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Analyzing the News Coverage of Iran's Military Operation Against Israel (‘Operation True Promise’/ ‘Vadeh Sadiq’ Operation) in Turkish Media

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction:

The media present purposeful frames of reality to their audiences. They can play the role of a tool for political propaganda of governments, valuation and value creation, message induction and prominence in the field of foreign policy towards legitimizing the message of the countries involved in the world public opinion. This research has been conducted with the aim of analyzing the news coverage of Iran's military operations against Israel (‘Operation True Promise’/ ‘Vadeh Sadiq’ Operation) in three important news websites of Turkey, including Anadolu, Hurriyat and Cumhuriyet. ‘Operation True Promise’ in response to the attack of the Zionist regime (Israel) on the Iranian consulate in Damascus, in the late hours of the 25th and early morning of the April 14, 2024, was reflected as an important event in regional, extra-regional and international media news.

Turkish media, due to the importance of this country in the region in terms of economic and political power, neighboring Iran, playing an active role in international and regional issues, cultural commonalities with Iran and economic and political connections with Israel and enjoying media diversity, it has been selected as the statistical population of this research. This research is based on framing theory and its basic assumption is that,

- What is the framework for representing the ‘Operation True Promise’ on news websites in Turkey?

- Is there a fundamental difference between news websites in Turkey in the representation of the ‘Operation True Promise’?

Metod:

Using quantitative and qualitative content analysis methods, the news framework of the news websites Anadolu, Hürriyet, and Cumhuriyet is analyzed. The variables of this study for analyzing the media framework include: number of units of analysis, news style, news source, frequently used news terms, news value, news orientation in the headline, type of reaction, positive reaction method, orientation in the headline and text, feedback on the ‘Operation True Promise’, reasons for carrying out the ‘Operation True Promise’, and consequences of the ‘Operation True Promise’. Coding instructions were prepared based on the topic and purpose of the research, and based on that, the desired news was extracted and coded. The contents related to ‘Operation True Promise’ in Anadolu, Hurriyat and Cumhuriyet news websites from April 13 to April 16 were selected as the statistical population of this research. Based on this, 202 contents related to the research topic were extracted and analyzed. The frequency and percentage distribution of the units of analysis included 32.7% related to the Anadolu news website, 45% related to the Hurriyet website, and 22.3% related to the Cumhuriyet news website.

Results:

The findings of the research show that:

- "News" style (88.6%) is the most important content presentation format and "Report" and "Article" as other styles used by Turkish media in the subject under investigation. The "news" format was observed more on the Anadolu website (90.91%) than on the other two websites, and this presentation style was observed on the Hürriyet website (90.11%) and on the Cumhuriyet website (82.22%). The Hurriyet website, which used the "report" format more (89.9%), lacked the "article" format. The Cumhuriyet website, which used the article format more (89.8%), was also distinct from the other two websites.
- The description of the "News Source" data also shows that the three most important news sources, in order of importance, were the Zionist regime (21.26%), Iran (17.14%), and the United States and NATO member countries (16%). The second group of "news sources" included the United States and NATO (16%), European countries and G7 countries (9.79%), Turkey (8.1%), and Russia and China (6.1%). Therefore, the contribution of Iran in providing the contents of the media examined on the subject of ‘Operation True Promise’ was very small.
- In terms of "news value", the content analysis of the media studied shows that "reputation-interaction" was the most important "news value" (60%) of the Turkish media for covering the ‘Operation True Promise’. "Inclusion-interaction" was the second news value (20.67%) of the ‘Operation True Promise’ for coverage in the Turkish media. These two news values have the same degree of importance in all three media.
- The "news orientation" of the media under investigation shows that 58.5 percent of the headlines in terms of "orientation" were in the "neutral" category (58.5%). However, 33% of the headlines used had a "negative" orientation towards the ‘Operation True Promise’ and only 8.5% had a "positive" orientation towards the ‘Operation True Promise’. Text analysis of the analysis units also shows that a "positive" orientation towards the ‘Operation True Promise’ was observed in only 15.2% of the texts. "Positive orientation" in the headlines on the Hürriyet website with 14.29% and "positive orientation" in the texts on the Cumhuriyet website with 24.44% were the distinguishing features of these websites from others.
- Media content analysis shows that regarding "True Promise", the word "attack" was the most frequently used word (42.2%) on all websites, and the word ‘Operation True Promise’ was used only 1%. In this regard, the Turkish media's approach to opposing ‘Operation True Promise’ was explained to the audience with more reasons (13 reasons) and provided fewer arguments (4 reasons) to support this operation. Also, the media surveyed mentioned 5 positive consequences for the operation (quoting Iranian officials) and mentioned 31 negative consequences for ‘Operation True Promise’. It should be noted that the consequences of "tension in the region" (6 cases) and "Iran's defeat" (4 cases) are among the cases that have been repeated in the aforementioned media.

Conclusions:

Analysis of research data based on "framing theory" shows that although the three news websites Anadolu, Hurriyet, and Cumhuriyet in Turkey are known for their different news strategies (respectively: supportive, independent, and opposing the government), they acted very similarly to each other in their coverage of the 'Operation True Promise'. Therefore, the approach of all three media outlets is classified within the "negative approach" framework. Although in this approach, Anadolu's website was "strongly negative" and the other two websites had a "moderately negative" approach. In content production, Turkish media mainly used the "news" format, "non-Iranian" sources, and the news values of "reputation-confrontation" and "inclusion-confrontation". It is likely that factors such as "Turkey's role as a regional power vis-à-vis other Middle Eastern countries" and "Turkey's economic and political relations with Israel" played an important role in creating this foreign approach in Turkish media.

Data Availability Statement

Data available on request from the authors.

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Ethical considerations

Not applicable.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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