

Hate Speech and Stereotyping Against Palestinians in Saudi and Emirati Press

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This study aimed at identifying the level of hate speech and stereotyping against Palestinians in the Saudi and Emirati press. The research analyses the content of a sample comprising two Saudi newspapers, Al-Sharq Al-Awsat and Okaz, and two Emirati newspapers, Al-Emarat Al-Youm and Al-Ittihad, from within the time period between January 1 and October 31, 2020. In the surveyed sample, hate speech and stereotyping of Palestinians coincided with the announcement of the deal of the century. This deal was rejected by the Palestinian leadership, who also rejected the normalisation steps taken by two Gulf states, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, with Israel, in contradiction with the Arab Peace Initiative, which stipulated peace between Israel and Arab countries in the event of establishing a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders. For example, some Gulf States' drama works aired in the month of Ramadan included hate speech against Palestinians, in addition to reviewing the history of the Jewish presence in the Gulf countries. The results of the researched sample show that (82.1%) of the monitored materials contain hate speech, and the percentage of stereotyping of Palestinians in the surveyed sample reached (88.2%), and (62.7%) of the materials monitored were not objective.

Key words: *Hate Speech, Stereotyping, Saudi Press, Emirati Press, the Palestinian Issue*

1- Literature Review

1-1 Media framing theory

Media-message framing enables researchers to measure message content, and provides an explanation regarding the message role through which different opinions and trends are influenced (Brewer et al., 2003). This theory is in fact a specific construction of expectations utilised by the media to raise people's awareness of social situations at certain times. It is the

communicator's purposeful process for restructuring the message in such a way as to make it fall into the category of people's perceptions and persuasive influences (Suleiman, 2013).

Goffman, who introduced this theory, used the term 'framework' for referring to a specific set of expectations that are employed to perceive social situations at certain times. The Media framing theory derives its importance from providing a practical and systematic interpretation of the way in which media cognitive and emotional effects influence the public with its diverse classes and demographic characteristics (Makkawy & Sayyed, 1998). Explanatory paradigms are introduced by the theory, and are employed in qualitative analysis for describing the significant aspects and features incorporated in the media message, that is, determining the frameworks for expert coverage of various issues and events (Suleiman, 2013).

According to Vreese (2005), framing includes mechanisms on which the news medium depends: the position the news story occupies, in addition to its specified space, symbols, supporting materials and graphics, including subjectification, dramatic emotional temptation attempts, selectivity, partial inclusion, demonisation, as well as selective choice of sources, introductions and closures used in the media content, and headings, subheadings and headers.

Media framing theory stipulates that the events and contents of the media do not hold meaning on their own except when they are situated in a specific organisation, context and media frameworks. These frameworks regulate words, texts and meanings, and use dominant social experiences and values (Entman et al., 2009).

Research results in the field of media framing show that the public is assisted by the media in understanding and interpreting events or issues they cover, particularly those receiving the utmost attention and follow-up by individuals. The role of the media here is to situate these events or issues within news frameworks, aiming to shed light upon and increase their significance compared to other topics displayed in these media, so that understanding of their contents is greatly facilitated. Individuals automatically link these frameworks to the contained subjects; based on which they are perceived and interpreted. Assessments and judgments are also made about them. This theory, therefore, can be applied to the analytical and financial aspects (Ahmed, 2009).

Hassouna (2015) reviews a set of definitions presented by some researchers. Mohamed Bassiouni, for example, considers this theory the angle of media handling in a context present in the communicator's mind. Therefore, the discourse producer makes it commensurate with his/her ideas and agendas. This is achieved by directing attention to certain aspects of the discourse while neglecting others, as well as highlighting elements and marginalising others, so that certain ideological or intellectual objectives related to the communicator, or the news medium through which the discourse was produced, are achieved.

Hassouna believes this theory examines the circumstances of the media message impact on the recipients. Therefore, it is only when events and contents of media messages are set in the organisation, context and media frameworks that they become meaningful. These frameworks regulate words, texts and meanings, and they use dominant social experiences and values. Framing the media message facilitates the measurement of the message content and explains its role in shaping opinions and trends. That is, a particular incident may not have a major significance to people unless the media outlet frames it in terms of language and wording, and sheds more light on a specific element until it becomes important at the heart of the entire social framework.

1-2 Hate speech

Hate speech refers to any discourse that spreads hatred by incitement of disputes and conflicts based on colour, race, or sect; or any incitement to deny and marginalise the other, spread discord, and accuse the other of treason and corruption (Ahmed & Al-Shayazami, 2018).

The concept of hate speech was the subject of controversy in the Educational, Scientific and Cultural United Nations Organisation "UNESCO", which defined such speech as dangerous speech, which as a concept specifies acts in which the likelihood of violence is high, in order to instigate or magnify violence committed by one group against another, and it extends to expressions that pave the way for abuse and intolerance, which may trigger discriminatory, aggressive and violent attacks.

JameKolok (2019) defined the concept of hate speech as the expression of ideas that denote the superiority or inferiority of persons or people or hatred based on nationality or religion, and may include hatred based on gender and sexual orientation.

Hate speech is defined as every speech that instigates feelings of hatred towards one or more components of society, and implicitly calls for the exclusion of its members by expulsion, annihilation or curtailment of rights, and by treating them as citizens of an inferior class. Hate speech may go beyond those within a single country and may target people, groups and segments outside it (Abu Risha, 2016).

Hate is usually shaped, nurtured and directed by specific individuals or groups against other individuals and groups who are different from the dominant ethnic, linguistic, or religious majority, often for political reasons. According to Bielsko and Biata, (2015), the presence of broader social, economic or political problems, or divisions in society, can provide fertile ground for hate messages.

Hate speech can be instigated for many reasons, primary among which is the wrong representation of the other. Other reasons include fear of competition and perceiving the other as the enemy, public culture, education, and the way history is received. Many people remain



captive to historical events and media messages, and they base their positions on prejudices and lack of information (Al-Rubaie, 2019).

According to Maabarra (2019), hate speech arises for two reasons:

- Politicians' control of the media who utilise it for their personal interests.
- Journalists' poor understanding of the potential impact of some unethical words and images, which promote hatred and incite violence.

The driver of this discourse is always intolerance, which is provoked by an emergent or old culture in society, nurtured by education at home and in school, while the media, places of worship, and official and civil organisations come in second place in terms of their role in spreading this discourse (Abu Risha, 2016).

In the same context, culture plays a prominent role in spreading hate speech. Culture in general is the set of attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviours that are shared by a group of people and transmitted from one generation to another through language and some other communication tools (Tanaka-Matsumi, 2011). Indeed, no culture in the world is free of hate. In every culture, distinction is made between groups belonging to that culture and groups outside it, and the latter often encounter a kind of hostility from the first (Sunstein & Glaeser, 2009).

It can be said that hate is an approach and a belief that are also transmitted from one generation to another through regular education tools, like other components of culture. However, hatred remains a disease that afflicts societies and threatens to divide them, especially in light of the huge number of multicultural societies that emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century due to globalisation and the consequent reduction of restrictions on the movement of individuals between countries and the openness of different cultures and civilisations to each other. From this, one society has become an incubator for individuals from different cultures and civilisations, which threatens to escalate instability within those societies in the event of increased levels of hatred between the cultures represented within them (Williams, 2007).

1-3 Stereotypes

The media significantly influence people's knowledge, opinions, perceptions and attitudes. When we receive a stream of information, in the form of pictures and news stories, we organise our knowledge of the world around us by sorting out the data and images that we receive. By simplifying them, we suit them to our perceptions and define our knowledge systems (Abu Asba, 2016).

These systems, with their various representations, are responsible not only for defining the way we perceive others, but also for what represents our vision of the world. Moreover, they significantly impact the course of our daily lives through our relationship with our social environment, and what can be achieved by perception, understanding, emotion and expectation, and by monitoring of the situation (Abu Asba, 2016).

According to Dente and Susan (2006), a stereotype can be defined as the cognitive outcome and beliefs about certain groups that are mostly negative. Debra (2004) defines stereotype as a kind of a reduced characteristic, or a way of reducing a number of characteristics of another individual, or of a group of people, which we tend to associate with a pattern of expectations. Then we treat them as if they are that same pattern.

A stereotype is based on specific experiences in addition to simple, general, fixed and distorted ideas extracted from current and historical information sources that include the media, education and different methods of socialisation (Bouchaala, 2016).

1-4 Previous Studies

Al-Rubaie (2019) conducted a study aimed at identifying the features of hate speech circulating through social media platforms and determining the role they play in spreading and accumulating hate speech. To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher used the survey method, as he relied on a sample of 130 social media users. A questionnaire was distributed to collect data and information about the research, and the results of the study showed that social networking sites contributed to the emergence of negative values that affected the accumulation of hate speech in society. Facebook, as one of the social media, was found to have a major role in building and spreading hate speech.

Al-Rahmaneh (2018) conducted a study aimed at defining the concept of hate speech and its forms circulating through social networks and its consequences on the Jordanian society, as well as determining the effects of the spread of hate speech. To achieve the objectives of the study, a descriptive approach was used, and a questionnaire was designed to collect information from a random sample. The results of the study show that the role of social media networks in hate speech and societal violence depends on the user's character and social and educational level. Such social media networks may also contribute to spreading misleading information.

Lamsih (2017) conducted a study aimed at identifying how the users of social media networks interact through these networks, and to identify the types of hate speech and the social reasons for spreading and inciting it. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the descriptive and analytical approaches were adopted. The study targeted a limited number of users of social media networks (100 individuals) in the Moroccan city of Marrakesh. The results of the study revealed that 40 percent of the users of social media networks in the study

sample were exposed to hate speech, and that some social aspects have a role in perpetuating hate speech and incitement to violence. Moreover, 71 percent of the study sample admitted that their social life was affected by the hate speech practiced on social media networks.

The study by Sahari and Nabih (2017) aimed at identifying the contents of websites and social networking sites, whether for individuals or groups, through which feelings of hatred and incitement were transmitted against certain groups within the Algerian society. One of the most important results of the study is that the image is employed by Facebook users to create hate speech, according to the person and the issue in question. Another important finding is that photos and videos are the most used by hate speech makers, and that political figures are the most targeted by hate speech.

Bielsk and Piata (2015) conducted a study that aimed at knowing the impact of hate speech and its consequences. The inductive approach was used by reviewing the literature that was directly and indirectly related to hate speech. The most important results concluded that hate speech has become a very disturbing reality that must be dealt with in a responsible manner through launching awareness and educational campaigns that target everyone, and which are related to human rights and respect for the lives and privacy of others.

2- Study Problem

The year 2020 witnessed a high level of hate speech towards Palestinians in three main areas: the first was when the Palestinians rejected the deal of the century presented by the American administration; the second was during Ramadan 2020 which witnessed drama works broadcast on the Saudi channel MBC, attacking the Palestinians and accusing them of being ungrateful and insulting towards their Saudi brothers, in addition to drama works that dealt with the Jewish presence in the Arab world before the Nakba in 1948. The latter led to protests by the Palestinians, which in turn caused Saudi newspapers to respond to this Palestinian reaction. The third area was when the Palestinians protested against the normalisation agreement that connected the Emiratis and Bahrainis on the one hand, and the Israelis on the other. This led to a spree of hate speech against the Palestinians through the Saudi and Emirati press.

This is really worrying because previous acts of hatred resulted in massacres against the Palestinians in Lebanon, for example, and in the aftermath of the Gulf War in 1990.

3- Study Hypothesis

The study is based on a set of hypotheses which, based on analysis of data, will be determined whether they are valid or not. These hypotheses include:

- The Saudi press was more involved in hate speech against the Palestinians than the Emirati press.
- Newspapers, in the sample surveyed, did not follow professional standards in their coverage of Palestinian issues, in line with the official position of both Saudi Arabia and Emirates.
- The Palestinians were stereotyped in the Saudi and Emirati press in many forms, including as rejecting peace, wasting opportunities, being ungrateful and traitorous, and similar issues, which will be surveyed within the researched sample.

4- Study Questions

The study raises a number of questions, including:

- Was there hate speech against the Palestinians in the Saudi and Emirati press in 2020 specifically?
- What are the features of hate speech in this press material?
- Is there stereotyping of the Palestinians in the discussed press materials, and how was this stereotyping?
- Are there professional and ethical violations in the journalistic reporting of the Palestinians and their cause?

5- Methodology and data collection

5-1 Methodology

This study is based on the content analysis methodology which mainly relies on transforming written information into numbers that describe the phenomenon under study. According to Suliman (2009), the method of content analysis can be defined as an objective method of quantitative and qualitative judgment at the same time, and contributes to taking the appropriate decision, as it helps in achieving the goals of scientific research that is concerned with studying in this field. In particular, research related to analysing media or journalist content. Neuendorf (2002) also thinks that content analysis is a quantitative summary analysis of the content, based on the scientific method which includes objectivity, internal subjectivity, initial design, reliability, truthfulness, generalisability, reproducibility and hypothesis testing, and is not limited to the types of variables that can be measured, nor to the context in which the content is displayed.

There are many studies that have used the content analysis method which has been used by many studies in their methodology, especially media and content analysis related studies. An example is the Al-Mansour (2015) study that aimed at analysing Arab newspapers' content

regarding their treatment of Trump's decision to acknowledge Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Azran et al. (2016) studied objectivity of Al-Jazeera in the handling of the implications of Qatar's FIFA World cup 2022 hosting.

The School of Peacemaking & Media Technology in Central Asia (2014) has also conducted a study in the Republic of "Kyrgyzia." The contents of the most important electronic newspapers published in the provinces (Osh, Jalalabad, Batkin, Bishkek, and Shwe), which included hate speech, were analysed. The results of the analysis showed that hate speech emerged because of the ethnicity that controls the government, and because of social and economic inequality.

5-2 Monitoring Sample

The surveyed sample deals with two Saudi newspapers, Al-Sharq Al-Awsat and Okaz, and two Emirati newspapers, Emirates Today and Al-Ittihad, within the time period extending from the beginning of January, 2020, until October 31, 2020.

5-3 Data Collection Technique

Data collection techniques utilised in this paper include the following:

- Preceding studies, references and available resources.
- The monitoring guide which handles the abovementioned sample, and which was subjected to arbitration by a number of media professors, before it was subjected to statistical analysis, to finally arrive at the results.

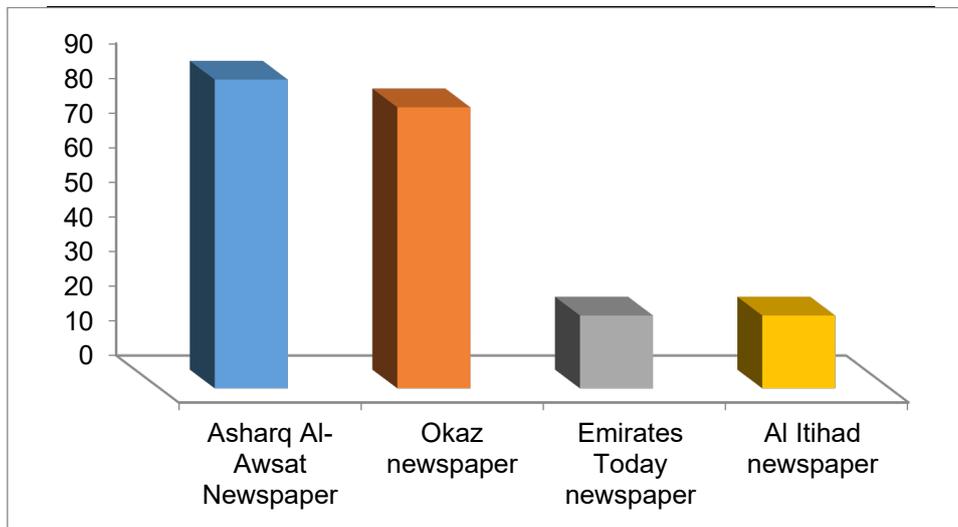
6- Data Analysis

Once the materials included in the study sample were monitored, namely the Saudi newspapers (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat and Okaz), and the Emirati newspapers (Emirates Today and Al-Ittihad), the researcher analysed the content of these newspapers according to the determinants of the monitoring guide that she prepared according to the nature of the study objectives.

Table (1) shows the newspapers that have been monitored and the press materials analysed in them:

Table (1): The proportional distribution of the study sample newspapers according to the press materials that were monitored

The newspaper	Frequency	Percent
Asharq Al-Awsat Newspaper	89	42.0%
Okaz newspaper	81	38.2%
Emirates Today newspaper	21	9.9%
Al Itihad newspaper	21	9.9%
Total	212	100%



It is noted from the table that there are 89 press articles that were monitored in Al-Sharq Al-Awsat newspaper, which accounted for (42.0%) of the total press materials that were monitored in the four newspapers, and 81 press articles were monitored in Okaz newspaper, with a percentage of (38.2). For the Emirates Today newspaper, the total articles monitored were 21 articles, constituting (9.9%). And 21 articles were also monitored in the Al Itihad newspaper, making the same percentage (9.9).

– **Category of press article**

Table (2): The proportional distribution of material by category

Category	Frequency	Percent
News story	80	37.7%
Dialogue	3	1.4%
Report	47	22.2%
Investigation	00	00
Article	80	37.7%
Portrait	00	00
Feature	2	0.9%
Total	212	100%

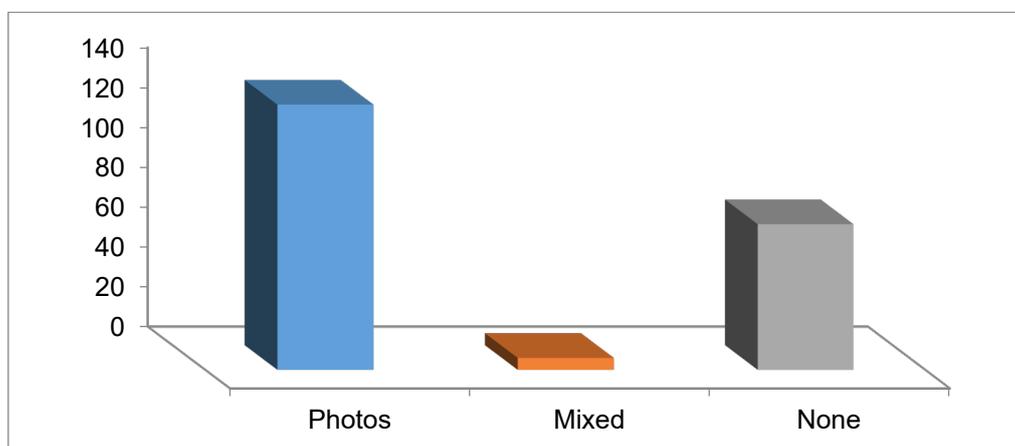
From the table, it is clear that the sample newspapers used the categories (news story - dialogue - report - article - feature) for press materials, where the focus was more on the two categories (news story) and (article), with the same percentage (37.7) for each. It is also noted that the (report) category constituted (22.2%) of the total press materials monitored, and a percentage of (1.4) for the (dialogue) category and (0.9) for the (feature) category were recorded.

– **Supporting materials in the press material:**

Table (3)

The proportional distribution of the supporting materials in the monitored material

Supporting materials	Frequency	Percent
Video	00	00
Photos	133	62.7%
Maps	00	00
Graphs	00	00
Timeline	00	00
Audio recordings	00	00
Mixed	6	2.4%
None	73	34.4%
Total	212	100%

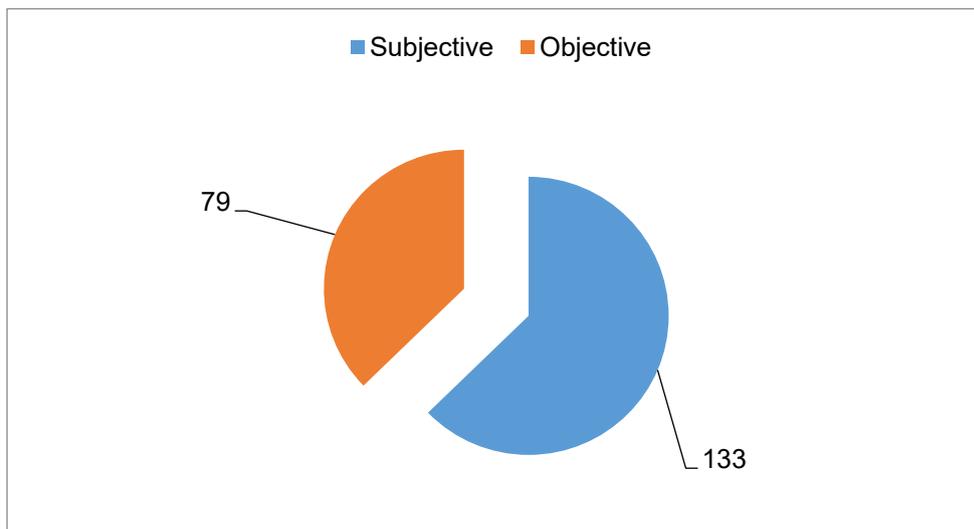


The table data indicate that most of the supporting materials that were used in the press material by the sample newspapers were (photos), with a percentage of (62.7), while (34.4 %) of the monitored press materials did not use any supporting materials.

– **Objectivity of the materials:**

Table (4): The proportional distribution of objectivity in the monitored material

Objectivity	Frequency	Percent
Subjective	133	62.7%
Objective	79	37.3%
Total	212	100%

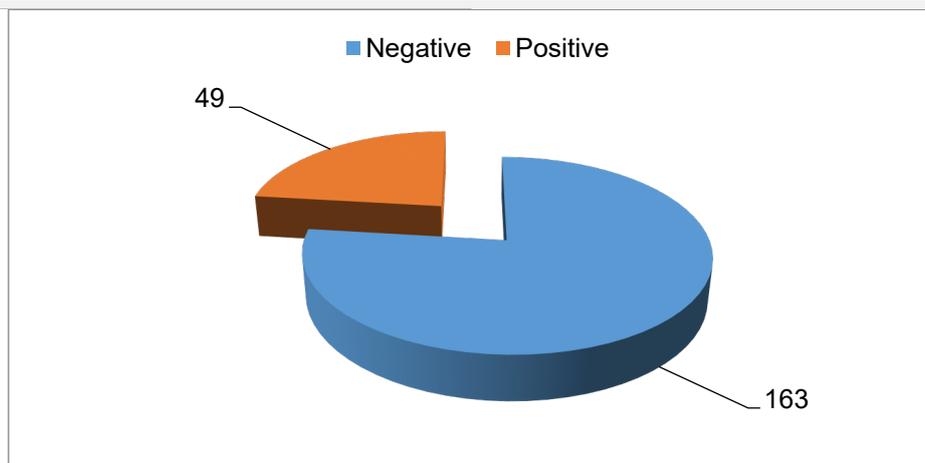


The table data indicate that (62.7%) of the monitored materials were not objective, while (37.3 %) of those materials were objective.

– **Professional orientation of material:**

Table (5): The proportional distribution of occupational orientation in the monitored subject

Professional orientation	Frequency	Percent
Negative	163	76.9%
Positive	49	23.1%
Total	212	100%



The table data indicate that (76.9%) of the monitored material had a negative professional orientation, while (23.1%) of those materials were characterised by a positive professional orientation.

- Hate Speech

Table (6): The proportional distribution of hate speech forms in the monitored press material

Forms of hate speech	Frequency	Percent
Mobilisation	41	19.3%
Incitement	18	8.5%
Insults	12	5.7%
Slander and defamation	22	10.4%
Stigmatising	43	20.3%
Accusation	38	17.9%
None	38	17.9%
Total	212	100%

It is noticed from the table that (82.1%) of the monitored materials contain hate speech, while only (17.9%) of the materials do not contain any form of hate speech. It is also noticed that (stigmatising), as one of the forms of hate speech, formed a rate of (20.3%), which is the highest, followed by (mobilisation) at a rate of (19.3%), then (accusation) at a rate of (17.9%), followed by (slander and defamation) at a rate of (10.4%), (incitement) at a rate of 8.5%, and (insults), at (5.7%).

– **Stereotyping**

Table (7): The proportional distribution of stereotyping in the monitored press material

Stereotyping forms	Frequency	Percent
Stereotyping the Palestinian as a traitor	13	6.1%
Stereotyping the Palestinian as a recruit in the occupation army	3	1.4%
Stereotyping the Palestinian as a seller of his land	11	5.2%
Stereotyping the Palestinian as a terrorist	9	4.2%
Stereotyping the Palestinian as ungrateful	26	12.3%
Stereotyping the Palestinian as hateful against Arabs and those who have a homeland	8	3.8%
Stereotyping the Palestinian as rejecting peace and wasting opportunities	23	10.8%
Stereotyping the Palestinian as financially corrupt	25	11.8%
Stereotyping the Palestinian as unjust to the peaceful Israeli	2	0.9%
Stereotyping the Palestinian as a historical burden on the Arab countries	30	14.2%
Stereotyping the Palestinian as compromising the security of Arab countries	5	2.4%
Stereotyping the Palestinian as a person with a funny accent	3	1.4%
There is no stereotyping	25	11.8%
Stereotyping the Palestinian as a dealer of the cause	29	13.7%
Total	212	100%

It is noticed from the table that most of the materials that have been monitored included stereotyping of Palestinians. Percentage of stereotyping in all materials reached (88.2%), while (11.8%) of those materials were devoid of any form of stereotyping.

The data of the table also show that forms of stereotyping of Palestinians have the following percentages: (14.2%) as a historical burden on the Arab countries (13.7%); as dealers of their cause, (12.3%); as ungrateful, (11.8%); as financially corrupt, (10.8%); as a rejecting peace and wasting opportunities, (6.1%); as traitors, (5.2%); as sellers of their homeland, (4.2%); as terrorists and extremists, (3.8%); as hateful against their Arab brothers and whoever has a homeland, (2.4%); as compromising the security of the Arab countries, (1.4%); as a recruit in the occupation army, (1.4%); as speaking a funny accent, (0.9%), and; as unfair towards the peaceful Israeli citizen.

7- Discussion and conclusions

Upon analysis of the monitored material content in both of the Saudi newspapers, (Okaz and Al-Sharq Al-Awsat), and both of the Emirati newspapers (Emirates Today and Al-Ittihad), the following results were found, which will be reviewed below, with an attempt to link them to the hypotheses and the aforementioned study questions.

The results show that there is a total of (212) press materials that the researcher monitored during the monitoring period, related to Palestinian affairs, with a percentage of (80.2%) in Saudi newspapers and (19.8%) in the Emirati newspapers, of the total material. This indicates that the Saudi newspapers are more concerned with issues related to the Palestinian cause than the Emirati newspapers. That validates the first hypothesis which states that the Saudi press addressed Palestinians and their cause more than the Emirati press.

It was also found that these newspapers focused on two categories of press materials, namely (news story) and (article) with the same percentage of (37.7%) for each, while the press materials that attempt to investigate the Palestinian issue and its analysis for the recipient were absent, which meant that the dialogue and feature were less frequent. Alongside, investigation and portraiture were completely non-existent.

The results also indicated that the most frequent supporting materials employed in the press material by the sample newspapers were: (photo) with a percentage of (62.7), while (34.4%) of the monitored press materials did not use any supporting materials. This can be explained by the type of journalism practiced by the sample newspapers, which are electronic newspapers as an extension of their paper versions that are directed primarily to readers and not to viewers. This also explains why they do not employ videos, maps, charts, or audio recordings and other supporting materials that could have clarified many facts and aspects of the Palestinian cause.

Through analysis of the monitored material content in the sample newspapers, the results show that (62.7%) of the materials were not objective, while (37.3%) of those materials were objective. Moreover, (76.9%) of the monitored materials had a negative professional orientation, while (23.1%) were characterised by a positive professional orientation. This indicates a high level of professional non-commitment, which validates the second hypothesis of the study.

The results of the study show that hate speech was present in (82.1%) of the monitored material, while (17.9%) of the material was hate-speech free. Stigmatising as a form of hate speech amounted to (20.3%), which was the highest form, followed by mobilisation, at a percentage of (19.3%), then by accusation at a percentage of (17.9%), followed by insult and defamation at a percentage of (10.4%), incitement at a percentage of (8.5%), with insults in



the last place at a percentage of (5.7%). This validates the hypothesis stipulating the presence of hate speech against Palestinians in the Saudi and Emirati press.

The results also show that most of the monitored materials contained stereotyping of Palestinians. The percentage of stereotyping in all materials was (88.2%), while only (11.8%) of those materials were devoid of any form of stereotyping.

In addition, the results indicate that stereotyping of Palestinians as a historical burden on the Arab countries reached (14.2%), stereotyping of Palestinians as dealers of their cause was (13.7%), stereotyping of Palestinians as ungrateful was (12.3%), stereotyping of Palestinians as financially corrupt was (11.8%), stereotyping of Palestinians as rejecting peace and wasting opportunities was (10.8%), stereotyping of Palestinians as traitors was (6.1%), stereotyping of Palestinians as sellers of their homeland was (5.2%), stereotyping of Palestinians as terrorists and extremists was (4.2%), stereotyping of Palestinians as a hateful against Arab brothers and whoever has a homeland was (3.8%), stereotyping of Palestinians as compromising the security of the Arab countries was (2.4%), stereotyping of Palestinians as recruits in the occupation army was (1.4%), stereotyping of Palestinians as speaking a funny accent was (1.4%), and finally, stereotyping of Palestinians as unfair towards the peaceful Israeli citizen was (0.9%).

Since stereotyping is a form of hate speech, in front of the aforementioned lineage it appears that the research hypothesis that talks about the existence of hate speech is fulfilled, in addition to the fact that this stereotyping was a form of framing the Palestinian, according to what was explained in the media framing theory on which the research was based.

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