Richardson & Wodak, 2022: 397). The label simultaneously works as a part-for-whole synecdoche, in which a single condensed token stands for an entire pattern of imputed coordination and hidden intent. Just as anti-Sorosism reduces global processes to the agency of one figure (Richardson & Wodak, 2022), the “sioniste” ideologeme reduces the Iran–Israel–United States conflict to a unified malevolent actor whose culpability is treated as self-evident — the simplifying logic by which conspiracy theories “*provide clearly separated Manichean divisions of the ‘innocent’ and of those to ‘blame’*” (Richardson & Wodak, 2022: 417, original emphasis). Significantly, in the Algerian corpus this logic is instrumentalized not by extreme-right activists but within official, state-aligned media, which lends the enemy image the authority and reach of institutional hard news.

Having demonstrated how the APS articles construct enemy images through naming, collocational scandal, and source distortion, the analysis now turns to the Radio Algérienne article, where ideology operates through the grammatical mechanisms of transitivity and nominalization rather than through naming alone.

7.2 The Representation of Morocco–Israel Bilateral Relations (Radio Algérienne)

As outlined in the methodology section, both transitivity and nominalization represent linguistic categories and processes through which ideology operates. Kress (1983: 45) explains: “the ideological system becomes visible through the selection and organization as a system of all these linguistic features present in the text.” The relevance of transitivity in analyzing Algerian online news discourse is socially motivated, particularly in relation to “what social, cultural, ideological, political or theoretical factors determine how a process is signified in a particular type of discourse” (Fairclough, 1992a: 179-180).

Given the constraints of scope and space, only two processes are considered — action and event — while the final section is devoted to nominalization and its function in the target news discourse. To illustrate how these linguistic processes

operate in the selected corpus, the following sections consider the news article published by Radio Algérienne, titled: « **Maroc : normalisation sans limites avec l’entité sioniste et cap sur la répression** ». ¹⁷

7.2.1 Action Processes

Table 1 presents action processes in the Radio Algérienne article. Action processes are clauses in which a human or institutional social actor is the agent of a material process — they are the prototypical realization of activation (van Leeuwen, 2008) and the most direct mechanism for assigning political agency and responsibility.

Table 1: Action Processes in the Representation of Moroccan Political Actors

Discursive patterns	Actor / Agent	Process (verb)	Affected participant / Goal
« le régime marocain poursuit l’approfondissement »	Le régime marocain	poursuit	L’approfondissement de ses relations
« ignorant les crimes quotidiens »	Le régime marocain	ignorant	les crimes quotidiens
« défiant la volonté populaire »	Le régime marocain	défiant	la volonté populaire
« ceux qui osent s’y opposer »	ceux / opposants	s’opposer	la normalisation / cette alliance
« de nombreuses nations prennent position »	de nombreuses nations	prennent position	contre l’occupation
« le Makhzen [...] persiste dans son alignement »	Le Makhzen	persiste	son alignement
« bafouant les principes éthiques et historiques »	Le Makhzen	bafouant	les principes éthiques et historiques
« tournant le dos à une cause juste »	Le Makhzen	tournant le dos	une cause juste
« le Front [...] a vivement dénoncé l’entêtement du régime »	Le Front marocain	a dénoncé	l’entêtement du régime
« renforcer ses liens avec l’entité sioniste »	Le régime	renforcer	ses liens
« réprimant féroce­ment les militants pro-palestiniens »	Le régime	réprimant	les militants pro-palestiniens
« son Conseil national a souligné que... »	Le Conseil national	a souligné	la persistance de l’État marocain
« le communiqué met en lumière la nature de cette collaboration »	Le communiqué	met en lumière	la nature de cette collaboration
« affirmant que... »	Le communiqué	affirmant	une prise de position
« d’autres nations refusent de les accueillir »	d’autres nations	refusent / accueillir	les navires
« des foires économiques ouvrent leurs portes »	des foires économiques	ouvrent	leurs portes
« le régime [...] traque impitoyablement toute voix dissidente »	Le régime	traque	toute voix dissidente
« le Makhzen agit »	Le Makhzen	agit	comme si l’allégeance était une condition
« avoir simplement appelé au boycott »	défenseurs / militants	appelé	au boycott
« exprimé leur rejet »	défenseurs / militants	exprimé	leur rejet
« l’arrestation [...] illustre cette répression »	L’arrestation	illustre	cette répression systématique

¹⁷ Radio Algérienne. (2025, February 25). *Maroc : Normalisation sans limites avec l’entité sioniste et cap sur la répression*. APS. <https://news.radioalgerie.dz/fr/node/60647>.

« le pouvoir ouvre grand ses portes »	Le pouvoir	ouvre	ses portes
« leur accorde des privilèges »	Le pouvoir	accorde	des privilèges
« il s'acharne sur les citoyens »	Le pouvoir / régime	s'acharne	les citoyens engagés
« révélant ainsi l'hypocrisie flagrante »	Le pouvoir / action du pouvoir	révélant	l'hypocrisie flagrante
« qui gouverne ses décisions »	L'hypocrisie	gouverne	ses décisions
« une manifestation rassemblant militants... »	manifestation	rassemblant	militants, avocats, citoyens
« venus exprimer leur rejet »	militants / avocats / citoyens	exprimer	leur rejet
« condamner la politique de musellement »	militants / avocats / citoyens	condamner	la politique de musellement
« les manifestants ont brandi les portraits »	Les manifestants	ont brandi	les portraits
« scandé des slogans »	Les manifestants	scandé	des slogans
« dénonçant un verdict »	Les manifestants	dénonçant	un verdict
« consacrer l'autoritarisme »	Le verdict	consacrer	l'autoritarisme
« transformer la justice en simple instrument »	Le verdict	transformer	la justice
« les défenseurs [...] ont affirmé que... »	Les défenseurs des droits humains	ont affirmé	une accusation contre le Makhzen
« il cherche désormais à imposer cette trahison »	Le Makhzen	cherche / imposer	cette trahison
« fera taire les consciences »	L'intimidation	fera taire	les consciences

Table 1 shows that action processes are mainly realized through active voice structures, where agency is explicitly assigned to social actors such as “le régime marocain,” “le Makhzen,” “le pouvoir,” “le Front,” “les manifestants,” and “les défenseurs des droits humains.” The article constructs a strongly agentive discourse in which political responsibility is directly attributed to Moroccan state actors, especially through clauses such as “le régime marocain poursuit,” “le Makhzen persiste,” “le régime traque,” “le pouvoir ouvre,” and “il s'acharne.” Theoretically, these active-voice structures realize what van Leeuwen (1996) terms activation, since the active role of the social actor “is most clearly foregrounded” when it is “realized by participation (grammatical participant roles)” (van Leeuwen, 1996: 44), here through material processes that assign the Actor role to Moroccan state agents.

Through activation — “realized by participation (grammatical participant roles), [whereby] the active role of the social actor in question is most clearly foregrounded” (van Leeuwen, 2008: 33) — the representation of agency is highly visible: actors are placed in subject position and associated with concrete processes such as “repression,” “denunciation,” “granting,” “condemning,” and “imposing.” The news discourse is therefore a *construal* in Fairclough’s sense. As he argues, “[t]here are three major ways in which semiosis relates to other elements of social practices and of social events: as a facet of action; in the construal (representation) of aspects of the world; and in the constitution of identities” (Fairclough, 2023: 13). This visibility of agency is not a neutral linguistic fact but an ideological selection: as Kress (1983: 45) argues, “the selection and use of lexical and transitivity features are guided by the demands of the interpersonal function,” so that the transitivity pattern itself becomes “an encoding of an ideology” (Kress, 1983: 45).

Furthermore, agency is attributed to social actors who are represented as responsible for “bad” actions and wrongdoing. The collocational and concordantial patterns are not simply governed by language as an abstract system; rather, they are discursively selected, co-indexed, and lexically juxtaposed. Their aim is to create the effect of genericization and categorization (van Leeuwen, 2008), through which the Kingdom of Morocco is referred to by different politically overloaded lexical items such as “le régime marocain,” “Makhzen,” and “le pouvoir.” The collocation network and the concordance are evidence of what Hart refers to as “discursive enactment of ideology and (de)legitimation” (Hart, 2020: 188). These lexical choices represent Morocco not through specification as an institutionally social actor, but through genericization and categorization as a homogeneous political class — a classification that relies on a stereotyped stance and assignment of negative attributes to Morocco.

In van Leeuwen’s (1996) sociosemantic terms, naming Morocco as “le régime marocain,” “le Makhzen,” and “le pouvoir” combines genericisation — representation of social actors “as classes” rather than “as specific, identifiable individuals” (van

Leeuwen, 1996: 46) — with classification, whereby actors are “referred to in terms of the major categories by means of which a given society or institution differentiates between classes of people” (van Leeuwen, 1996: 54). This collective categorisation suppresses the institutional specificity of the Moroccan state and reconstructs it as a homogeneous, negatively valued political class.

7.2.2 Event Processes

Event processes construe what happens as occurring of its own accord, without an explicit agent being held responsible. Where action processes foreground explicit agents who perform deliberate acts, event processes background or obscure them — a contrast that is itself ideologically meaningful. The comparison between the two process types reveals the full scope of the transitivity system as an ideological-discursive formation within the news discourse.

In the Radio Algérienne article, this contrast is the core ideological operation of the transitivity analysis. Where the action processes examined above activate the Moroccan state as an agent of “repression” and “betrayal” (Table 1), the event processes set out in **Table 2** naturalize “normalization,” “repression,” and “contestation” as common-sense ideologemes, presenting them as settled states of affairs. The analytical significance of this contrast lies in the ideological complementarity between the two process types: together, they produce a discourse in which the Moroccan state is simultaneously held responsible for its conduct (through the action processes) and in which “normalization” and “repression” are naturalized as accomplished realities (through the event processes), contributing to a broader representation of the Moroccan state as a morally suspect “bad actor” within the regional order and providing further evidence of an Algerian hybrid-war against Morocco that warrants more detailed examination in future research.

Table 2: Event Processes in Radio Algérienne News Discourse

Discursive patterns	Event process	Interpretation
« cette alliance contre-nature s’étend désormais à tous les secteurs »	s’étend	The phrase “tous les secteurs” functions as a strategic ambiguity (Mandel, 2019), as it leaves the domains unspecified while implying that the alliance has a broad and pervasive reach.
« la répression s’abat sur ceux qui osent s’y opposer »	s’abat	The term “repression” does not only denote coercive action; it triggers the pragmatic inference that such coercion is illegitimate and directed against protesters. The verb “s’abat” constructs repression as a violent and forceful act, while “ceux qui osent s’y opposer” represents potential protesters as oppositional social actors whose actions are symbolically associated with courage.
« des navires [...] accostent librement »	accostent	The docking of ships is presented as an observable event and, therefore, as factual. The adverb “librement” suggests the absence of restrictions or constraints, but it also implies that the action is carried out without accountability and is treated as a taken-for-granted operation. In this context, it refers to a form of commitment or complicity.
« la contestation ne faiblit pas »	ne faiblit pas	Protest is represented as a continuous and ongoing process. The negative form “ne faiblit pas” does not simply indicate continuity; it foregrounds persistence and constructs protesters as resistant social actors whose opposition remains strong despite pressure or repression. As a result, both the protests and their actors are morally legitimized, since they are represented as forms of resistance against repression.

Table 2 shows that event processes are used to represent “normalization” and “repression” as continuous social realities extended across time and space, rather than as limited or context-specific actions. Through processes such as **“s’étend,” “s’abat,” “accostent,”** and **“ne faiblit pas,”** the article constructs its discourse through ongoing and observable events. This grammatical choice naturalizes “normalization” as a taken-for-granted fact, while “repression” is represented as a recurrent, almost routine practice. In the clause **“cette alliance contre-nature s’étend désormais à tous les secteurs,”** the process **“s’étend”** represents the alliance as expanding without clear limits, while **“tous les secteurs”** functions as a strategic ambiguity, “projecting desired images consciously” (Mandel, 2019: 33).

Conceptually, event processes operate as a form of exclusion in van Leeuwen’s (1996) sense: by coding “normalization” and “repression” as agentless occurrences, the discourse backgrounds the responsible agents, since “nominalisations and process

nouns similarly allow the exclusion of social actors" (van Leeuwen, 1996: 40). The choice naturalizes these processes, presenting contested political actions as if they were autonomous events without identifiable authors.

The association between diplomatic relations and the negatively charged notion of "normalization" is also significant. The term "normalization" is not used as a neutral descriptor of interstate diplomatic relations; rather, it is entextualized and relexicalized so as to acquire a pejorative signification. Through relexicalization, a "process of coding experience in new ways by inventing lexical items" (Fowler & Kress, 1979: 33), the lexical item "normalization" is transformed into an ideologeme serving the broader Algerian anti-Moroccan propaganda strategy, through which Morocco's foreign policy choices are delegitimized and represented as morally wrong and condemnable. This framing reduces and subordinates diplomatic relations to evaluative language, thereby constructing the semantics of ideological complicity, as if Morocco were directly involved in Israel's conflicts in the Middle East. However, the news discourse of Radio Algérienne remains silent about and obscures the official framework of the 2020 Tripartite Declaration, which states in its fourth paragraph that "[r]ecalling the exchanged views, during the same conversation between His Majesty King Mohammed VI and His Excellency Donald Trump, on the current situation in the Middle East region in which his Majesty the King reiterated the coherent, constant and unchanged position of the Kingdom of Morocco on the Palestinian question".¹⁸

The event process "**accostent**" is particularly significant because it transforms a contested allegation into a taken-for-granted fact. The docking of ships is represented as evidence of collaboration, that is, as evidence of "**normalization**," but the discourse does not report the controversial status of the accusation. Maersk formally rejected allegations that its vessels were transporting weapons or ammunition to Israel and stated that some activist claims relied on inaccurate allegations, assumptions presented as facts, and misleading uses of public data.¹⁹ In this sense, the event process functions as a discursive recontextualization of what may be read as disinformation. In van Leeuwen's (1996) terms, the docking is represented through impersonalisation and objectivation, whereby actors are "represented by means of reference to a place or thing closely associated [...] with the activity they are represented as being engaged in" (van Leeuwen, 1996: 59); the ships, not the contested human decisions behind them, are foregrounded, which lends the allegation "a kind of impersonal authority" (van Leeuwen, 1996: 60) and obscures its disputed status.

Similarly, repression is represented as a continuous and almost absolute practice. This representation gives repression an overwhelming and generalized character, as if it were inherent to Moroccan state practice. However, some legitimate forms of state coercion are recognized and governed by law, particularly in situations involving public order, national security, or sovereignty issues. Williams (2019) refers to this as the inescapable need for coercion, stressing that "[p]rocedurally, democracies will always have to accept some level of unfair coercion in order to produce outcomes that approximate the democratic criterion of treating each individual's interests equally" (p. 50). Not surprisingly, scholars argue that power is not inherently negative; Blommaert (2005: 1), for instance, is explicit when he writes that "[P]ower is not a bad thing," arguing that "those who are in power will confirm it. They will argue convincingly that power is necessary in every system, for it is often that which allows the system to function in particular ways, without which the system would disintegrate or cease to operate effectively."

The negative representation of Moroccan state action as "**repression**" not only provides concrete evidence of stance-taking and subjectivity in the news discourse, but is also significant when projected onto the Algerian political context, particularly in relation to how freedom and the free press are framed in presidential discourse. In the interview, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune asserts that there is "**absolute freedom**," but only "**within the limits of respecting others**," adding that "**your freedom ends where the freedom of others begins**." His statement produces a discursive contradiction between "**absolute freedom**" and "**within limits**." The discourse first constructs freedom as absolute, then redefines it as conditional and limited. As far as the freedom of speech of intellectuals and activists is concerned, the President justifies Algerian coercive apparatuses and restrictions on freedom of speech through regularities fixed by the Constitution and the law, and as preventive measures against a return to the "**chaos**" preceding 2019. In this discourse, coercive state action is not represented as repression; rather, it is legitimized as a necessary legal response to insults, disorder, and threats to social cohesion.

This creates a clear contrast with Radio Algérienne's representation of Morocco. While Algerian presidential discourse recognizes the legitimacy of legal limits on expression and public order, Radio Algérienne frames similar coercive practices in Morocco through the negative lexical field of "**répression**." The article does not foreground the possibility that Moroccan state action may also be justified, from the state's perspective, by public order, national security, sovereignty, or legal considerations.

¹⁸ U.S. Department of State. (2021). Diplomatic and consular relations: Agreement between the United States of America, Morocco and Israel, signed at Rabat December 22, 2020; entered into force December 22, 2020 (Treaties and Other International Acts Series 20-1222). <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/20-1222-Morocco-Israel-Joint-Declaration.pdf>.

¹⁹ Maersk. (2025, July 1). *Maersk statement on military-related cargo shipments*. <https://www.maersk.com/news/articles/2025/03/18/maersk-statement-on-military-related-cargo-shipments>.

Instead, it represents coercion as an almost inherent feature of Moroccan state practice. This reveals a selective discursive treatment of state coercion: when applied to Algeria, restrictions are framed as constitutional, lawful, and protective of society; when attributed to Morocco, they are framed as repression.

The President’s reference to “**voices**” acting as a “**fifth column**” further reinforces this point. In the interview, dissenting or controversial speech is not treated only as individual expression; it may also be represented as externally dictated and punishable when it conflicts with the law and the Constitution. This discourse constructs a boundary between legitimate expression and speech perceived as foreign-influenced or socially destabilizing. By contrast, Radio Algérienne’s news story presents Moroccan activists and opponents through a moralized frame of courage and resistance, especially in the phrase “**ceux qui osent s’y opposer.**” Thus, the same broad issue — the state’s management of dissent — is evaluated differently depending on the ideological frame of the speaker’s position.

Therefore, the event process “**s’abat**” does more than describe repression; it participates in a polarized ideological construction. When read alongside the President’s discourse, this reveals an asymmetrical evaluative pattern: the Algerian state’s coercive authority is framed as lawful and necessary, while Moroccan state authority is represented as oppressive and illegitimate. This confrontation supports the argument that Radio Algérienne’s discourse is not simply descriptive, but ideologically organized through selective nomination, evaluation, and legitimation.

7.2.3 Nominalization

7.2.3.1 Nominalization, Agency, and Ideological Evaluation

Nominalization is very frequent in this article. It transforms actions, events, or relations into noun forms, often making them appear as stable entities or social facts.

Table 3: Nominalization Patterns in the Representation of Morocco–Israel Bilateral Relations and Political Agency

Nominalization	Process	Function in the article	Type
« normalisation »	normaliser	Represents the political process as an abstract and institutionalized reality.	Process nominalization
« répression »	réprimer	Condenses acts of repression into a general political system.	Process nominalization
« approfondissement »	approfondir	Turns the act of deepening relations into an object pursued by the regime.	Process nominalization
« trahison »	trahir	Moralizes the political act by naming it as betrayal.	Process nominalization
« alliance »	s’allier	Presents cooperation as a fixed political bloc.	Process nominalization
« alignement »	s’aligner	Represents political positioning as a state or orientation.	Process nominalization
« compromission »	se compromettre	Frames the relationship as morally compromised.	Process nominalization
« soutien »	soutenir	Turns the act of supporting Palestine into an institutional position.	Process nominalization
« entêtement »	s’entêter	Psychologizes the regime’s persistence as stubbornness.	Process nominalization
« génocide »	commettre un génocide	Represents violence as a named crime.	Process nominalization
« purification ethnique »	purifier ethniquement	Condenses violent processes into a legal-political category.	Process nominalization
« collaboration »	collaborer	Presents cooperation as structural and systematic.	Process nominalization
« mépris »	mépriser	Represents disregard as an abstract attitude.	Process nominalization
« dérive diplomatique »	dériver diplomatiquement	Represents policy movement as deviation.	Process nominalization

« arrestations arbitraires »	arrêter arbitrairement	Turns acts of arresting into a generalized repressive practice.	Process nominalization
« procès inéquitables »	juger / poursuivre en justice	Presents legal action as repeated institutional practice.	Process nominalization
« harcèlement »	harceler	Condenses repeated hostile actions into a single process noun.	Process nominalization
« boycott »	boycotter	Presents refusal or resistance as an organized act.	Process nominalization
« rejet »	rejeter	Turns opposition into a noun-object.	Process nominalization
« arrestation récente »	arrêter récemment	Refers to a specific repressive act as an event noun.	Process nominalization
« défense »	défendre	Represents political commitment as an abstract activity.	Process nominalization
« contestation »	contester	Represents protest as a continuing collective process.	Process nominalization
« manifestation »	manifester	Turns collective protest action into an event noun.	Process nominalization
« musellement »	museler	Represents silencing as a political policy.	Process nominalization
« verdict »	rendre un verdict	Condenses judicial action into a textual/legal object.	Process nominalization
« autoritarisme »	exercer une autorité coercitive	Abstracts political domination as a system.	Process nominalization
« intimidation »	intimider	Turns acts of threatening into a general strategy.	Process nominalization
« relations »	entrer en relation / relier	Presents political-diplomatic ties as an established entity.	Relational nominal
« occupation »	occuper	Condenses an ongoing political-military process into a noun.	Process nominalization
« accords »	s'accorder	Refers to political arrangements as completed institutional facts.	Process nominalization
« sentiments »	ressentir	Turns collective feeling into a social object.	Relational/state nominal object
« allégeance »	prêter allégeance	Presents loyalty as a condition or requirement.	Relational nominal
« défense »	défendre	Represents political commitment.	Process nominalization
« décisions »	décider	Turns acts of deciding into institutional products.	Process nominalization
« situation »	état de choses / configuration politique	Abstracts a set of political conditions.	State nominal
« provenance »	provenir	Encodes origin as a noun.	Relational nominal
« destination »	être destiné à / aller vers	Encodes direction or endpoint as a noun.	Relational nominal

A significant pattern is that nominalization reduces the visibility of direct agency. For example, “**répression**,” “**arrestations arbitraires**,” “**procès inéquitables**,” and “**harcèlement**” refer to repressive practices without always specifying, inside the nominal form itself, who performs them. However, the wider textual context repeatedly connects these practices to “**le régime**,” “**le Makhzen**,” and “**le pouvoir**.” In this way, nominalization does not completely erase agency; rather, it condenses agency into abstract political processes that the reader is guided to associate with Moroccan state actors.

The table also shows how nominalization contributes to ideological evaluation. Terms such as “**trahison**,” “**compromission**,” “**dérive diplomatique**,” “**allégeance**,” and “**autoritarisme**” do not just name actions; they evaluate them. They transform geopolitical choices into morally marked categories. For instance, “**normalisation**” is not presented as a neutral diplomatic process, but is associated with “**trahison**,” “**compromission**,” and “**dérive diplomatique**.” This creates a negative evaluative chain through which political relations with Israel are represented as illegitimate and morally condemned. This is

consistent with Kress's (1983) account of nominalization as ideological reification, in which "action gives way to the reification of action in nouns" (Kress, 1983: 50), so that morally loaded nominals such as "trahison" and "compromission" present evaluative judgements as though they were settled social facts.

Nominalization also helps construct repression as systematic. Forms such as "**arrestations arbitraires**," "**procès inéquitables**," "**harcèlement**," "**musellement**," and "**intimidation**" present coercive acts as recurrent practices rather than exceptional events. These nominal forms give the discourse a structural interpretation: repression appears as part of an organized political system, not as a series of individual or accidental actions. Such nominal forms also assimilate distinct coercive acts into a single collective abstraction; in van Leeuwen's (1996) terms this is assimilation, the representation of social actors and actions "as groups" rather than as individuals (van Leeuwen, 1996: 48), which lends "repression" the appearance of an organized, recurrent system rather than discrete, contestable events.

Overall, nominalization functions as a discursive resource through which the article abstracts, condenses, and evaluates geopolitical processes, transforming actions into entities, practices into systems, and geopolitical choices into moral categories. As Fowler et al. (1979: 15) put it, the rule in such cases seems to be to nominalize the verbs, allowing ideology to operate through grammar by making particular interpretations appear stable and already established.

7.2.3.2 Interdiscursive Convergence: The Presidential Template and the Order of Discourse

Having shown how nominalization condenses agency and encodes moral evaluation at the clause level, the analysis now widens to the macro level of interdiscursivity. The presidential foreign-policy discourse provides an important interdiscursive background for understanding Radio Algérienne's treatment of Morocco-Israel bilateral relations. In the media meeting, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune frames Algerian foreign policy through three recurrent principles: "**respect for state sovereignty**," "**rejection of foreign interference**," and "**support for the Palestinian cause**" (authors' translation). He presents Algeria as a state committed to non-interference in neighboring countries' internal affairs, while also positioning Palestine as a central moral and diplomatic cause. In relation to Palestine, the discourse emphasizes "the establishment of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders," rejects the idea of "Greater Israel" through the phrase "لا إسرائيل كبرى ولا هم يحزنون"²⁰ and condemns Israeli actions in the region. This framing constructs Algeria's regional identity as anti-colonial, pro-Palestinian, and opposed to Israeli foreign policy.

This convergence between the presidential discourse and the news discourse is itself an object of analysis. The president and the state-aligned outlets do not share a vocabulary — the outlets name "**l'entité sioniste**," the president rejects the project of "**Greater Israel**" — yet they share an evaluative grammar: Israel is predicated as an illegitimate and expansionist threat, the in-group as righteous, and the relation between them as Manichean. The categorical double negation of the presidential formula admits no dialogic space, while its intertextual echo of a Qur'anic cadence legitimizes the rejection through a religious-moral register and bonds an in-group around it. What travels between the two orders of discourse is therefore not the lexis but the ideogeme: a condensed sign of threat that is recontextualized — entextualized — from Arabic political-religious oratory into French journalistic scandalization, changing language, register, and genre while preserving its ideological nucleus (Fairclough, 1992a; van Dijk, 2011). Read through the discourse-historical concept of the Feindbild (Richardson & Wodak, 2022), "Greater Israel," like the "sioniste" label, functions as an enemy image: it personifies and condenses a complex geopolitics into a single, nameable, opposable entity, organizes a division between the 'innocent' and those 'to blame,' and serves as a site of permanent externalization (Volkan, 2013: 216, cited in Richardson and Wodak, 2022) onto which threat is displaced.

Explaining this convergence requires the macro level of the analysis. As the apex of the political order, the president exercises the order of discourse (Foucault, 1971), fixing the preferred reading that the news institutions — operating within the government-media nexus (Entman, 2004) as ideological apparatuses (Althusser, 1971/2004) — subsequently reproduce as the dominant meaning (Hall, 1980/2005). The flow is top-down: the presidential template is actualized in journalistic discourse, so the very convergence documented here is the empirical trace of political parallelism (Sampedro et al., 2018). In Entman's terms, the coverage is hegemonic rather than indexed — competing voices are not made visible, and the official evaluation is naturalized as common sense, in keeping with the manufacture of consent (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The presidential statement is thus not an isolated remark but a node that sets the legitimate boundary that the media then reproduce, enforce, and normalize in their coverage.

7.2.3.3 Immanent Critique and the Threshold of Antisemitic Discourse

²⁰ AL24 News. (2026) اللقاء الإعلامي الدوري للرئيس الجزائري عبد المجيد تبون مع ممثلي الصحافة الجزائرية [Periodic media interview of Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune with representatives of the Algerian press] [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIZ_zM7PuZs.

The analysis nevertheless argues that, in this instance, the discourse exceeds the bounds of legitimate state criticism and crosses into antisemitic discourse. The argument proceeds by immanent critique — a procedure, central to critical discourse studies, that interrogates a discourse through its own internal contradictions rather than by measuring it against externally imposed criteria. Three features documented above mark this threshold. First, the nominations “**l’entité sioniste**” and “**l’agresseur sioniste**” do not simply name a state in order to contest its conduct; they withhold statehood itself and replace it with an essentializing predicate, presenting aggression and illegitimacy as intrinsic properties of the actor rather than as objects of policy critique. Second, the fused ideogeme “**américano-sioniste**,” the Manichean partition of an innocent in-group from a culpable out-group, and the permanent externalization of blame reproduce the deep structure of the antisemitic “Jewish world conspiracy” — the personification of complex geopolitical processes into a single, nameable, malevolent agent — that Richardson and Wodak (2022) identify as constitutive of the Feindbild. Third, the evaluative double standard traced between the Algerian and Moroccan cases is the internal contradiction that immanent critique brings to light: coercive state action is discursively coded as “lawful” when Algerian and as “repression” when Moroccan, just as the United States figures as a “partner” in the diplomatic order of discourse and an “aggressor” in the news.

Read in this light, “normalization” — like the “sioniste” label — is not a neutral object whose criticism is self-evidently legitimate but an ideogeme (Epstein, 1991) drawn from the repertoire of the Algerian order of discourse and, in Laclau’s (2005; 2007) terms, an empty or floating signifier: it is entextualized so as to reconstruct Israel as something other than a recognized state and member of the United Nations — its statehood absorbed and annihilated (anéanti) — and represented through antisemitic discourse, a form of “bad talk” and ultimately of hate speech that weaponizes the public mind through illegitimate manipulation (van Dijk, 2008). Following Richardson and Wodak’s (2022) demonstration that such conspiratorial personification functions as antisemitism even when its proximate target is framed otherwise, the target news discourse — and the presidential statement on Israel that licenses it — are read here not as criticism of a state but as a manifestation of antisemitic discourse, instrumentalized within an official, state-aligned government–media nexus. Approached as argumentation in context (van Eemeren, 2010), such discourse forecloses reasonable resolution: by annihilating the standing of its object rather than contesting its claims, it can only entrench deep disagreement, foster intolerance, and erode the conditions of peace.

7.2.3.3.1 The Moroccan Sahara issue and the Internal Contradiction of the Algerian Order of Discourse: Immutability Contested from Within

The immanent critique developed above reveals a further, structurally analogous contradiction within the Algerian order of discourse — one concerning the Moroccan Sahara — that deepens the paper’s central argument about the internal incoherence of the *dispositif discursif*. Recent presidential talks, diffused by the same AL24News outlet that the paper identifies as a key node of the government–media nexus, expose an internal fissure between the official narrative of « immuabilité » (immutability) and a discursive instability that, viewed through Fairclough’s (1992) framework of discourse change, signals the potential for a hegemonic re-articulation of Algeria’s position on the conflict.

In the AL24News interview presented in the present study as a useful prelude, journalist Sarah Charif frames her question around the visit of U.S. Deputy Secretary Christopher Landau and invites President Tebboune to confirm Algeria’s « **position immuable** » on Palestine and the “Western Sahara.” The presidential response is revealing in its brevity and discursive caution: « **je ne vous apprend rien Madame... pour le Sahara Occidental, il y a une résolution de l’ONU, et l’ONU est en train de faire son chemin sans accro entre nous** (Algérie et ONU) »²¹ (authors’ translation: “I am not telling you anything new, Madam... for the Western Sahara, there is a UN resolution, and the UN is proceeding without friction between us — Algeria and the UN”). Three features of this utterance are discursively significant. First, the president implicitly accepts the journalist’s framing (position *immuable*) without explicitly reproducing the phrase, thereby neither confirming nor contesting it — a form of discursive hedging that differs markedly from the assertive declarative style he adopts on Palestine. Second, he displaces agency entirely onto the UN and its resolution, effacing Algeria’s own strategic stakes. Third, the expression « **sans accro** » — without friction — performs a normalizing move that forecloses any acknowledgment of the diplomatic pressure exercised by U.S.-facilitated negotiations involving Algeria, Morocco, the Polisario Front, and Mauritania on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2797 (2025). In Fairclough’s (1992: 97) terms, this constitutes an instance of “naturalization”: a discursive move through which what is contested is represented as self-evident and unproblematic.

²¹ AL24 News. (2026) اللقاء الإعلامي الدوري للرئيس الجزائري عبد المجيد تبون مع ممثلي الصحافة الجزائرية (2026) [Periodic media interview of Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune with representatives of the Algerian press] [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIZ_zM7PuZs.

This cautious performative stands in sharp contrast with a second presidential statement, reported by 24H Algérie on 29 December 2024,²² in which Tebboune directly addresses the Moroccan autonomy plan. Far from naturalized restraint, this statement is marked by assertive ideological evaluation: « **Nous savons que l'idée du plan d'autonomie au Sahara Occidental est née à Paris. Elle n'est née ni à Rabat ni à Marrakech. C'est une idée défendue depuis Jacques Chirac** » (24H Algérie) — (“We know that the idea of the autonomy plan for Western Sahara was born in Paris. It was born neither in Rabat nor in Marrakech. It is an idea defended since Jacques Chirac,” authors’ translation). He further qualifies Morocco’s autonomy plan as a “mythe” — in Arabic, “kharafa” (خرافة), a term connoting delusion or fairy-tale — and reaffirms that Algeria’s position since the 1970 Nouadhibou summit « n’a pas changé ». Yet, crucially, the same statement acknowledges the UN resolution (1514, December 1960) and Algeria’s support for Sahrawi self-determination as grounded in international legality. The discourse thus operates simultaneously on two registers: an ideological-polemical register (France as the origin of the autonomy plan; the plan as ‘kharafa’) and a legal-diplomatic register (respect for international law; UN resolution; self-determination). This dual register is itself an ideological contradiction, since the polemical lexicon targets France — Algeria’s key economic partner and diplomatic interlocutor — in a manner that is irreconcilable with the carefully managed pragmatic partnership described in the same AL24 interview.

The juxtaposition of these two presidential texts produces what Epstein (1991: 3) would call the most “honest witness” of ideological contradictions. On the one hand, during the Landau visit, the President performs Algeria as a « **bon intermédiaire** » and a credible diplomatic partner capable of transcending « **tous les clivages idéologiques** » — a pragmatic actor whose voice on Moroccan Sahara is exercised through the UN framework. On the other hand, the 24H Algérie statement positions France as the manipulative originator of the autonomy plan and dismisses it as mythology. Since France is simultaneously a major investor, Algeria’s largest trading partner in the EU, and a state whose cooperation Algeria has needed in UN Security Council negotiations, this polemical framing is internally inconsistent. It also directly contradicts the diplomatic logic that governs the Landau-visit discourse: one cannot simultaneously present Algeria as a pragmatic, non-ideological actor and dismiss the autonomy plan — supported by France, the United States, and a majority of Security Council members — as a colonial fairy-tale. In van Dijk’s (2011) terms, the ideological square is not consistently applied even at the level of presidential discourse itself: the “Us” (Algeria, which in some contexts is represented as defender of international law and UN resolutions, and of the principle of self-determination) is not a stable referent, but a floating signifier that is alternatively positioned within UN legalism or anti-colonial nationalism, depending on the interlocutor, the context, and the diplomatic pressure of the moment.

Read through Fairclough’s (1992) social theory of discourse, these internal contradictions are not merely anecdotal inconsistencies: they are symptoms of a deeper hegemonic instability within the Algerian order of discourse on the Moroccan Sahara. For Fairclough (1992: 9), orders of discourse — “the total configuration of discursive practices within an institution or society” — are “produced, reproduced, contested and transformed in discourse” (pp. 9-10). They are not static but are the product of ongoing hegemonic struggles in which dominant discursive formations may be naturalized and reproduced, contested from within through “counter-identification” (Pêcheux, 1982), or radically restructured through what Fairclough (1992: 32) calls ‘disidentification’ — the overthrow-rearrangement of ideological formations. The Algerian order of discourse on Moroccan Sahara has, since 1970, operated through a hegemonic discursive formation in which “self-determination,” “Saharan people,” “UN resolution,” and “anti-colonialism” function as stabilized ideologemes that reproduce a single, monologic preferred reading. However, the contradictions documented above — the hedged ‘naturalization’ of the AL24 interview, the ‘kharafa’ polemic, and the strategic silence on U.S. diplomatic engagement on Resolution 2797 — are precisely the kinds of ‘tension’ and ‘struggle’ over discourse structuring what Fairclough identifies as precursors of discursive change.

What the future may reveal, in Fairclough’s sense, is a gradual but structurally compelled re-articulation of the Algerian order of discourse on the Moroccan Sahara issue. The conditions for such a change are already partially in place.

First, the adoption of Resolution 2797 by the UN Security Council, drafted by the United States and calling for negotiations based on Morocco’s autonomy plan — with Algeria abstaining — represents an institutional disruption that cannot be permanently absorbed by the existing discursive formation. As Fairclough (1992: 9) observes, changes in the “boundaries between discourse practices in an institution or the wider society are progressively shifted in ways which accord with directions of social change;” the institutional shift represented by Resolution 2797 creates a new external constraint on what can legitimately be said within the Algerian order of discourse without incurring diplomatic costs.

Second, the internal contradiction between the polemical “kharafa” register and the pragmatic non-aligned register of the Landau-visit discourse is precisely what Fairclough (1992: 10) theorizes as ‘interdiscursivity’: the constitution of a text from competing discourse conventions whose unresolved tension marks a site of potential discursive transformation. When the same enunciator draws on incompatible discourse types within the same order of discourse, the naturalized ideological coherence of

²² Métaoui, F. (2024, December 30). *Tebboune : « l'idée du plan d'autonomie au Sahara occidental est née à Paris »*. 24H Algérie. <https://www.24hdz.dz/tebboune-lidee-du-plan-dautonomie-au-sahara-occidental-est-nee-a-paris/>

that order is exposed as constructed rather than given. Third, the technologization of discourse (Fairclough, 1992: 215–18) — in which states systematically redesign discourse practices to serve geopolitical objectives — suggests that the Algerian government-media nexus retains the institutional capacity to engineer a discursive shift if political conditions were to require it: the same nexus that produced “américano-sionistes” can, through selective recontextualization, begin to naturalize a new lexical and evaluative vocabulary for the Moroccan Sahara issue. The question is not whether such a shift is inevitable, but whether the internal contradictions already visible in presidential discourse constitute what Gramsci (1971, cited in Fairclough, 1992: 9) would call a “crisis of hegemony” — a moment at which the consent generated by the existing order of discourse begins to fracture, creating the discursive conditions for realignment.

This section thus contributes to the paper’s broader argument in two ways. First, it deepens the analysis of internal contradiction within the Algerian order of discourse: the Moroccan Sahara issue reveals not only a double standard between the diplomatic and the media order, but a double standard internal to presidential discourse itself. Second, it extends the paper’s Faircloughian framework beyond its descriptive-analytical function to a prospective one, showing that Critical Discourse Studies — and Fairclough’s (1992) social theory of discourse change in particular — provides the theoretical resources for projecting how an ideologically overdetermined order of discourse may evolve under sustained structural pressure. The analysis of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune’s statements on Moroccan Sahara shows that the Algerian *dispositif discursif* on this question is not simply monologic and closed, but is traversed by competing voices, pragmatic adjustments, and unresolved ideological tensions — precisely the conditions that, in Fairclough’s framework, characterize a discursive formation in transition.

7.2.3.4 “Normalization” as a Stigmatized and Weaponized Token: From Diplomacy to Conspiracy, and Its Uncritical Circulation in Academic Discourse

The preceding analysis indicates that, in Radio Algérienne’s discourse, “normalisation” does not function as a neutral descriptor of interstate relations but as a stigmatized and weaponized token. This reading is grounded in the premise — central to critical discourse studies and to the present article — that words and the discourses they construct are never neutral: they are either ideologically driven or the product of ideological manipulation. Language weaponization may be defined as “the gradual, political process in which dominant groups use words, discourse, and language in any form to inflict harm on minoritized groups” (Pentón Herrera, 2026: 3), a process in which “language begins as a tool for social interaction and meaning construction and is gradually transformed into a weapon through repeated, purposeful acts of ideological reinforcement and manipulation” (Pentón Herrera, 2026: 4). Re-described in these terms, the recurrent, morally charged deployment of “normalisation” is not a description of Morocco’s foreign policy but an instrument that delegitimizes it.

Two mechanisms identified in this framework illuminate how the token acquires its pejorative charge. The first is stigmatization and othering, “an active, calculated process” through which a “deviant attribute considered inferior, undesired, or sinful by the dominant groups” is assigned to the other, producing a “clear division of ‘us’[...] and ‘them’” (Pentón Herrera, 2026: 6–7). By coupling “normalisation” with “trahison,” “compromission,” and “allégeance,” the discourse stigmatizes Morocco and partitions the field into a loyal in-group and a treacherous out-group. The second is language conditioning, “the gradual internalization of such linguistic cues by societies and individuals,” whereby “through repetition, exposure, and reinforcement, certain words acquire emotional weight and ideological charge, becoming normalized as instruments of control” (Pentón Herrera, 2026: 10). Through such conditioning, the technical diplomatic term “normalisation” is reflexively associated with betrayal, so that its mere appearance pre-activates suspicion and moral condemnation.

Two further concepts clarify the effect of this conditioning. The third is the distortion and reduction of complex international relations: because “language does not merely describe reality but constructs it, shaping what is thinkable, sayable, and ultimately permissible within a community” (Pentón Herrera, 2026: 9–10), the weaponized token collapses a multilayered diplomatic process into a single accusatory frame of conspiracy and hidden alliance. The fourth is harm understood as delegitimization, since dehumanizing or stigmatizing discourse “often occurs alongside delegitimization, a process through which the targeted group is framed as undeserving of rights, empathy, or protection” (Pentón Herrera, 2026: 8). In the corpus, this harm is symbolic and political: Morocco is recast as morally blameworthy and excluded from the category of legitimate diplomatic actors, while the disputing of its sovereignty is rendered self-evidently just.

The principal theoretical contribution advanced here is that this weaponization is not confined to state-aligned media or to elite political rhetoric; it also migrates into academic discourse, where the token is frequently reproduced without critical distancing. Once “normalization” enters the academic order of discourse as a taken-for-granted descriptor, it escapes the critical questioning that critical discourse studies would otherwise demand, and its ideological sedimentation is silently ratified by scholarly authority. A representative instance is Maghraoui’s (2025) chapter, “The Multiple Layers of Morocco’s Normalization with Israel,” in which the contested token “normalization” organizes the analytic frame itself rather than being treated as an object of critique. The point is not to dispute the chapter’s substantive claims but to observe that adopting “normalization” as a neutral analytic category imports, unexamined, the very evaluative grammar that this article seeks to denaturalize. This is consistent with Kress’s

(1983: 45) argument that "any text is therefore an encoding of an ideology," and it extends the critique of ideologically driven language from public and elite discourse to academic research itself: if words are never neutral, then scholarly vocabulary, too, requires critical distanciation lest it reproduce the manipulations it purports to study.

7.2.4 Gossip, Hard News, and the Social Work of Moral Judgment

Read as a whole, the Radio Algérienne article shows that gossip in hard news is not informal chatter but a structured public discourse embedded in the conventional schema of headline, lead, and the inverted pyramid. It is institutionalized through journalistic format, moralized through evaluative vocabulary ("trahison," "compromission," "répression"), evidentialized through references to activists, protests, and a national "communiqué," and politicized through the Algeria–Morocco–Palestine–Israel frame. In this way, a contested allegation — such as the docking of a vessel reported as carrying weapons, which the carrier formally denied — is recontextualized as evidence of "complicity," guiding readers toward a preferred moral reading and enabling them to judge, align, and condemn.

In Algerian online news discourse, gossip is not simply reproduced as rumor; rather, it is reformulated into a hard-news register. Radio Algérienne's coverage of Morocco's bilateral relations with Israel and of the "accostage" of Israeli-linked or Israel-bound ships at Moroccan ports transforms gossip's central operations — moral evaluation, reputational judgment, suspicion, and the narration of hidden complicity — into institutionalized political discourse. Through labels such as "Makhzen," "entité sioniste," "normalisation," and "scandale," this coverage constructs Morocco not only as a neighboring state but as a morally compromised actor. In this sense, hard news performs the social work of gossip: it polices collective norms, dramatizes betrayal, and produces a community of readers positioned against normalization.

8. Discussion

The analysis of the three articles confirms the study's central claim that Algerian online foreign-affairs reporting does not simply inform readers about international events but recurrently transforms hard news into a moralized, gossip-laden discourse. Across the Iran–Israel–United States narrative and the Morocco–Israel normalization narrative, the same discursive grammar reappears: negative naming, polarization, emotional and moral evaluation, and nominalization. These are the mechanisms anticipated in the theoretical framework, in which gossip's operations — insinuation, moral judgment, reputational evaluation, and scandalization — were predicted to migrate into hard-news genres such as foreign-policy reporting.

The first research question — how gossip is linguistically manifested in Algerian online foreign-policy hard news — is answered consistently across the corpus. In the APS articles, gossip surfaces through naming ("l'entité sioniste," "l'agresseur sioniste," "américano-sionistes"), through the scandal frame that construes war as transgression, and through a quotation-integrity violation in which the parenthetical ("l'entité sioniste") is interpolated into António Guterres's statement — words absent from the original United Nations text. In the Radio Algérienne article, gossip is realized through transitivity and nominalization: action processes activate "le régime marocain," "le Makhzen," and "le pouvoir" as agents of "repression" and "betrayal," while nominalized forms such as "normalisation," "répression," "trahison," and "compromission" condense political choices into morally marked categories. This confirms the hypothesis that gossip traces are linguistically manifested through explicit evaluative lexical choices, including adjectives, nominations, and labels.

The second research question — how scandalization represents foreign-policy events and actors as morally problematic or politically illegitimate — is equally supported. Following Thompson's account of scandal as transgression of certain values, norms, or moral codes (Thompson, 2000), the corpus repeatedly elevates ordinary interstate relations to the level of moral drama: military conflict becomes "aggression," bilateral relations become "normalisation" as "trahison," and a contested maritime allegation becomes evidence of "complicity" despite the carrier's formal rejection of the claim. Scandalization thus operates as a delegitimizing device, excluding Israel and Morocco from the category of legitimate actors while including Iran, Palestine, and Moroccan anti-normalization activists in the category of victims or moral resisters. In the Iran–Israel–United States narrative in particular, this delegitimization takes the form of enemy-image (Feindbild) construction: APS's naming of Israel as "l'entité" and "l'agresseur sioniste" and the fused label "américano-sionistes" personify a complex conflict into a single blameworthy actor, aligning the present scandalization findings with the discourse-historical analysis of antisemitic enemy images (Richardson & Wodak, 2022).

These findings substantiate the broader argument that gossip in Algerian news functions as both a discursive and a social practice embedded in the government–media nexus (Entman, 2004) and reinforced through political parallelism (Sampedro et al., 2018). The asymmetry made visible in the Radio Algérienne case is decisive: state coercion is framed as lawful, constitutional, and protective when associated with Algeria in presidential discourse, yet as "répression" and "musellement" when attributed to Morocco. This double standard is the clearest empirical evidence of van Dijk's ideological square — positive self-representation and negative other-representation — operating across two orders of discourse, the diplomatic and the journalistic. Crucially, this

asymmetry is not merely an inconsistency between two texts but a structural property of the order of discourse itself: the same category — coercive state action — acquires opposite moral valences depending solely on the actor to whom it is attributed. This confirms that evaluation in the corpus is governed not by the events reported but by the predefined ideological positions of the in-group and out-group, which is precisely what distinguishes ideologically driven gossip from ordinary journalistic selection.

Read together, the three articles also confirm the Foucauldian dimension of the hypothesis: the recurrence of the same naming, evaluation, and legitimation patterns across different outlets and discursive events indicates an institutional order of discourse — a *dispositif discursif* — that governs who may speak, whose voice is subordinated, and which meanings are privileged as preferred. The corpus therefore exhibits biased, ethically deficient journalism that falls short of objectivity, balance, and source plurality. Taken together, the three answers converge on a single finding: gossip in Algerian foreign-affairs hard news is dialogic in form but monologic in function, as hypothesized. The heterogeneity of voices — Guterres, the Maersk statement, institutional communiqués — is real, but each voice is recontextualized and subordinated to one ideological background, so that apparent plurality conceals a unified evaluative stance. This is the mechanism through which the *dispositif discursif* reproduces itself across outlets and discursive events. What remains, then, is to specify the theoretical and methodological consequences of this finding, and to mark the boundaries within which it holds — including the conditions under which the Algerian order of discourse on the Moroccan Sahara may itself undergo realignment, as the following paragraph and the Conclusion address.

A further dimension of the paper's central argument, revealed by the integration of additional presidential texts circulated via AL24News and 24H Algérie, concerns the internal contradiction within the Algerian order of discourse on the Moroccan Sahara. Two presidential statements — Tebboune's hedged, UN-deferential response to journalist Sarah Charif during the Landau-visit interview (« **l'ONU est en train de faire son chemin sans accro** ») and his assertive declaration that the autonomy plan was « **née à Paris** » and constitutes a « **kharafa** » (24H Algérie) — expose a double standard internal to presidential discourse itself, one that mirrors and deepens the US/diplomatic-versus-media double standard documented in §7.1.2.3. Read through Fairclough's (1992) theory of discourse change, these contradictions are not merely rhetorical inconsistencies: they indicate a hegemonic instability within the Algerian order of discourse, in which competing discourse types — UN legalism, anti-colonial nationalism, and pragmatic non-alignment — are articulated through interdiscursivity (Fairclough, 1992: 9) without stable resolution. The institutional disruption represented by UN Security Council Resolution 2797 (2025) — calling for negotiations based on Morocco's autonomy plan, drafted by the United States, with Algeria abstaining — creates an external constraint that the existing ideological formation struggles to absorb. The internal contradictions documented here thus function as precursors of potential discursive realignment: in Gramscian terms (Gramsci, 1971, cited in Fairclough, 1992: 9), they constitute the early signs of a 'crisis of hegemony' within the Algerian order of discourse on Moroccan Sahara, whose outcome — further naturalization of the existing formation, counter-identification, or disidentification (Pêcheux, 1982) — future discourse analysis of the dossier may seek to track.

9. Conclusion

This article examined how Algerian online foreign-affairs hard news represents international actors and events through moralized and evaluative language, and demonstrated that such reporting recurrently migrates from information toward gossip, scandalization, and deception. On the basis of three representative articles — two by Algeria Press Service on the Iran–Israel–United States confrontation and one by Radio Algérienne on Morocco–Israel bilateral relations — the study confirms its hypothesis and answers both research questions. Gossip is linguistically manifested through naming, polarization, transitivity, and nominalization; scandalization recurrently transforms diplomacy and conflict into moral transgression in order to delegitimize the actors involved.

The contribution is threefold. First, theoretically, the study extends the concept of gossip beyond celebrity and tabloid culture, showing that its mechanisms of insinuation, reputational evaluation, and moral judgment can be entextualized within the schematic superstructure of hard news. In the coverage of the Iran–Israel–United States conflict, these gossip and scandalization mechanisms further converge with the discourse-historical construction of the enemy image, or *Feindbild* (Richardson & Wodak, 2022). Second, empirically, the study demonstrates through forensic-linguistic verification that deceptive source recontextualization constitutes a structural feature of the Algerian government–media nexus and its dominant order of discourse, producing political parallelism and a systematic asymmetry between the in-group and the out-group. Third, prospectively, by applying Fairclough's (1992) theory of discourse change to the internal contradictions documented in presidential discourse on the Moroccan Sahara, the study demonstrates that Critical Discourse Studies can serve not only as a tool of diagnosis but also of projection, identifying the conditions under which an ideologically overdetermined order of discourse may undergo hegemonic realignment.

This diagnosis is owed to the Glasgow University Media Group (1980), for whom news becomes "bad" not because the events reported are bad but because routine professional practice yields restricted, one-sided accounts whose surface of balance

and impartiality — a stylistic “naturalism” — conceals the ideological work being performed. In their terms, the most revealing instances are those “where individuals who cannot respond on equal terms are singled out for attack on major information platforms, exposing the working ideology of news producers in ways that cannot be justified by professional codes or cultural doctrines of fairness” (Glasgow University Media Group, 1980: xiii).

The present corpus radicalizes this insight: here the same surface forms of impartial reporting are no longer the unintended residue of routine practice but are deliberately instrumentalized within a state-aligned government–media nexus. Algerian foreign-affairs coverage thus exemplifies “bad news” in a double sense: it reports crisis while enacting bad professional practice—gossip, scandalization, and the deceptive recontextualization of sources—that falls short of media-ethics standards. In this double sense, the study’s title is not rhetorical but diagnostic: the news is “bad” because it narrates conflict, and “bad” again because the narration itself violates the professional norms—accuracy, balance, source fidelity—that distinguish reporting from propaganda. The deceptive interpolation into Guterres’s statement is the clearest instance of this second sense, since it converts the authority of an institutional source into a vehicle for an evaluation that source never made. A second emblematic case is the representation of a ship docking in Morocco as proof of “normalization” through alleged weapons transport to Israel, even though Maersk has explicitly denied that its vessels carried arms or ammunition. In this instance, the discourse mobilizes unverified accusations as hard news, transforming a contested claim into a moralized narrative of collaboration and threat in order to galvanize activists and shape public opinion.

The study is necessarily limited by its corpus of three articles, deliberately kept small to permit a fine-grained, qualitative, and source-verified analysis rather than statistical generalization; the findings are therefore offered as analytically rather than statistically generalizable. Future research can extend this framework well beyond the present corpus. Particularly promising are the controversial France–Algeria diplomatic dispute and the United Arab Emirates–Algeria controversy, both saturated with accusations of betrayal, conspiracy, foreign manipulation, and hidden alliances. Comparative analysis of these cases — and of additional outlets, languages, and multimodal formats — would provide further evidence of how gossip is constructed and how it migrates into hard news, and would allow the model proposed here to be tested diachronically as Algeria’s regional and international relations evolve.

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