The Echoes of Peace in Newspapers Editorials: A Corpus Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis of Israel Palestine Conflict

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Abstract
This study focuses on the analysis of the word "peace" in the news editorials in the context of Israel-Palestine issue. It takes Aljazeera as representative of Arab media and the Washington Post, New York Times, and New York Post as representative of American media. It adopts methodological framework from corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis. The corpus of around 6000 words from each representative media for the month of November 2023 is compiled. The word "peace" has been analysed by applying the peace discourse model of Gavriely-Nuri (2010) and the structured approach of ideological square by Van Dijk(1993) which posits that conflicting group ideologies are reflected and reproduced in language. The analysis reveals that the peace discourse in the newspaper editorials is mostly oppressive peace discourse that is promoting negative peace focusing on *stable, lasting, future, and secure peace* with no intention of cease-fire, focusing on the unilateral benefits, and using abstract instead of concrete language to show interest in conflict resolution and commitment to peace. Application of Van Dijk's ideological square framework reveals that there is polarization of "self" and "other" in both the corpora strengthening that conflicting ideologies of Israel and Palestine are making it clear that peace discourse is manipulated and reflecting bias for the benefit of the dominant group. The US news editorials advocate that violent means are a legitimate pathway for a peaceful reconciliation. Hamas actions have been overwhelmingly criticised and it has been portrayed as criminal. In Al Jazeera the Israeli government is depicted as aggressive, deceitful, and colonial. Both the newspapers editorials do not mention any positive actions of the "other" group and highlight only the negative ones.

Keywords: Israel-Palestine Conflict, Corpus Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis, Peace Discourse, Ideological Square, Peace Linguistics

Background
"Language has consequences …through the use of language, we create and recreate the particular worlds of understanding. (Silberstein, 2004). Words can be weaponized or can be used to make peace. Without words, peace may not be possible as all negotiations are based on language. The idea of Peace Linguistics has been around for decades; Many studies have focused on the educational

aspects of peace (Charalambous (2021), Oxford *et. al.* (2018), Curtis (2017), Gnomes de Matos (2014) Oxford (2013) However, the lack of linguistic analyses has been one of the reasons for it being unheard (Curtis, 2022). According to Curtis (2022), the founder of New Peace Linguistics (NPL), it is an in-depth systematic analysis of the language of the world's most powerful people. A central premise of NPL is that conflict arises through language and peace is also achieved through language. The study focuses on the Israel-Palestine conflict as a case study and analyses the concept of peace as framed by news editorials. Although new peace linguistics emphasizes on the analysis of the language of the world's most powerful people, this study takes media editorials as its object of study because media also serves as powerful institution which can deeply influence the social reality of the communities. Framed within the broad spectrum of peace linguistics, this study adopts the theoretical framework of corpus assisted critical discourse analysis and analyses the word peace in the newspaper editorials in the context of Israel-Palestine conflict. The Israel-Palestine conflict has been taken as a case study to analyse the language of peace because Gorsevski (1999) argues that one goal of the critical research is the need to study the political culture and history of the nations that face the challenge of persistent social problems. The Israel-Palestine conflict is one of the longest and the most violent conflict in history (Kandil, 2009). Dowty (2008) refers to it as the perfect conflict, both sides have a strong sense of victimhood and believe that it is fighting for its right. The conflict ignited on October 7, 2023, causing heavy civilian casualties, and inflaming feelings of hatred and betrayal. This research is grounded in peace linguistics' commitment to identifying how language can serve as a barrier to or facilitator of peace.

Peace Linguistics

(Gomes de Matos, 2012) argues that one important property of language is missing from its traditional definitions, that is humanizing nature of language. He argues that in merely describing that language as human, another trait of language is ignored: its power of humanizing. Such a characteristic subsumes both the traditional sense of making language human and its new sense that is making language humane. Realistically, such a description of language covers both its humanizing and dehumanizing characteristics, because, as linguists Bolinger (2014) has emphasized, language can also be used as a weapon. Sandra Silberstein says in her book War of Words, Language , Politics, and 9/11: "Language has consequences ...through the use of language, we create and recreate the particular worlds of understanding." Language is essentially responsible for the conflicts and peaceful environment. Recently, Peace Linguistics is emerging as a field which aims to systematically analyse the ways in which language is used to create peace or conflict.

The concept of Language and Peace is not new, both the terms have been co-existing since long as two interdependent concepts, however little has been done internationally, on a systematic basis, to integrate them in theory or in practice. Crystal (2004) defines peace linguistics as an approach to language diversity, multilingualism that emphasizes the need to foster language attitudes that respect individual speakers' dignity. Andy Curtis is the eminent figure in the field of peace linguistics whose book "The New Peace Linguistics and the Role of Language in Conflict" has served as building block in the field. He mentions

Peace Linguistics is interdisciplinary and is connected to the fields such as Peace Studies and Conflict Transformation and brings those together with the applied linguistics fields such as Sociolinguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis (Curtis, 2018, p. 12).

In the last few years, the focus has been shifting from Peace Linguistics to New Peace Linguistics (NPL). NPL does not focus on how language should be used rather it stresses on a bottom-up approach which looks at how language is actually used. *New Peace Linguistics is the systematic study of language that can help bring about periods of freedom from war and other kinds of violence, and of language that enables people to live and work together peacefully without violent disagreements. Peace Linguistics is also the systematic study of language that can bring about war and other kinds of violence, and of language that prevents people from living and working together peacefully.* (Curtis, 2022)

Warist Discourse

One Kind of discourse that is particularly relevant to New Peace Linguistics is warist discourse as such discourse appears to be more prominent and more powerful now than language being used to communicate and create peace. Like NPL, warist discourse is new in the sense of having appeared briefly. The word "warist" does not exist in English, which is equally true for peace-ist. Curtis (2022) cites William Gay who discussed the concept of warist discourse in The Language of War and Peace, in the Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace, and Conflict (1999). According to Gay (1999) "warist discourse represents one of the most globally intractable practices of linguistic violence". And in its "multifarious" nefarious manifestations such discourse results in the large scale killing of the people by organized groups such as the state, sub national political organizations, and religious, racial, and ethnic groups. Gay cites numerous examples of warist discourse such as discourse about nuclear power, genocidal discourse, and totalitarian language. Gay goes on to cite examples from Nazi who used the word "special treatment" instead of "execution" and the use of the phrase "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia in 1990s to refer to genocidal practices. Curtis (2022) cites Stanton (2017) who explains the use of the term "ethnic cleansing" as insidious because it is used in place of forced displacement and genocide. There is no international law treaty against this term whereas there are international laws against genocide. Gay (1999) mentions that language or discourse of war masks the actual reality of violence and this form of linguistic violence is episodic in many areas of social life. Curtis (2022) therefore asserts that one of the goals of NPL is to analyse discourses which can bring hazardous results instead of peaceful resolutions.

Peace and Critical Discourse Analysis

The field of discourse analysis has significant potential to contribute to the fields of peace and conflict (Karlberg ,2005). Van Dijk (2001) also argues that the field of critical discourse analysis is most relevant to peace and conflict studies. In critical discourse analysis, discourse is taken as a patterned way of thinking and talking about any aspects of reality such as peace, war, genocide, gender, or racism,

The discourse theory studies the patterned ways of people's thinking and talking

within communities about any social reality – for example, the distinction between ingroups and outgroups can influence the perceptions, social practices, and the public policies which can create peace or can give rise to conflict. Finally, critical discourse analyses offer a social change orientation that is in line with the goals of peace and conflict studies (Karlberg ,2005).

Curtis (2018) defines peace linguistics as an interdisciplinary field which draws on several fields such as peace and conflict studies, peace education and brings them together with sociolinguistics, critical discourse analysis and text or genre analysis.

The Israel-Palestine Conflict

The Israeli Palestinian conflict has remained one of the most violent and intractable issue in the history. The conflict ignited again on October 7, 2023, causing heavy civilian casualties, and inflaming feelings of hatred and betrayal. Language is an essential pre-requisite for conflict. There can be language without conflict, but there cannot be conflict without language as conflicts usually begin with language (Curtis, 2022). Conflicts start with words and words can kill no less than bullets (Tishkov, 2004, cited in Wenden, 2007 p. 163) Silberstein et al argue that linguistic categories help us understand the extraordinary rhetorical challenges facing speakers who are talking peace and ultimately waging war (1198, p.2, emphasis added) Gay (1999) in his book The language of War and Peace argues that words about and attitudes towards gender and war are embedded in language (1997). Gay (1999) mentions that linguistic violence is a type of covert violence . Gay described warist discourse as "the resulting language that takes for granted that wars are inevitable, justifiable, and winnable (p. 304). It is therefore essential to analyse such discourse and warn people of the consequences of such language.

The ideological and controversial discourse of the conflict has always been under the spotlight of media. The news reporting from both sides has been accused of biasness and has been the object of criticism. Sandra Silberstein says in her book War of Words, Language , Politics, and 9/11: "Language has consequences …through the use of language, we create and recreate the particular worlds of understanding. Ideologies in language provide important information through which one can view sociopolitical environment of various nations. Ideology of powerful authors must have a hidden power relation in it.

The Language of Othering

In Merriam Webster, 2021 "othering" is defined as "to treat or consider" (a person or a group of people) as alien to oneself or one's group (because of different racial, sexual, or cultural characteristics)" Example cited in the dictionary is by Toni Morrison "I am a black writer struggling with and through a language that can powerfully evoke and enforce hidden signs of racial superiority, cultural hegemony, and dismissive "othering" of people". Van Dijk (1993) also talked about the term othering even before it caught attention he discussed how language is used to include or exclude individuals and groups in the discourse. The ideological polarization between ingroups and outgroups may also be studied at all levels of discourse by analysing how ingroup emphasizes its own good deeds and highlights the bad ones of the outgroup.

Riggins (1997) found that the expressions that most clearly separate the

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boundaries of self and others are inclusive and exclusive pronouns and possessives such as we, they, us, and them, ours and theirs. Nilson et al (2017) define othering as the "manner in which social group dichotomies are represented in language via boundary oppositions of us and them. In their analysis of discourse practice of othering, they found seven such practices: cultural, social, cognitive, multilingual, migrational, visible, and religious based on the pronouns: they, this, these, those, and your. Curtis (2022) asserts that language may exist without othering, but "othering" cannot exist without language. "Othering" can be contrasted with "Ouring" in which inclusive pronouns are used in ways that emphasize the similarities between people, rather than their differences. Instead of an Us Vs Them mindset, in "ouring" those pronouns are used to promote a sense of "we are all together", especially during trying times.

Language and Power
Undoubtedly, language plays a significant role in the production, sustenance, and change in social relations of power (Fairclough, 2001, p. 1). Fairclough, (2013) argues that in a community, the party who has power to control discourse can sustain discursive practices with the particular ideologies and can exercise dominance over other alternative (including oppositional) practices.
In the same vein, a distinctive feature of NPL is to perform a systematic and in-depth analyses of the language of the powerful people, those who can influence people's ideologies, who have the power to bring peace or to cause war. One of the goals of NPL is analysing language to raise awareness of the potentially sensitive nature of the language use.
The goal of NPL is to explore both the positive and the negative impacts of the language of world leaders, to analyse whether their words lead to more peaceful or less peaceful outcomes. As the field of NPL is interdisciplinary and takes help from the theory of critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA primarily explores the way "social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (van Dijk, 2001, p. 352). It studies how language use reflects the ideologies, attitudes, and opinions of people. (e.g., van Dijk, 1998a, 1998b) One of the ultimate goals of CDA is to unmask the manipulative strategies that are adopted by powerful and dominant groups to maintain the system of social inequalities and injustices (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; van Dijk, 1996, 2006). The language of mass media is specifically important in CDA as the dominant groups seek to exhibit, enforce, and perpetuate ideologies through the discursive practices in mass media (Fairclough, 2001). NPL also aims to systematically analyse the language or discourse of the dominant people who have power to influence and shape the opinions and ideologies of the masses. The theory of CDA therefore can provide theoretical framework for the peace linguistic analysis of the discourse.

Role of Media in Framing Public Opinion
Media is a primary source of information. It not only controls information dissemination, but also influences its audience and shapes their understanding of the provided content. General public relies heavily on the information provided by online media today, these platforms thus wield a significant influence over the reported information. Fowler notes (cited in Sivandi & Dowlatabadi, 2016:92)

that a newspaper report has a specific ideology, thus it is not inherently neutral. Kabgani further suggests that news serves as an ideal shelter to hide underlying ideologies (Kabgani, 2013:58). Thus media can present biased information, shaping public understanding of issues according to its own views.

The main goal of this research is to uncover how subtle linguistic manipulation and choices can lead to the pathways to peace and conflicts. This approach is grounded in peace linguistics' commitment to identifying how language can serve as a barrier to or facilitator of peace.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts two theoretical frameworks to explore the language of peace in the news editorials. The analysis of the language of peace has been done by applying the model of peace by Gavriely-Nuri (2010). In her seminal work "The idiosyncratic language of Israeli Peace: A Cultural Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis". She proposes that peace discourse can be analysed on a binary axis, she makes the UN definition of the culture of peace as basis of analysis and divides the political peace discourse on a binary axis: supportive peace discourse and oppressive peace discourse.

Figure 1: Supportive Vs Oppressive Peace Discourse

Supportive Peace Discourse			Oppressive Peace Discourse		
Positivity	Concreteness	Bilateralism	Negativity	Abstractness	Unilateralism

She defines supportive peace including components such as freedom and justice whereas oppressive peace discourse discusses hindrances, violence, risks, dangers, and harm to civilians as inherent part of peace process. Supportive peace discourse makes concrete references to institutions, operative steps and systems designed for achieving peace whereas oppressive peace is abstract talking about hope, desire, seeking peace without any concrete references. Third component of supportive peace is bilateralism that involves peace arrangements involving all partners. In contrast unilateralism includes arrangements that only focus on the self image of one side expressing its desire and ability for peace making. The table below displays some of the examples of supportive vs oppressive peace discourse as presented by Gavriely-Nuri (2010) in her research.

Table 2. Dominant peace phrases in the Israeli Knesset protocols (more than 50 appearances of each phrase)

Positive	Concrete	Bilateral	Negative	Abstract	Unilateral
Want peace	Peace agreement	Peace relation-ships	True peace	Peace process	Peace seekers
Live in peace	Negotiation for peace	Partner for peace	Just peace	True peace	Peace for …
	Peace initiative		Peace and security	Achieving peace	[Shalom Temurat …]
Peace-oriented behavior (idiom)			Obstacle for peace	Making peace	Pursue peace
Peace relationships			Peace for … [Shalom Temurat …]	Wanting peace	Price of peace
Desire for peace/aspire to peace				Just peace	
			[They] don't want peace	Peace arrangement	Internal peace
			Safe peace	Peace seekers	Victims of peace
			Peace of the world	Road to peace	
			Price of peace	Comprehensive peace	
			Cold peace	Talking about peace	
			Stable peace	Chance for peace	
			Victims of peace	Peace-oriented behavior (idiom)	
				Full peace	
				Yearned-for peace	
				Pursue peace	
				Hope for peace	
				Safe peace	
				Peace of the world	
				Desire for peace	
				Stable peace	

Figure 2: Findings from (Gavriely-Nuri (2010): Examples of Supportive Vs Oppressive Peace Discourse

This study is also informed by van Dijk's (1998b) discussion of the concept of group ideologies. The main social function of these ideologies is ─the coordination of the social practices of group members for the effective realization of the goals of a social group, and the protection of its interests (van Dijk, p. 24). According to van Dijk, especially when conflicting group interests are involved, the typical content of group ideologies tends to be structured in a polarized way: ─Self and Others, Us and Them … We are Good and They are Bad (p. 25). The polarized structure of group ideologies might result in the polarization of discourses so that the in-group and their friends or allies receive positive description, while the out-group and their friends or allies receive negative description. As illustrated in table 1, van Dijk suggests that this polarized representation follows an abstract evaluative structure which he calls the ideological square. According to this model, a positive self or in-group representation is a result of emphasizing the good properties/actions of the in-group members and mitigating their bad properties/actions. The Other or the out-group, on the other hand, receives negative representation as a result of emphasizing their bad properties/actions and mitigating their good properties/actions.

Table 1: In-Group/Out-Group Polarized Representation (Based on van Dijk, 1998b)

Positive in-group representation	Negative out-group representation
Emphasizing the good properties /actions	Emphasizing the bad properties /actions

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Mitigating the bad properties / actions	Mitigating the good properties /actions

Research Questions
How is the language of news editorials used to generate supportive or oppressive peace discourse?
How the language of othering has been used to create dichotomies between ingroups and outgroups

Methodology
The objective of this article is to focus on political peace discourse as exhibited in the news editorials of the Arab world and the USA in the context of Israel-Palestine Conflict.
The study uses Corpus Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis. The corpus of news editorials of November 2023 has been compiled from Al-Jazeera as representative of Arab media and the Washington Post, New York Times, and New York Post as representative of American media. Each corpus contains around 6000 words. There are various techniques of corpus linguistics that can be utilized for the analysis. The current research analyses the frequency, collocates, and concordances of the word "peace" through word sketches. Sketch Engine has been used for obtaining the frequency and collocates of the word peace. This corpus analysis is further supported by critical discourse analysis by applying the political peace discourse model of Gavriely-Nuri (2010)
In addition, for a more comprehensive analysis, Van Dijk's ideological square framework has been applied to explore the impact of polarized ideologies on the peace discourse. the language of "othering" has been analysed by employing the four strategies (discussed above) presented by Van Dijk in his model of Ideological Square.

Results and Analysis
It has been found that Al-Jazeera devoted more space to Israel Palestine Conflict. Six editorials in the month of November were published in Al-Jazeera whereas in the Washington Post, only one editorial was published in the month of November. To match the word limit editorials published in November from two other top American news websites (New York Post and New York Times) were selected. Initially, the analysis has been done quantitatively by analysing the frequency through Sketch Engine.

Table 2: Details of the Selected Newspaper Editorials

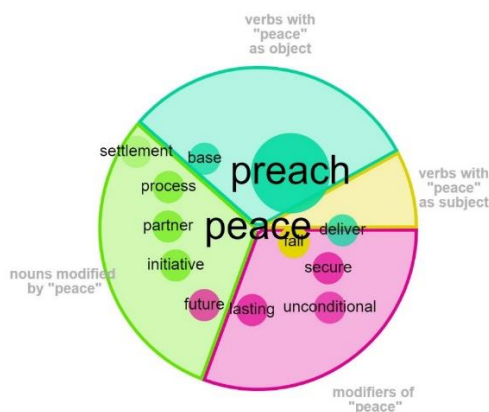|	Newspaper Website	Titles of Editorials	Date of Publication
Arab Media	Al-Jazeera	This Israel has no future in the Middle East	24 Nov 2023
		The farce of post-Gaza Pax Americana in the Middle East	07 Nov 2023
		Israel's war crimes in Gaza are by design, not default	09 Nov 2023
		Israel, Gaza, and the mass production of myths for mass media	20 Nov 2023

		Pirates, emperors and the Middle East axes of evil	03 Nov 2023
		An Israeli civil war?	23 Nov 2023
American Media	New York Post	Joe Biden keeps rewarding Hamas' war crimes	30 Nov, 2023
		First hostage release brings fresh proof that Hamas must be destroyed	24 Nov, 2023
		Even Human Rights Watch admits Palestinian terrorists bombed hospital	27 Nov, 2023
		Israel's OK on extending cease-fire mustn't stop it from wiping out Hamas	27 Nov, 2023
		Kfir Bibas hostage atrocity shows why Hamas MUST be stopped	29 Nov, 2023
		Lefties deny the Oct. 7 atrocities that Hamas proudly filmed	29 Nov, 2023
		Fresh evidence of anti-Israel bias at State Dept. that Biden and Obama enflamed	15 Nov, 2023
	New York Times	The Only Way Forward	25 Nov, 2023
		A Humanitarian Pause in Gaza	03 Nov, 2023
	Washington Post	Here's how to think about a cease-fire in Gaza	05 Nov, 2023

Peace Discourse in the Corpus
The analysis of the language of peace has been done by applying the model of peace presented by Gavriely-Nuri (2010). Our corpus consists of the news editorials of Arab and US media each containing around 6000 words. The word peace occurs 17 times in Aljazeera and 18 times in US media corpus.

Peace Discourse in Al Jazeera
The peace phrases that occur in Al Jazeera are "lasting peace", unconditional peace, "secure peace", future peace, peace process, peace initiative, peace partner, peace settlement, preach peace.

Figure 3: Word Sketch of the Word "Peace" in Al Jazeera
Oppressive Peace Discourse

"Lasting and Secure Peace"
The lasting peace in the example below does not talk about a cease fire rather it focuses on a post-war peace that will only be in favour of Israel when the occupation of Israel will end after achieving its goal by targeting Hamas and murdering the Palestinian civilians on an industrial scale. Hence negativity and unilateralism is evident as in the oppressive peace discourse.

Blinken tried to take the focus away from the war. He tried to convince Arab leaders to stop talking about a ceasefire and start talking about the desired **"lasting peace"** *that follows.*

Similarly, the word lasting and secure peace means that a state of peace achieved after war and after risking the lives of many people as the lasting and secure peace is used diplomatically to show that their intentions are in the favour of the people. Gavriely-Nuri (2010) discusses another secret meaning of "secure peace" used by Israeli people. The term peace in Israeli peace discourse is not sufficient to convey safety and security hence, they use the term secure peace.It is a peace that is secure for them and not for others demonstrating recklessness. She quotes an example from the speech of a Knesset member Ayub Kara (on May 26, 2003) "I am in favour of a secure peace but not a peace that allows [the enemy] to bombard, injure, and kill me on a daily basis." Similarly she mentions that "secure" borders emphasizes the need to keep the occupied territories for the protection of Israeli state.

"Mind you, the playbook actively encourages its readers to talk in favour of the "two state solution", and repeat the mantra "two homes for two peoples", because, "given the overwhelming American support for a two-state solution, it will make support much easier and faster if you set the tone for all discussions by articulating Israel's shared vision for the ultimate goal of two peoples, living side by side in a **lasting and secure peace"***. But then again, and here comes the punchline: "In the name of gaining credibility for why you might later say that 'a two-state solution isn't achievable overnight', you should start with language [that signals] how your goals align with the public's".*

Another instance of the oppressive peace discourse, showing negativity, abstractness, and unilateralism by talking about "future" peace to switch the world's attention from cease-fire to the future peace that will follow and that will be in favour of one side: Israel.

"Future Peace"
"Biden administration has switched emphasis from talking about the war to talking about **future peace***."*

Another instance of engaging in the peace process abstractly is that Israel and its allies preach peace but propagates war.

"The Biden administration is **preaching peace** *to cover up Israeli war crimes in Gaza."*

"Like other empires, old and new, America is careful to speak of human .... Its diplomats **preach peace** *while propagating war."*

The 'Two States' Rhetoric
Al Jazeera political analyst describes US President Joe Biden's political discourse on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in one of his editorials as follows.

The president omitted any mention of Israel's occupation of Palestine, the siege

*of Gaza, or any single part of the tortured history of Palestine in favour of more and more of the empty old rhetoric about "**shared future**" and "**two states**" that obfuscates the reality on the ground...*

With respect to Gavriely-Nuri's (2010) peace discourse model, President Biden's discourse on peace sustains conflict and legitimizes oppression in Gaza, therefore it can be categorized under oppressive peace discourse.

The Phrase 'Eye for an Eye'

Political analyst 'Marwan Bishara' in one of his news editorials gave the following statement.

Israel never accepts an "eye for an eye" in its confrontations with the Palestinians. It insists on a ratio of 1 to 10 or 20 when it comes to its civilian casualties vs Palestinian civilian casualties.

The statement 'eye for an eye' can be characterized as oppressive peace discourse because it does not align with the principles of promoting peace. It highlights disproportionate retaliation between the parties involved in the conflict i.e. Palestine and Israel which does not facilitate mutual understanding rather escalates aggression.

Normalization of Conflict

In the editorial it is asserted that Israel and US frequently use phrases like **two state solution**, **stable peace**, and **two homes for two peoples** in oppressive peace discourse. This rhetoric normalizes ongoing oppression in Gaza by portraying it as a long-term issue to be resolved in the distant future. Urgency of immediate humanitarian concerns in Gaza is reduced through such discourse. Use of the term 'shared future' implies that Biden believes that persecution and suppression of Palestinian people is acceptable until conflict is resolved. There is no explicit condemnation of Israeli military actions. This eventually leads to prolonged oppression and suffering of Palestinians.

Depoliticization

Biden intentionally diverts the attention from political and historical context of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict to maintain the status quo and oppression in Gaza. 'Two state solution' and 'shared future' are depoliticized abstract concepts which do not address political realities like issues of occupation, settlement expansion, and human rights abuses in Gaza. Therefore, contribute to violence and power imbalance.

Supportive Peace Discourse

The term peace initiative although has been used positively in the instance below that there are peace initiatives proposed by US administration, however Israel has always been rejecting these and interestingly has been rewarded and supported by military aid on the rejection of these peace initiatives.

*"The United States designated Israel as a regional policeman in the 1960s, a regional influencer in the 1970s, a strategic asset in the 1980s, and it has since been viewed as being at the forefront of the US war on terrorism. Paradoxically, almost every time Israel rejected an American **peace initiative**, it was somehow rewarded by a new Pentagon deal and greater military assistance, latest of which topped $3.8 billion".*
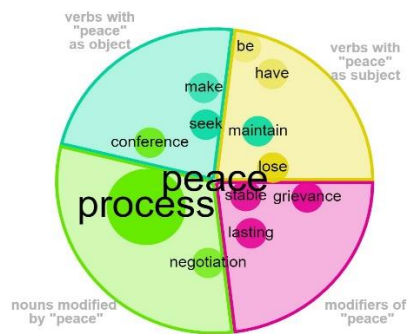
The term "peace process" has been used positively here which shows that though for a short while and though dependent on US, in 1990s, Israel engaged in peace process.

*"For a short while in the early 1990s, it seemed as if Israel was changing direction towards some form of normalcy, albeit dependent on the United States. It engaged the Palestinians and Arab states in the region in a **"peace process"** that promised mutual existence under favourable American auspices."*

Another important point that the positive peace discourse examples quoted here are referring to concrete events and are not reported abstractly.

Peace Discourse in NYP, NYT, and WP
The word peace occurs 18 times in US media corpus.

Figure 4: Word Sketch of the Word "Peace" in NYP, NYT, WP

Supportive Peace Discourse
The word peace process has been used concretely and falls under positive discourse category, it mentions some of the initiatives taken to bring peace in the region

*"The shape of a Palestinian state has been explored in minute detail by successive **peace conferences**, meetings, negotiations and private initiatives, collectively known — or derided, in their apparent futility — as the **peace process**."*

However, the successive paragraph mentions the hindrances and the failure of the peace process because of the use of violence and certain other circumstances. Gavriely-Nuri (2010) discusses that oppressive peace discourse mostly talks about hindrances and obstacles in the way of peace than about the opportunities and concrete steps. Another instance where hindrances are discussed that neither of the party is ready to lay down weapons.

*The primary condition for any **peace negotiation** is that those who seek peace must lay down their arms and come prepared to make painful concessions.*

Oppressive Peace Discourse

"Lost Peace"

Instances of peace discourse found in WP, NYT, and NYP mostly fall under oppressive peace discourse. As in the example below religious passion have been discussed hindrance to peace process.

*"They've tried, again and again, but in this cauldron of religious passion and competing grievances, **peace has always lost out.**"*

In another place, Mr. Netanyahu highlights that he wants peace but there is no one to cooperate with him. .

*"This allowed him to tell every American president: I'd love to **make peace**, but I have no Palestinian partner; they're divided."*

In the context of the above statement, the content of Mr Netanyahu's speech has also been discussed where he mentions that they are ready to accept Palestine as separate state on the condition that:

*"the state was **demilitarized** and that the Palestinians recognized Israel as the state of the Jewish people."* This shows unilateralism where they want to demilitarize the Palestinian state to achieve peace.

Stable and Lasting Peace
Israel's version of stable peace like "secure peace" discussed in the previous section is also dangerous, it shows their intention to rule and govern Palestine. Gavreily-Nuri (2010) also enlists "stable peace" in oppressive peace discourse (see figure 2 above).

*"To generate and maintain any **stable peace** with Israel, the authority needs to be able to demonstrate that, in comparison with Hamas, it is more capable of governing Gaza and the West Bank effectively. In its present condition, it cannot".*

*"Defeat for Hamas is neither guaranteed nor, if achieved, sufficient for **lasting peace**. That would also require stable governance and security in Gaza, perhaps supervised by an interim Arab and Muslim peacekeeping force. There would have to be an end to both the Hamas tunnel network and the Egyptian-Israeli blockade on Gaza. There could be an enhanced administrative role for the admittedly troubled Palestinian Authority, and elections. Then would come — sooner rather than later — serious diplomacy aimed at Palestinian statehood, side by side with Israel, in peace."*

'Peace through War' Rhetoric
The US news editorials advocate that violent means are a legitimate pathway for a peaceful reconciliation. Some of the instances from news editorials are mentioned and critically analysed below.
*'Every day that passes with Hamas still alive makes the job of **eradicating it** harder.'*
*'But Hamas must be **obliterated.**'*
Oxymoronic Peace Discourse
The use of word 'obliterated' in peace discourse is oxymoronic in nature. It infers that peace can only be attained through eradication of the opponent i.e. Hamas.

Therefore, this type of discourse can be characterized as oppressive peace discourse because it promotes violence and destruction. It delivers the message to the readers that violent measures like obliteration of Hamas is acceptable and necessarily required for resolution of conflict. It portrays Hamas as a threat to peace and violence against them is considered as a justified response to danger.

Rhetoric to Gain Credibility
Universalist Approach to Conflict Resolution
US political analyst in one of the news editorials asserted *'The critical qualification is for each side to understand the yearnings and fears of the other and to accept that the other has a right to live in peace.'* From peace discourse perspective, this statement is characterized as oppressive peace discourse because of the following reasons.

Depoliticization of Peace
This statement does not address political, historical, and socio-economic factors that have driven the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Specific issues like Israeli settlements in West Bank, status of Jerusalem, bloodshed and massacres in Gaza. These factors must be examined to resolve the conflict effectively. This type of oppressive peace discourse marginalizes the voices of Palestinians living under Israeli occupation. US political analyst frequently uses oppressive peace discourse to overlook deeper issues within Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
Phrase 'right to live in peace'
The phrase 'right to live in peace' is universalistic as living in peace is a fundamental human right. But, this phrase does not highlight the context of conflict between Israel and Palestine and dilute the intensity of atrocities and injustices faced by Palestinians. Use of such phrases hinders peaceful negotiations between groups.
Some other instances of such discourse are mentioned below.
The urgent challenge, as soon as the guns fall silent, is for Israel, the Palestinians, the Arab states, the United States and all other parties with an interest in a settlement to get to work.
The primary condition for any peace negotiation is that those who seek peace must lay down their arms and come prepared to make painful concessions.

Warist Discourse or Oppressive Peace Discourse
The use of the word war in this corpus strengthens the above findings that newspapers editorials show that Israeli peace discourse is mainly oppressive peace discourse showing little or no possibility of cease-fire. it is more a discourse of war than a discourse of peace justifying its war in the pre-text of self-defence and by highlighting that it is Hamas who is unfair in war and committing numerous war crimes. The word war occurs 27 times in US media corpus and 49 times in Al Jazeera. This section briefly gives an overview to show that how the use of the word war strengthens the previous finding where peace discourse is mostly vague, abstract, unilateral and warist discourse is draped in the peace terms.
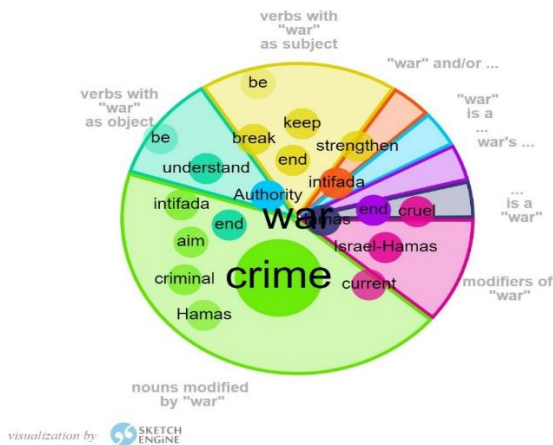
Figure 5: Word Sketch of the Word "War" in US media corpus

The discourse that ignites war has been termed as "warist discourse" by Curtis (2022). The instance below shows that this kind of discourse can cause war instead of peace.

"But the fight against Hamas is not a war against another nation, one that respects international law or the laws of war. </s><s> Hamas is a terrorist group, one whose founding charter called for nothing less than the destruction of the Jewish state."

The word war has occurred 49 times in Al Jazeera corpus. This corpus names Israel's war as genocidal , sadistic, US backed, all out, forever, and asymmetrical that has caused havoc in the region. It highlights US administrations strategies of covering up Israeli war crimes, and preaching peace, and propagating war by diverting the world's attention towards *lasting, stable, unconditional and future peace*. The critical discourse analysis unmasks the subtle linguistic manipulations which can ignite war. Peled-Elhanan (2010) conducted a research on Israeli history books and found out that these books are implicitly legitimating the murder of Palestinians as a tool to preserve Jewish state and motivate Israeli youth to be good soldiers to continue their occupation in the Palestinian territories. This research however has briefly touched this area and a separate research study will be required to analyse the use of the word "war" by news outlets of both the parties.
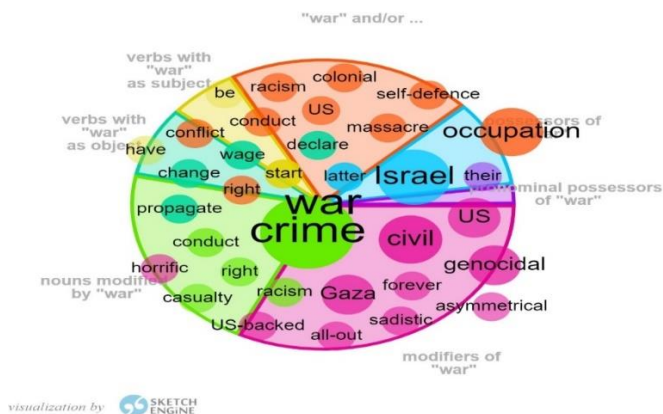

Figure 6: Word Sketch of the Word "War" in Al Jazeera

Peace Discourse and the Language of Othering

The above analysis of peace discourse also reflects the polarized and conflicting ideologies of Israel and Palestine. The two groups dichotomize each other by emphasizing each other's negative points and mitigating the positive aspects. The section below analyses the news editorials in the light of Van Dijk's ideological square.

Peace Discourse in Al Jazeera
"Empty soundbites and tired arguments" -Positive Self and Negative Other

Al Jazeera analyst 'Marwan Bishara' in one of his news editorials argues *"supporters of Israel all repeat the same empty soundbites and tired arguments when talking about Palestine."*

Phrases like "mass production of myths," "empty soundbites and tired arguments," and "propaganda used by Israel to justify its bombings of hospitals and schools" show the manipulation and distortion of the truth and justification of aggression.

In all the news editorials of Al Jazeera, the Israeli government is depicted as aggressive, deceitful, and colonial,. with terms such as "Israel's sadistic war on Gaza," "deliberate, industrial-scale murder," and "colonial nature" "violence is part and parcel of its colonial DNA," "deliberate ethnic cleansing," and "countless massacres against Palestinian civilians" painting a picture of a state that is inherently violent and unjust. Israel's supporter the US government is depicted as manipulative, and complicit in war crimes "Washington's efforts to shield Israel as it carries out war crimes in Palestine," "the Biden administration has dispatched its foremost naval strike force...to put its detractors on notice," and "the American administration is now an enthusiastic accomplice" paint a picture of two governments engaged in immoral and unjust actions.

No explicit examples of any positive aspects of the Israeli government or its policies have been found even when discussing the peace process of the early 1990s, the focus is on how Israel's "colonial nature dominated its behaviour," thus undermining the peace efforts. Even while discussing the US's promotion of peace, the focus is on how it is used to cover up or distract from war crimes, as seen in "the Biden administration is preaching peace to cover up Israeli war crimes in Gaza."

Even historical attempts at peace or security measures are framed as part of a broader strategy of colonialism and oppression, as seen in "Israel has maintained security through state repression, military occupation, bloody wars and countless massacres against civilians." US has been depicted as portraying a manipulative, and deceitful role: "US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is back in the Middle East in an attempt to turn Israel's war crimes into a diplomatic and strategic successes."

Peace Discourse in WP, NYP, and NYT
Justifying War through Emphasizing Their Negative Actions and Mitigating Own Negative Actions

Hamas actions have been overwhelmingly criticised, it is portrayed as a relentless enemy committed to Israel's destruction. It is committing war crimes, using human shields by placing military assets under hospitals, mosques, and schools,

diverting humanitarian aid for military purposes, and taking hostages. ""Hamas militants have long hidden themselves in mosques and schools and hospitals, intentionally placing civilians in harm's way." "All by itself, that's a war crime, expressly forbidden by the Geneva Conventions,". "Other Hamas war crimes include diverting humanitarian assistance...meant for civilians to its own cadres." Hamas has been portrayed as deceiver: "they're ruthless liars",, criminal: "they'll victimize anyone they can", and manipulator:: "they think they can get America to break with Israel". Hamas has been portrayed as a danger to Israel and Jews worldwide, Hamas' "atrocities" have been highlighted. Hamas murdered at least 40 infants and children during its Oct. 7 assault and took dozens of others hostage," and describing these actions as indicative of "sociopathic cruelty."

NYT takes a nuanced approach and criticizes both Israeli and Palestinian extremists for undermining peace efforts through violence, provocation, and deception. For example: "Extremists — be it Palestinian Islamists determined to destroy the Jewish state or Israeli settlers determined to push Palestinians out of the West Bank — knew they could undermine any effort toward peace through provocation or terrorism."

The editorials mitigate negative actions of Israeli side by justifying the IDF's operations in Gaza as necessary for self-defense and the protection of civilians. This can be inferred from statements like "Israel, which will wither away if it can't keep its civilians safe: It has no choice but to eradicate the terror group in Gaza." Any potential harm caused by Israeli military actions or policies has not been discussed,

Conclusion

Many research studies have been conducted to analyse ideological schema underlying polarities La Capra (1989) argues that aim of such demarcations is to assume a privileged position overtly or covertly, a group seeks dominance over the other (pp. 23-24). The descriptive analysis of editorials from Al-Jazeera, the New York Post (NYP), New York Times (NYT), and Washington Post (WP) has revealed nuanced ways in which language constructs ideological bias. Al-Jazeera findings reflect a strong polarization between "us" (implicitly Palestinians and critics) and "them" (Israel and its supporters) whereas USA newspapers reflect a sharp polarization between them (explicitly Palestinians and supporters) and us (Israel and its supporters). Us versus them dichotomy has also been encoded in lexical choices, and the overall narrative. All three selected newspapers of USA highlight the moral righteousness of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and by extension, the U.S. administration's support by portraying the IDF's efforts to minimize civilian casualties. On the other hand, the portrayal of Hamas is overwhelmingly negative framing them ruthless and sociopathic enemy. Al Jazeera's portrayal of Palestinians underscores a sympathetic narrative by highlighting the suffering, resilience, and victimization of the Palestinian people. While the Israeli government and its ally, the US, predominantly has been depicted as aggressive, manipulative, and unjust.

The study offers a unique perspective to the critical discourse analysis of the word "peace" in the context of Israel-Palestine conflict. The concept of peace has been analysed in terms of supportive peace discourse vs oppressive peace discourse. Findings reveal that most of peace discourse in the selected news editorials is oppressive peace discourse which is not paving a way towards

conflict resolution and peace negotiations. The peace discourse analysed here is mostly negative focusing on *stable, lasting, future, and secure peace* with no intention of cease-fire, focusing on the unilateral benefits, and using abstract instead of concrete language to show interest in conflict resolution and commitment to peace. The results are strengthened by applying the ideological square model of Van Dijk (1993) which show the ideological polarization between both the parties. Al Jazeera outgroups Israel and its allies and NYP, NYT, and WP outgroups Palestine and its supporters highlighting each others' negative points and mitigating the positive points. The ideologically polarized view of the conflict of both the parties involved results in oppressive peace discourse which is negative, abstract, and unilateral. This research however reveals that peace initiatives are awaited from Israeli side and their discourse is oppressive peace discourse, both Arab and US side news editorials mostly discuss peace perspectives, and peace initiatives by Israel. The research opens a new avenue to analyse peace efforts and conflict issues under the framework of peace linguistics and corpus assisted critical discourse analysis.

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