

Research Article

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Framing Conflict and Power by Al Jazeera English and The New York Times: A Mixed Methods Study

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Abstract

The intricate relationship between media discourse and power dynamics is a vital area for exploration, especially as global media continues to evolve and influence international readers. This research examined how Al Jazeera English (AJE) and The New York Times (NYT) portray collective identities and power dynamics in their coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of 200 articles published between October 2023 and October 2024. The study explored how these outlets use implicit messaging and intertextual references to either challenge or reinforce dominant narratives. A mixed methods descriptive design was used. For the qualitative analysis, Fairclough's (2010) three-dimensional model guided the CDA. The quantitative analysis entailed frequency counts and inferential statistics (chi-square tests) to uncover relationships between variables identified in the qualitative phase. Results showed that AJE consistently emphasizes Palestinian victimhood and resistance, actively contesting dominant Western-centric narratives by strategically incorporating human rights organizations and Palestinian voices. Conversely, The NYT's coverage, while acknowledging Palestinian suffering, tended to reinforce existing power structures by prioritizing Israeli security concerns and often minimizing Palestinian agency through specific framing and sourcing choices. A Chi-Square test confirmed a statistically significant association between the news outlet and the dominant narrative frame: AJE's coverage showed a statistically significant emphasis on Palestinian victimhood and agency, while The NYT's coverage disproportionately focused on Israeli victimhood and security. This study demonstrates that media discourse shapes public perceptions of complex geopolitical issues and contributes to a theoretical understanding of power dynamics in news reporting. Furthermore, the findings hold significant implications for CDA researchers, language and reading teachers, and CDA students and professors at MA and PhD levels.

Keywords: collective identity, critical discourse analysis, intertextuality, power dynamics

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1. Introduction

The way collective identities are formed and perspectives are legitimized through media discourse has gained increasing importance in influencing the public comprehension of international conflicts. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has demonstrated that media portrayals are never impartial; rather, they are situated within larger systems of power relations and ideological constructs (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Such representations play a crucial role in shaping and sustaining collective identities, while also validating certain viewpoints and invalidating others. Analyzing these processes is particularly important in the context of ongoing conflicts, as media narratives can have a profound impact on public opinion and policy formulation. Exploring intertextual references to other media sources, political discourses, and cultural texts has become essential for understanding how power dynamics are navigated and how prevailing (dominant) ideologies may be upheld or contested (Fairclough, 1992; Van Dijk, 2008). These connections form intricate networks of meaning that transcend individual texts, enriching societal comprehension and interpretation of conflicts.

Al Jazeera English (AJE) and The New York Times (NYT), as prominent global media entities, embody different cultural and ideological viewpoints in their reporting of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Their differing methods of constructing collective identities and legitimizing various perspectives provide important insights into how media discourse informs international perceptions of complex disputes (Kraidy, 2005). In the context of global communication, the influence of cultural and ideological contexts on media representations has grown increasingly significant. Thussu and Freedman (2003) contend that these contexts play a critical role in how media outlets develop narratives and portray the different stakeholders in conflict situations. How media organizations navigate power dynamics in their reporting can have long-lasting effects on public opinion and policymaking.

Within the scope of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, media organizations not only report on occurrences but also shape narratives that affect how various groups and viewpoints are seen. Although extensive studies have explored media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a significant gap remains in comprehending how various media organizations systematically contribute to the formation of collective identities and the legitimization of particular viewpoints. The examination of intertextual links and their influence on power dynamics is especially underexplored in comparative analyses (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2010). This research seeks to investigate how the discursive practices of AJE and The NYT contribute to the

development of collective identities and the legitimization or delegitimization of specific perspectives within their reporting of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Additionally, it explores how intertextual references to other media sources, political discourses, and cultural texts shape the negotiation of power dynamics, and also the reinforcement or challenge of dominant ideologies in the context of the Palestinian conflict.

Understanding these discursive mechanisms in international media is significant for fields like English Language Teaching (ELT) and applied linguistics, particularly in fostering critical media literacy among language learners who increasingly rely on global news sources (Wallace, 1992; Cots, 2006). Crucially, the study is also significant for ELT research and classroom practice by demonstrating robust methodologies for analyzing authentic, ideologically complex texts. Analyzing how power and identity are constructed in outlets like AJE and NYT can equip learners with tools to critically engage with diverse media perspectives. This study also makes significant contributions to our understanding of how media discourse influences collective identities and power relations in conflict scenarios. It offers valuable insights into how media outlets play a role in legitimizing or delegitimizing various perspectives and actors in intricate geopolitical disputes. From a theoretical standpoint, this research enhances our understanding of how intertextual networks function within global media discourse. It broadens existing frameworks for analyzing power dynamics in media representation, especially in cross-cultural settings, which can guide future research in media discourse analysis and international communication.

Considering the limitations of the previous studies, the subsequent questions have been formulated:

RQ1: To what extent do Al Jazeera English and The New York Times' discursive practices including implicitness contribute to the construction of collective identities and the legitimization or delegitimization of specific perspectives in their coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

RQ2: How do the frequencies of narratives emphasizing Palestinian versus Israeli victimhood and agency differ significantly between the two news outlets?

RQ3: How do the intertextual links to other media sources, political discourses, or cultural texts in Al Jazeera English and The New York Times' coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict shape the negotiation of power dynamics and the reproduction or challenge of dominant ideologies within the context of the conflict?

2. Literature Review

The formation of collective identities and power dynamics within media discourse involves intricate interactions between intertextual references and discursive practices. Fairclough's (1992, 2010) frameworks for CDA highlight how discourse plays a role in perpetuating macro-structures and power relations through various linguistic methods. This is especially apparent in reporting international conflicts, where media outlets are pivotal in shaping public understanding and legitimizing certain viewpoints. Research has illustrated how media discourse shapes the construction of collective identities and power relations through a range of discursive strategies. For instance, Baden and Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2018) examined coverage from various media outlets and identified patterns of convergence and divergence in response to key events that ultimately shape collective narratives. Similarly, Gonen et al. (2020) discovered that media sources frequently utilize inter-media citations during the periods of escalating conflict, demonstrating how power dynamics are navigated through choices of sources and their attribution.

The influence of intertextuality, defined here as the way texts explicitly or implicitly draw upon, reference, or relate to other texts (Kristeva, 1969; Fairclough, 1992), on power dynamics is further exemplified by research that explores how media organizations use various textual resources to construct and uphold ideological stances. Grincheva and Lu (2016) demonstrated that different media outlets utilize distinct rhetorical frameworks to project national identities and aspirations on the global stage. Wolfsfeld (2022) emphasized that the digital era has transformed power relationships in media coverage, empowering previously marginalized voices while also potentially exacerbating divisive narratives. This intricate relationship between intertextuality and power dynamics is especially notable in conflict reporting, where media outlets navigate competing narratives and ideological viewpoints in their coverage (Yarchi, 2016). It is also crucial to note that the type of media text, such as news reports versus opinion pieces, can significantly influence framing and discursive strategies, given their distinct journalistic aims and conventions (Bell, 1991).

The examination of media discourse has become increasingly essential for understanding how news organizations construct and perpetuate specific ideologies and power relations. Various elements—including media ownership, editorial policies, and intended audiences—collectively influence the nature and effects of news media discourse. CDA is an effective framework for investigating how media institutions play a role in perpetuating broader societal structures and power relations. According to Van Dijk (2003), CDA is

particularly focused on exploring how social and political discourses reflect power abuse, dominance, and inequality. Within CDA, 'power dynamics' refer to the ways social power, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, or resisted through text and talk. This analytical lens is especially pertinent in examining how news organizations utilize implicit meanings and intertextual references to influence public perceptions of intricate conflicts.

The notion of implicitness in media discourse, referring to meanings that are suggested or implied rather than directly stated (Chen & Zhang, 2010), serves a variety of purposes, including compliance with politeness norms and adaptation to different pragmatic contexts. This aspect becomes especially crucial in the coverage of conflicts, where media outlets may rely on implicit meanings to communicate ideological stances without overtly articulating them. Larson (1984) has identified three categories of implicit meaning: referential implicit, regulatory implicit, and situational implied, which provide a useful framework for analyzing how subtle messages are embedded within media coverage.

Intertextuality, as introduced by Kristeva (1969), underscores the idea that texts do not exist in isolation but are fundamentally interconnected with other texts. In news coverage, this concept is evident through various forms identified by Fairclough (1992), such as discourse representation, presupposition, negation, metadiscourse, and irony. These intertextual elements are critical in how media organizations construct narratives, establishing certain viewpoints as legitimate while undermining others. The significance of presupposition in news discourse, particularly in the context of conflict coverage, has been highlighted by Keenan (1971). Both pragmatic and semantic presuppositions play a vital role in how media outlets frame events and portray actors, often embedding ideological positions within what appears to be neutral reporting. This observation aligns with Fairclough's (1992) assertion that presuppositions can be interpreted within an intertextual framework, where assumed ideas are shaped by prior texts.

CDA has seen considerable advancements as a methodology for investigating the intersections of language, power, and ideology across various contexts. Recent research has illustrated its ability to reveal concealed meanings and power structures within media discourse. For example, Shahariar (2023) examined intertextuality as a postmodern concept in the realms of arts and literature, highlighting how texts reference and influence one another both overtly and subtly. This interconnectedness of texts shapes interpretation through various factors, including presentation style, context, and sequencing (Norris, 2019). Recent advancements in the examination of implicitness have illuminated its intricate role within discourse analysis.

Heliasz-Nowosielska and Ogrodniczuk (2019) investigated how discourse markers can convey both explicit and implicit meanings through corpus research. Furthermore, Corneille and Hütter (2020) presented a critical review of the concept of implicitness in attitude studies, advocating for the development of more precise terminology. Federici (2023) employed critical stylistics to uncover implicit gender ideologies present in interwar magazines, while Xiang and Wang (2022) provided a thorough overview of recognizing implicit discourse relations.

In media analysis, recent research has demonstrated how CDA can expose underlying ideological positions. Gong et al. (2023) explored how China Daily's coverage of COVID-19 utilized intertextual strategies such as impersonalization and genericization to subtly promote official narratives while maintaining a façade of objectivity. Kryachkov (2023) examined the functioning of intertextuality in media texts, identifying various markers such as headers, epigraphs, quotations, and allusions.

Applying CDA to conflict reporting has yielded important insights. Amer (2022) illustrated how prominent news outlets, including The NYT and BBC, framed the 2021 Gaza conflict in ways that privileged specific perspectives while downplaying others, demonstrating how media discourse can influence public comprehension of intricate political issues. In a similar vein, Ayoub (2023) evaluated Palestinian public diplomacy, identifying challenges and suggesting improvements in communication strategies. Research has also expanded into the realms of digital and social media. Rahayu and Amalia (2019) analyzed intertextuality in opinion articles regarding the Industrial Revolution, revealing the use of varied quotation strategies to construct arguments and sustain authority in newspaper writing. Their findings indicated how authors navigate informal discourse in conjunction with academic credibility.

Contemporary scholarship has increasingly emphasized the importance of implicitness in normative texts and communication. Sbisà (2017) argued that grasping implicit meanings is vital for understanding normative texts, illustrating how normativity differentiated between accurate interpretations and misconceptions. This research underscored the relevance of implicit meaning in both technical and everyday communication scenarios. Additionally, the intersection of CDA with translation studies has emerged as a noteworthy research area. Kaźmierczak (2019) examined the difficulties in translating intertextual markers in literature, particularly focusing on the English translations of Polish poetry. This study highlighted the challenges of preserving intertextual references across different linguistic and cultural contexts.

3. Method

3.1. Design

A sequential mixed methods design (Creswell, 2022) was implemented to examine how AJE and The NYT's discursive practices contribute to the construction of collective identities and the negotiation of power dynamics in their coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This approach was chosen to leverage the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data collected simultaneously. The qualitative phase, guided by CDA using Fairclough's (2010) three-dimensional model, allowed for an in-depth exploration of nuanced discursive strategies, implicitness, and intertextual references within the articles. The quantitative phase provided numerical data on the frequency of specific narrative frames (victimhood/agency), enabling statistical comparison between the two outlets and assessment of the significance of observed patterns. The integration occurred at the analysis and interpretation phase, where qualitative findings helped to interpret and contextualize the quantitative results, and quantitative findings helped to assess the prevalence and statistical significance of patterns identified qualitatively.

3.2. The Corpus of the Study

The study analyzed 200 articles (100 from each outlet: AJE and The NYT) published between October 2023 and October 2024, a period marked by significant events in the conflict following October 7, 2023. Articles were sourced directly from the official websites of AJE and NYT using keywords such as "Israel," "Palestine," "Gaza," "West Bank," and "conflict." To obtain a manageable yet representative sample, systematic sampling was employed (Neuman, 2014), selecting every fifth relevant article identified chronologically within the timeframe. While systematic sampling does not guarantee perfect representativeness like random sampling, this pragmatic approach was chosen to ensure coverage across the entire period and mitigate selection bias inherent in convenience sampling. It aimed to capture potential shifts in reporting related to different phases of the conflict occurring within the year. The corpus intentionally included diverse article types, including news reports, editorials, and opinion pieces, written by various authors.

3.3. Theoretical Framework

Fairclough's (2010) three-dimensional model provided the overarching framework for the CDA. The textual dimension guided the examination of linguistic choices (vocabulary, grammar, modality) contributing to identity construction and perspective legitimization. The discursive practice dimension

focused on how these texts were produced, distributed, and consumed within the institutional contexts of AJE and NYT, considering factors like target audience and editorial stances. The social practice dimension informed the analysis of how the discourse relates to broader societal power structures, ideologies, and specifically how intertextual links function to negotiate power dynamics and challenge or reproduce dominant ideologies related to the conflict.

3.4. Procedure

Initially, this study selected a corpus of 200 articles (100 from each outlet: AJE and The NYT) published from October 2023 to October 2024, a period marked by the events after October 7, 2023. While the primary analysis aggregated findings across article types to identify overarching outlet-specific patterns, notable differences related to genre (e.g., stronger opinions in editorials) were considered during the qualitative interpretation. The analysis primarily focused on the main textual content of the articles. Headlines and subheadings were considered contextually as framing devices during the qualitative analysis, but were not systematically coded. Images, videos, and other multimedia elements were excluded from the formal analysis due to the project's scope focusing on linguistic and textual discursive strategies.

An inductive reading of the articles in NVivo identified recurring themes and potential codes concerning identity, power, implicitness, and intertextuality. Following this exploratory phase, a deductive coding approach was applied, utilizing codes derived from Fairclough's (2010) model and the study's research questions. Key aspects scrutinized during the qualitative phase included the discursive strategies used to construct collective identities for both Palestinians and Israelis, examining the labels and attributes assigned to each group.

Techniques employed for legitimizing or delegitimizing actions and perspectives were also closely analyzed. Furthermore, intertextual connections were identified, encompassing both explicit and implicit references to external sources such as political statements, official reports, historical events, or other media outputs. These intertextual links were systematically coded based on the source type (e.g., Human Rights Org, Palestinian Voice, Israeli Voice, Western Gov Statement, Cultural Text). The analysis also delved into identifying implicit meanings conveyed through presuppositions, connotations, and strategic omissions within the news reports.

To ensure coding clarity and consistency, operational definitions were established for key analytical categories. For instance, 'Victimhood' was

defined as narratives emphasizing suffering, loss, harm, displacement, or lack of control attributed to external actions, often illustrated through descriptions of casualties, destroyed homes, or humanitarian need framed as resulting from the conflict or the other party's actions. Conversely, 'Agency' captured narratives depicting capacity for action, decision-making, resistance, self-defense, political maneuvering, or exercising control, exemplified by descriptions of protests, diplomatic efforts, military actions, policy statements, or acts of resistance. These defined categories were applied to representations of both Palestinians and Israelis across the dataset. To bolster coding consistency, inter-coder reliability was assessed on a subset of the data (20% of articles, 10 from each outlet), independently coded by the primary researcher and a second trained coder after a calibration process. The resulting Cohen's Kappa coefficient for the primary narrative categories was .86, indicating substantial agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977). Any coding discrepancies were resolved through discussion.

It is noteworthy that analyzing media coverage of the sensitive Israeli-Palestinian geopolitical conflict necessitates careful ethical consideration. The researchers acknowledged the potential for inherent biases influenced by their own backgrounds and experiences. To mitigate such subjectivity during the analysis, a systematic coding procedure, including inter-coder reliability checks, was implemented. Despite the critical nature of the CDA framework, efforts were made to maintain analytical neutrality in reporting the findings, focusing on observable discursive strategies rather than adopting advocacy positions. Sensitivity was maintained by concentrating the analysis on the media representations themselves, avoiding definitive claims about the conflict's reality, and refraining from language that could unnecessarily exacerbate tensions. The primary researcher's background, which includes familiarity with Middle Eastern contexts and critical discourse studies, informs the analytical lens but also underscores the need for conscious reflection on potential preconceptions. This positionality is acknowledged as potentially influencing interpretation, though methodological rigor was employed throughout the process to ensure transparency and enhance the validity of the findings.

3.5. Data Analysis

A multi-stage data analysis process was employed. Regarding qualitative data analysis, NVivo software proved instrumental in systematically organizing, coding, and retrieving textual segments pertinent to specific themes. Regarding quantitative data analysis, following the qualitative phase, the analysis transitioned to quantitative methods. Based on the finalized codes from the qualitative analysis, the frequencies of the four primary

narrative frames—Palestinian Victimhood, Israeli Victimhood, Palestinian Agency, and Israeli Agency—were calculated for both AJE and The NYT. A Chi-Square test of independence was subsequently performed using SPSS (Version 28) to determine if a statistically significant association existed between the news outlet and the frequency distribution of these dominant narrative frames. This statistical test was chosen for its suitability in comparing frequencies of categorical variables across two independent groups. The assumptions for the Chi-Square test were verified, confirming all expected cell counts were above 5. Cramer's V was calculated as an effect size measure to gauge the strength of the association. While alternative models like logistic regression could model predictors for specific frames, the Chi-Square test directly addressed the research question regarding the overall difference in narrative emphasis between the outlets, offering a direct and interpretable approach for this categorical comparison.

Moreover, consistent with the mixed methods design of the study, the qualitative and quantitative findings were integrated. The rich details from the qualitative analysis—explaining how narratives were constructed, the nature of implicitness, and the function of intertextual links—were used to interpret and add depth to the quantitative results, which demonstrated the frequency and statistical significance of these narrative patterns. This integration allowed for a comprehensive understanding, where qualitative insights enriched the interpretation of the observed statistical differences in reporting between the two news outlets.

4. Results

4.1. Results for Research Question One

The first research question aimed to explore the extent to which AJE and The NYT's discursive practices, including the use of implicitness, contribute to the construction of collective identities and the legitimization or de-legitimization of specific perspectives in their coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This section focused on the qualitative findings detailing *how* these narratives were constructed. The qualitative analysis, applying the operational definitions developed (i.e., victimhood defined as emphasis on suffering/loss due to external actions, and agency defined as capacity for action/resistance/decision-making), revealed distinct patterns in how victimhood and agency were attributed by each outlet.

AJE's coverage consistently constructed narratives that emphasized Palestinian **victimhood** stemming from Israeli occupation, military actions, and systemic policies. This was often achieved through emotionally resonant

language, detailed accounts of civilian suffering, and vivid imagery conveyed through text, framing Palestinians as subjected to disproportionate harm. For example:

Extract 1 (AJE, December 2023)

“The latest Israeli airstrike on a densely populated area of Gaza resulted in the deaths of ten children, the latest tragedy in a long line of suffering inflicted upon the Palestinian people.”

This extract exemplifies AJE’s focus on specific human costs (“deaths of ten children”) and uses framing (“latest tragedy,” “long line of suffering”) that reinforces an ongoing narrative of Palestinian victimhood. Simultaneously, AJE’s coverage frequently granted **agency** to Palestinians, particularly portraying resistance against occupation as a legitimate response. Actions like protests or political statements were framed as exercises of self-determination.

Extract 2 (AJE, January 2024)

“Palestinian protestors in the West Bank demonstrated against the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements, underscoring their determination to resist ongoing occupation.”

Here, Palestinians are depicted as active agents (“demonstrated,” “determination to resist”), explicitly linking their actions to challenging Israeli policies (“illegal Israeli settlements,” “ongoing occupation”), thus highlighting Palestinian agency in the context of resistance.

In contrast, The NYT, while sometimes acknowledging Palestinian suffering (victimhood), more frequently constructed narratives prioritizing Israeli security perspectives and agency. Palestinian suffering, when reported, was often contextualized within Israeli security justifications or presented with less emotive detail compared to AJE. Israeli agency, particularly governmental and military actions, was often foregrounded and framed as necessary or defensive.

Extract 3 (The NYT, December 2023)

“Following a recent surge in rocket attacks from Gaza, Israeli forces launched a counteroffensive to address the ongoing security threat.”

This excerpt centers Israeli agency (“Israeli forces launched a counteroffensive”) and frames it as a reaction (“Following a recent surge...”) to Palestinian actions, implicitly legitimizing the Israeli response by linking it to an “ongoing security threat.” The term “counteroffensive” itself suggests a defensive posture. Palestinian agency, particularly acts of resistance, was often

minimized or framed negatively using terms like “violence” or “terrorism,” thereby delegitimizing it while emphasizing Israeli victimhood linked to these acts.

Extract 4 (The NYT, January 2024)

“Concerns over *escalating* violence in the region led to heightened security measures along the Gaza border.”

This example uses passive or abstract phrasing (“escalating violence”) that obscures specific actors or causality, implicitly focusing attention on the Israeli response (“heightened security measures”) rather than Palestinian actions or grievances, thus constraining the representation of Palestinian agency. In summary, the qualitative analysis of discursive strategies (like framing and implicitness) demonstrates distinct approaches by AJE and The NYT in constructing identities and perspectives related to victimhood and agency in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. AJE qualitatively tends to prioritize narratives centered on Palestinian experiences, while the NYT tends to prioritize narratives centered on Israeli experiences, particularly security, through specific linguistic and framing choices.

4.2. Results for Research Question Two

The second research question asked how the frequencies of narratives emphasizing Palestinian versus Israeli victimhood and agency differ significantly between the two news outlets. To address this research question, quantitative analysis was performed on the narrative frames identified qualitatively. To assess the prevalence of the qualitative patterns related to victimhood and agency, the frequency of articles where the dominant narrative emphasis fell into one of four categories—Palestinian Victimhood (PV), Israeli Victimhood (IV), Palestinian Agency (PA), and Israeli Agency (IA)—was calculated for each outlet based on the coding (using NVivo for systematic coding and retrieval, validated through inter-coder reliability checks as detailed in Methodology).

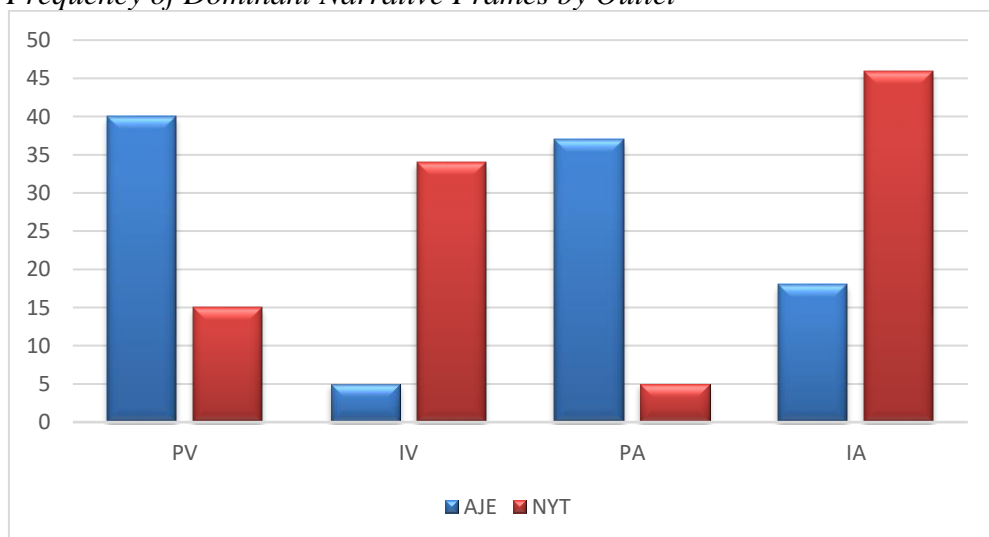
Table 1 clearly illustrates the divergent patterns observed qualitatively. AJE’s coverage showed a high frequency of articles emphasizing Palestinian Victimhood (40) and Palestinian Agency (37). The NYT’s coverage showed a high frequency of articles emphasizing Israeli Victimhood (34) and Israeli Agency (46), with notably low frequency for Palestinian Agency (5).

Table 1*Frequency of Dominant Narratives of Victimhood and Agency in AJE and The NYT Coverage*

Category	AJE (n=100)	NYT (n=100)	Narrative Focus (AJE)	Narrative Focus (NYT)
PV	40	15	Emphasis on suffering due to Israeli actions; evokes sympathy	Acknowledges suffering but often contextualized by security concerns or Palestinian actions
IV	5	34	Less frequent; often linked to specific attacks	Prominent; linked to security threats and used to justify Israeli responses
PA	37	5	Emphasis on resistance, resilience, political action	Infrequent; often framed negatively (violence/terrorism) or minimized
IA	18	46	Focus often critical of military/political actions	Emphasis on security measures, governance, military actions presented as legitimate

Note: Frequencies represent the number of articles where a specific narrative frame was identified as the dominant emphasis regarding victimhood or agency for either Palestinians or Israelis.

This quantitative data substantiates the qualitative observation that AJE foregrounds Palestinian experiences (both suffering and resistance), while the NYT foregrounds Israeli experiences (both suffering and security actions). Figure 1 illustrates the frequency of dominant narrative frames by outlet.

Figure 1*Frequency of Dominant Narrative Frames by Outlet*

As shown in Figure 1, AJE and The NYT employ contrasting narrative frames when covering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. AJE primarily focuses

on Palestinian Victimhood and Agency, while the NYT emphasizes Israeli Agency and, secondarily, Israeli Victimhood. Both outlets tend to center their dominant narrative on one side's perspective, with less frequent representation of the opposing side's victimhood or agency. A Chi-Square test of independence was conducted to determine if the observed differences in the distribution of these four narrative frames between AJE and The NYT were statistically significant.

Table 2

Chi-Square Test Results for Association between News Outlet and Narrative Frame

Statistic	Value
Chi-Square (χ^2)	85.25
Degrees of Freedom (df)	3
<i>p</i> -value	< .001
Cramer's V (Effect Size)	0.58

Note. N = 200 articles (representing the 100 dominant narrative instances from each outlet across the four categories). The analysis compares the distribution profile across outlets.

The Chi-Square test was statistically significant ($\chi^2(3, N = 200) = 85.25, p < .001$). The assumption for the test was met, as all expected cell counts were greater than 5. This result confirms a strong association between the news outlet and the type of narrative frame predominantly used. The Cramer's V value of 0.58 indicates a large effect size, underscoring the substantive difference in narrative strategies between the two outlets. Analysis of standardized residuals further specified this association: AJE significantly emphasized Palestinian Victimhood and Palestinian Agency more than expected by chance, while the NYT significantly emphasized Israeli Victimhood and Israeli Agency more than expected.

In summary for RQ2, quantitative analysis of narrative frequencies demonstrates statistically significant differences in the emphasis on victimhood and agency between AJE and The NYT. AJE's coverage shows a statistically significant higher frequency of narratives emphasizing Palestinian victimhood and agency, while The NYT's coverage shows a statistically significant higher frequency of narratives focused on Israeli victimhood and agency.

4.3. Results for Research Question Three

The third research question examined how intertextual links to other media sources, political discourses, or cultural texts in AJE's and The NYT's coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict shape the negotiation of power dynamics and the reproduction or challenge of dominant ideologies within the

context of the conflict. The analysis focused on identifying the types of sources referenced (intertextuality) and interpreting how these references functioned discursively to position the outlets relative to established power structures and narratives.

4.3.1. Qualitative Results for Intertextual Strategies

The qualitative analysis revealed contrasting strategies in the use of intertextual references by AJE and the NYT. AJE strategically employed intertextuality primarily to challenge dominant Western-centric narratives and renegotiate power dynamics by amplifying marginalized perspectives. This was frequently achieved by:

1. Citing international human rights organizations: Reports from groups like Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch were often referenced to lend credibility to narratives of Israeli violations and Palestinian suffering, positioning AJE's coverage against potentially more state-aligned narratives.

Extract 5 (AJE, January 2024)

“A recent Amnesty International report documenting the excessive use of force by Israeli soldiers against Palestinian protestors further highlights the need for international intervention.”

This extract shows AJE using an external, credible source (Amnesty International) to validate a critical perspective on Israeli actions, thereby challenging narratives that might downplay such force and bolstering the call for intervention (challenging existing power structures).

2. Amplifying Palestinian voices: AJE articles regularly included direct quotes or references to statements from Palestinian officials, activists, academics, and ordinary citizens. This practice directly countered the frequent marginalization of these voices in some other international media, giving them agency and platform within the discourse.
3. Critically framing Western political discourse: References to statements or policies from Western governments (especially the US) were often embedded within a critical context, highlighting perceived biases or negative consequences for Palestinians, thus questioning the legitimacy of these dominant political positions.

The NYT's use of intertextuality, while incorporating a range of sources, often functioned in ways that tended to reproduce dominant ideologies and reinforce existing **power dynamics**, primarily by:

1. Prioritizing official Israeli and US sources: Statements from Israeli government officials, military spokespersons, and US State Department officials were frequently cited, often framing the conflict in terms of Israeli security needs and aligning with established US foreign policy positions.
2. Balancing critical voices: While reports from human rights organizations or criticisms of Israeli actions were sometimes included, they were often presented alongside, or immediately followed by, rebuttals or justifications from Israeli official sources. This practice, while appearing balanced, could implicitly diminish the weight of the criticism and reinforce the legitimacy of the official Israeli perspective.

Extract 6 (NYT, February 2024)

“While human *rights* organizations have raised concerns about Israeli tactics, government officials maintain that the actions taken were necessary to protect Israeli civilians from ongoing threats.”

Here, the critical perspective (“human rights organizations have raised concerns”) is immediately juxtaposed with the official Israeli justification (“government officials maintain... necessary to protect Israeli civilians”). This common technique creates an appearance of neutrality but often gives significant weight to the state perspective, thereby subtly reinforcing the status quo power dynamic.

3. Limited inclusion of Palestinian cultural/historical context: References that deeply contextualized the conflict from a Palestinian historical or cultural perspective were less frequent compared to AJE, contributing to a framing often dominated by immediate security concerns rather than underlying historical grievances.

4.3.2. Quantitative Findings on Intertextual Links

The frequency with which certain types of key intertextual sources were prominently featured in the articles was quantified to assess the prevalence of these sourcing patterns.

Table 3*Frequency of Key Intertextual Link Types in AJE and The NYT Coverage*

Category of Intertextual Link	AJE (n=100)	NYT (n=100)	Observed Function (AJE)	Observed Function (NYT)
Human Rights Organizations	30	10	Corroborate Palestinian narratives; critique Israeli actions	Provide balance; impact often minimized by counter-claims
Palestinian Voices/Organizations	55	11	Amplify perspective; provide direct accounts; assert agency	Less frequent; sometimes framed within conflict/security narrative
Israeli Voices/Organizations (Official)	14	39	Provide context/response, often critically framed	Primary source for justification, explanation, security framing; legitimizes actions
Western Gov Statements (esp. US)	10	35	Often cited critically or to show impact on Palestinians	Often cited authoritatively; reinforces geopolitical alignment; frames conflict
Cultural/Historical Texts (Palestinian)	15	5	Contextualize Palestinian identity, history, resilience	Less frequent; less emphasis on Palestinian cultural/historical context

Note: Frequencies represent the number of articles containing at least one significant reference of the specified type. An article could contain multiple types of references.

Table 3 quantitatively supports the qualitative findings. AJE demonstrated a significantly higher reliance on Human Rights Organizations (30 instances) and Palestinian Voices (55 instances) – sources that facilitate the challenging of dominant narratives. Conversely, the NYT showed markedly higher frequencies for citing Israeli Official Voices (39 instances) and Western Government Statements (35 instances) – sources often aligned with existing power structures and dominant ideologies. The disparity in citing Palestinian Voices (55 in AJE vs. 11 in NYT) is particularly stark.

In summary for RQ2, the analysis indicates that AJE and The NYT utilize intertextual links in systematically different ways. AJE employs intertextuality as a key strategy to actively challenge dominant Western-centric narratives and negotiate power dynamics by centering critical and Palestinian perspectives. The NYT's intertextual practices, while presenting multiple viewpoints, tend to reinforce existing power dynamics and dominant ideologies through a greater reliance on official Israeli and Western sources

and specific balancing techniques. These patterns were observed consistently across the analyzed articles, although nuances may exist between different article genres (e.g., opinion pieces vs. news reports) which were not the primary focus of this aggregated analysis.

5. Discussion

This study investigated how AJE and The NYT portray collective identities, power dynamics, and utilize intertextuality in their coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict between October 2023 and October 2024. The findings, derived from a concurrent mixed methods design integrating qualitative CDA with quantitative analysis, reveal systematic and statistically significant differences in their approaches. This discussion will now delve into the interpretation of findings for each research question, linking them to theoretical frameworks, comparing them with previous research, and considering their implications.

The first research question explored the extent to which AJE and The NYT's discursive practices, including implicitness, contribute to the construction of collective identities and the legitimization or de-legitimization of specific perspectives. The qualitative analysis revealed distinct approaches by each outlet. AJE's discursive practices consistently constructed Palestinian identity around themes of victimhood resulting from occupation and military actions, and agency expressed through resistance. This was achieved through specific framing choices, such as the use of emotionally resonant language and detailed accounts of suffering (e.g., Extract 1), and by portraying resistance as a legitimate response to occupation (e.g., Extract 2). This aligns with framing theory (Entman, 1993), where selecting and making salient particular aspects of reality shapes audience perception. AJE's strategy actively constructs a collective Palestinian identity centered on shared suffering and resistance (Reicher & Hopkins, 1996) and functions as a counter-narrative within the global media landscape, challenging dominant Western-centric perspectives.

Conversely, The NYT's narrative construction, while sometimes acknowledging Palestinian suffering, more frequently prioritized Israeli security concerns and framed Israeli actions as *defensive*. Palestinian agency, particularly acts of resistance, was often minimized or framed negatively using terms like *violence*. This reflects van Dijk's (1998) concept of the "ideological square"—implicitly emphasizing 'our' positive actions (Israeli security) and 'their' negative actions (Palestinian 'violence'). The reliance on implicitness, such as strategic omissions of context or presuppositions favoring Israeli security logic, aligns with Chen and Zhang's (2010) observations on the

pragmatic functions of implicit meaning, serving here to convey an ideological stance without overt declaration.

These qualitative findings resonate with previous research indicating media's role in shaping conflict narratives (Wolfsfeld, 2022) and highlighting how discursive choices contribute to the legitimization of certain perspectives while marginalizing others (Amer, 2017, 2022). The qualitative observations suggest these patterns held across genres, though opinion pieces and editorials in both outlets allowed for more explicit articulation of the biases, aligning with Bell's (1991) distinctions in journalistic purpose.

The way these constructed narratives manifest in terms of frequency is addressed in the subsequent discussion for the second research question, which specifically addressed how the frequencies of narratives emphasizing Palestinian versus Israeli victimhood and agency differ significantly between AJE and The NYT. The quantitative analysis provided robust empirical evidence for the patterns observed qualitatively. Specifically, AJE's coverage showed a statistically significant higher frequency of articles emphasizing Palestinian Victimhood (PV) and Palestinian Agency (PA). In contrast, The NYT's coverage disproportionately focused on Israeli Victimhood (IV) and Israeli Agency (IA). This significant quantitative divergence underscores the extent to which these two major news outlets present fundamentally different statistical realities of the same conflict based on their framing choices. AJE's high frequency of PV and PA narratives reinforces its qualitatively observed role in constructing a narrative centered on Palestinian experiences of suffering and resistance. This approach, by consistently foregrounding these aspects, makes them highly salient for AJE's audience.

The NYT's significantly higher frequency of IV and IA narratives, particularly the emphasis on Israeli security (IA), quantitatively confirms its tendency to prioritize Israeli perspectives and frame the conflict through a security lens. This frequent reinforcement of Israeli security concerns and victimhood, reaching a broad international audience, can be seen as consistent with the propaganda model's arguments (Herman & Chomsky, 1988) about how institutional factors and dominant ideologies shape news content, even in outlets with a reputation for objectivity. The relative infrequency of PA in NYT coverage further highlights a systematic pattern of minimizing or underrepresenting Palestinian self-determination efforts. These statistical findings build upon the qualitative insights from the first research question, demonstrating that the observed discursive strategies are not isolated instances but reflect consistent, outlet-specific editorial patterns in selecting and emphasizing particular narrative frames. This has profound implications for public understanding, as audiences of these outlets are consistently exposed to

differing dominant portrayals of who are the primary victims and agents in the conflict (Cuhadar & Kampf, 2015).

The third research question focused on how intertextual links to other media sources, political discourses, or cultural texts in AJE's and The NYT's coverage shape the negotiation of power dynamics and the reproduction or challenge of dominant ideologies. The findings illustrate that source selection and referencing are not neutral acts but key discursive strategies with ideological implications. AJE's strategic use of intertextuality primarily served to actively contest dominant ideologies and challenge established power dynamics. The significantly higher frequency of citing international human rights organizations and amplifying Palestinian voices demonstrates a clear strategy to lend credibility to narratives of Israeli violations and Palestinian suffering. This directly challenges the hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) of narratives that often marginalize Palestinian perspectives or downplay Israeli accountability. This aligns with Fairclough's (1992, 2010) view of discourse as a site of social struggle, where intertextual choices can be wielded to promote counter-discourses and give voice to the subaltern. This strategy supports the findings of Gong et al. (2023) on how intertextual practices shape ideological perceptions.

The NYT's intertextual practices, conversely, tended to reproduce dominant ideologies and reinforce existing power structures. The markedly higher reliance on official Israeli and Western government sources reflects and legitimizes these established power centers. The common technique of "balancing" critical reports with official justifications, while appearing to adhere to journalistic norms of objectivity, often functions as a form of gatekeeping (White, 1950). This practice can privilege dominant perspectives and minimize the impact of counter-evidence, subtly embedding ideological positions (Fairclough, 1995). This pattern aligns with research showing how media can reflect geopolitical alignments (Grincheva & Lu, 2016; Lichtenstein & Eilders, 2018). The consistent reliance on sources that uphold the status quo, frequently framed around security discourses, contributes to the reproduction of a hegemonic understanding of the conflict that aligns with dominant Western geopolitical interests.

These findings underscore Fairclough's (2010) emphasis on the interplay between textual features (choices of words), discursive practices (sourcing, framing), and broader social practices (power relations, ideologies). The contrasting intertextual strategies employed by AJE and NYT are not merely stylistic choices but reflect their different positions within the global media field and their differing relationships to centers of political and

ideological power. This directly impacts how power dynamics are represented and negotiated within their conflict coverage.

6. Conclusions and Implications

This comparative study, employing a mixed methods approach integrating CDA with quantitative frequency analysis, investigated the discursive construction of collective identities and power dynamics in AJE and The NYT coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from October 2023 to October 2024. The findings reveal significant and systematic differences in how these influential outlets frame the conflict, utilize implicitness, and deploy intertextual links. AJE consistently employed discursive strategies that emphasized Palestinian victimhood and agency, actively challenging dominant Western-centric narratives and established power structures. This was achieved through specific framing choices, emotive language, and strategic intertextuality, particularly the amplification of Palestinian voices and reliance on critical reports from human rights organizations. Conversely, The NYT, while maintaining a semblance of neutrality and acknowledging Palestinian suffering to some extent, predominantly reinforced existing power dynamics and dominant ideologies. Its coverage prioritized Israeli victimhood and agency, especially security concerns, and relied more heavily on official Israeli and Western sources, often using intertextuality and framing techniques that subtly legitimized dominant perspectives. The statistically significant differences found in narrative frequencies underscore that these are not isolated instances but systematic patterns reflecting divergent editorial stances and approaches to representing the conflict.

The study underscores the crucial role of media discourse in shaping public perception and understanding of complex geopolitical issues like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It highlights how seemingly objective news reporting can be deeply embedded in ideological frameworks and power relations, conveyed through nuanced choices in language, framing, and source selection. This research empirically contributes to Critical Discourse Analysis by demonstrating how specific discursive strategies function in tandem within prominent international news outlets to construct divergent representations of a major conflict. It quantitatively validates qualitative observations of bias and narrative framing, strengthening the empirical basis for CDA claims, and reinforces the theoretical links between discourse, power, and ideology, showing concretely how linguistic and discursive choices are implicated in the maintenance or challenge of social and political inequalities.

The findings carry significant practical implications across several domains. For Discourse Analysis (DA) researchers, this study offers empirical

validation of systematic framing and narrative construction by influential global media. It provides a methodological model for mixed methods CDA, illustrating how qualitative depth and quantitative breadth can be effectively combined to analyze complex discursive phenomena, and highlights the ongoing relevance of CDA in uncovering power dynamics in contemporary media. It encourages further research into the evolving strategies media outlets use to shape understanding of international conflicts and the interplay between traditional media and newer digital platforms.

For pedagogical applications, it provides rich material and analytical frameworks for reading comprehension courses, enabling learners to deconstruct bias and evaluate sources; for media reading courses, it offers compelling case studies to navigate contemporary news discourse; and for media translation courses, it highlights how nuanced discursive choices carry ideological weight critical for translation. Furthermore, it serves as an exemplary application of CDA for DA courses at MA and PhD levels, particularly within applied linguistics, illustrating the operationalization of theoretical constructs in empirical research. For language teachers, particularly reading and media teachers in EFL contexts, this research offers rich, authentic material for developing critical media literacy. By comparing and contrasting articles from *AJE* and *NYT* on the same events, educators can guide learners to identify linguistic markers of bias, deconstruct framing techniques, evaluate source selection (intertextuality), and understand how implicitness conveys meaning. Such activities move beyond basic comprehension, equipping EFL learners with sophisticated analytical skills necessary to navigate the complexities of global English-language news. It provides a concrete basis for designing curriculum units focused on critical thinking, source evaluation, and understanding the ideological work of language in media, directly addressing the need for learners to become discerning consumers of information.

Furthermore, for students and professors of DA at MA and PhD levels, this study serves as an illustrative application of CDA to a pressing real-world issue. It demonstrates how theoretical constructs like Fairclough's model can be operationalized to analyze substantial datasets and yield meaningful insights into media representation. It can be used as a case study in courses on media discourse, political discourse, or advanced CDA, stimulating discussion on methodological choices, the interpretation of findings, and the ethical considerations involved in such research. It also provides a foundation upon which postgraduate students can build their own research projects, exploring different conflicts, media outlets, or specific discursive features in greater depth, thus contributing to the next generation of DA scholarship.

Ultimately, this research enhances public awareness of how media influences perceptions of international conflicts, encouraging a more critical engagement with news coverage and fostering a more informed public dialogue on intricate geopolitical matters. The findings also have relevance for journalists and media organizations, offering insights into the wider effects of their reporting choices on the formation of collective identities and the reinforcement or challenging of power dynamics, prompting reflection on ethical responsibilities in conflict reporting.

The study's primary strengths lie in its robust mixed methods design, which integrates in-depth qualitative analysis with statistical validation, and its focus on contemporary coverage from two influential yet ideologically distinct global news outlets, AJE and the NYT. However, the research is subject to several limitations which, in turn, highlight productive avenues for future investigation.

Firstly, the corpus, while systematically selected, is confined to 200 textual articles from these two specific outlets over a one-year period. This restricts the generalizability of the findings to other timeframes, different media organizations, or the full spectrum of coverage even within these outlets. Future research could address this by expanding the corpus significantly, including more outlets and covering different conflict periods for comparative analysis. Secondly, the analysis concentrated primarily on textual content. A crucial next step would be to incorporate multimodal analysis, examining how images, videos, and other multimedia elements interact with text to shape narratives, thus capturing the full complexity of contemporary news discourse.

Thirdly, potential sampling bias, although mitigated through systematic selection, cannot be entirely ruled out. Furthermore, the interpretive nature of qualitative CDA, despite methodological safeguards like inter-coder reliability checks, inherently involves a degree of subjectivity influenced by the researcher's positionality. Future studies could further explore audience reception across diverse demographics to understand how these potentially subjective interpretations resonate with different readers. Finally, investigating the specific journalistic routines and editorial policies within AJE and NYT that influence these discursive outputs, as well as exploring the interplay between social media interactions and these traditional media narratives, would provide valuable context and deeper understanding.

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