

# **MEDIA MANIPULATION: PRESUPPOSITION TRIGGERS AND LEXICAL CHOICES IN THE CNN COVERAGE OF TWO PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN EGYPT**

**Mohamed Mohamed Mostafa El-Nashar**

Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, Egypt

## **Abstract**

Egypt has recently undergone a rare experience of having two elected presidents within a period of two years. What makes this experience so exceptional is that each president came after one of two major events; namely, the January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011 and June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013 events. While the first Islamist head of state was generally hailed as the first freely elected president, the second was either welcomed as a savior or labeled as a coup leader. Through a pragma-discursive approach, this paper investigates the presupposition triggers and lexical choices employed by the CNN in both presidential elections. The analysis will cover the news reports released two weeks before each election and two weeks after. The CNN has been chosen as it is assumed to enjoy one of the largest readerships worldwide. This paper will address media manipulation through two sources; namely, presupposition triggers and lexical choices. Presupposition is a robust linguistic tool to examine manipulation by presenting certain beliefs as true and unquestionable and presuming shared background knowledge that does not have to be explicitly asserted or justified. In so doing, presupposition adds an aura of obscurity and mystification to certain circumstances. An attempt will be made to explore whether the presupposition triggers used had positive or negative impact on the two events in general, and the candidates involved in particular. Lexical choices, including adjectival and nominal constructions, will also be investigated as another source of media manipulation. Using a qualitative and quantitative analysis, this study will address semantic and pragmatic presupposition tools on both the lexical and structural levels. The triggers to be investigated are existential, lexical, structural, factive, non-factive, counter-factual, non-restrictive relative clauses and adverbial clauses, which form the core of the presupposition phenomenon.

**Key words: Presupposition triggers, manipulation, Pragmatics, news discourse, elections, Egyptian presidents**