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WHO ACTS, WHO SUFFERS? ACTOR AND VICTIM FRAMING IN THE GAZA WAR HEADLINES ACROSS CNN AND AL JAZEERA ENGLISH NEWS OUTLETS

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Abstract
During wars, news outlets shape public perception through specific vocabulary choices that reflect the political narrative buildup. In Gaza War 2023-2024, there was a distinct linguistic difference in framing the oppressor and the oppressed by the Western and Middle Eastern media. This study examines how the vocabulary of Gaza War reporting changed over time and how CNN (USA) and Al Jazeera English (AJE, Qatar) differed in the war vocabulary they used across two conflict phases: October–December 2023 (early) and January–December 2024 (late). A balanced corpus of 300 headlines, split evenly between the two news channels, was examined using AntConc 4.2.0 through wordlist, keyword, and concordance procedures. Data was analyzed through Entman's (1993) Framing Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis (van Dijk, 1988; Fairclough, 1995). The findings reveal that both the news outlets diverged significantly over time in the portrayal of the actors. For instance, CNN introduced the term 'terrorist' for Hamas whereas AJE introduced 'resistance fighters' in the later phase. Similarly, the term "children" referred to two contradictory victim populations; 'Israeli children who were freed from Hamas' (CNN) and 'Palestinian children dying because of malnutrition' (AJE). During 2023, Israeli hostages formed the central focus, with 11 occurrences recorded. By 2024, the framing shifted to Israeli military actions. The term 'operation' rose from 1 occurrence in the early period to 8 occurrences in the later period, marking a 700% increase. In 2024, AJE's coverage showed a marked rise in humanitarian framing, with 'famine' 'children' and 'displaced persons' appearing far more frequently compared to earlier coverage. The study concludes that war vocabulary is ideologically constitutive rather than merely descriptive. Both outlet's narrative shifts followed their pre-existing editorial orientations, deepening rather than revising them over time. The study provides the first corpus-based diachronic analysis of actor-victim framing of CNN and AJE for the 2023- 2024 Gaza War.

Keywords*: Corpus linguistics, war reporting, framing theory, Critical Discourse Analysis, Gaza War, CNN, Al Jazeera English, narrative shift, headline analysis*

Introduction

News outlets shape public opinion on the basis of the words that they use to deliver the war news so every word a journalist says is a political act. Fowler et al. (1979). It is never neutral and innocent. It is supported by a point of view. When a channel refers to militant fighters as "terrorists," they are implying that they are prohibited from fighting for a cause. If another channel calls them "resistance", they're saying those fighters have a right to fight back. Same with soldiers,

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if an outlet reports “killed in action”, it sounds like a normal war death. If another writes “martyred defending their land”, it makes the death sound brave and noble. Although the facts are the same, the feelings and conclusions are vastly different. When a viewer or reader sees one headline, this may seem normal. However, if they read or watch more war coverage from the same outlet, they will have a different perspective on the war and how it grows into something serious and important. They would have a selective understanding of what the real war is, who is suffering, who is causing the damage, who is facing the consequences, who deserves sympathy and who deserves accountability and what should be done to stop this disaster happening?

This study is built on a perspective that even a small word choice or difference in language has far bigger meaning and matters a lot in narrative building. This study analyses word choices and how the language is used to portray two different narratives about the same event which is the Gaza war, with assistance of corpus linguistics along with critical discourse analysis (CDA). It analyses very carefully the war language of headlines used by two mainstream English news outlets: CNN and Al Jazeera English news between the time period of the Gaza war from October 7, 2023 to December 2024.

A First Comparison

Even a cursory examination of headlines from the two outlets reveals the kinds of differences that drive this study. Take two headlines from the initial conflict that both addressed the subject of deaths in Gaza:

"BREAKING: Palestinian health ministry in Gaza reports 198 deaths and 1,610 injuries"
CNN, October 2023
"Israel flattens Palestine Tower amid deadly Gaza bombardment"
Al Jazeera English, October 2023

CNN's headline presents quantified information attributed to an official source a reporting style that prioritizes institutional authority and numerical precision over evaluative language whereas AJE's headline uses a visceral, agentive verb ('flattens') and embeds the specific event within a larger, ongoing, morally charged process ('deadly Gaza bombardment'). Both headlines are factually based but their lexical and syntactic choices construct different versions of what is happening: CNN's version is an event with numbers; AJE's version is an act with an agent and a context.

Research Questions:

RQ1: How do CNN and Al Jazeera English differ in their framing of actors and victims in Gaza War headlines, and does this framing change over time?

Statement of the Problem

War headlines are among the most influential short texts in society. Previous studies of the Palestine-Israel conflict on CNN and Al Jazeera English have only covered the framing differences of the two news outlets and have done it for brief conflicts. Previous studies have used qualitative methods; however, this study is corpus-based. Since the vocabulary in used headlines carries assumptions about actors, victims, and the nature of events, such ideological framing becomes part of public perception. These patterns are hard to detect without systematic analysis.

Preview of Key Corpus Findings:

In CNN-Early phase the word hostage and hostages appears 11 times combined and in CNN-Late phase it appears for five times which is a drop of 55%. This Pattern demonstrates the core of

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CNN‘s Night Shift within the outlet. It moves from a conflict center on Israeli captives to centered on Israel military procedure. AJE’s-Early reporting on the conflict never mentioned famine, children and displaced people. whereas in AJE’s late-phase all these words started showing up in 2024. All these words started appearing at the same time and became an imperative part of their coverage. All these words were absent from their initial coverage of the conflict.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Endman’s Framing Model The framing of Robert Entman‘s 1993 has been a common or dominant framework for analyzing media language and how it presents a conflict. He says that: To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation or treatment recommendation for the item described. (p. Entman, 1993) 52).

This definition points to four main framing jobs that are separate in theory but work together in practice. Firstly, it looks into the problem which is how the situation or conflict is labeled and described. Secondly it answers It figures out who to blame or who is causing the Conflict. Thirdly it concerns the ethical judgment and finally it looks at what treatment recommendations are there.

The Ideological Square:

Van Dijk 1995 created the ‘ideological square’ to explain how media reproduces in-group vs out-group bias through language. The model says news discourse usually follows 4 patterns: highlight the positive actions of ‘us’ , highlight the negative actions of ‘them’ , downplay the negative actions of ‘us’ and downplay the positive actions of ‘them’. In war coverage this means media close to one side will put more focus on their side’s victims and heroes, while putting more focus on the other side’s violence, extremism and guilt.

Interdiscursivity and Official Vocabulary:

Fairclough's 1995 notion of ‘interdiscursivity’ offers a useful insight into the integration of language from different domains into news articles. He contends that news does not merely replicate language when it employs terms from official entities such as the military, government, or judiciary. It also incorporates the beliefs and values concealed within those words. In military terminology, the term ‘operation’ conveys a sense of being organized, lawful, and expert. When CNN employs the term ‘operation’ in its headlines 8 times during late phase coverage in my dataset, it does more than simply narrate events. It incorporates the Israeli military ‘s rhetoric and its assertion of legitimacy into news coverage. This is significant because ‘operation’ conceals the identity of those involved and the effects, unlike ‘attack’ or ‘bombing’. Conversely, AJE employs the term ‘attack’ 14 times, introducing a distinct framework. This connects to Van Dijk's square: CNN highlights the validity of "our side" through military terminology.

Labelling and Legitimacy:

Labelling of armed forces is one of the most crucial aspects of war language. Morag argued in 2016 that how news names armed groups is a key political choice. Terms such as ‘terrorist’, ‘militant’, ‘fighter’ and ‘resistance’ can all refer to the same individuals engaged in similar activities, yet each term communicates a distinct perspective on the morality of their actions. ‘Terrorist’ portrays them as lawbreakers, ‘militant’ suggests strength but ambiguity, while ‘fighter’ remains largely neutral.

In 2011, Philo and Berry demonstrated that labeling options influence audience beliefs. They not only theorize it, but also test it. They analyze UK television news regarding the Israel-Palestine

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conflict through two approaches: initially, they quantified the words, and subsequently, they inquired about viewers' understanding of the topic. Their research on UK television news discovered that Israeli terminology prevailed in the reports, leading viewers of that coverage to be more prone to misinterpret the conflict and only grasp fundamental details about it. Labels not only appear biased, they also shift people's beliefs.This proves that analysing actor labels in CNN and AJE headlines corpora is important because words shape public understanding.

3.METHODOLOGY

Corpus Structure:

Total 300 headlines make the corpus for this research. Headlines are further divided into four sub-corpora containing 75 headlines each. It includes early and late phases of CNN and early and late phases of ALJAZEERAENGLISH.

CNN-Early (October–December 2023), CNN-Late (January–December 2024), AJE-Early (October–December 2023), and AJE-Late (January–December 2024).

Sub-Corpus	Source	Phase	Date Range	No. of Headlines
CNN-Early	CNN	Early War	October - December 2023	**75**
CNN-Late	CNN	Late War	January - December 2024	**75**
AJE-Early	Al Jazeera English	Early War	October - December 2023	**75**
AJE-Late	Al Jazeera English	Early War	January - December 2024	**75**
TOTAL	**Both**	**Both phases**	**Oct 2023-December 2024**	**300**

Selection of Headlines:

Headlines were chosen as the unit of analysis for this article. Richardson (2007) argues that in the world of news reporting and discourse, headlines are not merely words or titles they are framing devices. In order to write a rich headline in terms of text and context it is important for the writer to narrow down complicated stories to the most essential elements and since viewers concentrate particularly on headlines which also contain ideological meaning it requires more attention and care for writing it. Van Dijk (1988) also argues that headlines open the room for interpretation through which the reader and viewer process the information of the news and articles and more often than not readers go through the headlines only.

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Corpus Linguistics:
This study used three procedures of corpus. These procedures are performed by using software 'AntConc' (Anthony 2022). All words are ranked in corpus By frequency through the wordless analysis and it allows the comparison of vocabulary profiles of all four sub corpora. With the assistance of keyword analysis all the unusual frequency words appear in one corpus relatively to the reference corpus. The sub corpora of CNN and sub corpora of AJE are used as mutual reference corpora . Keyword in context analysis (KWIC) or Concordance analysis retrieves all the target words alongside its surrounding text. Due to the theoretical and empirical significance of selected 12 words which includes civilian, genocide, hostage, famine, terrorist, ceasefire, killed, operation, displaced, children and strikes the concordance analysis was conducted.

Critical Discourse Analysis:
Van Dijk (1988, 1995) and Fairclough (1995), Originate critical discourse analysis they stated that the language is never neutral. Every word delivers a message which can be positive or negative and can be tailored according to the desire. In the context of reporting the conflict of this research, critical discourse analysis means concentrating on questions like who is demonstrated and reported as a victim, who has taken the agency and how is the same event and armed groups are reported and lablelled differently by different news outlets.

4. FINDINGS

Actor and Victim Framing Across CNN and AJE (2023–2024)

No.	Dimension	CNN Early (Oct–Dec 2023)	CNN Late (Jan–Dec 2024)	AJE Early (Oct–Dec 2023)	AJE Late (Jan–Dec 2024)	Theoretical Link
1	**Actor Labelling (Palestinian Armed Groups)**	"terrorist" used once (quoting IDF, no distancing punctuation) Frequency: 1	"terrorist" dropped entirely No actor label used Frequency: 0	No label used (Hamas referenced by name or obliquely) Frequency: 0	"resistance" and "resistance fighters" introduced in own editorial voice Frequency: 2	Entman (1993): Moral evaluation terrorist = illegitimate; resistance = legitimate Van Dijk (1995): Ideological square
2	**Israeli Victim Frame (Hostage Vocabulary)**	Hostage/hostages: 11 Headlines name individuals: terminally ill mother, dual nationality, personal	Hostage/hostages: 5 (−55% drop) Hostage frame recedes; replaced by military	Hostage/hostages: 0 No individual Israeli victim humanisation	Hostage/hostages: 3 Only as political protest: "Hundreds of thousands	Richardson (2007): Victim humanisation invites reader identification Van Dijk (1995):

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		detail — full humanisation	operation frame (Finding 3)		protest demanding hostage deal"	In-group suffering foregrounded
3	**Military Actor Frame (Israeli Military Activity)**	"operation": 1 "attack": 5 Framing: emergency response to Hamas attack	"operation": 8 (+700%) "strikes": 5 Israel reframed as active military agent conducting planned, legitimate campaigns	"offensive": 0 "attack": 1 General war vocabulary; no specific military frame dominant	"offensive": 4 (+4) "siege": 2 Israel framed as aggressor conducting territorial expansion	Fairclough (1995): Interdiscursivity "operation" borrows military legitimacy; "offensive" borrows critical framing Entman (1993): Problem definition
4	**Palestinian Victim Frame (Humanitarian Vocabulary)**	children: 1 (Israeli children freed) famine: 0 displaced: 1 Palestinian civilians largely absent from victim frame	children: 0 (dropped) famine: 2 displaced: 2 Passive voice used: "aid remains blocked" (no named agent)	children: 0 famine: 0 displaced: 0 Humanitarian vocabulary entirely absent from early AJE coverage	children: 3 (new) famine: 3 (new) displaced: 3 (new) Active voice used: "Israel blocks" "manufactured by Israeli siege" (agent named)	Richardson (2007): Humanisation of victims as framing device Van Dijk (1988): Causal attribution through active vs passive grammar Entman (1993): Moral evaluation

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CNN and AJE construct inverse victim hierarchies: CNN humanises Israeli subjects (hostages → military agent); AJE humanises Palestinian subjects (civilians → famine victims). Both shifts deepen pre-existing ideological orientations rather than revising them.

Finding A: Actor Labelling

Hamas and Palestinian Armed Groups:

CNN used the word terrorists once in the early phase quoting an IDF spokesman:

"By the end of the day, IDF spokesman hopes there will be no more live terrorists in Israel" CNN, October 2023

This single use is imperative. Even though CNN only used it once, it stands out because it came straight from a military official in Israel and was reported as fact without any question or context, in the late phase CNN drops it totally. AJE's never use 'terrorists' in neither early nor late phase instead it introduce new words like 'resistance and resistance fighters'

"Resistance fighters repel Israeli forces in Gaza City battles"
Al Jazeera English, 2024
"Palestinian resistance continues despite year of Israeli bombardment"
(Al Jazeera English, 2024)

AJE selected the term 'resistance'. They might have opted for the terms "militant" or "terrorist," but they decided against it. Entman (1993) asserts that framing fundamentally involves selecting which aspects of a story to emphasize. You cannot display everything, so you choose what is important. Like a camera, you can focus on one individual and exclude the others. That decision alters the narrative. By choosing 'resistance' they're focusing on the political motive for combat: occupation. They're eliminating the notion that it's merely random violence or that these individuals are just criminals.

Finding B: The Hostage Victim Frame

CNN frequently employs victim labels such as 'hostage' for one group while using different terms for others, which can lead to the impression that certain people's suffering is more significant or pressing than that of others.

Word	CNN Early	CNN LateA	AJE Early	AJE Late
Hostage	5	3	0	1
Hostages	6	2	0	2
Total	11	5	0	3

Right after October 7th, CNN ran a lot of headlines about the people Hamas captured (hostages):

"Terminally ill mother of Israeli hostage asks Biden to help bring her daughter back" CNN, October 2023
"Israeli-American hostage has died while being held captive in Gaza" CNN, October 2023
"Live updates: war between Israel and Hamas, deal to release Gazan hostages, 4-day truce" CNN, October 2023

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By providing readers with intimate details, CNN focuses on the individuals that Hamas seized. A sick mom, a person holding two passports, a prisoner let go on camera. Those touches turn them into faces and names, not statistics, and push the audience to worry about them right now. It is handled differently by AJE. It put out no stories about the seized individuals in the first stretch of coverage, and only three much later. In those few cases, AJE treats the topic as a policy dispute or demonstration point, not as someone ‘s personal ordeal:

"Hundreds of thousands protest in Israel demanding hostage deal" Al Jazeera English, 2024

CNN portrays the Israelis captured by Hamas as relatable figures, referring to them as mothers, daughters, or American citizens, highlighting a non-random distinction. AJE performs similar emotional work, concentrating on Palestinians who are injured or deceased. Essentially, both sources reverse who they consider. The primary victims. In 2023, CNN highlighted Israeli suffering by focusing on hostages. AJE highlighted Palestinian suffering by discussing children, hunger, famine, and individuals displaced from their homes.

Finding C: Military Agency Language:

The most notable change is the increased frequency of the term "operation" in CNN's military terminology. It emerged only once after October 7, when CNN referred to a hospital raid as a "specific and focused operation." By 2024, the term appeared eight times, and CNN currently employs it as the official designation for Israel’s significant military operations.

"Israel intends to conduct a ground operation in Rafah as more than a million displaced individuals take refuge there." CNN, 2024

"Israeli demands halt ceasefire discussions regarding Rafah operation." CNN, 2024

"Hamas agrees to the ceasefire proposal, yet Israel persists with the Rafah operation." CNN, 2024

"Israeli military actions in the West Bank increase as the conflict in Gaza intensifies." CNN,

The way you use the term "operation" is significant. Terms such as "assault," "offensive," and "attack" imply violent or aggressive connotation, while "operation "suggests an official, controlled, and structured tone. It's a term typically used by militaries rather than by aid organizations or ordinary individuals. In just one year, CNN utilized eight times more. That leap illustrates the typical response to Israel's military operations.

In 2023, the wording created an impression of a crisis. By 2024, the wording suggested it resembled standard military protocol. AJE has its distinct take on that change. The term ‘offensive ‘was absent in the beginning but later it is mentioned four times. Offensive doesn't convey neutrality like a mission. It implies that Israel is aggressively advancing and seizing new territory, rather than conducting a cautious or methodical operation. It is simple to observe how the two establishments contrast:

"Israel intensifies ground operations in southern Gaza as civilian casualties rise." (Al Jazeera English, 2024)

"Israel expands ground offensive in southern Gaza as civilian toll mounts" (Al Jazeera English, 2024)

"Israel launches Rafah ground offensive despite global condemnation" (Al Jazeera English, 2024)

CNN employs the term _operation‘ to portray Israel as a government conducting careful, formal missions. AJE employs the term "offensive" to depict Israel as a trespasser encroaching on

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territory. Even though they are both addressing the same military operation, the language they select to articulate it reveals their stance on the legitimacy of those military actions.

Words	CNN Early	CNN Late	Shift	AJE Early	AJE Late	Shift
Operation	1	8	⬆ +7	0	1	⬆ +1
strikes	0	5	⬆ +5	3	2	⬇ −1
offensive	1	1	_	0	4	⬆ +4
attack	5	3	⬇ −2	1	4	⬆ +3
launches	0	3	⬆ +3	0	2	⬆ +2

Finding D: Humanitarian Victim Frame:

Following October 7, neither of the publications referred to it as a "famine." It represents a pivotal moment in the story when it shows up on both platforms in 2024. The conflict transitioned from a brief security emergency to a prolonged disaster for the civilian population. AJE‘s headlines from that period are straightforward:

"Gaza facing full-blown famine in north, UN warns" (Al Jazeera English, 2024)

"Gaza famine spreads as Israel blocks humanitarian corridors" (Al Jazeera English, 2024)

"Gaza famine manufactured by Israeli siege, rights groups say" (Al Jazeera English, 2024)

Israel blockade creates famine in Gaza, according to rights organizations" (Al Jazeera English, 2024)

The third headline holds immense significance. When CNN covers the famine, they usually present it with the phrase "famine warnings escalate," referencing impersonal reasons. Phrases such as "Israeli blockade" and "produced by Israeli siege" in AJE's reports assign direct responsibility to Israeli actions. This goes beyond recording pain to leveling a charge. It aligns with AJE's approach of connecting humanitarian matters to specific Israeli military and political choices. CNN's subsequent reporting on famine maintains a more objective, institutional tone:

‘US airdrops food into Gaza as famine warnings grow.’ (CNN, 2024)

‘Gaza famine spreads north as humanitarian aid remains blocked’. (CNN, 2024)

When CNN talks about the aid not reaching the civilians in Gaza, it uses passive language ‘aid remains blocked' which does not point at anyone directly. Conversely, AJE used a straightforward tone and wrote that Israel is doing it all.

The word ‘children ‘illustrates a significant disparity between the two sources. In CNN's initial set of headlines, it appears just once, concerning Israeli children freed by Hamas. Eventually, CNN ceased using the term entirely. AJE, in contrast, references children three times in the later context, with each mention concerning Palestinian kids who were either killed or injured.

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"Gaza children dying of malnutrition as aid blocked from entering" (Al Jazeera English, 2024)
"Gaza children bear heaviest toll of Israeli military campaign" (Al Jazeera English, 2024)
"Gaza becomes graveyard for Palestinian children, rights groups warn" (Al Jazeera English, 2024)

Richardson (2007) claimed that featuring actual victims in headlines effectively influences readers 'emotions. It enables individuals to bond and respond emotionally. AJE does exactly that by constantly highlighting children hurt in Gaza. That is intentional humanization. CNN also humanizes, but it flips who gets it. Early on, CNN only mentions children when they 're Israeli kids being released, or when their parents are begging for them back.

Word	CNN Early	CNN Late	Shift	AJE Early	AJE Late	Shift
Famine	0	2	⬆ +2	0	3	⬆ +3
Children	1	0	⬇ −1	0	3	⬆ +3
Displaced	1	2	⬆ +1	0	3	⬆ +3
Civilians	0	2	⬆ +2	2	2	—
Aid	3	5	⬆ +2	4	6	⬆ +2
Death	2	4	⬆ +2	2	5	⬆ +3

Humanitarian vocabulary frequency and shift

DISCUSSION

In military terminology, "operation denotes a deliberate, professional, and implicitly authorized action, grounded in procedural language rather than in urgent response. When CNN's 2023 headlines focused on 'hostages' they showcased individuals with names, health statuses, nationalities, and mourning families, depicting Israel as a suffering society striving to reunite with its people. In 2024, when news articles mentioned "operations" in Rafah and the West Bank, attention turned to Israel as a strategically organized military force executing campaigns on various fronts. Both frames fit CNN's wider editorial stance, but they represent different narratives, and the move from one to the other marks a clear change in the story CNN told about Israel.

AJE's Deepening Humanitarian Frame

In AJE's late-phase data, a set of terms appeared that was absent from the early-phase coverage. These words shifted focus to Palestinian civilian suffering with greater detail and urgency. The shift is depicted by three terms. In AJE-Early, the terms "famine," "children," and "displaced" were used nil times, while they were used three times in AJE-Late. Their joint appearance reflects a deliberate editorial strategy of presenting Palestinian civilians as the war's main victims at the point when the military frame became harder to sustain given the documented humanitarian impact. AJE's humanitarian viewpoint extends beyond merely documenting hardship. Analytically, it is notable for attributing responsibility, identifying an agent behind the crisis rather than viewing it as a neutral consequence of war. This trend is evident in AJE's reporting on famine.

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"While Israel restricts humanitarian corridors, the starvation crisis in Gaza expands" Al Jazeera English, 2024

"Rights groups claim that the Israeli blockade is causing a famine in Gaza." Al Jazeera English, 2024

RQ1: Framing of Actors and Victims:

CNN and AJE repeatedly applied distinct labels to Palestinian armed factions throughout both stages. CNN utilized the term terrorists‖ once in a preliminary headline, subsequently omitting specific actor designations. AJE included "resistance fighters" in the later stage. Both outlets also preserved consistent victim hierarchies, even while particular terms changed. Keeping Israeli subjects at the center of its main narrative, CNN focused on Israeli hostages in 2023 and Israeli military operations in 2024. AJE centered the conflict and 88 Palestinian national subjects in 2023, then shifted to Palestinian children and famine victims in 2024, keeping Palestinian civilians central to its humanitarian frame.

Grounding the Ideological Square in Corpus Evidence:

Van Dijk's 1995 "ideological square" describes how ideologically driven discourse highlights in-group strengths and out-group weaknesses while downplaying the opposite. It has usually been applied through qualitative examples. This study tests the concept with systematic corpus data for the first time in Gaza War headline analysis. 89 The inverse humanization pattern found in both outlets is not an isolated example. CNN used the term "children" to refer to Hamas-released Israeli prisoners, whereas AJE only used the term for malnourished Palestinian children. This pattern is quantitatively confirmed across 300 headlines, not just one particular instance. Corpus evidence thus strengthens the empirical basis of van Dijk's model and shows the value of pairing it with corpus methods.

Normalization as the Most Profound Ideological Endeavor:

This article indicates a broader theoretical perspective on the role of ideology in extended conflicts. In the early phase of the Gaza War, both outlets did ideological framing in a direct and contested way. Their choices for framing were obvious, they were the subject of public debate and they caused controversy. By the later phase, those same choices became normal. The framing shifted into news coverage's everyday vocabulary. It was repeated daily without comment and was treated as justified, CNN's 'operation' had become standard vocabulary for Israeli military activity; AJE's 'famine' and 'siege' had become standard vocabulary for Palestinian conditions. Normalization is the point at which ideology disappears into convention, not ideological neutrality. The most consequential ideological work in prolonged war reporting may not be the dramatic moments of framing controversy but the quiet routinization of particular vocabularies into the background language of settled news.

Conclusion

This article begins with a simple question: do the words employed by media outlets to characterize war hold significance? Indeed, based on the analysis of the corpus, significantly. AJE described Israeli military campaigns as "offensives," whereas CNN labeled them as "operations." In 2023, CNN gave a human touch to Israeli hostages by sharing personal stories; in 2024, AJE did likewise for Palestinian children. CNN employed passive voice, while AJE directly linked famine "genocide" solely following to own commentary in October 2023. These are significant changes to the style. Countless readers grasped one of the most devastating conflicts of the 21st century

through these concepts. This vocabulary was not permanent, as the research also shows. Both media organizations evolved over a period of 15 months in ideologically coherent manners that reinforced their established frames. This conclusion extends beyond Gaza. The language of news actively shapes a version of reality during extended conflicts, rather than just mirroring events. That version evolves to feel more natural with time, making it tougher to contest. The expressions "operation," "siege," and "ceasefire talks" have shifted from being mere descriptions to becoming widely recognized concepts. The political, humanitarian, and ethical assessments of individuals experiencing war are influenced by these established perspectives. Gaza was a battlefield of language as well. The battle unfolded on the streets of Gaza, in the conference rooms of Doha and Washington, and in the word choices of every media outlet that reported on it. This research contributes to that dimension by systematically recording, with scholarly precision and clarity, the words utilized and excluded by CNN and AJE, alongside how these decisions influenced the public's comprehension of a war that continued to claim lives at the time of writing.

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