War of Terminologies in Israeli and Western Media: A Critical Media Discourse Study of Israel and Gaza War

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Sami Khalaf Al-Khawaldeh and Faysel Ahmad Alserhan
Arab Open University, Jordan

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Abstract: The current study is a critical media discourse analysis of some Israeli and international Western newspapers and TV channels that cover the Israel and Gaza war after the events of October 7th. The data were selected from various influential Israeli and Western international newspapers and TV channels such as CNBC News, Middle East News, CNN, BBC News, The Guardian, The Times of Israel, Euro News, and The New York Times. News articles directly related to the war were selected and examined. The authors have adopted Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach (1993) as a theoretical framework for analyzing both written and some spoken discourses. In this study, the socio-cognitive approach is employed to investigate how terminologies sustain dominant ideologies, marginalize groups, and trigger particular mental models that influence interpretations of the Israel-Gaza war. The findings revealed that the selected Israeli and Western newspapers and TV channels conveyed biased ideologies and political stances against Hamas and Palestinians in Gaza by employing specific terms and phrases to construct biased ideologies and legitimize the brutal violence against Gaza. The news frames Hamas as terrorists and aggressive enemies to Israel and national security. Moreover, the findings showed the biased political and ideological stances of newspapers in legitimizing the violence of Israel against civilians in Gaza, displacing Palestinians from their indigenous land, and constructing anti-Semitic ideology.

Keywords: cognitive approach, critical discourse analysis, Israel and Gaza conflict, media discourses, socio- terminology, terrorist ideology

1. Introduction

Politics and language have an intrinsically linked relationship. Politicians use language as an essential tool to create particular ideologies and power relations, as well as to influence how the public views social and political developments. Politicians purposefully use certain language to convey their beliefs, values, and reliability in order to shape and direct the public's perceptions and opinions. The importance of language in politics is emphasized by Chilton and Schäffner (1997: 206), who state that "politics cannot be conducted without language, and it is probably the case that the use of language in the constitution of social groups leads to what we call 'politics' in a broad sense." This claim emphasizes how essential language is to the development and functioning of political organizations and social institutions.

Politicians actively participate in the formation of collective identities and social cohesion using rhetorical techniques in addition to communicating their ideas and policies. In addition to generating support and creating a feeling of community

among voters, politicians use language purposefully to bolster their authority and credibility. The deliberate scripting of speeches, slogans, and public statements is intended to resonate with certain audiences and elicit desired responses. Political actors can thus use language as a potent tool to negotiate and shape the complex ground of public opinion and perception.

Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) is an interdisciplinary approach that examines the linguistic and discursive nature of political discourses and how such discourses construct social and ideological beliefs in a society (Van Dijk 1997). PDA utilizes multiple disciplines such as semantics, syntax, sociology, political science, sociolinguistics, and pragmatics to decipher political issues, agendas, propaganda, and practices. PDA is considered a critical approach that focuses on exploring the vital role political discourses play in shaping, maintaining, resisting, and abusing power in society (Fairclough and Fairclough 2013). According to Hudson (1978), language is an essential tactical tool that allows politicians to seize and hold onto power. It is a crucial instrument that has the power to shape people's attitudes, opinions, ideas, and behaviors. This manipulation not only aids in the exclusion and marginalization of particular social groups but also legitimizes politicians' actions and goals, enabling them to continue abusing their position of authority and power.

PDA focuses on analyzing these multimodal texts and discourses and investigating the ways in which language is employed to accomplish these goals. For example, a politician may incite fear or patriotism by using emotive rhetoric to mobilize public support for a contentious policy. By designating a tax increase as a "patriotic contribution," they put a positive spin on it and associate it with civic duty and pride. On the other hand, detractors might highlight its detrimental effects by using phrases like "tax burden." Such deliberate word choices have the capacity to strongly influence public opinion and uphold particular power relations.

As a scheme of analysis, PDA studies various aspects of discourse. It examines linguistic features in terms of lexical choices, grammar, and syntax. Additionally, the analysis extends to social, political, and cultural contexts to bridge discourse with underlying power relations, ideology, and political agendas. Rhetoric is also one of the main aspects of discourse that attracts the attention of discourse analysts due to its influence in manipulating people's minds and constructing and maintaining political power (Van Dijk 1997). The words used by politicians have a phenomenal influence on people's beliefs, opinions, and actions. In light of Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach, language impacts social cognition and ideologies. Social cognition refers to the mental processes involved in perceiving, interpreting, and responding to social information. The ideological function is the production, replication, and challenge of societal ideologies through speech. Ideologies are ingrained in people's thoughts and manifest in language, affecting how they see and engage with the outside world. Thus, political discourses must always be under a critical lens to uncover biased ideologies and power abuse.

Nowadays, one of the intriguing political issues engaging the entire world and dominating the news is the Israel and Gaza Strip conflict. Almost all TV channels, newspapers, and social media platforms are broadcasting, presenting, and

monitoring the ongoing actions, news, political leaders' decisions, and debates of the Israel and Gaza Strip conflict. Politicians from all over the world address and focus on the conflict in their speeches. What is intriguing in the politicians' declarations, speeches, and newspaper posts is the contrasting views and depictions of the current conflict. The nature of the language used by politicians and in newspapers and articles, in terms of words, metaphors, similes, and fixed expressions, reflects various and unequal presentations and interpretations of the ongoing conflict. Media political news and reports mislead domestic and global audiences by portraying conflict dynamics in which Israel has the right to launch a hostile attack against Gaza. Israeli and Western media try to distort the truth by showing Hamas as terrorists, encouraging the exile and displacement of Palestinians from their lands, legitimizing the war against Gaza, and constructing an anti-Semitic stereotype.

The current study is devoted to shedding light on the nature of the language used by several political figures, news articles, and social media platforms in representing and depicting the Israel and Gaza conflict. It aims to uncover the underlying political and ideological stances of Israeli and Western newspapers and TV channels in depicting the Israel and Gaza war. Moreover, the study endeavors to decipher the implicit power abuse exercised by Israel upon Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Thus, the study aims to answer two main questions:

1. What are the underlying ideologies and political representations present in the Israeli and Western newspapers and TV channels covering the Israel and Gaza war?
2. How do the selected newspapers and TV channels depict the Gaza and Hamas war? Do they imply ideological biases?

1.1 Israel and Gaza conflict

The history of the Palestine and Israel conflict dates back to 1947 when Britain and the United Nations called for dividing Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. Palestinians did not accept the establishment of the state of Israel on their lands and have resisted the Israeli conquest since that time. Consequently, Israel forcibly occupied much of the Palestinians' land and displaced them with Israeli settlements. The West Bank territory remained under Jordanian rule, while the Gaza Strip was under Egyptian control. Afterward, in 1967, Israel occupied the West Bank, Syrian Golan Heights, and Gaza Strip and did not allow Palestinians to return to their lands. The conflict between Israel and Palestine continued without a solution to end it (Masalha 1992). One of the deceptive justifications that Israel always employs to justify its violent actions against Palestine is anti-Semitism. This phenomenon is a form of discrimination and prejudice against Jewish people, dating back to the Holocaust when six million Jews were murdered by the Nazi government (Lipstadt 2019). During the Israel and Gaza war, Israeli and other Western newspapers perpetuate the idea of anti-Semitism in various ways.

In response to the severe repression and persecution inflicted upon Gaza by Israel, the Islamic resistance movement known as Hamas retaliated on October 7th by breaching Israeli barriers and military checkpoints. Hamas aimed to secure

freedom, justice, and negotiate the exchange of Palestinian detainees for Israelis. Conversely, Israel initiated an unprecedented and relentless assault on the Gaza Strip, targeting not only militants but also civilians, schools, hospitals, and various other facilities. Israel's aggressive attack resulted in the killing of thousands of innocents and children and the bombing of homes, schools, hospitals, and mosques. Moreover, Israel forced civilians to take refuge in the south of the Gaza Strip without homes and food. Despite international pressure on Israel from all sides to stop the genocide and apartheid in Gaza, it refused all international agreements and court requests. This conflict has subsequently been extensively covered by Western and Arab television channels, newspapers, and social media platforms.

1.2 Media and politics

The relationship between media and politics is interdependent, multifaceted, and intricate. Media shapes and frames public opinion and political discourses; hence, it is a weapon in politicians' hands to manipulate and sway people's minds for their own political and social purposes. Media does not merely disseminate political information, declarations, and discourses; rather, it is a vital means for emphasizing underlying power structures, power abuse, political narratives, and ideological bias. Media deploys and utilizes linguistic and semiotic resources to marginalize certain voices or groups, make some ideological stances prominent, and legitimize certain social and political practices (Fairclough 2013).

Studying media discourses has attracted the attention of researchers from various fields of linguistics and political social sciences (e.g., Darshan and Suresh 2019; Erdayani, Afandi, Aswad and Afandi 2022; KhosraviNik 2022; Yang and Van Gorp 2023). Media is a crucial means of organizing social interactions and disseminating political propaganda and campaigns. It is of paramount importance to critically investigate media political discourses to uncover implicit ideological meanings and propaganda. Critical studies of media political discourses (e.g., Amaireh 2024; Darshan and Suresh 2019; Pavlichenko 2022) increase public consciousness and awareness of significant social issues. The current study is devoted to examining media discourses of some international newspapers and TV channels depicting the Israel and Gaza conflict to unravel implicit meanings and ideologies.

2. Literature review

Critical media discourse analysis is a well-recognized field of study, demonstrating its importance and implications in the political, social, and academic domains. Understanding how news organizations use language to affect societal attitudes and public perception is made possible through studying media critical discourse analysis (CDA). By analyzing the nuanced ways in which the media presents events, emphasizes particular stories, and utilizes rhetorical devices, critical media analysis reveals underlying prejudices, power structures, and ideological influences.

Van Dijk (1995) confirmed the role of critical discourse analysis (CDA) in various fields and domains. He considered it a multidisciplinary approach that

examines the role of language in the reproduction and resistance against dominance and inequality. CDA is an attempt to uncover hidden ideologies through several strategies, such as manipulating, legitimizing, and manufacturing consent, among other ways that influence people's minds.

2.1 Gaza-Israel conflict

The Gaza-Israel conflict is one of the long-standing, intractable struggles engaging the Middle East and the entire world. Despite the struggle and anguish that Gaza has been witnessing from 1948 to the present, a small number of studies have emphasized the critical political conflict in Gaza. Rababah and Hamdan (2019) conducted a contrastive critical discourse study of speeches delivered by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to the United Nations General Assembly regarding the Gaza War (2014). The authors adopted Van Dijk's ideological square framework along with Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar to explore the group polarization of the Us versus Them dichotomy (Van Dijk 2006). The findings pointed out that the depiction of the "Self" and "Other" in the speeches presents two contrasting ideologically governed perspectives on the Gaza conflict. Both speakers present the "Self" as 'strong,' 'human,' and 'honorable' in contrast to the "Other," deemed a 'dire threat' and an 'agent of destruction.'

A critical discourse analysis conducted by Amaireh (2024) examined Al Jazeera's reports on the 2021 Israel-Palestine Crisis to analyze the news coverage by Al Jazeera English. The author employed Van Dijk's 'ideological framework square' as the theoretical framework. Fifty news reports were analyzed to uncover the ideological stance reflected in the reporting. The findings reveal that Al Jazeera reporters exhibit a clear ideological bias in their lexical choices, demonstrating either a positive or negative stance towards the crisis. Palestinians were consistently portrayed as the 'in-group,' while Israelis were depicted as the 'out-group.' Palestinians were framed as innocent victims of colonization, while Israelis were negatively characterized as victimizers, racists, and colonizers. The study underscores how Al Jazeera emphasizes the Palestinian narrative while projecting personal feelings and attitudes towards the crisis, effectively silencing the Israeli perspective and portraying them derogatorily.

By using Van Dijk's (2006) ideological square, Alnwihe and Al-Abbas (2023) examined the official statements made by Israel and Hamas to interpret the hidden ideologies and representations of the Gaza and Israel war (2021). Significant discrepancies were found in the discursive methods used by the two parties, as each highlighted its respective positive activities, accomplishments, defenses, and glorifications while downplaying the other's negative actions. Israel stressed themes of security, self-defense, and the legitimacy of its war against Hamas, while Hamas focused on themes of victimhood, resistance, and martyrdom, depicting the conflict as a fight for Palestinian liberation against Israeli oppression. In an attempt to defend its military actions as essential safeguards for Israeli residents, Israel repeatedly stressed the threat presented by Hamas's rocket launches in their statements.

Focusing on the same political conflict between Israel and Hamas (2021), Amer (2022) conducted an investigation into the BBC and New York Times' coverage of the Israeli onslaught on Gaza. The aim of the study was to analyze the primary themes and linguistic structures employed by these two powerful media outlets in presenting the Israeli and Palestinian actors, their violent actions, and how their coverage shapes a specific ideological interpretation of the events. The author employed the theoretical framework proposed by Fairclough (1992; 1995). The analysis demonstrated that by conflating two primary themes in their coverage of Israel's assault on Gaza, the two media outlets mostly aided Israel's objectives and justifications at the expense of the Palestinian narrative and rights. The Israeli war was framed as retaliation to Hamas's rockets, not as a war against Palestine. Additionally, the media outlets reduced Israel's responsibility for the collateral killing of innocents.

Amer (2017) conducted a critical discourse study to analyze the representation of political and social actors in media coverage of the Gaza war between 2008-2009. The researcher adopted Fairclough's (1995) and Van Dijk's (1998) models as a theoretical framework to scrutinize how international press outlets shape public perceptions through language and framing. The findings revealed significant similarities in representation patterns among the four newspapers. On the one hand, the newspapers foregrounded Israeli agencies in achieving a ceasefire, portraying Israeli actors predominantly in activated roles. On the other hand, the four newspapers emphasized Palestinian agencies in rejecting the ceasefire, also assigning them activated roles. Additionally, the study confirmed that news reports on the Gaza war of 2008–2009 were influenced by the political orientations of the newspapers and their liberal and conservative ideological stances.

2.2 Media and political conflict

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine is one of the global political issues involving the entire world. Tutar (2023) undertook a critical discourse analysis of the leaders' remarks regarding the conflict as released by the Russian and Ukrainian Anadolu Agency. The analysis focused on thematic analysis, word selections, context analysis, and persuasion methods. The results showed that Putin constructed authority as a source of conflict through authoritarian rhetoric. Zelensky aimed to demonstrate his right to defend because the conflict was fought on Ukrainian territory. Moreover, Vladimir Putin, the leader of Russia, frequently addresses security issues, anti-Western sentiment, and historical justification in his remarks. Putin uses historical connections and perceived threats from NATO and the West to justify Russia's actions, framing the conflict as a necessary measure to defend Russian interests and ethnic Russians.

Abdulkadir (2023) conducted a critical discourse analysis study on political interviews in Nigerian news media. The main aim of the study was to uncover the hidden ideology in politicians' interviews and demonstrate how linguistic resources and rhetoric manipulate people's cognition, beliefs, and opinions. Van Dijk's (2006) socio-cognitive approach and rhetoric served as the theoretical framework for the

study. The data consisted of two interviews of Nigerian politicians randomly selected from TV channels. The interviews were downloaded and transcribed for analysis. The findings revealed that politicians employed language to construct a biased ideology with two contrasting in-groups and out-groups. In-group members were depicted positively, while out-group members were portrayed negatively. Moreover, the study highlighted how politicians utilized ideology as a tool for incitement and persuasion, leveraging Nigeria's ethnic diversity for political gain. This study underscores the power of language in manipulating and affirming ideological stances and its effects on people's minds.

Pavlichenko (2022) adopted an integrated CDA framework (Fairclough 1989, 1995; Van Dijk, 2000; Wodak 2001, 2005, and Tenorio 2011)) to examine American and British media political discourse on the Russian and Ukrainian war. Pavlichenko (2022) investigated the discursive strategies of polarization and the use of linguistic devices such as conceptual metaphor, simile, idioms, personification, metonymy, and comparison in media political discourse. The findings revealed that both American and British politicians employed discursive strategies of polarization through linguistic devices such as labeling, evidentiality, numerical emphasis, hyperbole, victimization, personalization, and analogy to construct ideological stances. They positively labeled Ukraine as an in-group and negatively labeled Russia as an out-group. The study confirmed that language is a powerful means of constructing and reproducing a particular ideological position. American and British politicians utilized media to portray a positive image of Ukraine and a negative one of Russia.

A particularly relevant contribution to this field is the study by Hamdan, Naser, and Hamdan (2021), which focuses on ideologically motivated Arabic-English media translations related to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Their analysis of MEMRI translations reveals how covert strategies such as substitution, omission, and addition were used to reshape source texts and embed political bias. The study highlights how translation in media reporting becomes an act of ideological manipulation that distorts the original message for targeted audiences—especially in politically sensitive contexts like Palestine. This research substantiates the current study's focus on terminological manipulation in Western media, demonstrating how language in translation can serve as a tool to legitimize one narrative while marginalizing another.

Hamdan et al.'s study closely aligns with the current study, as both emphasize the political and ideological roles acted by media in shaping and framing the narratives of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through employing particular lexical choices and phrases to manipulate the perception of the international audience. The study demonstrates that translation is never neutral in media and it serves as a crucial weapon in creating power relations in the political conflict, tool for propaganda and (de)legitimatizing strategy for political acts. Hamdan et al.'s study is a key reference of the role of media in framing the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Despite the abundance of critical discourse studies conducted on the Israel and Gaza war, there has been no single study examining news coverage of the Israel and Gaza conflict after October 7th. The current study devotes itself to tackling the

ongoing conflict between Israel and Gaza and examining the language used by influential international newspapers and TV channels covering the Israel and Gaza war in 2023.

3. Methodology

3.1. Theoretical framework (Socio-Cognitive Approach)

CDA encompasses several interdisciplinary models and approaches proposed by pioneering linguists such as Wodak (2012), Fairclough (2001), and Van Dijk (1993). Each approach endeavors to investigate discourse from various aspects to unravel the intertwining relationship between language on the one hand and social, political, and ideological practices and stances on the other hand.

The current study adopts Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach (1993) to critically examine and analyze the selected data. The socio-cognitive approach is considered effective for uncovering ideologies because it integrates the analysis of discourse, cognition, and society. This comprehensive framework allows researchers to examine how language and communication reflect, shape, and reinforce social beliefs and power structures. It provides a powerful tool for uncovering and analyzing the complex ways in which ideologies are embedded in and transmitted through discourse, making it an invaluable method for critical discourse studies. The approach considers discourse as a form of social cognition, where understanding discourse structures reflects mental and ideological presentations as well.

Van Dijk (1993) is also interested in uncovering the relationship between language and power. Language is a vital weapon used to legitimize power relations, ideology, and social structure. For Van Dijk, examining discourse requires understanding the social context and background knowledge of participants.

The main standpoint of the socio-cognitive approach is centralized in the triangular framework that links discourse and society via the cognitive interface, as presented in the following diagram. Van Dijk (2016) confirms that discourse is shaped by cognition in the sense that what people have in their minds—ideologies, beliefs, attitudes, and convictions—are represented in their discourses and language practices. Similarly, language influences cognition and reinforces ideologies and power relations. In the light of the socio-cognitive approach, and to uncover mental, social, and cognitive representations residing in discourse, two levels of analysis are conducted: the macrostructure and microstructure levels of discourse.

In macrostructure analysis, the overall structure of discourse, topics, and themes are investigated to decipher the communicative goals of discourse. Microstructure analysis focuses on linguistic elements employed in discourse such as lexical choices, syntactic structures, the use of pronouns, and figurative features. The macro and micro levels are integrated into meaning-making.

3.2. Data collection

The current data are obtained from various media and press resources. Firstly, the authors targeted some influential international newspapers that directly address the Israel and Gaza conflict, as illustrated below. Secondly, the resources include TV

channels such as CNN and BBC, along with media agencies like CNBC News, Vox News, Sky News, and Canadian News. Additionally, data were sourced from politicians' official websites such as U.S. President Joe Biden, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Piers Morgan, and Josep Borrell. The distribution of data is shown in the table below.

3.3 Data analysis

The socio-cognitive approach targets both micro and macro levels of discourse structures. Micro-structure analysis investigates the linguistic elements of discourse, examining choices of lexical terms, and grammatical and syntactic structures to identify patterns, denotative and connotative meanings. Moreover, rhetorical devices such as metaphor, similes, hyperbole, and symbolism are scrutinized to understand how they are used to persuade, manipulate, and emphasize certain aspects of meaning. Macro-structure analysis focuses on the overall structure and organization of discourse, including underlying themes, arguments, and ideological underpinnings.

Table 1. The distribution of the selected data

Resources	Number of data
The Guardian British news	2
Le Monde French newspaper	1
Haaretz Israeli newspaper	1
The Times of Israel	2
Financial Times Magazine	1
Middle East News	2
Israel Defend Force	2
Economic times news	1
Morocco world news	1
Vox media	1
The staring times news	1
The US department of treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control	1
Bloomberg Originals	1
U.S mission to the OSCE	1
The starting news	1
Anadolu Agency	1
Euro news	1
Reuters news	1
Sky News	1
CBC news	1
NBC news	1
Washington News	1
CNC news	1
PBC news	1

CNBC	1
CNN	1
You Tube	1
Politicians' speeches: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Biden, Blinken, Obama, Josep Borrell	6
Total	33

The analytical process comprises specific steps or stages. In the first stage, authors collect data from the aforementioned sources, targeting news, political speeches, declarations, and posts directly addressing the Israel-Gaza conflict. In the second stage, under the socio-cognitive approach, selected data are examined to identify words, expressions, rhetorical devices, and other linguistic elements that shape and frame public social cognition of the conflict. For example, a common news headline across many newspapers reads "Israel-Hamas War." The use of "war" requires critical analysis to uncover implicit and communicative meanings. Does "war" accurately describe the current conflict?

In the third stage, data are categorized based on their political and ideological functions. Finally, results and findings are discussed, illustrated, and linked to the study's questions. For reliability and validity, all data are analyzed using the same framework to cross-verify findings. The distribution of data is generally equal among the targeted samples.

4. Findings

This section presents the results of a thorough analysis of the collected data within the theoretical framework of Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach. It examines the lexical terms and expressions employed by Israeli and international newspapers and TV channels in their coverage of Israel's actions in Gaza. The section is organized into four parts based on the ideological and political implications found within the selected data. The table below summarizes the primary findings of the study.

Table 2. The ideological and political implications

Displacement and Exile	*"Israel calls for evacuation of 1.1 million Palestinians in Gaza; at least 27 Americans killed."*
Terrorist Ideology	*"Hamas terrorists burst through the border, slaughter Israelis in their homes."*
Legitimizing Violence and Right of Existence	*"Israel has the right to defend itself."*
Anti-Semitism	*"Israel-Hamas war unleashes wave of antisemitism in Europe."*

4.1 Displacement and exile

Based on the main tenets of Critical Discourse Analysis, language functions as a crucial instrument wielded by individuals to influence cognition, social practices, justify the misuse of power, and establish ideological stances. In the context of media discourses covering the Israel-Gaza conflict, it provides a transparent view of the implicit meanings and agendas underlying these discourses. The following examples from news posted by several newspapers illustrate political and ideological stances evident in the selection of particular terms.

1. CNBC news, Amanda Macias, national security reporter, reported that "Israel calls for ***evacuation*** *of 1.1 million Palestinians in Gaza; at least 27 Americans killed".*

2. Middle East news also reported, Israel: "1.1 Million in Gaza ***should evacuat****e within 24 hours".*

3. Israel Defend Force on the official Twitter account posted that: "IDF calls for ***evacuation*** *of all civilians from Gaza City from their homes southwards, for* ***their safety*** *and protection, to move to the area south of Wadi Gaza, the river Gaza".*

4. CNN announced that "Israel military warns all Gaza city civilians ***to evacuate****".*

From a critical discourse analysis perspective, the use of the word "evacuation" by Israel in the above contexts conveys several implicit messages. It suggests that civilians' lives are in danger if they remain in their homes. Additionally, declaring the killing of 27 Americans (in Example 1) legitimizes Israel's right to defend itself and employ various forms of violence against Gaza. Linking the evacuation of Gaza civilians with the killing of 27 Americans communicates underlying political intentions, portraying Hamas (the Gaza-based resistance group) as brutal terrorists who must be defeated and eliminated. In Example 2, the use of the modal verb "should evacuate" implies that evacuation is a necessary process for Palestinians to ensure their safety. This association of evacuation with safety represents a strong recommendation from Israel, urging Palestinians to temporarily leave their homes to protect themselves. Furthermore, the 24-hour timeframe for evacuation emphasizes the urgency and seriousness of the situation, compelling Palestinians to act immediately.

Example 4 conveys a significant message by using the verb "warns" in conjunction with "evacuation," as Israel warns and urges all Gaza civilians to evacuate. The use of "warn" underscores the potential dangers for civilians who remain in Gaza. Israel aims to impress upon Palestinians the perception that Hamas poses a serious threat, portraying them as brutal terrorists and suggesting that Israel's actions are necessary to eliminate this threat and ensure Gaza's safety. Consequently, civilians in Gaza are pressured to leave their homes, aligning with Israel's efforts to defeat Hamas. The connotative and denotative meanings of verbs such as "evacuate, relocate, leave, move, flee" shape the ideological implications of displacement and exile for Palestinians from their homeland.

Scrutinizing the selected data reveals the implicit ideological and political implications favoring Israel. Moreover, a significant number of international newspapers and media outlets display bias against Gaza. The examples below (5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10) confirm Israel's underlying agenda and intent to displace and exile Palestinians from their lands.

5. The Economic Times news: "The Israeli intelligence ministry has put forward a proposal recommending the ***relocation*** *of the 2.3 million residents of the Gaza Strip to Egypt's Sinai Peninsula".*

6. Morocco World News: "Israel's Directive Shakes Gaza: 1.1 Million Palestinians Ordered to ***Relocate*** *South".*

7. YouTube Channel, Haber Lutfen: "The ***displacement*** *of Palestinians from northern Gaza to the south has begun".*

8. VOX Media: "Since Hamas's deadly attack on Israel on October 7, 1.4 million people have been ***displaced*** *in Gaza following Israeli orders to* ***flee*** *south, according to the United Nations".*

9. Middle East News: "Israel Tells Palestinians to ***Leave*** *4 Southern Gaza Towns".*

10. The Starting Times: "Israel tells Gazans to ***move*** *south or risk being seen as 'terrorist' partner".*

11. CBC News: "Israel tells Palestinians to ***move*** *south as it preps for military action".*

12. The Guardian News: "Gaza residents told to ***move*** *south as Israel prepares for expected ground assault*".

The connotative meaning of the concept "relocate" in examples (5 and 6), as used by the Israeli government and Western newspapers, reflects Israel's political manipulation and colonial ideology. The repeated use of "relocation" across media platforms, TV channels, and newspapers manipulates the perceptions of Palestinians and international audiences. It suggests that the population of Gaza should temporarily abandon conflict areas and return only after Israel has eliminated and neutralized Hamas through forceful means. Furthermore, framing "relocation" as a humanitarian act softens the gravity of Palestinians leaving their homes, portraying this significant displacement as a simple and positive action for the benefit of Gaza. This narrative is prevalent in Israeli and many international newspapers and TV channels.

Analyzing the aforementioned examples (7, 8, 9, and 10) reveals strong indications of Israel's assertive political stance, abuse of power, and colonial agenda. The use of terms such as "displacement," "move," "leave," and "flee" in these contexts reinforces Israeli policies aimed at colonizing Gaza and forcibly displacing its population. For clarification, verbs like "move" and "leave" convey implicit messages suggesting that Palestinians' departure from Gaza is not enforced by Israel but rather presented as a viable option for civilians to avoid danger posed by Hamas. Israel aims to downplay its role in displacing and exiling Palestinians from Gaza.

Moreover, the use of terms like "move," "leave," and "flee" in these contexts serves to diminish Israel's culpability for its actions in Gaza. This framing suggests

that Palestinians themselves should resolve political issues by leaving their homes, portraying Israel as a neutral actor rather than a colonial force.

4.2 Terrorist ideology

One of the widespread concepts in Israeli and other newspapers and media outlets is the use of the term "terrorists" to describe Hamas. Employing such a strong term as a label for Hamas serves to establish political stances on both local and global levels. The following examples present some of the common harsh terms used by Israeli and other newspapers in describing Hamas.

13. The Times of Israel: "Oct. 7: Hamas terrorists burst through the border, slaughter Israelis in their homes".

*14. Piers Morgan on a TV interview: "Five days ago **Terrorists** from Hamas **attacked** Israel, they murdered and raped civilians and executed ….".*

*15. "The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC)imposed sanctions on ten key Hamas **terrorist** group members, operatives, and financial facilitators in Gaza and elsewhere including Sudan, Türkiye, Algeria, and Qatar".*

*16. President Biden on the United States' Response to Hamas's **Terrorist Attacks** Against Israel and Russia's Ongoing Brutal War Against Ukraine.*

*17. U.S. Mission to the OSCE: "On the **unprecedented**, **orchestrated attack** by the Palestinian **terrorist** group Hamas against Israel".*

*18. The Times of Israel: "Israel said likely to form tribunal to try Hamas **terrorists** for October 7 atrocities- by Toi Staff".*

*19. Israel Defense Forces: "Inside Hamas **Terrorist** Tunnel Under Rantisi Hospital in Gaza".*

The consistent use of "Hamas terrorists" in the above examples communicates clear political messages and intentions by framing Hamas solely within the context of terrorism and radicalism. Israel aims to dehumanize the Hamas group by associating them with destructive, evil, and irrational acts. The term "terrorists" is used strategically to establish ideological and political positions against Hamas, shaping public perception of them as killers and enemies of humanity. Furthermore, the media portrays Hamas in a powerful position as a dangerous group capable of killing innocents, destroying property, and threatening global security.

An in-depth analysis of the selected data reveals the frequent use of hostile and violent terms alongside "terrorists," such as "slaughter," "unprecedented orchestrated attack," "burst," "atrocities," "murdered," and "raped." These terms are deliberately chosen to stigmatize Hamas and justify violence against them. For example, the term "slaughter" in Example 1 evokes a vivid and brutal image of Hamas as merciless murderers. The verb "slaughter" conveys significant aggression and brutality attributed to Hamas.

From a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective, words like "burst" and "attack" in these contexts carry strong ideological and political implications. Language is used strategically to influence perceptions and construct power relations. The verb "burst" rhetorically intensifies Hamas's violence, depicting it as explosive and indiscriminate. Similarly, the term "attack" portrays Hamas as

aggressive terrorists, framing their actions as hostile and brutal against humanity. The consistent use of "attack" perpetuates negative connotations associated with Hamas, creating a distorted and stereotypical public image of them as a threatening terrorist group. Additionally, framing Hamas's resistance and opposition as "attacks" delegitimizes their actions against Israel as illegitimate and destructive.

4.3 Legitimizing violence and right of existence

The following excerpts are taken from various international newspapers and TV channels, confirming the role of language in manipulating public opinion and perception of the current conflict between Israel and Hamas. In the examples below (20, 21, 22, and 23), the recurrent concept of "Israel has the right to defend itself," used by dominant media outlets, politicians, and newspapers, constructs ideological and political implications. Israel is portrayed as a legitimate authority with the right to exist in Palestine, and all its actions against Gaza are presented as legitimate and legal.

*20. Anadolu Agency, Blinken: "Israel has the **right** to **defend** itself".*
*21. Bloomberg Originals, Obama: "Israel Has Right to **Defend** Itself".*
*22. Euro news, the EU's top diplomat Josep Borrell said on Tuesday evening: "Israel has the **right to defend** itself, but some of its actions since Hamas' unprecedented **assault** on Saturday "counter" international humanitarian law".*
*23. Reuters news, Biden says: "Israel has **the right to defend** itself, must protect civilians".*
*24. The New York Times, "Israel Can **Defend** Itself and Uphold Its Values*".

The verb "defend" in these contexts strategically constructs power dynamics in several ways. Through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Israel is portrayed as a victim under attack by Hamas, which is framed as the aggressor. The use of "defend" underscores hierarchies and inequalities, positioning Hamas as the powerful aggressor and Israel as the defender. This framing legitimizes Israel's actions against Gaza, suggesting that these measures are not acts of aggression but necessary for self-protection and national security against the perceived threat posed by Hamas.

*25. Le Monde newspaper: "Israel-Hamas **war**: The terrible toll of excluding Gaza".*
*26. The New York Times: "Israel has responded with **airstrikes** on Gaza, and its troops have entered the territory".*
*27. Sky News: "Israel-Hamas war: Gaza satellite radar reveals extensive **damage**".*
*28. CNN Channel: "Israel says it is 'at **war**' after Hamas surprise **attack**".*

Israeli and other international newspapers use the term "war" to describe the current political conflict between Israel and Gaza. From a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective, the word "war" carries significant ideological and

political implications. It suggests a struggle between equal and opposing forces, framing the conflict as being against a powerful and threatening enemy. The use of "war" in these contexts normalizes Israel's aggressive actions against Gaza by portraying aggression and confrontation as necessary solutions to the political issues in Gaza.

The invocation of "war" serves to legitimize Israel's authority and power, granting it perceived justification to use all forms of destructive weapons and forces against Hamas. In the examples provided, Israel is depicted as noble leaders confronting a hostile enemy. The term "war" also mobilizes urgent support from Israel and its allies to counter the perceived threats posed by Hamas. While "war" typically implies an armed conflict between nations, in the context of the Israel-Hamas conflict, it exaggerates Hamas's power. There is a clear disparity in capabilities, weapons, and military forces.

Critics argue that Israel, along with its supporters in the media including writers, influencers, bloggers, and public figures, seeks to justify its actions in Gaza, particularly following the events of October 7, 2023, by labeling the conflict as a "war." This framing allows Israel to exert substantial military force on Gaza's land and sea, portraying Hamas as a terrorist entity deserving eradication. Additionally, the term "war" provides a legal rationale for Israel to justify various forms of violence against Gaza.

Israeli, American, and Western media employ a combination of logical and emotional appeals to garner international sympathy and support for defeating Hamas. By using the term "war," these media outlets implicitly construct an image of Hamas as a "state," framing the conflict as a state-versus-state confrontation. This justification enables Israel to conduct intense and sustained military operations throughout Gaza.

4.4 Anti-Semitism

A critical analysis of Israeli and many Western newspapers reveals underlying assumptions about Arab hostility towards Semitism. The following examples illustrate how the phenomenon of anti-Semitism is constructed and perpetuated in international media.

*29. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Hamas's attack on October 7 "the worst act of **anti-Semitic** violence since the Holocaust".*

*30. Financial Times Magazine: "Israel-Hamas war unleashes wave of **antisemitism** in Europe".*

Jews on the continent fear they could become a target of Muslim anger".

*31. NBC News: "The Gaza crisis is stoking **antisemitism** in the U.S. Israel's war with Hamas has emboldened some to express their hatred of Jews "very loudly".*

*32. PBC News: "Last month as the latest war between Israel and Hamas **escalated**, a wave of anger directed at Jews swept across the U.S., with watchdog groups reporting a sharp increase in **anti-Semitic attacks**".*

*33. The Washington News: "U.S. envoy for **combating antisemitism** decries rise in **anti-Jewish** incidents".*

The examples above (29, 30, 31, 32, and 33) confirm that Israeli leaders and politicians, led by Netanyahu, along with Western newspapers, continuously use the term "Anti-Semitism," which has gained significant prominence, especially at the onset of Israel's conflict in Gaza. They employ it to justify aggressive actions carried out by both military and political forces against the people of Gaza. The use of the term "Anti-Semitism" in these contexts aims to evoke emotions among world leaders and their populations, garnering support for Israeli violence and harsh actions against Gaza civilians. This justification draws on the historical persecution of Jews, invoking sympathy and solidarity.

During Israel's intense conflict in Gaza, the use of the term "Anti-Semitism" serves as a clear indication of manipulation and deception to sway public opinion through emotional exploitation in Israeli political discourse. Western media and governments often echo Israeli propaganda, reinforcing fears of Muslims and portraying them as terrorists seeking Israel's destruction.

In Example 29, Prime Minister Netanyahu equates Hamas's attacks to the Holocaust, employing a rhetorical strategy that suggests Hamas's actions are driven by an anti-Semitic ideology. In Example 30, the Financial Times uses the metaphor "wave of antisemitism" to convey several underlying assumptions and implications. The metaphor "wave" suggests a negative progression and an increase in anti-Semitism over time, creating a mental image of an overwhelming anti-Semitic movement from Hamas against Israel. Additionally, the metaphor "wave" connotes power, implying that, like powerful and dangerous ocean waves, Hamas's anti-Semitic movement is formidable and lethal. The notion of a "wave" also indicates that Hamas's anti-Semitic ideology is widespread and expanding.

A critical investigation of examples (31 and 32) confirms the political intentions and narratives of Israel and Western newspapers to portray Hamas as an anti-Semitic group. Metaphorical terms such as "stoking," "escalated," and "emboldened" suggest that Hamas deliberately intensified and fueled the anti-Semitic phenomenon. In these contexts, Hamas is portrayed as actively constructing an anti-Semitic ideology. Furthermore, using expressions like "anti-Jewish" and "hatred of Jews" confirms the underlying anti-Semitic ideology that Israeli and Western newspapers attempt to convey in their narratives.

5. Discussion

This study explores the political and ideological stances and power relations underlying news and narratives covering the Israel-Gaza War after October 7th. Various Israeli and international newspapers and TV channels are examined from Van Dijk's socio-cognitive perspective (1993). The findings provide answers to research questions. Israeli and Western media exhibit ideological biases against Gaza, manifested through specific lexical terms and expressions that normalize the displacement and exile of Gaza civilians, portray Hamas as terrorists, justify violence against Gaza, and construct anti-Semitic ideology.

The analysis highlights the use of lexicalization and recurring words and phrases to demonstrate ideological and political impacts on public and international

opinion. Consistent with Abdulkadir's study (2023), Israeli and Western media influence international audiences by employing specific words and expressions aligned with their political agendas, particularly concerning the displacement and exile of Gaza civilians. The findings suggest that Israeli and Western narratives present the displacement of Gaza civilians as a protective measure against Hamas. Terms such as "evacuate, move, leave, relocate" are used to frame Gaza as unsafe for civilians and justify the need to defeat Hamas, depicted as a threat and source of terrorism.

The findings illustrate how language depicts and frames Hamas as terrorists and a threat to Israel's and international security. Israeli and Western newspapers emphasize terms and phrases that create a brutal mental representation of Hamas, such as "Hamas terrorists burst, slaughter, they murdered, they raped, ...etc." Israeli and Western newspapers aim to sway the international audience by highlighting the events of October 7th as a terrorist action, justifying Israel's war and casualties in the Gaza Strip.

Aligned with the current study showing the media's role in shaping specific ideologies, Amaireh's (2024) research confirms that Al Jazeera reporters exhibit ideological bias against Israel. They use lexical terms framing Palestinians as innocent victims of colonization, while negatively characterizing Israelis as oppressors, racists, and colonizers. From a different perspective, the current study shows that Israeli and Western newspapers employ lexical terms to portray Israelis as victims of Hamas attacks and depict Hamas as brutal animals and terrorists.

The findings confirm ideological and political biases by Israeli and Western media against Hamas, justifying inhumane violence by Israel against Gaza through false facts and the reality of the conflict. Describing Israel's attacks on Gaza as "war" is a form of deceit and manipulation. The lexical term "war" politically legitimizes brutal violence by Israel and Western military support. Confirming the role of language in "war," Tutar's (2023) study shows that Putin used authoritarian language to construct power as a source of war.

The Anti-Semitic phenomenon is also a major ideological and political representation underlying Israeli and Western newspapers. Israel describes Hamas' attacks as hatred of Jews using expressions and lexical terms such as "act of anti-Semitic violence, a wave of antisemitism stoking antisemitism, hatred of Jews." The findings confirm that media news creates a false reality portraying Palestinians as hating Jews for historical and religious motives.

The results of the current study align to some extent with Irfan, Aqeel and Hussain’s (2024) research, which examined Islamophobia in BBC coverage of the Israel-Gaza conflict. Irfan et al. (2024) confirmed that the BBC exhibits biased ideologies against Gaza by perpetuating Islamophobic stereotypes, influencing public perception and understanding of the conflict. The study demonstrated how language serves as a vital tool used by media outlets to manipulate public perception. The findings of the current study provide clear explanations of the media's role in shaping public perception and opinion of the Israel-Gaza conflict.

6. Conclusion

The current paper contributes to critical media discourse studies. Critical media discourse analysis is a powerful tool for uncovering underlying ideologies, power abuse, and political biases. The study employed Van Dijk's (1993) Socio-cognitive model to reveal ideological and political stances in news coverage of the Israel-Gaza conflict after October 7th. The findings have demonstrated that language used by Israeli and Western newspapers and TV channels carries political and ideological biases against Hamas. The selection of particular words and expressions such as "evacuation, move, leave, relocate" manipulates minds and international opinion to support the "displacement and exile" of Palestinians from their land. Language is also employed to frame Hamas as terrorists and murderers who pose a threat to Israel, national, and international security. From a socio-cognitive perspective, media discourses use language to legitimize Israel's brutal violence against civilians in Gaza and justify Israel's right to exist. Anti-Semitism is also framed and highlighted in media discourses to justify Israel's war against Hamas. The authors recommend further studies to examine and uncover more ideological and political implications present in Israeli and Western news.

Sami Khalaf Al-Khawaldeh- Corresponding Author
Assistant Professor of Linguistics
Arab Open University/ Jordan
ORCID Number: 0000-0003-4649-0474
Email: s_khawaldeh@aou.edu.jo

Faysal Ahmad Alserhan
Associate Professor of Public Relations
Arab Open University/ Jordan
ORCID Number: 0000-0002-2601-8378
Email: f_alserhan@aou.edu.jo

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