

How to Cite:

Ahmed, M. S., Abed, T. M., & Hussain, K. H. (2022). Israeli-Palestinian struggle: A critical discourse analysis. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S8), 3676–3688.

<https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS8.12928>

Israeli-Palestinian struggle: A critical discourse analysis

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Abstract---This study investigates how the struggle between Israelis and Palestinians is represented in the western news discourse through building a relationship between language and ideology. The study provides a picture of how Palestinians are depicted in the West. To achieve this aim, extracts from six articles of two western newspapers, namely the Independent from U.K and the Washington Post from U.S from the period between 2001-2012 are selected and analyzed ideologically and linguistically. The study is carried out using Van Dijk's notion of "ideological square", categorized by *Us vs. Them* dichotomies using qualitative and quantitative procedures. The study has concluded that Palestinians are absolutely portrayed negatively in the western newspapers. They are explicitly or implicitly seen as fighters, suicide bombers, Islamic militants, kidnappers and terrorists, which reflect their danger as compared to the Israelis. The conclusions have also proved that the two newspapers have revealed similar attitudes toward Palestinians and almost used similar language to describe them.

Keywords---Palestinians, Israelis, struggle, ideology, discourse analysis.

Introduction

Critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) represents a developing field in the study of language, in which the most important figures include Fairclough, van

Dijk, Gee, van Leeuwen, Wodak and Scollon. CDA cannot be considered a method but as an approach that consists of different perspectives and different methods to study the relationship between language use and social context. CDA differs from other approaches in its particular interest in power, where it assumes that the social relations reproduced in language are to be considered as part of a larger pattern characterised by unequal power relations. Hence, it began to view language as an evidence for what is happening across a much wider network.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA): An Overview

CDA began to gain its importance in the late 1970s, in a series of publications, such as “Language and Control”, by Fowler, Hodge, Kress and Trew (1979) and “Language as Ideology”, by Hodge and Kress (1993) which used Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics into a more largely social perspective that can handle some political issues of power and control. CDA is mainly concerned with the relation between language and power. Weiss and Wodak (2002:12) claim that CDA takes a particular interest in the relationship between language and power as it links between ideas, language, and power, on the one hand, and the ordering of relationship within society on the other. Wodak (2011:50) argues that CDA is an entity, a recognisable approach to language study. It may be described as neo-Marxist; where the cultural and economic dimensions are significant in the creation and maintenance of power relations (ibid).

Van Dijk (1998:352) maintains that CDA is a field that is concerned with studying and analysing written and spoken texts to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias. Fairclough and Wodak (1997:258) argue that CDA is concerned with analysing real examples of social interaction that take a complete or partial linguistic form as it aims to make visible “the ideological loading of particular ways of using language and the relations of power”, which underlie them (ibid).

Ideology

Bloor and Bloor (2007:10) assert that ideology is "a set of beliefs or attitude shared by members of a particular social group". Van Dijk (1998) postulates a multidisciplinary definition related to ideology. He assumes that ideology is a group of notions that are practiced by a group of people or a particular class, and interacted via language use. Van Dijk (1998, 2004, 2007) says that three levels of ideology are found, which are cognitive, social and discoursal. The cognitive level indicates ‘social representations’, which socially shared, stances, beliefs, values and viewpoints. Ideology, according to van Dijk (2007:116) is “belief systems”. The social representations are recognised in religious beliefs, feminism, communism and racism. The ideology of mental and cognitive functions, on the other hand, are observed in reality, artificiality, common sense and ‘false consciousness’.

The concept of ideological square (henceforth IdS) is presented as a procedure employed in CDA to display the way ideology is demonstrated in language. IdS comprises one of the methodological frameworks used in the current study. Van Dijk suggests this procedure to analyse the text ideologically. Van Dijk (2000a:44)

introduces four principles related to the analysis of ideology, that he calls "IdS" which is built on the following principles:

1. Emphasize positive things about Us
2. Emphasize negative things about Them
3. De-emphasize negative things about Us
4. De-emphasize positive things about Them

IdS, as is shown above, introduces polarization of in-groups vs. out-groups to show Us in a positive way, but Them negatively (ibid). Van Dijk (2000a, 2004) has schemed categories of ideological analysis conducive to the depiction of Us vs. Them.

The Arab-Israeli Relation

Shaheen (1983:328) illustrates the way the American media introduces unpleasant and undesirable stereotype of Arabs via "editorial cartoons, television shows, comic strips, comic books, college and school textbooks, novels, magazines, newspapers". Suleiman (1988:36-60) introduced diverse phases of this stereotyping in a study related to American press coverage of the 1956, 1967, 1973 Arab- Israeli struggles and illustrated the way of utilizing the Arab stereotype as weapon in the American media for the benefit of Israel. Besides.

Stockton (1994:119-153) focused on Arab images introduced in hundreds of cartoons taken from editorial pages and comic strips in his study. A dehumanizing image of Arabs was the main concept of all these cartoons to present Arabs. He mentioned that after the Arab Israeli war in 1967, the undesired image of Arabs became stronger in the U.S. Correspondingly, Artz and Pollock (1995:119-135) prepared a rhetorical analysis of editorial cartoons. This work was published in the New York Times, the Chicago Sun-Times, the Chicago Tribune, Newsweek, and the Los Angeles Times during the last five months of 1990. They said that the media succeeded in employing culturally accepted anti-Arab images to reinforce the American aggressive in the first Arab Gulf War.

Ghareeb (1983:7 cited in Jahedi and Abdullah,2014:299) maintained that western attributed virtuousness to Israel and rancour to the Arabs; and described Arabs as "backward, scheming, fanatic terrorists who are dirty, dishonest, oversexed and corrupt". Shaheen (1984:4) argues that American television attended to maintain four essential myths about Arab "they are all fabulously wealthy; they are barbaric and uncultured; they are sex maniacs with a penchant for white slavery; and they revel in acts of terrorism". Examining many American magazines, Suleiman (1988:33 cited in Jahedi and Abdullah,2014:299) deduced that the coverage of American news on the war between Arabs and Israelis seems to be biased against Arabs. He additionally said that the American news coverage described Israelis as "Western-like and democratic", in contrast to Arabs who are represented as "bad guys", the aggressors against the 'peace-loving' Israelis".

Methodology

In the current study Van Dijk's (1998) CDA approach and his notion of ideological Square (IdS) is used since it explains the dichotomous character of the prevailing discourse in societies (Richardson, 2004:65). Besides the ideological analysis, the linguistic features (naming and presupposition) are also used as tools for linguistic analysis to show how the analysis through these related tools contributes to a broader picture. The models that the analysis of naming based on is the models of Wardhaugh (1989) and Fowler, Kress and Trew (1979). Presupposition analysis, on the other hand, is based on the model of Huang (2007) and van Dijk (1995).

Linguistic Features for CDA

Naming

Wardhaugh (1989:259) affirms that naming choices can indicate the ideological implication. Wardhaugh (1989:260) illustrates that whites sometimes address blacks by their first names in situations that they should call them by title or title and last name. Fowler, Kress and Trew (1979) believe that different ways of naming indicate different attitude, approach and intimacy relationships of the speaker or writer to the one/ones who are spoken to or written about.

Presupposition

Presupposition is employed in ND to serve ideological and/or political purposes (Bekalu, 2006:151,169). Huang (2007:65) states that a presupposition is "*a proposition which is assumed by the speaker to be known to the listener, on the basis of including all relevant information and shared knowledge*". A presupposition is, thus, a proposition that is inferred by what is and what is not in a sentence.

Data Collection and Sample Size

In the current study, six articles; three from the British newspaper "The Independent" (henceforth IN) and three from the American newspaper "Washington Post" (henceforth WP).

The Corpus of the Study

The data of this study is based on the coverage of Israeli-Palestinian struggle in the websites of two western English language newspapers –British and American articles in the period between 2001-2012. The following Tables contain the corpus of the study.

Table (1) The Corpus of the Study of The Independent Articles

No.	The newspaper	Title of Article/ News	The date
1	Independent	Nine Israelis killed in bus attack	Wednesday 12 December 2001

2		Hawks say Israel should show no restraint in their war on terrorism	Monday 3 December 2001
3		Mubarak's anointed one begins to assume power	Friday 11 February 2011

Table (2) The Corpus of the Study of Washington Post Articles

No.	The newspaper	Title of Article/ News	<i>The date</i>
1.	Washington Post	With a Death, an Opening	Friday, June 9, 2006
2.		Who Should Take the First Step Toward Peace in the Middle East?	Tuesday, December 30, 2008
3.		Blair Sees Chance For Progress on Middle East Conflict	November 17, 2006

Data Analysis

The Independent

Nine Israelis killed in bus attack (IN1)

Extract (1)

At least nine were killed and dozens injured in a gun attack by Palestinians on a bus in the West Bank, during a day of violence in Israel, which also saw many injured in suicide bombings in Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip.

Extract (2)

Violence continued throughout the day despite a US peace envoy's call for 48 hours of calm. Israeli helicopter gunships attacked a Palestinian refugee camp this morning in response to mortar fire on nearby Jewish settlements. Four Palestinian militiamen were killed and 20 bystanders wounded in the air strike.

Critical Reading of the Extracts from IN1

These two Extracts reveal the struggle between Palestinians and Israelis. The two Extracts clearly focus on the violence practiced by Palestinians against the Israelis in the West Bank. They strongly expose the suffering of Israelis from the suicide bombing attacks committed by the Palestinians' suicide bombers, which has made the world in general and the West in particular to consider Palestinians as violent, terrorists, and killers, while Israelis are always introduced as innocent people and victims of the Palestinians. Such a negative representation of Palestinians in the WND reveals a fact that the security of Israel is part of the security of the West and any kind of threat to Israel means a threat to the West. This, in turn, has a negative reflection on the image of the people who express any kind of hostility or practice any threat to Israel in WND.

Table (3) Ideological Analysis of the Extracts from IN1

No.	Parts Selected	Ideological Square	
		Us	Them
1	At least nine were killed and dozens injured in a gun attack by Palestinians on a bus in the West Bank, during a day of violence in Israel.	Israelis	Palestinians
	Palestinians in this part, are shown as dangerous people practicing violence against Israelis that gives the reasons to consider Israelis as victims of Palestinians violence and terrorism. Such a representation shows the negative ideology of the West toward Palestinians when the situation is defined in term of Jews vs. Arabs.		
2	Violence continued throughout the day despite a US peace envoy's call for 48 hours of calm. Israeli helicopter gunships attacked a Palestinian refugee camp this morning in response to mortar fire on nearby Jewish settlements. Four Palestinian militiamen were killed and 20 bystanders wounded in the air strike.	US and Israel	Palestinians
	This part exposes US as a state that tries to play a role through its peace envoy to find a solution to the struggle between Arabs and Israel. The good action of (Us) is emphasized and the bad action of (Them) is emphasized. Even the attack of the Israeli helicopter is followed by a statement "in response to mortar fire" to justify it and not to blame Israel for such a behaviour. The part reveals the alignment of the West to Israel against Arabs, the ideology that is always followed in the West.		

Linguistic Analysis of the Extracts from IN1

For naming choices, in these Extracts, Palestinians are given the names such as 'Palestinian militiamen, a suicide bomber, and gunmen' to represent them in the text as terrorists that constitute a danger to Israel.

Presupposition is identified in:

"Violence continued throughout the day despite a US peace envoy's call for 48 hours of calm" which presupposes that violence connected to Palestinians has started before, and that the Americans try to stop it.

Hawks say Israel should show no restraint in their war on terrorism (IN2)

Extract (3)

Avigdor Lieberman, the minister of national infrastructure who represents a right-wing Russian immigrant party, urged the Prime Minister to topple the Palestinian Authority. Activists of the Kach movement, barred from parliament as racists, demonstrated at the scene of the Jerusalem suicide bombing, chanting: "Death to the Arabs." They always do, but there were more of them this time.

Extract (4)

Ruby Rivlin, the Communications Minister, said: "Israel can't go on any longer with this situation. We are in a war. They are killing us every day. We have to protect ourselves. It's not our right, it's our duty." What did Mr Rivlin propose? "Arafat has to fight the terrorists. If that means opening fire on them in order to capture them, let him open fire ... If he isn't fighting and capturing them, we shall have to go in and fight and capture them ourselves.

Critical Reading of the Extracts from IN2

These two Extracts reveal how Palestinians are introduced badly in the WND in order to reinforce the negative image on them in the West. They are portrayed as terrorists, killers, and a source of threat to the existence of Israel. In contrast, the ND exposes Israelis as victims of this terrorism and violence. This reflects the influence of the struggle between Arabs in Palestine and Israel on the Palestinians' image in the West. Extract (3) shows the hostility of Israel toward Arabs. Arabs are considered as source of restlessness to Israel. This, in turn, creates a kind of hatred to Palestinians in the West because Israel is regarded as the most important ally for the West in the middle East. Extract (4) above shows that Israel gets angry with the behaviour of the Palestinians in Palestine and it regards them as a source of daily killing. Such an action by Palestinians gives Israel the right to defend itself.

Table (4) Ideological Analysis of the Extracts from IN2

No.	Parts Selected	Ideological Square	
		Us	Them
3	Avigdor Lieberman, the minister of national infrastructure who represents a right-wing Russian immigrant party, urged the Prime Minister to topple the Palestinian Authority	Avigdor Lieberman, the minister of national infrastructure	Palestinian Authority
	This part reveals the negative ideology of the West (Us) toward Palestinians in Palestine (Them) who are seen as the source of restlessness of Israel .		
4	Ruby Rivlin, the Communications Minister, said: "Israel can't go on any longer with this situation. We are in a war. They are killing us every day. We have to protect ourselves. It's not our right, it's our duty.	Ruby Rivlin	Palestinians
	The speech delivered by Rivlin demonstrates that Israelis are victims of the terrorism committed by Palestinians (Them) who are considered as a source of terrorism in this ND. Revealing Palestinians in the WND in this way implies the negative ideology they (Us) show toward them. The text emphasizes Palestinians ' bad action.		

Linguistic Analysis of the Extracts from IN2

For naming choices, Palestinians are given the names of 'Terrorists, and Islamic Jihad', which imply negative representation in the ND as these words are connected to terrorism.

As for presupposition, it is represented in:

"Israel can't go on any longer with this situation. We are in a war. They are killing us every day. We have to protect ourselves" which presupposes that there is a continuous struggle between Jews and Arabs and that Palestinians are the main cause for this threat which results in killing Israelis every day as the ND exposes.

Mubarak's anointed one begins to assume power IN3

Extract (5)

A recent Wiki-Leaks cable attests to the value put by Washington on its intelligence relationship with Mr Suleiman, but also quotes him as pointing out that a peaceful resolution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict would be a "big blow to terrorist organisations that use it as a pretext".

Critical Reading of the Extract from IN3

The Extract reveals a positive image on Arabs, characterized by Mr Suleiman, who sees that the Israel-Palestinian conflict can be solved peacefully to send a message to the terrorist organisation that using the Israel-Palestinian conflict as a pretext. This shows that Palestinians are peaceful people.

Table (5) Ideological Analysis of the Extract from IN3

No.	Part Selected	Ideological Square	
		Us	Them
5	<i>Mr Suleiman, but also quotes him as pointing out that a peaceful resolution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict would be a "big blow to terrorist organisations that use it as a pretext".</i>	WND	Mr Suleiman (an Arab Muslim)
	This part represents a positive image on Palestinians (Them), which contradicts the previous negative image viewed in the West (Us). Such a representation declares that there is a positive change in the ideology of the West toward A Palestinians Ms.		

Linguistic Analysis of the Extract from IN3

For naming choices, no references in relation to Palestinians are found.

As for presupposition, is represented in:

... but also quotes him as pointing out that a peaceful resolution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict would be a "big blow to terrorist organisations that use it as a pretext", which presupposes that AMs, characterized by Mr Suleiman, prefer peaceful resolutions to terror in relation to the Israel-Palestinian conflict in contrast to the previous negative image of Palestinians viewed in the West.

The Washington Post
With a Death, an Opening (WP1)
Extract (1)

Law and order have disappeared in the Gaza territory since the Israeli withdrawal. Kidnappings and gunfights, not campaign rallies, are the tools of electioneering there. Financial mismanagement by Mahmoud Abbas's Palestinian Authority has forced the World Bank to freeze \$60 million in budget support and effectively move the PA toward bankruptcy in a matter of weeks.

Critical Reading of the Extract from WP1

In this Extract, Palestinians are viewed through the relation between Israelis and Palestinians, which has reflections on Palestinians in the West as Israel is considered as the best ally to the West in the Middle East and any bad action against Israel means annoyance to the West. The Extract above portrays the situation in Gaza as chaotic after the Israeli withdrawal where law and order disappeared and kidnappings and gunfights are the prominent features used as tools of electioneering in Gaza instead of campaign rallies. This presents Palestinians as kidnappers and gunfighters and shows that the Israeli withdrawal affects the scene in Gaza to reveal the positive image of Israel.

Table (6) Ideological Analysis of the Extract from WP1

No.	Part Selected	Ideological Square	
		Us	Them
6	Law and order have disappeared in the Gaza territory since the Israeli withdrawal. Kidnappings and gunfights, not campaign rallies, are the tools of electioneering there. Financial mismanagement by Mahmoud Abbas's.	Israel	Mahmoud Abbas (Palestinians)
	This part apparently reveals the negative image of Palestinians and presents (Them) as chaotic people who use the armed tools in their election rather than using the civilized campaigns. Israelis, on the other hand, are represented positively, and introduced in the ND as the keepers of law and order in Gaza. This emphasizes that (Us) are good, while (Them) are bad.		

Linguistic Analysis of the Extract from WP1

For naming choices, Palestinians are connected to the names of 'kidnappings and gunfights' to represent them as dangerous people.

As for presupposition, it is represented in:

"Law and order have disappeared in the Gaza territory since the Israeli withdrawal. Kidnappings and gunfights, not campaign rallies, are the tools of electioneering there" which presupposes that law and order in Gaza can only be achieved by Israelis and that Palestinians are unable to apply law. This exposes a negative image on Palestinians as the ND presents them as different from Israelis.

Who Should Take the First Step Toward Peace in the Middle East? (WP2) Extract (2)

The Palestinians made a peace agreement with the Israelis in 1993 but their agents chose violent means, including bus and hotel bombings, to express dissatisfaction with the pace of implementation.

Critical Reading of the Extract from WP2

In this Extract, Palestinians are represented as violent people who express their dissatisfaction with the application of the peace agreement with Israel in 1993. The Extract exposes the dissatisfaction of the Palestinians as a sort of violence including bus and hotel bombing as a means of expressing their angry with the pace of implementation to reveal their negative behaviour. In Contrast, Israel is mentioned in this Extract as a state that wants peace with the Palestinians in the sense that no sign of Israeli reaction is mentioned against the violence of the Palestinians. Such a representation reflects the alignment of the West toward Israel, which, in turn, has an effect on the way Palestinians are represented in the WND.

Table (7) Ideological Analysis of the Extract of WP2

No	Parts Selected	Ideological Square	
		Us	Them
7	but their agents chose violent means, including bus and hotel bombings, to express dissatisfaction with the pace of implementation.	Israelis	Palestinians
	The selected part clearly reveals the negative image of Palestinians (Them) and it exposes their bad action, which is associated with violence they show against the process of implementing the peace agreement. In contrast, nothing is mentioned here in relation to Israelis (Us) in order to expose them as victims of the violent action of (Them).		

Linguistic Analysis of the Extract from WP2

For naming choices, Palestinians are given the names of 'violent' to represent them in the text as dangerous people as this word carries the meaning of terrorism.

As for presupposition, it is represented in:

"..... but their agents chose violent means, including bus and hotel bombings, to express dissatisfaction with the pace of implementation"

which presupposes that there are violent agents for Palestinians who used to use violent means to express disagreement to the peace application.

Blair Sees Chance For Progress on Middle East Conflict WP3 Extract (3)

He said the "next few months are critical" on the Israeli-Palestinian issue: "My worry is there is increasing not just poverty and despair on the Palestinian side but also disintegration, and that is very dangerous."

Extract (4)

"So we either decide that we are going to take this moment and use it to drive forward, or obviously there's a danger that the whole region takes a wrong turn," he said.

Critical Reading of the Extracts from WP3

The two Extracts above show how much attention the West pays to the Israeli-Palestinian issue as the Israeli security constitutes significance to the West, which, in turn, affects the Palestinians in the West as they are represented in the WND as a real threat to the existence of Israel. In Extract (3) above, Blair, the British Prime Minister, expresses his worry about the future events on the Israeli-Palestinian issue focusing only on the Palestinian side and revealing his worry about the increasing not just in poverty and despair, but also in disintegration that would be very dangerous. Blair's speech indirectly reveals how the West tries to point out the negative images about Palestinians and exposes them as a threat to the Israeli security. In Extract (4), Blair reveals the West responsibility for keeping peace, otherwise there is a danger that the whole region might take the wrong turn.

Table (9) Ideological Analysis of the Extracts from WP3

No.	Parts Selected	Ideological Square	
		Us	Them
8	My worry is there is increasing not just poverty and despair on the Palestinian side but also disintegration, and that is very dangerous.	The West	Palestinians
	The West (Us), represented by Blair, tries to expose the negative side of the Palestinians (Them) by focusing on the problems they suffer from without mentioning any role of the Israelis in these problems. This shows that the West always considers Palestinians as the source of the problems, which has a great effect on the image of Palestinians in the West. This is to emphasize that (Them) are bad.		
9	So we either decide that we are going to take this moment and use it to drive forward, or obviously there's a danger that the whole region takes a wrong turn.		
	In this part, Blair shows the authority of the West (Us) in finding a solution to the struggle between Palestinians and Israelis without which the whole region might take a wrong turn. This exposes the West (Us) as having the solution keys to the problems raised by Palestinians to show the bad actions of (Them).		

Linguistic Analysis of the Extracts from WP3

No references to naming in relation to Palestinians are identified in the Extracts above.

In relation to presupposition, it is noticed in:

"My worry is there is increasing not just poverty and despair on the Palestinian side but also disintegration, and that is very dangerous" which presupposes that

Palestinians in Palestine are suffering from poverty and despair as compared with Israelis. Such a representation reflects a negative image on Palestinians in the WND.

Findings and results

The Names given to Palestinians that have been noticed through the analysis of the selected Articles in the IN and WP are exposed in the Table below.

Table (8) Names given to Palestinians in the Independent (IN) and the Washington Post (WP)

Names given to Palestinians	IN	WP	Total	% of total
Fighters	0	1	1	11,11
Suicide bombers	1	0	1	11,11
Gunmen	1	0	1	11,11
Islamic militants	1	0	1	11,11
Terrorists	2	0	2	22,23
Islamic Jihad	1	0	1	11,11
Arabs	0	1	1	11,11
Kidnappers	0	1	1	11,11
Total	6	3	9	100%

The analysis of the Extracts from the articles and the careful examination of naming and presupposition as linguistic features have revealed how Palestinians are represented negatively. The Analysis has shown that the image of Palestinians as security threats is being justified in the West as it is related to 'war on terror'.

Conclusions

It has been concluded that the Palestinians have explicitly or implicitly been depicted through the ideological and linguistic analyses as terrorists, suicide bombers, violent, kidnappers and gunfighters, and other negative characteristics. Using naming and presupposition as linguistic features in the CDA of Palestinians has revealed how Palestinians are represented negatively in the British and American ND. This representation tends to emphasize stereotyped images and sheds an unfavourable light over Palestinians. Palestinian have been portrayed as a threat to the West without emphasizing any positive aspect. Also, the findings have shown that both the British and American attitudes are the same as both of them have dealt with the Israeli-Palestinian struggle in the same way

Acknowledgments

I have to express my appreciation to Asst. Inst. Karama H. Hussain and Asst. Inst. Teiseer M. Abed for sharing their contributions and corrections during the writing of this research. We immensely grateful to professor Abbas F. for his comments on the earlier version of this research. We heartly appreciate his efforts.

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