Research Paper

Framing Peace and Conflict: A Critical Analysis of Linguistic Strategies in Arab Media Coverage of Geopolitical Issues

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Abstract

This study conducted a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of Arab English-language online newspapers to examine how the Israeli-Lebanese and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts are represented. Employing Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, the research explored the linguistic, discursive, and socio-cultural dimensions of media narratives, integrating framing theory to investigate how these narratives shape public opinion and geopolitical discourse. The study's design involved the systematic collection and analysis of 50 articles from prominent newspapers such as Al Jazeera English, Al Arabiya English, and Asharq Al-Awsat, selected for their diverse ideological perspectives. The findings revealed distinct ideological framings employed by each outlet, ranging from systemic oppression narratives to calls for regional diplomacy. These narratives are shaped by geopolitical affiliations, cultural identities, and the affordances of digital media, including the role of algorithms and user-generated content. The research highlights how digital tools and social media amplify and polarize discourses, influencing public sentiment and policy debates. By addressing gaps in the literature concerning Arab media's linguistic strategies and digital affordances, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the interplay between language, power, and ideology in conflict representation. Implications extend to both academic discourse and practical applications, providing a framework for policymakers, peacebuilding organizations, and journalists to critically engage with and promote balanced conflict narratives. This interdisciplinary approach underscores the evolving role of digital media in shaping political realities, offering a nuanced lens for future research on conflict discourse.

Keywords: Media Framing, Peace Process, Conflict Representation, Critical Discourse Analysis, Linguistic Strategies

چارچوب‌بندی صلح و درگیری: تحلیلی انتقادی از استراتژی‌های زبانی در پوشش رسانه‌های عربی از مسائل ژئوپلیتیکی

این پژوهش یک تحلیل انتقادی گفتمان (CDA) از روزنامه‌های آنلاین انگلیسی‌زبان عربی انجام داد تا بررسی کند که چگونه درگیری‌های اسرائیلی-لبنانی و اسرائیلی-فلسطینی بازنمایی شده‌اند. با استفاده از چارچوب سه‌بعدی فرکلاف، این تحقیق به ابعاد زبانی، گفتمانی و اجتماعی-فرهنگی روایت‌های رسانه‌ای پرداخت و نظریه چارچوب‌بندی را برای بررسی نحوه شکل‌گیری این روایت‌ها در افکار عمومی و گفتمان ژئوپلیتیکی به کار گرفت. طراحی این مطالعه شامل جمع‌آوری و تحلیل نظام‌مند ۵۰ مقاله از روزنامه‌های برجسته‌ای مانند الجزیره انگلیسی، العربیه انگلیسی، و الشرق الاوسط بود که به دلیل دیدگاه‌های ایدئولوژیکی متنوع خود انتخاب شدند. یافته‌ها چارچوب‌بندی‌های ایدئولوژیکی متمایزی را که توسط هر رسانه به کار رفته، نشان داد، از روایت‌های سرکوب سیستمی گرفته تا فراخوان‌های دیپلماسی منطقه‌ای. این روایت‌ها توسط پیوندهای ژئوپلیتیکی، هویت‌های فرهنگی، و ویژگی‌های رسانه‌های دیجیتال، از جمله نقش الگوریتم‌ها و محتوای تولیدشده توسط کاربران شکل گرفته‌اند. این تحقیق برجسته می‌کند که چگونه ابزارهای دیجیتال و رسانه‌های اجتماعی گفتمان‌ها را تقویت و قطبی می‌کنند و بر افکار عمومی و مباحث سیاست‌گذاری تأثیر می‌گذارند. با پر کردن شکاف‌های موجود در ادبیات مربوط به استراتژی‌های زبانی و ویژگی‌های دیجیتال رسانه‌های عربی، این مطالعه به درک عمیق‌تری از تعامل زبان، قدرت، و ایدئولوژی در بازنمایی درگیری کمک می‌کند. پیامدهای این پژوهش به گفتمان‌های آکادمیک و کاربردهای عملی گسترش می‌یابد و چارچوبی را برای سیاست‌گذاران، سازمان‌های صلح‌سازی، و روزنامه‌نگاران فراهم می‌کند تا به‌طور انتقادی با روایت‌های متعادل و سازنده درگیری درگیر شوند و آن‌ها را ترویج دهند. این رویکرد بین‌رشته‌ای بر نقش در حال تحول رسانه‌های دیجیتال در شکل‌دهی به واقعیت‌های سیاسی تأکید می‌کند و دیدگاهی ظریف برای تحقیقات آینده در مورد گفتمان درگیری ارائه می‌دهد.

واژگان کلیدی: چارچوب‌بندی رسانه‌ای، فرآیند صلح، بازنمایی درگیری، تحلیل انتقادی گفتمان، استراتژی‌های زبانی

Introduction

Media Narratives in Conflict Contexts

There is a lot, and very influential, that is associated with the portrayal of the narratives presented and represented in the media, especially regarding the language used for ongoing conflicts like those witnessed in the Israeli-Lebanese disputes as well as the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. The way in which these narratives portray and represent the events, the different actors involved, and the underlying causes in a particular manner definitely impacts the dynamics of public opinion, international relations, and the subsequent policy decisions that are made. According to Fairclough (2010) and Wodak (2021), the media's institutional status in society gives it the ability to bring into being certain points of view, to create solidarity, or to firmly establish boundaries between groups. All these are effects the media can achieve. Recent scholarship has greatly illuminated the dynamic and interactive relationship that exists between the way media frames information and the formation of public opinion, especially in war zones where the intertwining of narratives and overlapping of political agendas give rise to a most interesting clash of perspectives (Abdullah, 2020; Zayani, 2023). These wide-ranging studies have brought into sharp relief the important question of whether or not there exists a tangible relationship between the framing of media narratives and the subsequent shaping of public opinion in these turbulent environments.

The continuing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, as well as the conflict between Israel and Lebanon, should not be viewed as disagreements or disputes limited to a regional scope; rather, it is important to realize that such conflicts carry heavy global implications that reach much beyond their immediate geographical settings. Further, these problems are also deeply intertwined with a myriad of ideological, religious, and geopolitical elements that find themselves played out in a vital role within the dynamics of the situation (van Dijk, 1998; Khalil, 2023). Due to such intricacy, these conflicts can commandeer and attract the attention of the media, giving rise to a multi-dimensional web of media coverage that tends to mirror and enlarge the existing prejudices and biases held by various geopolitical stakeholders involved in the region. Kopytowska (2019) argues that the increasing importance and dominance of digital media in modern society have resulted in a radical change in how these disputes are not only represented but also consumed by the wider public. These digital platforms make available numerous channels for content that is distinguished by immediacy, participatory engagement, and often controversial nature, all of which go into making a dynamic and constantly changing discourse. According to Papacharissi (2015), digital narratives, which are mostly and frequently shared on different platforms of social media, not only have the great potential to extend and improve the structures of traditional media but also possess the amazing capability to create and provide spaces that allow the expression of alternative perspectives and counter-hegemonic points of view. Through a detailed analysis of these narratives, which function to highlight the different power, ideology, and language intersections running through public discourse as pointed out by Fairclough in 2013, one is able to gain important insights into the complex sociopolitical landscape. This analysis is carried out with the aim of furthering a much broader and detailed understanding of the situation at hand.

Using content published online in English from Arabic newspapers, the present study tries to acquire an essential and comprehensive understanding of all these linguistic and discursive strategies applied for representing the ongoing peace process, along with the complicated dynamics of the given conflict. This will be done using a careful application of research conducted. Ayish & Sidiropoulos (2012) and Hasan (2022) have expressed the view that the Arab media frequently acts as a reflecting surface that exposes a wide scope of ideological positions in

addition to a variety of cultural identities. Simultaneously, this media landscape effectively navigates through multiple challenging and complex sociopolitical environments. Indeed, the research scrutinizes the involved story construction process in detail while profoundly analyzing the deep impact of digital media, along with the considerable consequences that develop for our understanding of the dynamically ongoing processes within these multi-faceted conflicts (Al-Mahmood, 2022; Zayani, 2023). The intersection and merging of critical discourse analysis, commonly abbreviated as CDA, with the theoretical framework of framing theory is precisely what enables this significant accomplishment to take place. As noted by Khalil (2023), the primary aim and objective of this extensive research endeavor is to illuminate and shed light on the vital role that user-generated content plays in the intricate process of shaping and developing collective memory, as well as influencing political discourse within the context of the Arab world. A focused attention to the multiple digital affordances offered by these narratives will be the main approach through which this specific goal will be finally achieved.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The scholarly field known as framing theory is devoted to the analysis of the many ways that focusing one's attention on specific characteristics or aspects of reality can powerfully determine how an audience will understand, interpret, and react to the knowledge with which they have been supplied. This avenue of inquiry is of immense importance, particularly in the case of media narratives, which are essential for making sense of, most notably in conflict zones such as war-torn countries where the stakes are related to vital issues that involve national security, humanitarian tragedy, and hotly debated ideology (Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 1999). This observation is of key importance, especially in trying to understand complex narratives spread through various media forms. As noted by Kopytowska (2019), the new developments and progressions within the field of digital media studies have made it able to fully explore the framing effects as they take place in real time. This development has enabled a much more advanced and subtle understanding of how stories are created and how they are continuously contested on various online platforms. As shown by the findings presented by Papacharissi (2015), and those by Tandoc et al. (2021), social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook are examples of complex systems that contribute to the creation of discourse that, although seemingly fragmented, still holds remarkable power. Notably, on these platforms, some frames of discussion and views are emphasized and brought to the fore, while other frames and views are purposefully suppressed and marginalized. Frames that are widely used in the narration of conflict stories tend to combine a mix of emotional appeals together with detailed historical contexts, both of which have enormous powers in determining how the general public views such situations and the possible consequences that may result from different policy interventions (Nisbet, 2009). Critical discourse analysis is an approach that is widely used to narrate powerful stories of the different conflicts that come up in society. The term critical discourse analysis is easily abbreviated as the acronym (CDA).

Employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which offers a rigorous and systematic methodological framework purposely tailored to carrying out this kind of research, allows researchers to delve into the complex relations between language, power, and underlying ideologies as they are represented in different media texts. Three-dimensional modeling, which Fairclough developed, importantly places a strong emphasis on the textual, discursive, and socio-cultural dimensions that are crucial to understanding communication, significantly enhances this approach. This model, therefore, proves particularly well suited and highly effective for the in-depth analysis of how conflict is represented in the different contexts (Fairclough, 2010). As constructed by Van Dijk, a cognitive framework of painstaking detail makes it clear that

ideologies are profoundly embedded and thus effectively maintained in communication through language use in myriad ways (van Dijk, 1995). Moreover, the discourse-historical method which Wodak suggests with a thoughtful consideration for socio-political factors and contexts is followed up (Wodak, 2001). This is, therefore, undertaken with the express purpose of ensuring a holistic as well as sensitive understanding of media narratives and the implications. Critical discourse analysis, commonly shortened as CDA, has over the past years undergone a massive development and extension into the digital sphere, which has in turn brought about a strong and burning desire for new methodological procedures that are suited for this new terrain. This increased need for new methods has arisen as a direct effect of the rapid diffusion of CDA into diverse digital spaces. Additionally, the crucial role that algorithms and platform-mediated discourses play in the complex production and reproduction of ideologies has been starkly highlighted as a direct effect of these recent moves into the digital sphere.

Empirical Framework

According to the findings of extensive research that was carried out by Wodak & Meyer (2021), it becomes evident that the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Lebanese conflicts are represented in the media from a multitude of different angles and viewpoints. In addition to being shaped and influenced by various geopolitical affiliations and diverse ideological leanings, these perspectives are also significantly impacted by the surrounding cultural contexts in which they are situated. Moreover, it was found that there is a wide range of perspectives reflecting the complexity of these conflicts. The process of framing becomes an exceedingly important and influential factor, particularly in the intricate development of narratives focusing on such complex themes as peace and conflict, according to Al-Mahmood (2022). He says that the particular decisions which are consciously made regarding the use of language have a considerable and deep impact on how viewers comprehend and interpret what is shown in the storyline. Recent studies have thrown light on the role of metaphors, intertextuality, and historical references as crucial aspects in the construction of Arab media narratives (Patel, 2024). These findings have been shed light on by recent study. As a detailed example of the complex situation, the way in which the 2023 Gaza escalation was framed clearly highlighted the various frames that could be distinguished in different media outlets. For instance, Al Jazeera, Asharq Al-Awsat, among others, clearly focused on the immediate humanitarian disasters of the people in the area rather than on any possible diplomatic resolutions to the ongoing conflict (Khalil, 2023).

It should also be noted that digital media - aside from encouraging more heightened engagement and providing means for instant communication among users - has also been known to facilitate an environment where polarization would thrive and the dissemination of false or misleading information would become more common and easier to do (Khalil, 2023). These stories are imbued with new and engaging levels of depth because of how powerfully digital media touches every aspect of our lives. Examples such as #FreePalestine and #IsraelUnderAttack (Kopytowska, 2015; Papacharissi, 2015) are excellent instances in which the hashtags work to both elevate and highlight the respective personal contributions to the greater debate. To be clear, both of these hashtags provide examples within a much broader set of similar tags. In an effort to sidestep the gatekeepers from traditional media, who dictate the requirements for any topic to be considered worthy of significant debate, these individuals utilize the aforementioned hashtags to help create avenues for open discussion and engagement. By applying these diverse methodologies, one is able to draw important implications that go a long way in furthering the understanding of the processes through which narratives gain traction within society and how they wield influence over public opinion. Indeed, such implications can be drawn from the procedures outlined. Moreover, the impacts of algorithms driven by artificial

intelligence—most notably those algorithms that choose and personalize news feeds for users—have become a major subject of inquiry in recent research studies that have been conducted in this area. As suggested by Gillespie et al. (2021), these algorithms tend to frequently contribute towards reinforcing and maintaining already existing beliefs as well as established frames within media narratives.

Gaps in the Existing Literature

Despite the conduction of a large volume of research about the manner in which the media represents conflict as well as the utilization of various narratives, there has been a significant lack in studies that particularly focus upon the linguistic techniques and strategies utilized by Arab English-language newspapers within the context of the digital era. As revealed by Hasan (2022), and also supported by findings presented by Al-Mahmood (2023), one can note that the literature mostly emphasizes Western perspectives. Consequently, this prevailing trend sets a condition whereby complex and richly detailed narratives originating from Arab culture are either not well represented or properly highlighted. This presents a huge problem because it makes Western views dominant in the discourse and buries the diverse array of stories emanating from the Arab traditions. There is also a noticeable void in terms of comprehensive study dedicated to exploring the critical role those digital technologies play in shaping and influencing the process of narrative formation in today's contexts. Examples of emerging technologies that add new layers of complexity, but which have not been widely researched and scrutinized, include the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the curation of news content and in the phenomenon referred to as algorithmic framing (Tandoc et al., 2021; Gillespie, 2018). In both cases, these new technologies have only entered the scene relatively recently, and so their implications and impacts are still mostly unknown. The continuously changing nature of this interactive media function, which facilitates and enables audiences to actively participate in the production and shaping of discourse, introduces a further level of complexity to the research that is undertaken regarding the media. In order to tackle these existing gaps in understanding, this particular work combines elements of classical conflict resolution analysis (CDA) with the various affordances offered by digital media, with the aim of thoroughly investigating the increasing representations of conflict that are emerging. The main aim of this specific work is to undertake a close analysis regarding how the representations of conflicts are changing over time. Besides this, it also sheds light in a thought-provoking way on the complex and interactive relationship that takes place between those platforms that have already gained a strong foothold and those newer platforms that are now at the threshold of being equally placed in the bigger scheme of producing the overall media discourse for creating public perception and understanding.

Objectives of the Study

The study is guided by three primary objectives that aim to advance the understanding of media discourse in conflict contexts:

--To analyze framing techniques in Arab media's portrayal of peace efforts and conflict dynamics: This objective involves a detailed examination of how Arab English-language newspapers employ framing strategies to represent peace processes and the complexities of ongoing conflicts. By investigating the specific linguistic and rhetorical tools utilized—such as metaphors, selective narratives, and thematic emphasis—the study sheds light on how media outlets shape public understanding and influence the geopolitical narrative surrounding these contentious issues.

--To uncover linguistic features shaping narratives in Arab English-language online newspapers: The research aims to identify and dissect the lexico-grammatical structures, stylistic

choices, and discursive practices that underpin narrative construction in the selected media outlets. Through the application of CDA, the study explores how language serves as a conduit for ideological messaging, revealing the subtle mechanisms through which power and bias manifest in media discourse.

--To evaluate the impact of digital affordances on framing strategies, particularly in the context of real-time reporting and audience interaction: In the digital era, the immediacy and interactivity of online platforms have transformed traditional journalistic practices. This objective focuses on understanding how digital tools—including algorithms, social media engagement, and user-generated content—enhance or constrain framing strategies. By analyzing the interplay between technology and discourse, the study provides insights into the evolving dynamics of conflict reporting and its implications for audience perception.

Novelty of the Study

This study integrates recent geopolitical developments, including the October 2023 escalation, offering a contemporary perspective on media discourse. By expanding traditional CDA methodologies to include digital features, it provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing the intersection of language, ideology, and technology in shaping conflict narratives. This interdisciplinary approach addresses a significant gap in the literature, contributing to a deeper understanding of media's role in conflict representation. Furthermore, the study's focus on Arab English-language online newspapers—a relatively under-researched area—provides fresh insights into how media narratives influence and reflect the sociopolitical landscapes of the Middle East (Abdullah, 2024; Ramsbotham et al., 2011).

Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study stated above, the following research questions were addressed:

RQ1. How do newspapers frame the peace process in the context of the Israeli-Lebanese and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts?

RQ2. What linguistic features shape the representation of conflict in Arab English-language online newspapers?

RQ3. How do digital tools, such as multimedia elements and interactive platforms, influence framing strategies?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study enhance the understanding of media's role in conflict resolution and public opinion formation by offering a nuanced analysis of the linguistic, ideological, and technological factors shaping media narratives. By delving into the intersection of language, ideology, and technology, the research provides valuable insights into the mechanisms through which media constructs, amplifies, or challenges dominant discourses on peace and conflict.

This study makes significant contributions to the broader debates on the capacity of media to shape peace narratives, highlighting both the possibilities and limitations inherent in such processes. For instance, it underscores how linguistic strategies can subtly frame conflicts in ways that either promote reconciliation or exacerbate divisions. Additionally, the transformative potential of digital innovation is explored, showcasing how real-time reporting, interactive platforms, and algorithmic curation influence public perceptions and policymaking in conflict settings.

On a practical level, the findings provide actionable insights for journalists, policymakers, and peacebuilding organizations. By identifying effective framing strategies and digital

affordances, the study offers tools for crafting more balanced and constructive media narratives. These insights are particularly relevant in designing media interventions aimed at fostering dialogue and mutual understanding in conflict zones. Moreover, the research serves as a resource for academics and practitioners seeking to bridge the gap between traditional discourse analysis and the evolving landscape of digital media.

Methodology

Research Design
This study employed a qualitative CDA approach augmented by digital content analysis techniques. By integrating Fairclough's three-dimensional model with framing theory, the research addressed both traditional linguistic elements and the novel affordances of digital media.

Corpus of the Study
The corpus included articles from Arab English-language newspapers published, with a particular focus on those incorporating digital media elements. Examples include Al Jazeera English, Al Arabiya English, and Asharq Al-Awsat. The selection emphasizes articles addressing the peace process and conflict dynamics.

Model of the Study
Fairclough's framework was integrated with framing theory and digital media analysis tools. This combined approach enabled a multidimensional analysis of how language, power, and technology intersect in shaping conflict narratives (Fairclough, 2010; Entman, 1993).

Data Collection Procedures
The study employs purposive sampling to identify and select relevant articles from Arab English-language online newspapers that explicitly focus on the peace process and conflict dynamics in the Israeli-Lebanese and Israeli-Palestinian contexts. Articles are drawn from diverse media outlets, including Al Jazeera English, Al Arabiya English, and Asharq Al-Awsat, to capture a wide range of ideological and cultural perspectives. In addition to textual analysis, multimedia elements—such as embedded videos, images, and hyperlinks—are incorporated to provide a holistic view of how narratives are constructed and disseminated.

User-generated content, including audience comments on articles and interactions on social media platforms linked to the newspapers, is also analyzed to explore grassroots contributions to framing strategies. These digital interactions offer critical insights into the dialogic relationship between media producers and consumers, highlighting how audiences interpret and reshape conflict narratives in real time.

Data Analysis Procedures
The study employed a multi-faceted analytical approach, combining linguistic and contextual analysis to investigate framing strategies in the selected articles. Drawing on critical discourse analysis (CDA), the research examined the lexico-grammatical structures, rhetorical devices, and thematic patterns used to construct narratives about peace and conflict. Particular attention was given to the representation of key actors, events, and ideological perspectives, as well as the strategic use of metaphors and intertextual references.

Digital affordances were analyzed to understand their role in shaping narrative dynamics. This included examining how multimedia elements, such as videos and images, complement or reinforce textual narratives. Also, features like hyperlinks and audience engagement tools were scrutinized to uncover their impact on framing strategies. The interplay between traditional

linguistic techniques and emerging digital tools were explored to reveal how media outlets adapt their strategies in response to the affordances and constraints of digital platforms.

The analysis also incorporated insights from user-generated content, focusing on how audience comments and social media interactions contribute to shaping public perceptions of conflict and peace narratives. By integrating these elements, the study provided an understanding of how digital and linguistic dimensions converge to influence media discourse in conflict contexts.

Results

Statistical Results of Research Question 1

Analysis of the selected articles revealed diverse framing approaches to peace narratives, with optimism dominating the discourse. A majority of articles (68%) framed the peace process in an optimistic light, emphasizing potential resolutions and cooperation. In contrast, 32% expressed skepticism, highlighting challenges, deadlocks, and failures.

Table 1
Framing Approaches to Peace Narratives

Framing Approach	Percentage (%)
Optimistic	68
Skeptical	32

Optimistic framing aligns with broader media strategies to instill hope in audiences, particularly in contexts requiring international attention. By presenting the peace process as a pathway toward achievable cooperation and resolution, these frames contribute to fostering public optimism and sustaining international support for peace initiatives. The strategic use of imagery and language in optimistic articles strengthens their persuasive appeal, creating a narrative that emphasizes collaboration and shared goals among conflicting parties.

Contrariwise, skeptical frames serve an essential role as counter-narratives by providing critical perspectives on the feasibility and challenges of peace efforts. These frames highlight unresolved tensions, structural obstacles, and political complexities, offering a realistic appraisal of the difficulties inherent in achieving lasting peace. By doing so, skeptical frames challenge overly simplistic or idealized portrayals, fostering a more nuanced and balanced discourse. Together, these framing approaches reflect the media's dual role in shaping and scrutinizing public expectations about conflict resolution.

Statistical Results of Research Question 2

Linguistic analysis identified metaphors, modality, and rhetorical devices as the key strategies shaping conflict representation. Metaphors like "bridges to peace" were prominent in optimistic frames, while skeptical frames utilized terms like "impasse" and "stalemate." Modality choices emphasized ideological stances, with assertive forms ("must," "will") appearing in optimistic frames and hedging terms ("might," "could") in skeptical narratives.

Table 2
Frequency of Linguistic Features

Linguistic Feature	Frequency (%)
Metaphors	45
Modality (e.g., must)	30
Rhetorical Devices	25

The frequency distribution of linguistic features, visualized below, highlights the predominant use of metaphors as persuasive tools. Metaphors function as powerful cognitive tools, enabling audiences to conceptualize complex and abstract ideas about peace and conflict in relatable terms. For example, optimistic metaphors like "bridges to peace" evoke images of connection and progress, reinforcing narratives that encourage collaboration and mutual understanding. These metaphors simplify intricate geopolitical dynamics, making them more accessible and emotionally resonant for diverse audiences.

The use of modality reveals the authors' ideological leanings and the degree of certainty associated with their claims. Assertive modalities ("must," "will") project confidence and urgency, often framing peace initiatives as imperative and attainable goals. In contrast, hedging terms ("might," "could") introduce caution and uncertainty, reflecting the complexities and unpredictability of conflict resolution. This contrast in modality underscores the tension between aspirational visions and pragmatic considerations in media narratives.

Rhetorical devices amplify the persuasive impact of these narratives by appealing to readers' emotions and moral sensibilities. Devices such as repetition, parallelism, and rhetorical questions emphasize key points and elicit audience engagement, framing the discourse around shared values and ethical imperatives. Collectively, these linguistic features contribute to constructing a layered and dynamic representation of conflict, balancing hopeful aspirations with critical realism.

Statistical Results of Research Question 3

The findings reveal a clear preference for optimistic framing among the sampled articles, suggesting that Arab English-language newspapers aim to position the peace process as a constructive and achievable endeavor. Articles adopting optimistic frames accounted for 68% of the sample, a significant majority, signaling a strategic choice by media outlets to emphasize positive developments, encourage stakeholder engagement, and foster a climate of hope.

Optimistic narratives often employed emotionally resonant language, such as terms like "breakthrough," "milestone," and "historic moment." These linguistic choices were strategically paired with visual elements, such as photos of smiling diplomats, handshakes, and conference settings. Such multimodal approaches enhanced the credibility and persuasive power of the message, effectively drawing audiences into a shared vision of progress.

On the other hand, skeptical frames, representing 32% of the articles, provided a critical lens on the peace process. These articles often highlighted unresolved disputes, systemic challenges, and political stalemates, using terms like "gridlock" and "untenable." Skeptical narratives were more likely to include statistical data or references to past failures to substantiate their critical perspectives. For example, they might reference failed peace talks or unimplemented agreements as evidence of persistent barriers to progress.

Table 3
Visual Representation of Framing Approaches

Framing Approach	Visual Elements Included (%)	Textual Emphasis (%)
Optimistic	Diplomatic photos (75%)	Positive language (90%)
Skeptical	Statistical charts (50%)	Critical analysis (85%)

Dominance of Hopeful Imagery: The optimistic framing relies heavily on visual and textual synergy to reinforce messages of collaboration and possibility. This aligns with broader media strategies to maintain audience interest and support for peace-building efforts.

Critical Counterbalance: The inclusion of skeptical framing highlights the media's role in providing accountability and realism. By focusing on potential pitfalls and unresolved issues, skeptical narratives ensure that audiences receive a nuanced perspective rather than an overly idealized view of the peace process.

Summary of Results

The results generally underscore the importance of framing strategies in shaping public perceptions of the peace process. Optimistic frames serve to build hope and sustain momentum, crucial in contexts where public support can influence diplomatic efforts. On the other hand, skeptical frames act as a necessary counterbalance, fostering a critical dialogue about the challenges inherent in achieving sustainable peace. Together, these framing approaches reflect the complex, multifaceted role of media in conflict discourse.

The results also demonstrate the pivotal role of language and framing in shaping public perceptions of the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Lebanese conflicts. Optimistic frames, supported by assertive linguistic choices, sought to mobilize support for peace initiatives by projecting confidence and urgency. Conversely, skeptical frames challenged this narrative, focusing on systemic barriers and failures.

Digital affordances amplified these frames, with multimedia elements like embedded videos, infographics, and user interactions (e.g., comments, polls) adding depth to the narratives. For instance, optimistic articles often included visual depictions of diplomatic successes, while skeptical pieces featured analytical diagrams or audience reactions questioning progress.

The integration of metaphors, modality, and rhetorical devices highlights the strategic use of language to construct ideological stances. These features not only framed the narratives but also shaped audience interpretations and emotional responses, underscoring the power of discourse in influencing public opinion.

Discussion

Discussion Related to Research Question 1

Framing of the peace process as depicted in various Arab English-language newspapers reflects a complex and nuanced interplay that exists between differing ideological affiliations and specific political objectives. Leading newspapers, including Al Jazeera English and Asharq Al-Awsat, approach the task of narrative construction with distinct styles to frame peace initiatives. For example, Al Jazeera often invoked frames highlighting the dire humanitarian situations that real people faced to frame peace as an absolutely necessary solution to the widespread suffering in the locations affected. In direct contrast, Asharq Al-Awsat tends to frame peace as a realistically attainable goal, highlighting diplomatic efforts and successful multilateral cooperation among nations and stakeholders involved.

Recent scholarship has given considerable credence to these observations, with the important qualification that media outlets often frame peace processes in ways that closely align with their broader political agendas (Abdullah, 2020; Khalil, 2023). Moreover, digital media platforms have significantly amplified these framing techniques, enabling newspapers to effectively reach a wide array of diverse audiences by crafting tailored narratives specifically designed for them. In this landscape, positive frames—defined by terms and expressions such as "breakthrough" and "progress"—dominate the coverage in some media outlets, reflecting a strategic attempt to harness international support for the peace initiatives being negotiated. In

contrast, skeptical frames underscore and bring into focus the presence of systemic impediments that hinder progress, using terms like "stalemate" and "deadlock" to successfully challenge the general viability and usefulness of several peace initiatives (Tandoc et al., 2021).

Discussion Related to Research Question 2

The linguistic representation of conflict in Arab English-language newspapers employs rhetorical devices, metaphors, and modality to convey ideological positions. Metaphors such as "bridges to peace" or "walls of division" serve as powerful tools to simplify complex geopolitical issues, making them accessible to a wider audience. Modal verbs, including "must" and "might," further underscore ideological leanings, reflecting either assertive optimism or cautious skepticism.

Comparing these findings with recent studies reveals consistent trends in the use of language to construct narratives. For instance, van Dijk's (2015) cognitive framework identifies how metaphors and rhetorical devices shape mental models, embedding specific ideological stances. This aligns with the analysis of articles in Al Arabiya English, where assertive linguistic choices project confidence in diplomatic resolutions, while hedging terms are strategically used to temper expectations.

Discussion Related to Research Question 3

The integration of digital tools, which includes a variety of multimedia elements and interactive platforms, has significantly transformed the ways in which newspapers frame and represent both conflict and peace processes. Features such as embedded videos, infographics that summarize complex information, and hyperlinks that connect to additional resources enrich narratives, thereby offering audiences a multi-dimensional and engaging perspective on the issues at hand. For instance, optimistic articles often pair hopeful and encouraging language with carefully selected images of diplomatic summits, which together work to reinforce positive framing through various visual cues. In contrast, skeptical frames take a different approach by utilizing audience engagement tools, such as interactive polls or comment sections, in order to amplify and elevate dissenting voices within the discourse.

Recent scholarship has highlighted the crucial and multilayered role that digital platforms play in how strategies are framed within public discourse. On the one hand, these new tools serve to democratize discourse by facilitating the emergence of a wide array of diverse perspectives that may not be heard in more traditional formats; on the other hand, they run the significant risk of entrenching polarization through the selective amplification of some viewpoints over others, leading to a more divided conversation (Kopytowska, 2019; Papacharissi, 2015). Moreover, the examination of user-generated content, such as trending hashtags like #FreePalestine or #IsraelUnderAttack, puts much emphasis on the participatory nature of digital framing, showing very clearly how ordinary users actively take part in the narratives being framed in the online space. This participatory model often bypasses the traditional gatekeeping mechanisms, which changes the dynamics of how stories build up and, as a result, the public opinion (Gillespie, 2018).

Comparative Insights and Emerging Trends

These findings resonate with broader trends in conflict representation in media discourse. Traditional framing techniques still predominate, but the onset of digital tools has also initiated new dynamics, such as real-time feedback from the audience and algorithmic curation of content. These changes call for a revisit of traditional CDA frameworks and bringing in the affordances

that the digital offers, if there is to be a comprehensive encapsulation of the nuances of contemporary media narratives.

Finally, the framing of peace processes and conflicts in English-written Arabic newspapers reveals complex interactions of various linguistic strategies, ideological perspectives, and digital technological developments. Such an intersection not only influences a specific aspect of how the public perceives these processes but also underlines the changed role that media plays in facilitating and influencing geopolitical discussion and narratives. Further research into cross-cultural comparisons should be carried out to better understand this phenomenon. It should also examine the implications emerging technologies, particularly those relating to artificial intelligence, hold for the moderation of media narratives and their impact on shaping public discourse.

Conclusion

This study significantly enhances our critical awareness regarding the intricate ways in which media framing can profoundly impact the public's understanding of the complex dynamics that exist between peace and conflict. By carefully examining not only traditional linguistic features but also exploring the essential role that various digital tools play in this context, it underscores the considerable potential of media to either promote narratives that are balanced and fair or, conversely, to deepen and exacerbate ideological divides among different groups in society. The findings presented in this study provide actionable insights that are invaluable for peacebuilding organizations and policymakers who are striving to effectively leverage media as a means for fostering constructive dialogue and understanding among diverse stakeholders. Moreover, the integration of digital affordances in the framing strategies' context highlights the powerful and transformative impact technology has on how contemporary discourse is framed and perceived in today's society.

Limitations of the Study

While this study does bring valuable insights into the field of media and its impact, it is important to note that it is mostly focused on digital media, and therefore, traditional forms of media are excluded from the analysis. Traditional media still wields considerable power in the formation and influence of public opinion, and such influence is an important factor that cannot be undermined. Additionally, the study was limited to Arab English-language newspapers, and as such, the generalizability of the findings may be limited to other linguistic and cultural contexts with possibly different media landscapes. Such delimitations point to the compelling need for a much more encompassing and comparative approach in future research undertakings to ensure a more holistic understanding of the influence the media wields across different settings.

Delimitations of the Study

The study was deliberately limited to only Arab English-language newspapers and their affiliated digital content in order to provide a focused and concentrated examination of this specific area that has been drastically understudied. By taking this particular approach, it afforded an in-depth and detailed exploration of specific framing techniques as well as the digital affordances that are afforded in this context; however, this approach necessarily precluded other formats and languages, which may have offered different insights.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies can better investigate cross-cultural comparisons with a focus on how media frames geopolitical conflicts, detailing nuances in the ways that different cultural contexts significantly shape the framing of these conflicts. Moreover, the study of the role played by

artificial intelligence in content moderation and in the shaping of public opinion is an exciting and promising line that calls for further research and exploration. By broadening the analysis to traditional media outlets and multilingual corpora, researchers would be able to offer a far more comprehensive understanding of the intricate interplay between media, technology, and the representation of conflict in our modern world.

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