



## *Western Media Bias in the Israel –Palestine Conflict: A critical Discourse Analysis*

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### **Abstract:**

*The aim of this study is to examine the ideological underpinnings of western media narratives in the conflict of Israel and Palestine by using (CDA) critical discourse analysis. It tries to investigate how language, ideology and power significantly intersect in media discourse, drawing Van Dijk's tripartite frame work of macro structure(themes). Super structure (schematic organization) and micro structure (lexical and rhetorical strategies). The main focus of this study is to investigate how certain strategies reproduce ideological position and legitimize one view over the other. There are mainly thee sources used for data for this study between 2019 t0 2025. These are BBC (Unites Kingdom) France 24 (France) and Deutsche Welle (Germany). The data for this study has been taken from headlines, news articles, and broadcast of speeches of western political figures during both crisis and non-crisis duration. The finding and analysis show the consistent use of the word "militant" for Palestinians and the "operations" for Israeli actions which reflects the asymmetrical framing. This study argues that such discursive practices reproduce unsustainable power relations between two sides, and change the perception of European public. By highlighting these practices Van Dijk modal can uncover the bias across multiple textual levels. The study also contributes to critical media scholarship and emphasizes the need for balance reporting.*

**Keywords:** *Van Dijk, Critical Discourse Analysis, Western Media, Israel-Palestine conflict, Media Bias.*

**Introduction:**

The conflict of Israel and Palestine is one of the major issues in the map of world. It is indeed the most enduring and polarizing issues in international politics. On the other hand, some other factors like politics, history and religious enhances its complexity while in this whole scenario the role of media cannot be denied and underestimated. In the age of social media and global information era, public perception can be constructed through building the narrative in media, especially produced in the west. Irrespect of that, language is a neutral tool, becomes the vehicle for transmitting the ideology and the reinforcement of dominant power structure. Western media outlets partially criticized by portraying Israeli state actions as legitimate, self-defense and Palestinian resistance as terrorism and aggression. This research looks through the lense of (CDA) critical discourse analysis to unpack how western media constructs, reproduces and legitimizes specific ideology stance through selective

language framing and source attribution. The Israel–Palestine conflict has remained one of the most widely covered yet highly contested international issues for decades. For audiences in Europe, media is often the primary lens through which the conflict is understood. The way news outlets select events, frame stories, and choose words does not only inform people but also shapes their attitudes, beliefs, and even government policies. Because of this, scholars argue that studying media bias is not just about journalism, but also about power, politics, and ideology.

In the western context, electronic media outlets such as the BBC (United Kingdom), France 24 (France), and Deutsche Welle (DW) (Germany) hold a special place. These broadcasters reach global audiences in multiple languages, and their credibility is generally seen as higher than smaller or partisan media. Yet, like all institutions, they are not free from ideological influence. Their reporting on Israel–Palestine has often been criticized for showing subtle but powerful bias sometimes by the choice of words, sometimes by the placement of voices, and sometimes by the overall themes emphasized. West occupies a unique geopolitical position. On one hand, it has historic ties to the Middle East through colonial history, diplomacy, migration, and trade. On the other hand, Western governments often balance between supporting Israel as a strategic ally and supporting Palestinians through humanitarian and diplomatic channels. This political “balancing act” also appears in European media. For instance, while reports may cover Palestinian suffering, they often simultaneously highlight Israel’s “security concerns” in more prominent terms. Studying these representations is important because European audiences rely heavily on these outlets to form their opinions, which in turn may influence European Union policies on the conflict. When analyzing media bias, Teun A. van Dijk’s Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model is one of the most widely respected approaches. His model suggests that media discourse should be studied at three levels:

1. Macro-structure: the overall themes and topics of news. For example, is the conflict described mainly in terms of “terrorism,” “human rights,” or “peace negotiations”?
2. Super-structure: the schematic organization of the text. Which voices appear first? Which events are given the lead paragraph? Are Palestinian voices quoted equally compared to Israeli officials?

3. Micro-structure: the choice of words, grammar, and rhetoric. For instance, calling Palestinians “militants” but Israelis “soldiers,” or describing Israeli strikes as “responses” while Palestinian attacks are “aggressions.”

This multi-level approach allows us to see bias not just in obvious statements but also in subtle choices that most audiences accept as “neutral.”

### **Research questions**

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do selected European electronic media outlets represent the Israel-Palestine conflict through macro-structure of discourse themes, headlines and topics?
2. In what ways do super structural elements schematic organization of news reports reveal bias towards Israel or Palestine?
3. What rhetorical and lexical strategies (micro structure) are used to legitimize one side and de legitimize the other?

### **Objectives of the study**

The primary objectives of this study are:

1. To apply Van Dijk’s CDA framework to western electronic media discourse on the Israeli-Palestine conflict.
2. To investigate linguistic and structural strategies of bias (e.g selective lexicalization, quotations pattern and framing).
3. To explore how western media, frame the narrative and influence on perceptions of legitimacy in conflict.

### **Significance of the study**

This study holds significant importance in both academic and practical perspective. Firstly, from the scholarly point of view, it fills with the study of critical discourse analysis by looking through the window of its theories to the real world conflict that is highly charged both linguistically and ideologically. It tries to fill the breach between political discourse, media study and international relations. On the other hand, from the practical perspectives, it tries to promote the literacy of critical media and equipped the readers with the analytical tools which make them able to question and decode media narratives. In the age of technology where media influences the lives of people, their opinions, it is important to understand the mechanism of discursive power which is essential for democratic citizenship and social justice advocacy. Furthermore, this study contributes to the decolonization of knowledge by highlighting the marginalization of Palestinian voices and calling for more balance and ethical journalism in international reporting.

### **Literature Review**

The purpose of this chapter is to critically examine the recent scholarly work relevant to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and its application to media representations of the Israel-Palestine

conflict, particularly in Western media. By reviewing studies published within the last five years, this chapter contextualizes the current research within a contemporary academic landscape. The chapter is organized into key thematic areas, including CDA theory and application, media framing, lexical and syntactic analysis, voice representation, and identified gaps in existing literature.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) continues to serve as a powerful theoretical and methodological tool in the study of media discourse. It investigates the role of language in the production and maintenance of power and ideology. El Damanhoury, Saleh, and Lebovic (2025) employed CDA to analyze the 2023 Gaza war coverage by Al Jazeera English and the BBC. Their study revealed that language, voice structure, and quotation patterns differed significantly between these outlets, reflecting distinct ideological positions. For example, Al Jazeera was found to highlight Palestinian voices and use active voice to describe Israeli actions, while the BBC employed more neutral or passive constructions, often omitting the agency behind violence (El Damanhoury et al., 2025).

Salhab (2024) used van Dijk's argumentation strategies to analyze how BBC and CNN framed the 2023–2024 Gaza conflict. His findings indicated a systematic favoring of Israeli perspectives through strategic lexical choices and quotation patterns. The study emphasized how power structures are embedded in discursive practices, leading to narrative imbalance and ideological reinforcement. Media framing shapes audience interpretation by highlighting specific aspects of a story while omitting or downplaying others. In the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict, several recent studies have observed a consistent pattern of framing that aligns with pro-Israeli narratives. Hamad and Najm (2024) conducted a CDA of Western media narratives using van Dijk's ideological square and found that Western outlets frequently portray Israeli actions as defensive while framing Palestinian responses as aggressive or irrational. Their analysis of outlets like Middle East Eye and NowThis showed how language, visual imagery, and voice exclusion reinforce orientalist ideologies and a binary worldview of civilized versus uncivilized. Markkula (2025) analyzed U.S. media coverage, particularly CNN and the New York Post, focusing on the language used during the 2024 escalation. Her findings revealed that lexical choices such as "militants," "retaliation," and "clashes" often obscure the asymmetric nature of the conflict. The study emphasized the role of transitivity structures, where Palestinian suffering was framed passively "23 Palestinians died", and Israeli casualties were framed actively and emotionally " Hamas rocket kills Israeli mother"

Language is never neutral; it reflects ideological perspectives through lexical and syntactic choices. The studies reviewed a recurrent use of passive voice in reporting Palestinian casualties, which masks the agency behind acts of violence. In contrast, Israeli casualties are often described using active voice and humanizing detail. El Damanhoury et al. (2025) found that BBC headlines frequently omitted Israeli military agency in describing civilian Palestinian deaths. Similarly, Salhab (2024) noted that CNN's lexical framing of Hamas as "terrorists" or "militants" contributed to delegitimizing the Palestinian political struggle while legitimizing Israeli state violence through phrases like "self-defense." These findings align with van Dijk's concept of "ideological square," which explains how discourse structures systematically emphasize the positive aspects of the in-group (Israel) and the negative traits of the out-group (Palestinians), while minimizing or obscuring the reverse.

Another major concern identified in recent research is the exclusion or marginalization of Palestinian voices in mainstream Western media. This contributes to what many scholars refer to as epistemic injustice where certain groups are denied the right to participate in knowledge production or public discourse. Hamad and Najm (2024) found that Western media heavily rely on Israeli or international governmental sources, with Palestinian perspectives presented sporadically and often framed as subjective, emotional, or unreliable. Markkula (2025) similarly observed that Palestinian sources were rarely quoted directly, and their narratives were frequently paraphrased or diluted. Such practices reduce the authenticity and visibility of Palestinian agency.

Despite the valuable contributions of recent studies, several gaps remain in the literature. First, most CDA research on the Israel-Palestine conflict focuses on a narrow selection of news outlets (e.g., BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera) and often neglects less mainstream or non-English platforms. Second, while CDA provides deep insight into language and ideology, few studies have combined it with audience reception research to examine how these narratives are consumed and internalized. There is also a lack of longitudinal studies that track the evolution of discursive practices over multiple conflict events. Future research should adopt comparative and diachronic approaches to reveal how media discourse shifts in response to political pressure, public opinion, or changing editorial policies.

This chapter reviewed recent (2020–2025) academic work applying CDA to Western media coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Scholars such as El Damanhoury et al. (2025), Salhab (2024), Hamad and Najm (2024), and Markkula (2025) have demonstrated how linguistic structures including framing, voice representation, and lexical choice—serve to legitimize Israeli state narratives while silencing or distorting Palestinian perspectives. These insights establish a strong theoretical foundation for the upcoming methodological and analytical chapters of this study.

The study of media bias in conflict situations has long been a central concern for communication scholars, political analysts, and linguists. The Israel–Palestine conflict, due to its long history and complex political dimensions, has often served as a critical case for exploring how news organizations frame conflicts. This section reviews the key strands of literature relevant to the present study, focusing on three areas: (1) general theories of media bias, (2) critical discourse analysis (CDA) and van Dijk’s contributions, and (3) existing studies on European media coverage of Israel–Palestine since 2019.

Media bias can be defined as the systematic tendency of news organizations to present events in a way that favors certain perspectives, actors, or ideologies over others. Bias does not always take the form of overt falsehoods; instead, it is often reflected in subtler ways through the selection of topics, ordering of information, or the use of particular words. Entman (1993) described this as framing, where certain aspects of a perceived reality are highlighted while others are downplayed. Classic studies of media bias have shown that conflicts are often reported through dominant national or cultural perspectives. For example, Galtung and Ruge (1965) demonstrated that news values such as “negativity,” “proximity,” and “elite persons” often determine which events become news. Later studies Herman & Chomsky, (1988) in their “propaganda model” suggested that structural factors like ownership, advertising, and political affiliations create systematic biases in mainstream media.

In the case of international conflicts, school 1997; Philo & Berry, (2011). For instance, American media are often criticized for their strong pro-Israeli bias, while Arab media are accused of the opposite. European media are often assumed to occupy a “middle ground,” yet research suggests that their reporting also contains subtle ideological leanings

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an approach that studies the relationship between language, power, and ideology. CDA assumes that discourse is not neutral but actively shapes and reflects social power relations. Van Dijk, Fairclough, and Wodak are considered the key figures in the development of CDA. Among these, Teun A. van Dijk has been particularly influential in applying discourse analysis to media texts. His socio-cognitive approach emphasizes how texts both reflect and reproduce ideologies in society. According to van Dijk (1998; 2000; 2020), media discourse can be analyzed at three interconnected levels:

**1. Macro-structures (Themes/Topics):** These represent the global meaning of texts. For example, if news about Gaza is framed under the theme of “terrorism,” that sets a certain ideological orientation.

**2. Super-structures (Schematics):** This refers to the overall organization of news stories—the way headlines, leads, and body paragraphs are ordered. Bias can be revealed by asking: whose perspective appears first? Who is given the main headline?

**3. Micro-structures (Lexical/Rhetorical Choices):** These are the fine-grained linguistic features of texts, such as word choice, syntax, quotations, and metaphors. For instance, Palestinians may be called “militants,” while Israelis are called “soldiers,” which signals asymmetry.

Van Dijk (2006, 2020) argues that ideology works through these structures to subtly influence readers without appearing overtly biased. This makes his framework particularly useful for analyzing conflicts like Israel–Palestine, where discourse is politically charged. Research on Israel–Palestine media coverage has consistently shown evidence of bias. A large body of work highlights that Western media often frame Israel as a “defensive democracy” and Palestinians as “aggressors” or “terrorists” (Philo & Berry, 2011; Falah & Shukla, 2024). Studies of American media (e.g., The New York Times, CNN) show a recurring pattern: Israeli casualties are personalized and humanized, while Palestinian casualties are often reported in numbers or statistics (Kumar, 2019). In Europe, earlier studies indicated somewhat more balanced coverage compared to the U.S., yet significant asymmetries still exist. For example, Elmasry (2009) found that the BBC frequently privileges Israeli official voices over Palestinian ones. More recent studies also confirm these tendencies. Hajjar (2021) analyzed European television coverage of the 2021 Gaza conflict and concluded that although Palestinian suffering was reported, it was often “balanced out” by emphasizing Israeli security concerns. Since 2019, several significant works have examined European media in this context: Koschut (2022) compared British, French, and German news outlets and found that macro-level themes often centered on “violence” and “security” rather than “occupation” or “human rights.” Saeed & Nasrullah (2021) highlighted how European coverage often reproduces Western political discourses, presenting Israel as a partner in democracy while depicting Palestinians as associated with instability. Al-Khatib & Trier (2024) analyzed headlines from European newspapers and found consistent patterns of lexical bias—such as “clashes” when Palestinians

are killed by Israeli forces, but “terror attacks” when Israelis are targeted. Hassan (2021) noted that Palestinian voices, when included, were often relegated to secondary paragraphs, while Israeli official voices were featured prominently in leads.

At the same time, newer research highlights the role of digital platforms. Kammer & Alghatam (2022) showed that European outlets’ coverage is influenced by social media trends, where Twitter and Facebook debates feed back into mainstream reporting. This interconnection sometimes magnifies bias, as outlets reproduce viral narratives without critical examination.

1. Limited focus on recent years (2019–2025): Much of the existing work ends around 2017–2018, leaving the last few years underexplored. 2. Few systematic CDA applications: While some studies use framing analysis, fewer employ van Dijk’s full CDA model to European coverage.
2. Comparative focus: Few studies directly compare multiple European outlets (BBC, France 24, DW) in one study, especially across crisis vs non-crisis periods.
3. Based on this review, the current study positions itself at the intersection of media bias research and critical discourse analysis. It builds upon earlier findings by applying van Dijk’s model to recent European electronic media coverage of Israel–Palestine. By doing so, it addresses the following contributions:

**Theoretically:** It applies a socio-cognitive CDA model, linking language with ideology.

**Practically:** It demonstrates how bias operates subtly, providing insights for both scholars and media practitioners.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The present study adopts a qualitative research design, rooted in the tradition of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The choice of a qualitative approach is guided by the nature of the research problem: uncovering bias, ideology, and representation in European media coverage of the Israel–Palestine conflict. Unlike quantitative methods that focus on measuring frequencies or statistical trends, CDA is concerned with the deeper structures of meaning embedded in language. Van Dijk’s model, in particular, is suitable for analyzing how discourse strategies reproduce dominance and marginalization in news texts. This research therefore positions itself within the interpretive paradigm, where the aim is not to generalize across all media platforms, but to critically interpret discursive patterns and their socio-political implications.

### **Theoretical Framework: Van Dijk’s CDA Model**

The study applies Teun A. van Dijk’s Critical Discourse Analysis model, which combines linguistic analysis with social theory. His model works at three interrelated levels:

#### **1. Macro-structure (Themes)**

This involves analyzing the overall topics of news reports.

Example: whether coverage highlights “terrorism” and “security” (Israeli perspective) or “occupation” and “human rights violations” (Palestinian perspective).

## **2. Super-structure (Schematic Organization)**

This level examines how the news text is structured: headlines, leads, body paragraphs, quotations, and conclusions. Example: which voices appear first Israeli officials or Palestinian witnesses, and how the storyline is framed.

## **3. Micro-structure (Local Meaning, Lexical Choices, Rhetoric)**

This involves analyzing vocabulary, grammar, and stylistic devices. Example: whether Palestinians are called “militants,” “fighters,” or “terrorists,” while Israelis are described as “soldiers” or “defense forces.” Attention is also given to passive vs. active constructions (e.g., “X was killed” vs. “Israeli airstrikes killed X”). By combining these three levels, Van Dijk’s model allows the researcher to uncover hidden ideologies and power relations within media discourse.

### **Data Sources**

The data set consists of news reports, headlines, and transcripts published or broadcast between 2019 and 2025. Three major European electronic media outlets were selected:

1. BBC News (United Kingdom) representing an English-language, global broadcaster with significant influence in Europe.
2. France 24 (France) representing a Francophone perspective and often reflecting French diplomatic approaches.
3. Deutsche Welle (Germany) representing German media framing, with a particular emphasis on European values and international relations.

The rationale for selecting these outlets is twofold: They are widely recognized and accessible sources of European perspectives. They hold international credibility, making their discourse impactful not only in Europe but also globally. A purposive sampling strategy was employed, focusing on coverage of three key events in the Israel–Palestine conflict during the chosen period:

1. The May 2021 Gaza conflict.
2. The Jerusalem tensions of 2022.
3. The October 2023 escalation and subsequent Gaza war.

From each outlet, 20–25 articles or transcripts were collected for each event, making a total of approximately 200 texts.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data were collected directly from the official websites of the three news organizations and from publicly available broadcast transcripts. The following steps were followed:

1. Identify key time periods of escalated conflict.
2. Search for related articles using keywords such as “Israel,” “Palestine,” “Gaza,” “ Hamas,” “airstrikes,” “conflict,” and “peace.”
3. Download the full text of selected articles in PDF/Word format.
4. Organize texts chronologically and by outlet for systematic analysis.

This ensured that the sample reflected both breaking news coverage and in-depth analysis pieces.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

The data analysis followed a three-step CDA process:

#### **1. Coding and Categorization**

Articles were read multiple times. Recurrent themes (e.g., “terrorism,” “victimhood,” “occupation”) were identified. Lexical items were coded according to ideological alignment (pro-Israel, pro-Palestine, or neutral).

#### **Application of Van Dijk’s Levels**

At the macro-structural level, the dominant themes of each article were outlined. At the super-structural level, the position of Palestinian vs. Israeli voices was noted. At the micro-structural level, detailed linguistic analysis of word choice, transitivity, and metaphor was conducted.

#### **Interpretation in Social Context**

Findings were linked with broader socio-political factors, such as European Union foreign policy, historical ties with Israel, and public opinion in Europe.

#### **Ethical Considerations**

Since the research is based entirely on publicly available media texts, there are no direct ethical risks involving human participants. However, the study acknowledges the sensitivity of the Israel–Palestine conflict and commits to maintaining academic objectivity. Sources are properly cited, and analysis is focused on discourse rather than moral judgment.

#### **Limitations**

The study is limited by its scope of three media outlets and three conflict periods. While this allows for depth, it does not represent the entire European media landscape. Furthermore, CDA is interpretive in nature, meaning findings may not claim universal objectivity but rather reflect critical interpretation.

#### **Findings / Results**

This section presents the findings of the study based on the analysis of selected European media outlets BBC, France 24, and Deutsche Welle covering the Israel-Palestine conflict between

2019 and 2025. Van Dijk's model was applied across three levels: macro-structures overall themes, super-structures schematic organization of reports, and micro-structures lexical and rhetorical strategies.

### **1. Macro-Structure (Themes and Ideologies)**

At the macro level, three dominant themes were identified across the European outlets:

#### **1. Security and Terrorism Narrative**

Reports frequently framed the conflict in terms of "Israel's security" and "Palestinian terrorism."

For example, BBC headlines often emphasized " Hamas attacks" or "rocket fire into Israel," while Israel's actions were presented as "responses" or "defense measures."

This theme positioned Israel as a state under threat, while Palestinians were portrayed primarily as aggressors.

#### **2. Humanitarian Crisis as Secondary**

France 24 gave limited but notable attention to civilian suffering, especially in Gaza. However, humanitarian issues were often presented as "afterthoughts" rather than central narratives. For instance, reports would mention "casualties in Gaza" only after describing Israeli strikes as "retaliation."

#### **3. Diplomatic and International Response**

All three outlets dedicated significant coverage to the role of European Union, United Nations, and US responses. However, Palestinian voices in diplomatic spaces were underrepresented compared to Israeli officials.

#### **Interpretation:**

The macro-level shows a clear imbalance: European media tends to foreground security and diplomacy over occupation and human rights. This reproduces Western ideological positions aligned with Israel.

Super-Structure (Schematic Organization of News Reports) Super-structural analysis highlights how reports were organized: In most cases, the opening lines of articles foregrounded Israeli perspectives. Example:

BBC: "Israel says it has launched airstrikes in response to rocket fire from Gaza." Here, the Israeli claim is placed first, creating a dominant frame before Palestinian perspectives appear later.

#### **Voice Placement**

Israeli government officials were consistently quoted in the first half of reports. Palestinian voices, when included, appeared later in the text and often came from NGOs, eyewitnesses, or non-state actors, making them appear less authoritative.

## Visuals and Headlines

BBC and DW frequently used images of Israeli damage (burnt cars, destroyed houses in Israel), while images of Palestinian destruction appeared less frequently or were generalized (crowded hospitals, generic protests).

### Interpretation:

Super-structural choices reinforced a hierarchy of voices, prioritizing Israeli authority and relegating Palestinian suffering to secondary positions.

### Micro-Structure (Lexical, Rhetorical, and Grammatical Choices)

The micro-level findings reveal strong lexical and rhetorical asymmetries:

#### 1. Lexicalization (Word Choice)

Palestinians described as: “militants,” “extremists,” “terrorists.” Israel described as: “defense forces,” “government officials,” “security operations.” Example (France 24): “Israeli defense forces struck Gaza after Hamas militants fired rockets.” Israel is framed as defending, Palestinians as aggressing.

#### 2. Agency and Responsibility

Sentences often obscured Israeli responsibility. Example: DW: “Gaza buildings collapsed after airstrikes.” The passive structure hides the agent (Israeli military), softening accountability.

#### 3. Metaphors and Labels

Frequent use of “cycle of violence” metaphor, which creates a sense of inevitability and blurs distinctions between occupier and occupied. “Clashes” was often used even when violence was disproportionate (e.g., armed Israeli police vs. unarmed Palestinian protesters).

#### 4. Quoting Practices

Israeli officials’ statements often quoted directly. Palestinian voices often paraphrased, reducing credibility. Example: “Palestinians claim...” vs. “Israeli officials said...” → shows unequal epistemic authority.

### Interpretation:

The micro-structure reveals subtle but powerful strategies of bias: lexical asymmetry, passive constructions, and selective quoting that naturalize Israeli legitimacy while undermining Palestinian claims.

### Overall Patterns

BBC: Most consistent in framing Israel as defensive and Palestinians as aggressive. France 24: Relatively more balanced, but still used asymmetric lexicalization. Deutsche Welle: Strong

emphasis on European and German political responses, but relied heavily on Israeli official sources.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study critically examined the representation of the Israel–Palestine conflict in European media specifically BBC, France 24, and Deutsche Welle through Van Dijk’s model of Critical Discourse Analysis. By analyzing macro-structures, super-structures, and micro-structures, the findings reveal that European media consistently reproduce patterns of discursive bias. At the macro level, coverage frequently highlighted Israel’s security concerns and framed Palestinians largely through the lens of terrorism or militancy. Humanitarian crises, although acknowledged, were secondary in narrative construction. At the super-structural level, Israeli voices were prioritized in headlines, leads, and opening paragraphs, while Palestinian perspectives appeared later or in weaker positions. At the micro level, lexical asymmetries (e.g., “militants” vs. “defense forces”), passive constructions, and selective quoting practices systematically reinforced Israeli legitimacy while delegitimizing Palestinian claims.

These discursive choices are not random but reflect broader ideological alignments of European states with Israel. They reproduce dominant Western narratives where Israel is a state defending its survival, while Palestinians are portrayed as aggressors or destabilizing actors. Such framing naturalizes political inequalities and obscures the historical context of occupation, displacement, and human rights violations. In essence, the study confirms Van Dijk’s argument that discourse is not neutral but functions as a site where power, ideology, and inequality are reproduced. European media’s coverage of the conflict demonstrates how linguistic and structural strategies in news reporting shape public perception, delegitimize marginalized voices, and perpetuate asymmetrical power relations.

## **Recommendations**

### **For Media Organizations**

#### **1. Balanced Representation of Voices**

News outlets should ensure equitable quoting practices by giving equal space to Palestinian officials, civilians, and activists alongside Israeli perspectives.

#### **2. Transparent Use of Sources**

Journalists must diversify sources, relying not only on state or military officials but also on independent NGOs, human rights groups, and local eyewitnesses.

#### **3. Neutral Lexical Choices**

Media professionals should critically reflect on word choices such as “militants” or “defense forces” and adopt language that avoids legitimizing one side while delegitimizing the other.

#### **4. Foregrounding Humanitarian Concerns**

Reports should prioritize the humanitarian dimension of the conflict instead of treating it as secondary. Civilian suffering must be reported as central to the story.

#### **For Policy Makers and International Institutions**

##### **1. Encourage Ethical Media Guidelines**

European Union bodies and press councils should develop frameworks that promote conflict-sensitive journalism and address implicit bias.

##### **2. Media Literacy Programs**

Funding should be directed toward educational initiatives that help audiences critically read and interpret news discourses, making them aware of ideological framings.

#### **For Future Researchers**

##### **1. Expand Scope**

Future research should include a comparative analysis of non-European media (e.g., Al Jazeera, TRT World) to highlight how global narratives differ.

##### **2. Digital and Social Media Analysis**

Since much of the conflict discourse is now shaped on social media platforms, studies should extend Van Dijk's CDA model to Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

##### **3. Audience Reception Studies**

Future studies could examine how European audiences interpret these biased narratives and how such discourses influence public opinion and foreign policy.

#### **Final Reflection**

This study concludes that European media discourse on the Israel–Palestine conflict is far from neutral. Instead, it functions as a discursive tool of ideological reproduction, reinforcing geopolitical power structures. Critical awareness, ethical journalism, and inclusive media practices are essential steps toward fairer and more responsible reporting. Only through such measures can media move closer to fulfilling their democratic responsibility of truth-telling and representing all sides of a conflict equitably.

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