

Environmental Communication

Environmental Issues in Syrian Newspapers- An Analytical Study of Albaath, Althawra, and Teshreen Newspapers During the First Half of 2008

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Abstract

The problem of this study is focused on how environmental issues are presented in Syrian newspapers due to the importance of the environment, the variety of dangers it involves and how journalism deals with it. This study aims at knowing to what extent Syrian newspapers are interested in the environmental issue and how they introduce it. This study answers a number of questions: What is the number, the nature, the focus, the quality and the quantity of the topics which are concerned with the environmental issue in the studied newspapers (Albaath, Althawra, and Teshreen). These newspapers were selected for many reasons: They are the oldest Syrian newspapers which are still published, and they constitute the main base of Syrian newspapers. A sample was drawn randomly from these newspapers during the first six months of 2008 by the use of the regular industrial week method.

This study is a descriptive one and it depends on survey, content analysis and comparative methods. Data were collected by the use of an analysis form especially designed for this purpose. The reliability and validity of this form were tested and this study came to a number of conclusions, some of which are the following:

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Syrian newspapers are interested in publishing environmental topics. The percentage of environment news has increased and it occupies more than half of the published topics in the studied newspapers. Also, Syrian newspapers are more interested in environment news than presenting environmental issues. To certain extent, sources of information are neglected. These sources are represented in information banks which are considered as one of the major features of writing scientific stories. As for writing environmental stories, there was an intensive balanced presentation which displays conflicting points of views. Furthermore, the studied newspapers used various conciliations which were centered on presenting evidence and examples. The studied newspapers, also, were deeply concerned in marking readers aware of the raised environmental issues and in presenting general information about the environment.

The increase in the population forms the main environmental issue. There were various environmental problems, but no specific problem was identified. The problems were dealt with in different ways and at low levels, with the exception of the problem of the randomly spread buildings. Syrian newspapers specify a good percentage for publishing environmental topics. Most of the environmental topics are presented with pictures, usually one picture, and to certain extent most of the pictures are appropriate.

This study recommends the necessity of reconsidering the role of journalism especially in relation to the news function at the expense of other functions, such as: education, culturing, analysis and interpretation. These functions can only be achieved by journalism which has a specific environmental strategy, a well qualified and specialized journalistic cadre, and journalism which equally builds strong bridges among experts, specialists in the field of environment and readers.