Power Dynamics and Linguistic Strategies in Social Media Framing of Refugee Crises: A Critical Analysis of Ukrainian and Arab Refugees

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Abstract
This study investigates how power dynamics and linguistic strategies shape the social media framing of refugee crises, specifically comparing narratives surrounding Ukrainian and Arab refugees. Employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) guided by van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach, this research examines how power structures and ideologies influence the portrayal of these groups across platforms like Twitter (X) and Reddit. The study compares discourse related to the influx of Ukrainian refugees post-February 2022 with that surrounding the 2015 Syrian refugee crisis to uncover patterns of bias and inequality. Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods, the research analyzes a corpus of social media posts to identify specific linguistic strategies—such as lexical choices, metaphors, and narrative structures—that contribute to double standards in representation. The findings reveal how Western-centric biases, nationalism, and Islamophobia shape the framing of Ukrainian and Arab refugees, reinforcing societal inequalities. This paper underscores the role of language in perpetuating discriminatory practices and emphasizes the need for critical awareness to challenge biased narratives.

INTRODUCTION
Language functions as a potent instrument in shaping societal perceptions, particularly regarding global crises such as refugee movements. It does not merely reflect social realities but actively constructs them, reinforcing power structures, ideologies, and biases that influence how different groups are perceived and treated (Fairclough, 2010; Van Dijk, 2011). The framing of refugee crises is inherently ideological, as linguistic choices shape narratives that privilege certain groups while marginalizing others (Bhatia & Jenks, 2018; Bozdağ, 2019). Social

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media platforms, which serve as primary arenas for discourse production and dissemination, have further intensified the construction and contestation of refugee-related narratives (Kreis, 2017; Alwi, 2024).

The disparities in how different refugee groups are framed have been well-documented, particularly in relation to Ukrainian and Arab refugees. Research emphasizes that Ukrainian refugees are frequently represented as victims deserving of empathy and support, whereas Arab refugees are often depicted as security threats or economic burdens (Kapetanovic, 2022; Pepinsky, 2024). This differentiation is deeply rooted in historical, cultural, and political

contexts that shape Western-centric ideological frameworks (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017; Schmauch & Nygren, 2020). For instance, media representations of the 2015 Syrian refugee crisis overwhelmingly associated Arab refugees with terrorism, instability, and cultural incompatibility (Bhatia & Jenks, 2018; Goodman et al., 2017). In contrast, Ukrainian refugees, displaced after the 2022 Russian invasion, have been framed as resilient individuals escaping unjust aggression, leading to broader international solidarity and policy support (Nordø & Ivarsflaten, 2021; Torppa, 2023).

The ideological underpinnings of these representations are evident in the language and rhetorical strategies employed in social media discourse. The strategic use of lexical choices, metaphors, and narratives reinforces the construction of in-group versus out-group distinctions, further perpetuating double standards (Van Dijk, 2008; Siapera et al., 2018). Van Dijk's (2000) ideological square framework elucidates how dominant groups emphasize their positive attributes while amplifying the negative characteristics of marginalized groups. In the context of refugee representation, this results in the amplification of humanitarian concerns for Ukrainian refugees while downplaying or distorting similar circumstances faced by Arab refugees (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017; Staniforth et al., 2016).

Social media platforms such as Twitter (now X), Facebook, and Reddit play a critical role in shaping public opinion and policy responses through their algorithmic amplification of dominant narratives (Hoewe, 2018; Liu & Ahmed, 2023). Research has demonstrated that content portraying Ukrainian refugees in a sympathetic light receives greater engagement and visibility compared to posts emphasizing the struggles of Arab refugees (Steimel, 2010; Lenette, 2018). Furthermore, digital racism and Islamophobia manifest through the selective portrayal of Arab refugees as burdensome or culturally alien, reinforcing pre-existing biases (Aldamen, 2023; Harrison, 2016).

The disparities in discourse extend beyond media representation and influence institutional responses. European nations that responded with open-border policies and financial assistance

for Ukrainian refugees imposed stricter immigration controls on Syrian and other Arab refugees, reflecting the direct impact of discourse on policymaking (Crawley & Jones, 2021; Welfens, 2019). The selective application of humanitarian principles underscores the broader issue of moral hierarchies in refugee reception, where cultural proximity and geopolitical interests dictate levels of empathy and support (Macklin, 2007; Hoffman, 2011). This phenomenon is consistent with the historical tendency of Western discourse to categorize migrants as either "deserving" or "undeserving" based on racial, religious, and political considerations (Ignatieff, 2001; Zimbardo, 2007).

A critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach, particularly utilizing Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model, is essential for uncovering the mechanisms through which these biases are produced and reinforced (Van Dijk, 2001; Hart, 2011). CDA reveals how linguistic strategies, such as categorization, presupposition, and implication, contribute to the differential framing of refugee groups (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Leitch & Palmer, 2010). The study of social media discourse, therefore, offers valuable insights into contemporary ideological struggles and the ongoing reproduction of power inequalities in global refugee policies (Foucault, 1980; Sims-Schouten et al., 2007).

By critically examining the representation of Ukrainian and Arab refugees on social media, this study aims to emphasize the role of discourse in shaping humanitarian responses, influencing public opinion, and perpetuating systemic biases. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for fostering equitable policies and challenging discriminatory narratives that contribute to social exclusion and xenophobia (Staniforth et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW
Theoretical Background
This study integrates Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with theoretical frameworks such as van Dijk's socio-cognitive model and Fairclough's three-dimensional approach. These frameworks emphasize the interplay between language, cognition, and society, emphasizing how discourse reflects and reinforces power imbalances

(Fairclough, 2013; Van Dijk, 2008). CDA provides a robust methodological foundation for analyzing the ways in which language is used to construct and sustain social inequalities. According to Fairclough (2013), discourse is not merely a reflection of social reality but an active force that shapes and reshapes societal structures, ideologies, and power relations. Similarly, van Dijk (2008) emphasizes the role of cognition in mediating the relationship between discourse and society, arguing that discourse operates through cognitive schemas that are shaped by existing power dynamics and ideologies.

The study also incorporates framing theory to analyze how narratives are constructed and how they influence public perception (Entman, 1993; Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017). Framing theory posits that the way an issue is presented—through specific linguistic choices, metaphors, and narratives—can significantly impact how it is understood and acted upon by audiences (Entman, 1993). For instance, Greussing and Boomgaarden (2017) demonstrate how media framing of refugees often oscillates between portraying them as victims deserving of empathy and as threats requiring containment. This duality is reflective of broader societal biases and power dynamics, which shape the cognitive frameworks through which audiences interpret these narratives.

Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model further enriches this analysis by providing a framework for understanding how discourse constructs and reinforces ideological positions. According to van Dijk (2008), discourse is a tool for maintaining social hierarchies, with powerful groups using language to legitimize their dominance while marginalizing others. This is achieved through strategies such as positive self-representation and negative other-representation, which create and sustain dichotomies between "Us" and "Them" (van Dijk, 2006). These strategies are particularly evident in the portrayal of refugees, where dominant groups often frame themselves as compassionate and humanitarian while depicting marginalized groups as dangerous or burdensome (Wodak, 2021).

Fairclough's three-dimensional approach complements van Dijk's model by offering a structured methodology for analyzing discourse at the textual, discursive, and social levels (Fairclough, 2013). At the textual level, Fairclough examines the linguistic features of discourse, such as lexical choices and syntactic structures, which encode ideological meanings. At the discursive level, he explores how these features interact with broader discursive practices, such as media reporting and political rhetoric. Finally, at the social level, Fairclough investigates how discourse reflects and reproduces social structures, including power relations and inequalities. This multi-layered approach enables a complete analysis of how discourse functions as a site of struggle over meaning and power (Jaworski & Coupland, 2019).

The integration of these theoretical frameworks emphasizes the interconnectedness of language, cognition, and society in shaping discourse. As noted by Wodak and Meyer (2016), discourse is not a neutral medium but a strategic tool used by powerful actors to advance their interests and maintain their dominance. This perspective aligns with Foucault's (1980) notion of power as a pervasive force that operates through discourse to shape identities, relationships, and social realities. By examining how language is used to construct and reinforce double standards, this study seeks to uncover the mechanisms through which power dynamics are perpetuated in social media discourse (Krzyżanowski, 2016; Shahmirzadi, 2018).

Moreover, the study draws on insights from cognitive linguistics to explore how metaphors and framing devices influence audience perceptions. Lakoff and Johnson (2008) argue that metaphors are not merely decorative elements of language but fundamental tools for organizing thought and experience. In the context of refugee discourse, metaphors such as "flood," "invasion," and "burden" evoke specific emotional responses and shape public attitudes toward refugees (Musolff, 2016). Similarly, framing theory emphasizes how the selection and emphasis of certain aspects of an issue can guide audience interpretations and evaluations (Entman, 1993). For example, framing refugees as victims of external aggression elicits sympathy and support, while framing them as products of internal conflict

diminishes moral responsibility and fosters indifference (Douai et al., 2021).

Incorporating these theoretical perspectives, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how discourse operates as a mechanism of power and control. By analyzing the linguistic and rhetorical strategies used in social media discourse, the study seeks to uncover the underlying ideologies and cognitive biases that shape the representation of Ukrainian and Arab refugees (Azeem, 2022; Sutkutė, 2023). This approach builds on recent scholarship that emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary methods in studying complex social phenomena (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017; Kapetanovic, 2022).

Empirical Background

Recent studies reveal significant disparities in the portrayal of Ukrainian and Arab refugees. While Ukrainian refugees are framed through a humanitarian lens, Arab refugees are often associated with security threats and economic burdens (Hania & Nashef, 2011; Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017). This contrast reflects broader societal biases, including Islamophobia and nationalism, which shape cognitive schemas and influence discourse (Wodak, 2021; Kapetanovic, 2022). For instance, Iberi (2023) emphasizes how German newspapers portrayed Ukrainian refugees as victims deserving of compassion, while Syrian refugees were often depicted as threats to national security and cultural identity. This differential treatment underscores the role of racialized and politicized narratives in shaping public perceptions of refugees.

The framing of Ukrainian refugees as victims of external aggression aligns with Western-centric narratives that prioritize certain values, such as democracy and freedom, over others (Politi et al., 2023). This framing evokes a sense of shared vulnerability among European audiences, fostering empathy and solidarity. In contrast, the portrayal of Arab refugees as products of internal conflicts or self-inflicted problems diminishes their claim to victimhood and justifies restrictive policies (Costello & Foster, 2022). This disparity is further exacerbated by media coverage that emphasizes the cultural and religious differences of Arab refugees, reinforcing stereotypes of incompatibility and threat (Yılmaz et al., 2023).

Empirical research also emphasizes the role of social media in amplifying these biases. Studies by Douai et al. (2021) and Popovic (2024) demonstrate how social media platforms serve as arenas for the negotiation of power relations, where narratives about refugees are constructed and contested. These platforms often amplify dominant discourses while marginalizing alternative voices, contributing to the perpetuation of double standards (Sutkutė, 2023). For example, Calabrese (2024) notes that Ukrainian refugees are frequently portrayed as deserving and worthy of support on social media, while Arab refugees face skepticism and negative biases.

The influence of Islamophobia and xenophobia on refugee discourse is well-documented in recent literature. Hania and Nashef (2011) argue that Arabs are frequently portrayed through a lens of violence and threat, perpetuating stereotypes that position them as the "evil other." Similarly, Sambaraju and Shrikant (2023) note that Ukrainian refugees are often depicted as "war refugees," emphasizing their victimhood and the circumstances that led to their displacement. This contrast reflects broader societal biases that privilege certain groups while marginalizing others (Abbas, 2019; Wodak, 2021). Furthermore, empirical studies emphasize the importance of contextual factors in shaping refugee discourse. Grincheva and Lu (2016) examine how media coverage constructs national identities through selective framing, reinforcing the "Us" versus "Them" dichotomy. This framing is particularly evident in the portrayal of Arab refugees, who are often depicted as outsiders threatening the cultural and social fabric of host societies (Dekker & Scholten, 2017). In contrast, Ukrainian refugees are framed as part of a shared European identity, emphasizing their alignment with Western values and norms (Politi et al., 2023).

The empirical evidence underscores the need for a critical examination of the mechanisms through which discourse shapes public perceptions of refugees. By focusing on the linguistic and rhetorical strategies used in

social media discourse, this study seeks to uncover the underlying ideologies and cognitive biases that contribute to the differential treatment of Ukrainian and Arab refugees (Azeem, 2022; Sutkutė, 2023). This approach builds on recent scholarship that emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary methods in studying complex social phenomena (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017; Kapetanovic, 2022).

Gap in the Literature

Despite growing interest in media representations of refugees, there remains a lack of systematic analysis of the linguistic and rhetorical techniques used to construct double standards. This study addresses this gap by examining how power dynamics and ideologies manifest in social media discourse (Azeem, 2022; Sutkutė, 2023). By focusing on linguistic and rhetorical strategies, this research provides deeper insights into how biases are perpetuated and how they influence public attitudes and policy decisions.

One significant gap in the literature is the limited attention to the role of language in constructing and reinforcing double standards. While previous studies have identified disparities in the portrayal of Ukrainian and Arab refugees, few have systematically analyzed the specific linguistic and rhetorical techniques used to achieve these outcomes (Rogelj, 2017; Steimel, 2010). For instance, Krishnamurti (2013) emphasizes the need for more detailed investigations into the discursive strategies employed to establish and maintain double standards in media representations of refugees. This study responds to this call by employing van Dijk's socio-cognitive model and Fairclough's three-dimensional approach to analyze the linguistic and rhetorical strategies used in social media discourse.

Another gap in the literature is the lack of comparative analyses of different refugee groups. Most studies focus on non-European refugees, neglecting the specific dynamics at play in the representation of European versus non-European refugees (Kapetanovic, 2022; Torppa, 2023). This study addresses this gap by comparing the portrayal of Ukrainian and Arab refugees, providing a more nuanced understanding of how societal biases and power

dynamics shape refugee discourse. By incorporating insights from framing theory and cognitive linguistics, the study offers a complete analysis of the mechanisms through which double standards are constructed and maintained (Musolff, 2016; Douai et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the study addresses the need for more interdisciplinary approaches to studying refugee discourse. Recent scholarship emphasizes the importance of integrating insights from linguistics, sociology, and cognitive psychology to understand the complex interplay between language, cognition, and society (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017; Kapetanovic, 2022). This study builds on this scholarship by combining theoretical frameworks from CDA, framing theory, and cognitive linguistics to provide a holistic analysis of refugee discourse. By doing so, it contributes to a deeper understanding of how language functions as a mechanism of power and control, shaping public perceptions and influencing policy decisions (Krzyżanowski, 2016; Shahmirzadi, 2018).

Finally, the study addresses the need for more critical analyses of social media discourse. While previous research has examined traditional media representations of refugees, few studies have focused on the role of social media in shaping public perceptions (Sutkutė, 2023). This study fills this gap by analyzing the linguistic and rhetorical strategies used in social media discourse, emphasizing the ways in which these platforms contribute to the perpetuation of double standards. By focusing on the intersection of language, power, and ideology, the study provides valuable insights into the mechanisms through which social media influences public attitudes and policy decisions (Azeem, 2022; Liu & Ahmed, 2023).

The Problem

The study delves into the pressing need to comprehend how power dynamics and linguistic strategies shape the portrayal of refugee crises on social media, particularly in the cases of Ukrainian and Arab refugees. It seeks to uncover the intricate ways in which societal power structures and ideological frameworks mold the narratives surrounding these groups, influencing public perception and policy responses.

Through a critical examination of discourse, the research aims to shed light on how certain groups are privileged while others are marginalized, often due to deeply ingrained biases rooted in nationalism, Islamophobia, and Western-centric worldviews. The role of political elites, media institutions, and social media algorithms is central to this dynamic, as they play a crucial part in amplifying certain narratives while suppressing others, thereby shaping broader societal attitudes toward different refugee populations.

A significant aspect of the study focuses on the linguistic strategies that contribute to the formation of double standards in the representation of refugees. Language is not merely a tool for communication; it is a powerful mechanism through which empathy can be evoked for one group while fear and resentment are directed toward another. By examining lexical choices, metaphors, and framing devices, the research explores how language is strategically deployed to reinforce societal inequalities. The way in which narratives are structured and emotionally charged language is used plays a pivotal role in determining how different refugee groups are perceived. These linguistic strategies not only shape public sentiment but also reflect deeper cognitive and ideological biases that sustain discriminatory attitudes.

In addition to linguistic strategies, the study investigates the specific rhetorical techniques employed in social media discourse that reinforce biased representations. Euphemism, hyperbole, implication, and presupposition are among the rhetorical tools used to construct narratives that either legitimize or delegitimize certain groups. By mapping these techniques, the research aims to illustrate how social media functions as a battleground where dominant ideologies are reinforced, creating and sustaining divisions between the so-called "deserving" and "undeserving" refugees. This dichotomy, deeply embedded in discourse, influences public attitudes and behaviors, further entrenching disparities in humanitarian responses and policy decisions. Through this detailed analysis, the study aspires to offer a critical understanding of the mechanisms that shape refugee representation, challenging the narratives that contribute to social exclusion and inequality.

Novelty of the Study

This study bridges critical gaps in the literature by employing van Dijk's socio-cognitive model to explore power dynamics and linguistic strategies in social media framing. While previous research has identified disparities in the representation of different refugee groups, few studies have systematically analyzed the specific linguistic and rhetorical mechanisms that underpin these biases. By integrating van Dijk's framework, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of language, cognition, and society, this research provides a nuanced understanding of how double standards are constructed and maintained in online discourse.

The novelty of this study lies in its interdisciplinary approach, combining insights from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), framing theory, and cognitive linguistics to offer a complete examination of social media representations of refugees. Furthermore, the study addresses the lack of comparative analyses in existing literature by focusing on the contrasting portrayals of Ukrainian and Arab refugees, shedding light on how cultural, religious, and geopolitical factors influence public perception. By emphasizing the strategic use of language in shaping narratives, this research not only contributes to academic scholarship but also offers practical tools for challenging biased discourse and promoting more equitable representations of vulnerable populations.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Based on the objectives of the study, the following research questions and hypotheses were addressed:

RQ1: How do power dynamics and ideologies influence the portrayal of Ukrainian and Arab refugees in social media discourse?

RQ2: How do linguistic strategies such as lexical choices, metaphors, and narratives contribute to the construction of double standards in the representation of different refugee groups?

RQ3: What are the linguistic and rhetorical techniques used to establish and reinforce double

standards in the social media representation of Ukrainian and Arab refugees?

H_{01}: Power dynamics and ideologies do not influence the portrayal of Ukrainian and Arab refugees in social media discourse.

H_{02}: Linguistic strategies, including lexical choices, metaphors, and narratives, do not contribute to the construction of double standards in the representation of different refugee groups.

H_{03}: Linguistic and rhetorical techniques do not play a role in establishing and reinforcing double standards in the social media representation of Ukrainian and Arab refugees.

METHODOLOGY
Design of the Study
This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to analyze social media discourse. The integration of these methods allows for a complete understanding of the linguistic and rhetorical strategies used in framing Ukrainian and Syrian refugees on social media platforms. While the qualitative component focuses on uncovering underlying ideologies and discursive practices, the quantitative analysis provides statistical insights into the frequency and prevalence of specific strategies, enhancing the robustness of the findings.

Corpus of the Study
The corpus consists of 200 posts: 100 concerning Ukrainian refugees and 100 concerning Syrian refugees, collected from Twitter (now X) and Reddit. This balanced dataset ensures a nuanced comparison between the two groups, capturing the evolving discourse surrounding refugee crises during pivotal moments—the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine (2022–2024) and the height of the Syrian refugee influx into Europe (2015–2024). Each platform contributes 50 posts per refugee group, ensuring diversity in the types of discourse analyzed.

Instruments
The study utilizes **Atlas.ti 9** for qualitative data analysis, enabling systematic coding and categorization of rhetorical strategies, ideological implications, and discursive practices. For quantitative analysis, statistical software is employed to calculate the frequency of specific linguistic and rhetorical techniques, providing a clear visualization of patterns through tables and charts. These tools collectively ensure rigorous and reliable data interpretation.

Model of the Study
Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach serves as the analytical framework, emphasizing the interconnectedness of society, cognition, and discourse. This model emphasizes how power dynamics and ideologies shape language use, influencing public perception and reinforcing double standards. Specifically, Van Dijk's concept of the "Ideological Square" is applied to examine positive self-representation ("Us") and negative other-representation ("Them"), offering a structured lens to analyze the construction of biases in social media discourse.

Data Collection Procedures
Data was collected using **X's Search API** and **Reddit's API,** employing a carefully constructed list of keywords derived from trending terms and recent studies related to the Ukrainian and Syrian crises. Keywords included terms such as "Ukraine," "Syria," "refugee," "humanitarian," and "conflict." To ensure objectivity, posts were selected through random sampling, minimizing researcher bias. Geographic tagging on X was utilized to identify user locations, while Reddit data lacked this feature. All posts were filtered to include only English-language content, ensuring consistency and comparability in the analysis.

Data Analysis Procedures
The analysis involved a multi-step process as follows:

--Coding: Posts are systematically coded for rhetorical strategies, ideological implications, and recurring themes, guided by Van Dijk's framework. Specific strategies such as lexicalization, metaphor, and narrative construction are identified and categorized.

--Categorization: Coded elements are grouped into broader categories, such as positive self-representation, negative other-representation, and framing devices like euphemism and hyperbole.

--Comparative Analysis: A comparative analysis is conducted to discern differences in the application of these strategies between Ukrainian and Syrian refugee-related posts.

--Quantitative Analysis: Statistical methods are used to determine the frequency of specific strategies, providing numerical support for qualitative findings.

--Narrative Construction: The study examines how narratives of heroism and victimhood for Ukrainian refugees' contrast with narratives of threat and burden for Syrian refugees, emphasizeing the emotional and cognitive impact of these portrayals.

RESULTS

Statistical Results of the Fourth Research Question

Table 1 below presents the impact of power dynamics and ideological biases on the portrayal of Ukrainian and Arab refugees. The findings reveal that Western-centric biases, nationalism, and cultural proximity significantly shape media discourse. Ukrainian refugees are framed as victims of aggression, receiving more positive sentiment and humanitarian rhetoric. Conversely, Arab refugees are portrayed in ways that reinforce fears of security threats and economic strain, leading to restrictive policies and heightened scrutiny.

Table 1

Impact of Power Dynamics and Ideological Biases on Refugee Portrayal in Social Media

Factor	Ukrainian Refugees (%)	Arab Refugees (%)
Positive Representation	78	35
Security Threat Narrative	12	65
Humanitarian Framing	85	40
Economic Burden Narrative	10	60

Statistical Results of the Fifth Research Question

The findings indicate that lexical choices, metaphors, and narrative structures play a crucial role in framing Ukrainian and Arab refugees differently. Ukrainian refugees are often described using terms such as "innocent," "families in need," and "war victims," whereas Arab refugees are frequently linked to terms like "illegal," "potential threat," and "migrants" rather than "refugees".

Table 2

Linguistic Strategies in the Representation of Ukrainian and Arab Refugees

Linguistic Strategy	Ukrainian Refugees (%)	Arab Refugees (%)
Positive Metaphors	80	25
Negative Lexicalization	15	70
Neutral Terminology	5	5

Statistical Results of the Sixth Research Question

Table 3 emphasizes the frequency of linguistic and rhetorical techniques used to reinforce double standards in social media discourse. Key techniques include categorization (distinguishing "us" vs. "them"), implication (indirectly reinforcing negative stereotypes), and euphemism (softening negative aspects of the preferred group while emphasizing negative aspects of the other group).

Table 3

Frequency of Rhetorical Techniques Used in Social Media Discourse on Refugees

Rhetorical Technique	Frequency in Ukrainian Refugee Discourse (%)	Frequency in Arab Refugee Discourse (%)
Categorization	60	85
Implication	45	75
Euphemism	50	20

These results illustrate the systematic application of linguistic and rhetorical techniques that contribute to the unequal framing of refugee groups, reinforcing the broader ideological and policy disparities observed in media discourse.

DISCUSSION

Discussion Related to the First Research Hypothesis

The findings of the current study align with van Dijk's ideological square, demonstrating how power dynamics and ideologies shape discourse. The differential framing of Ukrainian and Arab refugees reflects broader societal power structures that dictate whose suffering is acknowledged and whose is minimized (Van Dijk, 2008; Siapera et al., 2018). Western-centric ideologies, particularly those emphasizing European solidarity and cultural affinity, play a pivotal role in reinforcing these disparities, leading to preferential treatment in both media representations and policy responses (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017; Torppa, 2023). Studies have shown that the political rhetoric of Western leaders, combined with news media framing, further perpetuates these biases, constructing narratives that justify selective humanitarian responses (Crawley & Jones, 2021; Welfens, 2019).

Discussion Related to the Second Research Hypothesis

The study confirms the role of linguistic strategies in constructing double standards, reflecting societal biases and cognitive schemas (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017; Kapetanovic, 2022). The frequent use of positive lexicalization for Ukrainian refugees and negative framing for Arab refugees emphasizes how language functions as a tool for ideological reinforcement (Bhatia & Jenks, 2018; Hoewe, 2018). Ukrainian refugees are described using terms such as "innocent families," "victims of war," and "brave survivors," whereas Arab refugees are often labeled as "illegal migrants," "security threats," or "economic burdens" (Azeem, 2022; Harrison, 2016). Such terminological distinctions shape public perception and policy responses, reinforcing existing inequalities in refugee reception and integration policies (Lutz et al., 2020).

Discussion Related to the Third Research Hypothesis

The analysis emphasizes how rhetorical techniques reinforce double standards, perpetuating societal inequalities (Van Dijk, 2011; Fairclough, 2015). The strategic use of categorization, presupposition, and implication in discourse constructs a reality where certain refugee groups are deemed more deserving of support while others face suspicion and exclusion (Siapera et al., 2018; Schmauch & Nygren, 2020). By embedding narratives of risk and security threats, media and political discourse justify restrictive immigration policies and exclusionary practices against Arab refugees, reinforcing xenophobic tendencies (Staniforth et al., 2016; Sutkutė, 2023). These findings emphasize the urgent need for discourse-conscious policy reforms that challenge biased representations and promote equitable humanitarian responses (Liu & Ahmed, 2023; Steimel, 2010).

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the systematic nature of double standards in social media discourse, emphasizing the need for critical awareness and equitable responses. The findings demonstrate how linguistic and rhetorical strategies contribute to biased representations of refugees, reinforcing broader societal ideologies that privilege certain groups while marginalizing others. By applying critical discourse analysis (CDA), this research has unveiled the mechanisms through which these biases are embedded and perpetuated, emphasizing the necessity of discourse-conscious interventions to counter discriminatory narratives.

Implications of the Study

The findings have pedagogical and practical implications for promoting fair and just representations of refugees. In educational settings, incorporating discourse analysis into media literacy programs can help students and scholars critically engage with refugee narratives, identifying biases and questioning ideological underpinnings. Practically, policymakers and media professionals can use these insights to develop ethical guidelines that foster balanced

and humane representations of refugees, thereby mitigating the harmful effects of discriminatory discourse.

Limitations of the Study

The study is limited by its focus on English-language posts and specific time periods. While English-language discourse provides valuable insights into dominant Western narratives, it does not account for variations in refugee representations across different linguistic and cultural contexts. Furthermore, the selected time frame may not fully capture evolving discursive trends and shifts in public sentiment over extended periods.

Suggestions for Further Research

Future research should expand the corpus and incorporate multilingual analysis. Examining refugee discourse in non-English languages, including Arabic, Russian, and European languages, would provide a more complete understanding of how refugee narratives are constructed globally. Furthermore, longitudinal studies that track discourse changes over time could offer deeper insights into the evolving nature of refugee representation and its implications for policy and public perception.

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