The Strategies of Social Media Networks in Producing Ideologies and Rhetorical Dominance: A Study of Israeli Discourse on Twitter and Facebook

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This paper explores the role of social media networks in the production of rhetorical dominance through preferential and restricted access. It hypothesises that the digital activity of users is subject to hierarchy and classification, which determines their ability to access communicative events and public discourse, as is the case with Israeli ideological discourse. This results in a disparity in the access of control of platforms in public discourse by defining its fields, topics, issues, flow and contexts. It also consecrates Israeli rhetorical hegemony through the accounts of journalists and researchers as well as official Israeli accounts on Twitter and Facebook, of which there were eight in total in Arabic 2022. To analyse and explain Israeli discourse, the paper uses the five-fold epistemological model of the modes of operation of ideology, as established by John Thompson in his study of ideology and contemporary culture, and looks into the ways in which meanings function to establish and maintain relationships of dominance. The paper also applies critical analysis of the discourse in its three levels: the means of action, the means of representation and the means of being. Ultimately, it finds that platforms, i.e. Twitter and Facebook, contribute to the "social appropriation of discourse" and dominance over its contexts by the Israeli self through preferential access, giving it a vast space to produce ideological patterns that reflect a certain perception of the Palestinian cause, outside of time, and a vision of its relationship with the Palestinian self – a terrorist one at that– as well as the world. These ideological patterns, e.g. legitimisation, fragmentation and militarisation, merge with the visions of official Israeli institutions and show the bias of communication networks towards the Israeli self and the inequality between the two parties participating in the communicative act.