

A Critical Discourse Analysis on Media Excerpts

Ghasem Tayebbi

English Language Department
Islamic Azad University, Kazeroon Branch
Kazeroon, Iran
Ghasem_tayyebi@yahoo.com

Fatemeh Behjat*

English Language Department
Islamic Azad University, Abadeh Branch
Abadeh, Iran
fb_304@yahoo.com

Abstract. As narrative discourses and discursive thematic frameworks on social issues in media can provide us with an insight into how different understandings and perspectives serve to construct different presentations of social actors, social events as well as social relations and conflicts, it seems necessary to take them into more serious considerations. To this end, the present study was an attempt to have a critical discourse analysis on two papers published on “attack to Ghaza”. Through a deep media discourse analysis, it was found that there is a pattern of who is speaking and in what way in mass media the meaning is constructed by journalistic conventions as well as by social norms, and by rules that in part are set by a political regime. It was revealed that conventions play a strong role as we apply a representation analysis method.

Keywords: Discourse analysis, media discourse, representation analysis method.

Received: October 2013; Accepted: December 2013

*Corresponding author

1. Introduction

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) may be described as a shared perspective on doing linguistics, semiotic or discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 1993). Such definition aims to link linguistic analysis with social analysis: language should be analyzed in relation to the social context in which it is being used and the social consequences of its use; and more specifically the relationships between discourse and its social conditions, ideologies and power relations need to be examined. Wodak (1999) defines CDA as the following:

Critical Discourse Analysis centers on authentic everyday communication in institutional, media, political or other locations rather than on sample sentences or sample texts constructed in Linguists' minds. [CDA] regards both written and spoken, discourse, as a form of social practice. It assumes a dialectical relationship between particular discursive acts and the situations, institutions and social structures in which they are embedded: the situational, institutional and social contexts shape and affect discourse, and, in turn, discourses influence social and political reality. In other words, discourse constitutes social practice and is at the same time constituted by it (p. 65).

Regarding the aim of CDA, Janks (1997) states it is to unmask ideologically permeated and often obscured structures of power, political control, and dominance, as well as strategies of discriminatory inclusion and exclusion in language in use. There is a three-dimensional framework for studying discourse, where the aim is to map three separate forms of analysis onto one another: the analysis of (spoken or written) language texts, the analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution and consumption), and the analysis of discursive events as instances of sociocultural practice.

Regarding the discourse of journalism, CDA maintains that social practices and the discursive practices of the production of journalism exist as a dialectical relationship (Richardson, 2007). Similarly there is a dialectical relationship between the consumption of journalistic texts

and a classification system which consists of actionals and relationals. In this framework, actional models represent the perceived relationships in the physical world. Actionals are divided more specifically into transactive and non-transactive.

Relational models or relationals encompass equative and attributive sections. They are concerned with the classificatory and evaluative systems of language. Equative models create the relations between nouns: Elham is a writer; while attributive models bring about the relations between noun and qualities: He is handsome. Relationals may be transitive: you seem very happy. This gives the following scheme of basic models for languages:

Actionals (transactive vs. non-transactive)

Syntagmatic models

Relationals (equative vs. attributive)

The term ‘Relationals’ indicates the consequences of mental activities and suggests judgments, comment, etc. Euphemistic and derogatory words belong to the relational part of this framework and are used as detection devices for recognizing the manipulation of realities and ideas. Ideology, according to Hodge and Kress (1993), involves a systematically organized presentation of reality. The application of different euphemistic and derogatory terms leads to different presentation of realities and therefore ideologies.

1.2 Fairclough’s media discourse model

In ‘Media discourse’, Fairclough (1995) examines concrete media discourses, and emphasizes the importance of empirical foundation in concrete studies, and includes the level ‘social practice’ in his framework for the analysis of communicative events. Fairclough makes an analytical distinction between the discourse seen as a vehicle of representation, the so-called order of discourse, and the discourse viewed as a means of enacting social relations and social interaction, the so-called communicative level of discourse. The first dimension is the dimension of semantics whereas the second dimension is the dimension of concrete communication viewed as a species of social interaction. Fairclough also makes the tripartite distinction between the modes of analysis which a researcher can employ when seeking to tear apart a specific piece of media discourse. In Fairclough’s three-dimensional model the aim is to map three separate forms of analysis onto one another: the analysis of (spoken or written) language texts, the analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production distribution and consumption), and the analysis of discursive events as instances of socio-cultural practice (Fairclough, 1995).

This reflects three different concepts of the discourse, and just as a researcher must examine the semantics of the discourse, he must also scrutinize over the practices surrounding the production and consumption of the discourse, and over the discursive act approached as an event occurring within a socially situated context.

A study of communicative events has to take all the dimensions of text production and consumption into consideration. An analysis of a text is at one level about text analysis, semiotics and linguistics and how these are part of the discursive-constructive process, for instance in the case of genres. At another level, we see how an author draws on pre-existing discourses and genres in order to create a text, and how these existing discourses and genres at the same time enable the consumption of a text by a receiver. At a third level, where Fairclough plunges into his theories of socio-cultural practices, one can, as an analyst, choose different levels of abstraction, choose his own interpretational perspective.

Fairclough recommends that an analyst begins with the analysis of the social practice within which the discourse is being produced and received. The analyst should, then, proceed to explore the two stages of the proper discursive analysis: the structuralist stage, where the object of analysis is the discourse itself, and the contextual stage, where the object is the relationship between the discourse and the cultural, institutional, and social embedding. Thus, the CDA-analysis resists the temptation to treat textual and discursive products as self-contained semiotic structures without any relation to the concrete social practices and power structures. But at the same time, CDA-analyst supplies analytical tools necessary for a thorough analysis of what one could call the production's 'semiotic infrastructure'. Fairclough's model will propose a challenging and ambitious research effort in order to scrutinize all the three levels in any satisfactory way.

Following the model and classifications offered by Fairclough (1995, 2000, 2003) and Hodge and Kress's (1993), the present paper is an attempt to investigate two press excerpts, one in favor of Palestinians and the other one Israelis, and explores how wording can reflect insights of the writers.

2. Methodology

The following steps were gone through to analyze some excerpts from two texts separately: lexical analysis which consists of (a) the choice and meaning of words (connoted as well as denoted) and (b) naming and reference (the way that people or things are named), and (c) predication (the result of linguistically assigning qualities to people, animals,); legitimation; syntax and transitivity or the relationship between participants and the roles they play in the

processes described in reporting; sentence construction: (a) modality or judgments, attitude, and comment in text, (b) presuppositions; rhetorical tropes: (a) hyperbole or excessive exaggeration for rhetorical effects, (b) metaphor or perceiving one thing as another, (c) metonym, (d) neologism, a word or phrase that has been assigned new meaning, (e) nominalization, the loss of certain semantic elements of clauses, both tense and modality, or the exclusion of participants. Finally, an overall evaluation of each part is presented.

2.1 Lexical analysis

2.1.1 Choice and meaning of words

The words used to communicate the message of the text reflect the story of war in direct and unavoidable ways. Words with negative connoted meanings which are used to describe Israel's attack and what the author calls Israel's aggression are indicated in the followings:

Israel's latent **aggression** in Gaza./ The actual targets of its **assault** on Gaza./ requires Israel to use **massive violence**./ Short of a complete **reoccupation** of Gaza./ Israel could not meet its objectives by **resorting to force**./ Israel's history of **manufacturing wars**./ The Zionist regime **waged another war**./ Israel must be held responsible and pay for the **Gazacaust**... .

As we see among many other alternatives including positive or neutral options such as retaliation, defense, resistance, response, etc. only words with strongly negative connoted meaning (which are bold in the extracts provided) have been chosen to represent Israel's attack on Gaza. These words can clearly show the violent nature of war or state the after-effects of war. The author has tried to increase his own commitment to use the word 'war' by not attributing it to others; no quotation is used to describe this war. The words which are selected to describe the other side of this war are the followings:

It could have addressed Hamas' **longstanding ceasefire** proposals/
The Palestinian **resistance** is engaged

As it could be seen from the above examples, only words with positive connoted meaning are used to describe Palestine and Hamas which are on the other side of the war.

2.1.2 Naming and reference

In this article, the two camps, Israel and the Hamas, like any other entities possess a range of identities, roles and characteristics that could be used to describe them accurately but not with the same meaning. The author of the article has tried to direct the attention of the readers to the negative aspects of the war and at the same time inculcate the idea that this is "Israel" and "not

Hamas” which is looking for such disasters. From the view of the author the war is to destroy or occupy Palestine, to kill Palestinians etc. What Israel does in this war is referred to as aggression, assault, violence, occupation, Gazacaust.

There is no such negative naming and reference when Hamas and Palestine are referred to as the other side of the war.

2.1.3 Predication

The choice of words is also important in this text from the perspective of representing more directly the values and characteristics of the two sides of this challenge, Israel and Hamas, by specific form of reference as well as attributes, collocations, comparisons etc.

In this article, predicational strategies are mainly realized by explicit form of reference based on explicit denotation as well as on more or less implicit connotation to attribute a negative character to Israel and a positive one to Hamas and Palestinians, for example:

Gazans did not leave their **motherland**/ it could have addressed Hamas’ longstanding **ceasefire proposals** for a complete **end to rocket-fire**/ Zionist Army’s **criminal moves** they will not cooperate with the **criminal occupiers**/ The Zionist regime waged another war and was **once again humiliated**/ Now it should also await the massive cases of **war crimes**

We can also see attributes in the form of prepositional phrases, infinitive clauses and relative clauses which represent the same negative characteristic of Israel:

Israel wanted **to isolate Gaza**/ its assault on Gaza after Dec. 27, **which included schools, hospitals, police stations, mosques, universities**/ Israel’s history **of manufacturing wars**/ **With the escalation of the attacks**/ But that “new reality” requires Israel **to use massive violence** to degrade

2.2 Legitimation

The undesirability and fruitlessness of the Israel attack on Gaza is legitimated by a clear specification of what motivates it in the form of semantic relations of purpose which are explicitly marked by connectors.

If Israel’s goal were simply **to** end rocket attacks on its civilians/
Israel could not meet its objectives **by** resorting to force/ using overwhelming force **to** achieve “deterrence” has never been successful/
It’s the primary cause **of** Israel’s insecurity **because** it deepens hatred and a desire for revenge rather than fear/

The same form of legitimation is also expressed in the form of authorization, in this case by reference to the authority of law:

But a military victory for Israel over Hamas is not possible **Jane's Defense Weekly said.**

And also it is expressed in the form of rationalization by reference to the utility of institutionalized action and to the knowledge the society has constructed to endow them with cognitive validity:

Now it should also await the massive **cases of war crimes/ ... Israel must be held responsible and pay for the Gazacaust.**

2.3 Syntax and transitivity

In this text, the relationships between participants and the roles they play are sometimes marked explicitly and in some cases implicitly; how actions are represented, and what actions appear in the text, who does them, and to whom they are done forms the heart of representing the undesirability of the attack on Gaza.

The perceived victory **was supposed** to be visible and tangible.

The Palestinian resistance **is engaged** in an asymmetrical political, military, The Zionist regime waged another war and **was** once again **humiliated**. Israel **must be held** responsible and pay for the Gaza-caust. Israel's latent aggression in Gaza **was engineered** to achieve a decisive.

The subjects of the sentences are removed through the use of passive verb: was supposed, is engaged, was humiliated, must be held and was engineered. The absence of subject in these sentences is revealed by asking: supposed, engaged, humiliated, must be held or was engineered by who? By the world?! By the United States? By Arab countries? By some nations?!

Any transformation of this kind removes a sense of specificity and precision from the clause. The journalist considered "the Palestinian resistance, the Zionist regime, Israel, Israel's latest aggression" to be more important aspect of the story than who did the action of the main verb. In terms of transitivity, Israel is represented here as the active agent of transitive violent actions, and Palestinians are involved processes of non-violent actions.

Choices in the way that the event, Israel attack on Gaza, is represented are reflected in the principle verb of the clause which points to the negative aspects and/or the after-effects of the attack on Palestine, in order to show the undesirability and/or the fruitlessness of the attack:

But that "new reality" requires Israel to **use massive violence** to degrade...No amount of violence will **erase Hamas from the scene**. Israel **could not meet its objectives** by resorting to force. But a

military victory for Israel over Hamas **is not** possible. It **deepens hatred and a desire for revenge**

The choice of the events to be included in the text is also of most importance. The events which have been included here are “Hamas’ longstanding ceasefire” and then “the Guantanamo scandal”:

At the time when the US has not been able to get rid of the **Guantanamo scandal...It could have addressed Hamas’ longstanding ceasefire proposals** for...

This is done in order to direct the attention of the reader to the negative aspect of this attack.

2.4 Sentence construction

2.4.1 Modality

Modality forms the counter-part of transitivity, referring to judgments, comment and attitude in the text, and specifically the degree to which the author is committed to the claim he is making. Modality shows that there are not only links between form and content, but also between content and function (Fairclough, 2003). It should be noted that even a high value modal (certainly, always) is less determinate than a polar form. ‘That is certainly Ali’ is less certain than ‘That is Ali’. In other words, we only say we are certain when we are not. Modality is important in the texturing of identities, both personal (personalities) and social in the sense that what you commit yourself to is a significant part of what you are, so modality choices can be seen as part of the process of texturing self-identity. Markers of modality include modal verbs, participial adjectives such as ‘required’, mental process clauses such as ‘I think’, modal adjectives such as ‘possible’ adverbs of frequency, and some other verbs apart from modal verbs such as ‘seem’ or ‘appear’. Look at the following extracts:

The actual targets of its assault on Gaza.....**clearly** reveal that Israel’s primary goals go far beyond providing immediate security for its citizens.

‘Clearly’ is a modal adverb which represents a strong degree of commitment to truth (Richardson, 2007). Truth modality can be seen when the author addresses the fruitlessness of the attack:

No amount of violence **will** erase Hamas from the scene. They **will not** cooperate with the criminal occupiers. The security situation in southern Israel and Gaza **will not** improve.

‘Will/will not’ is absolutely categorical (Richardson, 2007). It shows the author is certain to a great extent that Israel’s attack on Gaza in order to meet

its objectives is fruitless. The author could choose other alternatives; ‘can’ with degrees of hedging or ‘could’ or ‘may’ with reduced certainty if he was less certain.

Other modal verbs and adverbs which are used to serve the same purpose are the followings:

Israel **could not** meet its objectives by resorting to force, and is **probably** thinking that it has up to 10 days to complete its Gaza project. It **should** also await the massive cases of war crimes. Israel **must** be held responsible and pay for the Gazacaust.

In all these extracts, adding a modal verb results in an epistemically weaker claim than if the author chose not to modalize the verbs. So, it could be concluded that he is not quite certain about what the after-attack consequences are. If he were, he would write:

Israel **does not meet.**/ It **awaits.**/ Israel **is responsible...**

In some cases the author intentionally uses non-modalized categorical assertions. These verbs have certain effects, and in order not to diminish the argumentative force of these verbs the author does not modalize them (Richardson, 2007).

Israel’s latent aggression in Gaza **was engineered** to achieve a decisive. Israel **wanted** to isolate Gaza ...It **was** clear from the outset. In fact, it’s the primary cause of Israel’s insecurity. The Palestinian resistance **is** engaged in an asymmetrical political. Gazans **did not leave** their motherland during.

The writer has also included a reported speech- attributing a statement to others- to lower his own commitment to the undesirability and fruitlessness of this attack:

But a military victory for Israel over Hamas **is not possible.** Jane’s Defense Weekly said.

2.4.2 Presupposition

As we know, not all meaning is immediately ‘there’ in a text to be simply read from the manifest content; there is also some hidden or presupposed meaning in texts which is a taken-for-granted, implicit claim embedded within the explicit meaning of a text and could be marked in a variety of ways.

Certain words including change-of-state verbs or implicative ones invoke presupposed meaning in their very use (Richardson, 2007):

If Israel’s goal were simply to **end** rocket attacks on its civilians/ Hamas’ longstanding ceasefire proposals for a complete **end** to rocket-fire on Israel.

The highlighted verb ‘end’ presupposes that there has already been rocket attack on Israel.

It can **facilitate** the entry of Palestinian Authority (PA) chief, Mahmud Abbas into the strip on a bulldozer-tank and take control.

The verb ‘facilitate’ triggers the presupposition that Israel tries to enter/has entered on a bulldozer-tank to take control.

...Israel to use massive violence to **degrade** the political and military capacity of Hamas.

‘Degrade’ in this sentence presupposes that Hamas has the political and military capacity which is undesirable for Israel.

The security situation in southern Israel and Gaza will not **improve**, even in the longer term.

The verb ‘improve’ presupposes that the security situation in southern Israel and Gaza is not good.

...it **deepens** hatred and a desire for revenge rather than fear.

The verb ‘deepen’ presupposes that ‘hatred and a desire for revenge’ already exist. Possessive articles also trigger presupposition.

Israel’s latent aggression in Gaza.../ **Israel’s history of manufacturing wars...**/ It’s the primary cause of **Israel’s insecurity** because.../... the Zionist **Army’s criminal moves...**

The highlighted possessives represent the presupposition that Israel is aggressive, war manufacturer, insecure and makes criminal moves. The definite article ‘the’ which abound especially in the news texts invoke presupposition as well. When ‘the’ is used before an entity, it is taken for granted that the reader knows what entity the writer is referring to. And it could be implied that such entity exist. Look at these extracts:

...it would have solidified and extended **the ceasefire**...they will not cooperate with **the criminal occupiers** either. **The Palestinian resistance** is engaged in...

In these clauses, it has been taken for granted that the reader knows and/or agrees that there was a desirable ceasefire; Israelis are occupiers and Palestinians resist.

2.5 Rhetorical tropes

2.5.1 Hyperbole

Hyperbole is one example of exaggeration for rhetorical tropes. It is a way of describing something by saying it is much bigger, smaller or worse than it actually is Fairclough (2000). In this report, Israel is viewed as a social out-group, and the hyperbole takes on the more sinister dimension whereas Palestine takes on the better and more moral dimension.

...**complete destruction** of Gaza's infrastructure. Its assault on Gaza after Dec. 27, which **included schools, hospitals, police stations, mosques, universities, and Hamas government institutions**. Israel's history of **manufacturing wars** through "strategic escalation" and using **overwhelming force** to achieve "deterrence" has **never** been successful. Now it should also await the **massive cases** of war crimes. Israel must be held responsible and pay for the **Gazacaust**.

These hyperboles are used to represent a negative face of Israelis and their attack on Gaza. Attack on Gaza is 'attack on schools, hospitals, mosques etc', and killing Palestinians is 'Gazacaust'. Israel's probable failure in some wars is represented by 'never success', and the force they use to attack is 'overwhelming'. The cases of war crime that Israelis commit are 'massive'.

2.5.2 Metaphor

Metaphor involves perceiving one thing in form of another. In this text, 'war' has not been defined as an emergency in which no sacrifice would be excessive, rather it has been defined as something unnecessary and undesirable. Israel's claim about its objective, providing immediate security for its citizens, is challenged by the author. Throughout the text the author uses metaphors and metaphorical framework to point to the negative aspects of the war and the undesirability of after-war consequences.

Israel's latent **aggression**.../...the actual targets of its **assault** on Gaza.../... **complete destruction of Gaza's infrastructure**.../... the Zionist Army's **criminal moves**.../ ...await the massive cases of **war crimes**/... responsible and pay for the **Gazacaust**/... Short of a complete **reoccupation** of Gaza.

2.5.3 Metonym

Metonym is a form of substitution in which something which is associated with X is substituted for X. In other words, it is the substitution of one word, phrase or object for another from a semantically related field of reference.

The significance of metonymies lies not in their presence in a text, but in the ways that they are used. It differs from metaphor, in that metaphors op-

erate through transference of similar characteristics while metonymy operates through more direct forms of association.

They will not cooperate with the **criminal occupiers** either.

‘Criminal occupiers’ refers to Israel since Israelis have been considered as those who have occupied Palestine. In other words, something which is associated with Israel is substituted for Israel. Metonyms enable the author to conjure away responsible, involved or affected actors, or to keep them in the semantic background. And these sentences look punchier than their possible alternatives. Another can be seen in the following extract:

...it can facilitate the entry of Palestinian Authority (PA) chief, Mahmud Abbas into the strip **on a bulldozer-tank** and take control.

Bulldozer-tanks which are used mostly for destroying are associated with this war. Through the use of metonym, it is substituted for war to represent its violent and destructive nature.

2.5.4 Neologism

Neologism can be created through coining a word, blending two existing words or by shifting word meaning either through changing grammatical function or by developing a new euphemistic meaning (Fairclough, 2000). Among these three ways we can point to the followings:

At the time when the US has not been able to get rid of the **Guantanamo scandal**, Israel must be held responsible and pay for the **Gazacaust**. But that “**new reality**” requires Israel to use massive violence to degrade

‘Gazacaust’ which is compared to the Holocaust was coined during Israel attack on Gaza which implies that lots of Gazans died in this war. ‘Guantanamo scandal’ which is formed by blending two existing words in recent years points to the violence of the US Army with prisoners in Guantanamo Prison. And at the same time the writer makes a comparison between these two to indicate that what happened in Gaza is another scandal.

The phrase ‘new reality’ in this text has a new euphemistic meaning. From the view of the writer, it means war, massive violence and destruction. All of these neologisms are coined and/or addressed to blame the attack and what Israel Army does with Gazans.

2.5.5 Nominalization

Through nominalization, instead of representing processes which are taking place as processes (grammatically, in clauses or sentences with verbs), processes are represented as entities; in other words, the conversion of a verb into a noun-

like word, and semantically, a process into an entity (Fairclough, 2000).

One common consequence of nominalization is that the agents of processes are absent. This is one of the most significant forms of metaphorical representation which enables the author to keep the agents in the semantic background or conjure away responsible. At the same time the attention of the reader is directed to the verb of the main clause.

With the escalation of the attacks and complete destruction of Gaza's infrastructure, Israel wanted to **isolate** Gaza.

Nominalizations are underlined in these clauses. There is a transparent link between 'destruction' and 'people destroy infrastructures', 'escalation' and 'people escalate the attack', such that it is easy to see the former in each case as a nominalization of the latter. In this assertion, people who initiate processes or act upon other people are absent from the underlined entities. Loss of certain semantic elements of clauses, both tense (so destruction can cover 'was/is/will be destroyed') and modality (so the distinction between 'is', 'maybe', 'will be' and so forth are lost), can also be noticed. The author has tried to direct the attention of the reader to the main verb of the clause which is boldface.

A long list of nominalizations could be made among which some are addressed here. The same argumentation could be provided for the following entities. One possible alternative way for formulating each of what the author is referring to is put into parentheses.

It can **facilitate** the entry of Palestinian Authority (PA) chief, Mah-

mud Abbas into the strip (the PA chief will /can/may enter into the strip). If Israel's goal were simply to **end** rocket attacks on its civilians ... (Hamas can, will, did, may attack on Israeli citizen with rockets). Short of a complete reoccupation of Gaza, no amount of violence **will erase** Hamas from the scene. (Israel is/was going to, can/can not, may/may not occupy Gaza again). The looming political standoff on the Palestinian side **threatens** to boost Hamas (the political stand off is/will be/ may be looming). The Palestinian resistance **is engaged** in an asymmetrical political. (Palestinian resist, resisted, may/can/will resist)

As it can be seen in many cases, the attention of the reader is directed to the main verb (facilitate, will erase, and threatens), and in some cases the main purpose is to exclude the participants in the process or action (to end rocket attacks). Of course, when a process is changed into an entity and brought at the beginning of the clause, it will gain more prominence (the Palestinian resistance).

2.6 Evaluation and conclusion

It is clear that evaluative statements are statements about desirability and undesirability, what is good and what is bad (Fairclough, 2000). Here, we have set out the main values the author commits himself to in this text, what is constructed as desirable, and what is constructed as undesirable.

Undesirable

Aggression, Escalation of attacks, Destruction of Gaza's infrastructures, Entry of Palestinian Authority chief into the strip on a bulldozer-tank, Isolating Gaza, Attacking schools, hospitals, police stations, mosques, universities, Using massive violence, Reoccupation of Gaza, Erasing Hamas from the scene, A ceasefire with conditions more congenial to Israel, Recognizing Abbas as president of the PA, Resorting to force, Military victory for Israel over Hamas, Engaging in an asymmetrical political, military, diplomatic and economic war, The Zionist Army's criminal moves, Cooperation with the criminal occupiers, Massive cases of war crimes, The Gazacaust.

Desirable

Longstanding ceasefire proposals, Lifting siege on Gaza, The looming political standoff on the Palestinian side, The Palestinian resistance, Staying in motherland, Paying for the Gazacaust, Holding Israel responsible for the war, Humiliating the attack.

The overall conclusion which can be drawn from this text is that attacking on Palestine is unfair, fruitless and unwise. The writer tries to show that Palestine and Hamas hope that a comprehensive ceasefire is what they are looking for, and this is Israel which attempts to occupy Gaza again for no good reason. Throughout this text, the author has tried to make a link between undesirable processes or entities with Israel attack on Gaza. He also attempts to point to the after-effects of war by referring to the destruction of Gaza's infrastructures (With the escalation of the attacks and complete destruction of Gaza's infrastructure) and the possible consequences of this war(it deepens hatred and a desire for revenge rather than fear) contextualizing and recontextualizing some parts which were touched in previous section to represent the unacceptable face of the war.

Finally, it can be mentioned that evaluation can also be made without the relatively transparent markers of evaluation (evaluative statements, modalities and affective mental process verbs), which is another reason for coming to this conclusion;

If Israel's goal were simply to end rocket attacks on its civilians, it would have solidified and extended the ceasefire. It could be implied from this conditional sentence that what Israel is looking for is something beyond providing immediate security for its citizens. Rather, it intends to refer to massive violence in order to agree with a kind of ceasefire with conditions more congenial

to Israel. In fact, it is the primary cause of Israel's insecurity. It deepens hatred and a desire for revenge. When something deepens hatred and the desire for revenge or when it is the source of insecurity, it is negatively evaluated. Evaluative statements also evaluate in terms of importance, usefulness, and so forth, where desirability/undesirability is assumed.

It was clear from the outset that **Israel could not meet its objectives** by resorting to force. The Palestinian resistance is engaged in an **asymmetrical political, military, diplomatic and economic war**.

Extracts from text 2; Israel's Gaza War: Five Asymmetries, By: Menachem Kellner

2.1 Lexical analysis

2.1.1 Choice and meaning of words

The analysis of particular words used in a text is almost always the first stage of any text or discourse analysis. Words convey the imprint of society and value judgments – in particular, they convey connoted as well as denoted meanings. All types of words but particularly nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs carry connoted in addition to denoted meanings. Look at the following examples taken from the text:

| Hamas | Israel |
|-----------------|---|
| Destroys Israel | Destroys Hamas's ability to threaten Israel |
| | Fires thousands of rockets at towns and cities cannot avoid civilian casualties |
| Destroys Israel | Frees Palestine |
| | Israel is associated with birth, building, and green line |
| | Hamas is associated with death, destruction, and desert |

Some of the words which are used to describe Israel's attack on Gaza and its effort to deal with the challenge, all with positive connoted meanings are presented here:

Israel Defense Forces (IDF) are to **defend** their people Israeli TV, radio, and newspapers are full of **expressions of anguish over the civilian toll in Gaza**. Israel **treats wounded Palestinians** in Barzilai hospital...Israel even though dozens of trucks containing **aid supplies are sent from Israel into Gaza** every day. Israel **warns** Gazans in advance of attacks that will endanger them.

On the other hand, words which describe the other side of this war, Hamas,

and their efforts all have negative connoted and denoted meanings:

...allowed Hamas to **smuggle a host of arms** into Egypt, and from Egypt into Gaza. Hamas has indiscriminately **fired thousands of rockets** at towns and cities a million people have been and continue to be **terrorized by them** (Hamas). When you have an enemy (Hamas) who **uses children as shields**... Hamas and its supporters **celebrate the death of Israeli children**... Hamas too **rejects** out of hand United Nations **calls for a ceasefire**... To allow Hamas to continue in its indiscriminately **murderous way**...

As we see among many other alternatives including positive or neutral options such as resist, fight, retaliate, defend, and respond only words with strongly negative connoted meaning (which are bold in the extracts provided) have been chosen to represent the efforts of Hamas in this war. These terms clearly draw a violent, unaccepted and undesirable picture of Hamas. In this regard the author has tried to increase his own commitment to use terms such as 'terrorists' and 'murderers' when referring to Hamas by not attributing it to others; no quotation is used when these negative features are attributed to Hamas.

2.1.2 Naming and reference

Entities, including Hamas and Israel which are the two sides of this war, are put and described in such a framework to inculcate the idea that Hamas is the source of insecurity in the region and what Israel does is to bring security not only for Israelis but also for Gazans. So, entities take negative connoted and denoted meaning when referred to Hamas and positive when referred to Israel. The attack on Gaza is referred to as 'Operation Cast Lead', which simply covers the violent nature of war and after-war effects.

Israel's 18-month siege on Gaza is named "closing tunnels of smuggling" which does not represent the actual nature of the story and its consequences for Gazans_ the bad condition that any siege may cause.

Israel must see to it that the tunnels between Rafah, Egypt, and Rafah, Gaza are interdicted and remain closed. Egyptian collusion or incompetence, or both, has allowed Hamas to smuggle a host of arms...

The attack is referred to as defense. All that is related to attacking citizens is negative, unacceptable and ugly into the public eye. But defense triggers just positive feelings.

...they cannot be avoided if the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) are to defend their people.

Defeating Hamas brings about lots of destruction, deaths, and injuries in Gaza, but these consequences can be hidden with words if terms which do not represent these consequences are used:

If Israel wins, Gazans-albeit at tragic expense-**are freed** from the thuggish terrorism of Hamas

According to this report, efforts of Hamas just brings civilian casualties for Israelis and imprisonment for Gazans, and that is why they are called 'terrorists and murderers' not 'fighters or defenders' of their motherland. The first two terms "violence, aggression" represent bad feelings while the 'fighters' is neutral and 'defenders' brings sacrifice into the mind of readers.

...million people have been and continue to be terrorized by them.
To allow Hamas to continue in its indiscriminately murderous way...
Hamas, on the other hand, has indiscriminately fired thousands of rockets at towns and cities

2.2 Legitimation

The reporter has tried to legitimize the Israel attack on Gaza is by a clear specification of what motivates it. He has done it in a number of strategies two of which are addressed here:

a. rationalization: Legitimation by reference to the utility of the institutionalized action, and to the acknowledges the society has constructed to endow them with cognitive validity.

b. moral evaluation: Legitimation by reference to value systems

These can be seen in the following extracts:

Israel must see to it that the tunnels..... allowed Hamas to smuggle a host of arms into Egypt, and from Egypt into Gaza

When an action is to end 'smuggling a host of arms' it would be legitimate and appreciated.

The aim of Operation Cast Lead is not the destruction of Gaza, but of Hamas's ability to **threaten Israel**/ people in the south of Israel can live without **the constant threat** of rockets.

Here the author introduces this attack as an operation, the end of which is to destroy something threatening. When X threatens Y, it could be concluded that X is dangerous, and any attempt to destroy the source of threat would be appreciated.

Israel wins, Gazans-albeit at tragic expense-are freed from the thuggish terrorism of Hamas.

As we see here again, the aim of this attack is not to destroy, kill, injure, hurt etc but to bring freedom. When X frees Y from Z, it could be concluded that Z is harmful, Y would benefit and X saves Y not kill or hurt, so it is legitimate and desirable.

2.3 Syntax and transitivity

In this text, the author conjures away responsible when Israel is the plausible responsible of the war or after-war effects, so the relationships between participants and the roles they play are marked implicitly; who does them and sometimes to whom they are done is not clearly mentioned and this forms the heart of representing that Israel does not commit crimes or brings about any damage.

...the tunnels between Rafah, Egypt, and Rafah, Gaza are interdicted and remain closed.

Israel has laid siege to Gaza but it is not seen who has interdicted the tunnels.

Israel seeks to avoid civilian casualties/ Hamas has indiscriminately fired thousands of rockets at towns and cities in Israel

In these extracts, the writer describes the same event, i.e., attacking cities, differently. When he depicts the attack of Hamas on Israel, the agent of the violent action is explicit, and the object of this violence, Israelis, is also clearly stated. The writer has chosen to represent the event as a transitive action process (has fired). On the other hand, when Israel is the agent of the event he has chosen to represent it as a relational process (civilian casualties) hence it lacks agent. The object of the violent action is also not clear.

Hamas and its supporters celebrate the death of Israeli children;
Israeli TV, radio, and newspapers are full of expressions of anguish
over the civilian toll in Gaza.

There is political and ideological significance between these choices. Hamas and its supporters are clearly stated as the agent of this event; the object is 'Israeli children' and the event is represented as a transitive action (celebrate). When Israel is depicted in the same event, the agent of the violent action or killing children, which is Israel, is not stated. The object of the violent action is not stated. 'Civilian toll' is viewed as something that happens by itself rather than something which has been acted upon by Israelis.

Men, women, and children of Gaza, many of whom have nothing to do with Hamas, and through no fault of their own, **are victims in this battle.**

Here the writer represent a transitive action as a relational one to conjure

away responsible and the agent of the civilian toll. If this was to be reported in transitive form, he could write “X kills men, women and children of Gaza”. X who is the agent of the violence is not clarified. When syntax and transitivity are discussed, it is significant to see what actions appear in the text, and how they are represented.

To depict a positive and acceptable picture of Israel, the writer has pointed to another two events both in transitive action with the agents and the patients clearly stated, since they trigger positive feelings toward Israel in the mind of reader.

Israel treats wounded Palestinians in Barzilai. Dozens of trucks containing aid supplies are sent from Israel into Gaza every day.

Other events which have been addressed to create negative feelings toward Hamas are presented with the same feature:

...you have an enemy (Hamas) **who uses children** as shields...
 ...**Hamas to smuggle a host of arms** into Egypt, and from Egypt into Gaza...

2.4. Sentence construction

2.4.1 Modality

In this report, like in any other reports, modality is used to represent the speaker’s attitude towards, or opinions about, the truth of a proposition expressed by sentences. Modal verbs and adverbs are a feature of more opinionated genres of journalism. This text does not simply report an event (information) but also provides a judgment of the event (the attack on Gaza) in terms of evaluation and comment.

Israel **must see** to it that the tunnels between Rafah, Egypt, and Rafah, Gaza are interdicted and remain closed. (Comment)

The modal verb ‘must’ is absolutely categorical. It shows the author is certain to a great extent that what Israel has done in this attack is acceptable. The author could choose other alternatives; ‘can’ with degrees of hedging or ‘could’ or ‘may’ with reduced certainty if he was less certain.

If Israel wins... Israel **can live** without the constant threat of rockets. (Evaluation). To allow Hamas to continue in its indiscriminately murderous way **would be** no less tragic. (Evaluation)

Truth modality can be seen when the author addresses the fruitfulness of the attack. Since adding a modal verb results in an epistemically weaker claim than if the author chose not to modalize the verbs, he has tried not to use them in order to commit himself to strong claims. These verbs have certain effects,

and in order not to diminish the argumentative force of these verbs the author does not modalize them.

Israel **wants to live** in peace next to ... Hamas **wants to destroy** Israel. The aim of Operation Cast Lead **is not** the destruction of Gaza... allowed Hamas **to smuggle** a host of arms into Egypt, and from Egypt into Gaza. If Israel wins, Gazans-albeit at tragic expense-**are freed** from the thuggish terrorism of Hamas. The reason **lies** in five asymmetries. The fifth and final asymmetry **is related** to the TV reporting... The media asymmetry **is also reflected** in much of the international press...

The choice of modalized assertions as well as the non-modalized ones is put in a framework to inculcate the idea that attack on Gaza could be the only option available to solve the problem of threat, insecurity and freedom. He also tries to represent that the after-war effects as something desirable not only for Israelis but also for Gazans.

2.4.2 Presupposition

A presupposition is a taken-for-granted, implicit claim embedded within the explicit meaning of a text or utterance which is marked in a variety of ways. Among those which are present in this report the followings could be pointed to. Some of the extracts which contain change of state verbs or implicative ones and invoke presupposed meaning come here:

Hamas's ability to **threaten** Israel

When X threatens Y, it could be implied that X is potentially dangerous and Y is either a positive or a neutral entity.

...tunnels between Rafah, Egypt, and Rafah, Gaza are interdicted and **remain** closed.

From the bold-face verb 'remain' it could be implied that the tunnels are already closed.

... a million people have been and **continue** to be terrorized by them. /To allow Hamas to **continue** in its indiscriminately murderous way would be no less tragic.

'Continue' triggers the assumption that they (Hamas) already have started terrorizing people and their have already been murdering people.

... if Israel wins, Gazans-albeit at tragic expense-**are freed** from the thuggish terrorism of Hamas.

When X frees Y from Z, it could be implied that Y would benefit from X and Z is harmful.

The reporters have **a set narrative and pre-determined terms** (“cycle of violence”, “disproportionate Israeli response”, “occupied Gaza”, and the like)

It could be implied that what reporters use to describe the war (the terms in the parentheses) is not based on facts since they have them in their mind prior to what happen. Then, we can point to possessives and relative clauses which trigger assumption in a different way:

Hamas’s ability to threaten Israel/When you have an enemy who uses children as shields

It can be implied that Hamas has the ability to threaten Israel, and it uses children as shields.

To allow Hamas to continue in **its indiscriminately murderous way** would be no less tragic.

This sentence presupposes that Hamas’s way is murderous. And finally the definite article ‘the’ is considered as an entity which triggers presupposition:

... thousands of rockets at towns and cities in Israel since **the** withdrawal from the Gaza strip in August 2005.

‘The’ takes it for granted there has already been a withdrawal and readers already know which ‘withdrawal’ the writer talks about.

Israel can live without **the** constant threat of rockets/...newspapers are full of expressions of anguish over **the** civilian toll in Gaza/It blames the suffering of Gazans ...

The assumption here is that ‘threat of rockets’ exists, ‘civilian toll’ has occurred and it is taken for granted that Gazans suffer.

2.5 Rhetorical tropes

2.5.1 Hyperbole

In this report, Hamas is viewed as a social out-group and the exaggeration takes on the more sinister dimension whereas Israel and even Gazans take on the better and more moral dimension. The kind of exaggerations which are used for rhetorical troops are the followings:

Hamas, on the other hand, has indiscriminately fired **thousands of** rockets at towns and cities in Israel since the withdrawal from the Gaza strip in August 2005 **a million people** have been and continue to be terrorized by them.

Overstating the number of rockets fired in Israel and the number of people killed by Hamas is a one way to address them as evil.

When you have an enemy who **uses children as shields ...** (Overstating the number of children died as a result of Hamas's mistakes or strategies). Look at the Gaza side (and nearby Egypt): **desert** (Overstating less agriculture in comparison with Israel side)**turning thriving farms in Gush Katif into launching-pads for rockets.** (Overstating using lands for firing rockets). Israeli TV, radio, and newspapers are **full** of expressions of anguish over the civilian toll in Gaza. (Overstating the existence of expressions of anguish). Israel treats wounded Palestinians in Barzilai hospital in **rocket-torn** Ashkelon (Overstating being bombarded by rockets)

As it can be observed from the above extracts, the author has tried to exaggerate what he sees as the negative points of Hamas and what he considers as the positive points of Israel.

2.5.2 Metaphor

Metaphor is a way of describing something by referring to it as something different and suggesting that it has similar qualities to that thing. Considering this definition, in this text Israel is not simply a usual country taking part in a war. Rather it has been depicted as a Utopia through different strategies including metaphorical framework. The opposite idea is developed for Gaza which is in the opposite camp. Throughout the text the author uses metaphors and metaphorical framework to underestimate after-war effects and to represent the attack as construction rather than destruction. He has tried to depict a good picture of Israel's efforts in this attack and at the same time to hide the violent nature of war:

When I think of Israel, I think of **birth, of building, of literally turning the desert green.** (Happy, dynamic, modern and creative life is reported as birth, building and turning the desert green).
When I think of Hamas I think of **death, of destruction, of turning thriving farms in Gush Katif into launching-pads for rockets.** (Instead of lack of hope, undesirable view of the city, and war, metaphorical expressions are used)

2.5.3 Metonymy

Metonymy operates through more direct forms of association. In other words, something which is associated with X is substituted for X. Look at the following extracts:

Look at the Israel side of the (aptly named) **“green line”**: intensive agriculture. Look at the Gaza side (and nearby Egypt): **desert**

Green color which is associated with agriculture is substituted for it and desert which is associated with lack of agriculture is substituted for it.

Hamas might have devoted its energies to **turning Gaza into the Singapore or Hong Kong** of the Mediterranean. Google Earth reveals the nihilism at its heart.

Singapore or Hong Kong which are associated with nihilism and hopelessness and ‘turning a city into Singapore and Hong Kong’ which is associated with developing the idea of nihilism are substituted respectively for them.

As it is clear from these extracts, negative metonyms are used to depict the present Gaza and the political, social or ideological efforts of Hamas. Positive ones are used to address Israel.

2.5.4 Neologism

In this text no new word has been coined, but the author has blended existing words to create neologisms with new euphemistic meanings. Among the existing ones we can point to the followings:

Israel wants to live **in peace next to a thriving Palestine** while Hamas wants to destroy Israel. The aim of Operation Cast Lead is **not the destruction of Gaza, but of Hamas’s ability to threaten Israel**.

From this extract, one can conclude that the writer has developed a new euphemistic meaning when he refers to ‘a thriving Palestine’. It could be implied that he means Palestine without Hamas or Hamas’s military and/or political and social power.

This is an **asymmetrical zero-sum game** between Israel and Hamas. Israel treats wounded Palestinians in Barzilai hospital in **rocket-torn Ashkelon**.

In both of these extracts neologism is created by blending existing words to point the negative effects of this war. But in the first one, Hamas is pictured as the side which benefits from the asymmetry, and in the second one, Hamas’s violent nature is depicted.

The reporters have a set narrative and pre-determined terms (“cycle of violence”, “disproportionate Israeli response”, “occupied Gaza”, and the like). ‘Occupied Gaza’ is another neologism reflected in press to project the idea of aggression towards Gaza but this neologism is challenged by the writer when he uses ‘pre-determined terms’ and ‘narrative’.

2.5.5 Nominalization

In this text there are many processes which are represented as entities, and the absence of agents in these processes could be one thing the writer has been looking for. This is done especially when Israel is the plausible responsible for the violent action.

When Hamas is responsible of the violent action, processes are represented as processes, mentioning the agent and the patient of the process. And in some cases nominalization is used but not to conjure away responsible. The agent (Hamas) is kept in the semantic background of the text and the attention of reader is directed to the main verb of the clause.

Look at the following extracts:

The aim of Operation Cast Lead **is not** the **destruction** of Gaza.

Who destroys Gaza? In this extract the prominent element is the verb of the clause which confirms what the writer has called ‘Israel’s good ends’.

Egyptian **collusion** or incompetence, or both, has **allowed** Hamas to smuggle a host ...

Nominalization (collusion which has a transparent link with ‘Egyptians colluded with some’) which is used here has the same purpose, but to represent Hamas’s evil efforts.

When I think of Israel, I **think of birth**, of **building**, of literally **turning the desert green**.

All the processes which have been changed into entities in this extract have the purpose of creating good feelings towards Israel since a comparison has been made here. The opposite processes have been changed to entities and have been attributed to Hamas to create the opposite feelings in the mind of readers:

When I think of Hamas I think of **death**, of **destruction**, of **turning thriving farms ... into launching-pads** for rockets ... newspapers **are** full of expressions of anguish over the **civilian toll** in Gaza.

There is a link between ‘civilian toll’ as an entity and the process of ‘Israel has killed or injured a number of people’. This is done to conjure away responsible who is Israel.

Hamas and its supporters **celebrate** the **death** of Israeli children.

Here, Hamas is kept in the semantic background as the agent of the process even when it is changed into an entity, and the attention of reader is directed to the main verb which points to an evil feature attributed to Hamas. There are some other nominalizations which serve the same purpose, so they are just been mentioned here:

It **blames** the **suffering** of Gazans ... Israel can **live** without the constant **threat** of rockets.

2.6 Evaluation

The main values the author commits himself to represent desirability and undesirability of an event. These evaluative statements have already been set out in the previous section. As mentioned before, these statements show what is good and what is bad from the view of the author.

The overall conclusion which can be drawn from this text is that the attack on Gaza is the only option which brings freedom not only for Israelis but also for Palestinians.

As it is clear from the desirable and undesirable events, entities and processes mentioned above, the framework in this text has been constructed to inculcate the idea that Israel is looking for the desirable ones. All undesirables are attributed to Hamas, so it can be concluded that the only choice which is unavoidable from the view of the writer is to erase Hamas.

Another reason for coming to this conclusion is the relatively transparent markers of evaluation (evaluative statements, modalities and affective mental process verbs):

... the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) are to defend their people.

In this extract the attack on Gaza is viewed as 'defense', from which we can imply that this is Hamas which is aggressive not Israel.

Men, women, and children of Gaza, many of whom have nothing to do with Hamas, and through no fault of their own, are victims in this battle, and that is surely **tragic**. **To allow Hamas to continue** in its indiscriminately murderous way would be **no less tragic**.

In this extract Hamas is seen as a social out-group, which does not belong even to Gaza. It is regarded as a social out-group which is the source of insecurity and tragedy.

2.7 Final remarks

Investigating narrative discourses and discursive thematic frameworks on social issues in media is important because they provide us with an insight into how different understandings and perspectives serve to construct different presentations of social actors, social events as well as of social relations and social conflicts.

The pattern of who is speaking and in what way in mass media may be constructed by journalistic conventions within the media as well as by social norms outside media, and by rules that in part are set by a political regime. Conventions play a strong role, but usually this fact remains hidden to the audience, as well as to researchers. For analysts, this may become more visible when we move from contemporary media and apply the representation analysis method.

According to Fowler (1991), the question that is addressed here is, what is the role of the media in this complex contemporary framework of social, economic and cultural forces? Markets, politics, and policies all need an ideological basis. Such ideologies require production and reproduction through public text and talk, which in our modern times are largely generated or mediated by the mass media. As Van Dijk (1993) correctly puts it, if we talk about the influence of media messages, we should begin with an explicit and systematic analysis of text and talk, and go beyond superficial content analysis or a simplistic enumeration of repertoires. If we want to understand media effects and uses, we should then examine the detailed processes and representations involved, so that we know what it means exactly when we speak about opinions, attitudes, or ideologies of the public, and how these are, in turn, related to the social practices of media users.

The authors:

Ghasem Tayyebi is an Assistant Professor of Teaching English at Islamic Azad University of Kazroon. He received his PhD degree from IAU, Shiraz. His research interests include UG and Discourse Analysis, and he is currently completing a book on *The Islamization of English*.

Fatemeh Behjat holds a PhD degree in TEFL from Islamic Azad University, Shiraz Branch and has been a faculty member at Islamic Azad University, Abadeh Branch since 2000. She taught English at Iran Language Institute for eight years and is teaching at Zand Institute of Higher Education. She has so far presented papers at international conferences in Iran and abroad and has published articles in different journals. Her main areas of interest are language teaching and learning.

References

- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Media discourse*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Fairclough, N. (2000). *New labour, new language*. London: Routledge.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analyzing discourse: Toward an analysis for social research*. London: Routledge.
- Fowler, R. (1991). *Language in the news: Discourse and ideology in the press*. London:
- Hodge, R. & Kress, G. (1993). *Language as ideology* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Janks, H. (1997). Critical discourse analysis as a research tool. In H. Janks. Discourse. *Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 18 (3), 329-342.
- Lukes, S. (1974). *Power: A radical view*. London: MacMillan.
- Richardson, L. (2007). Discourse analysis. *System*, 2 (32), 13-18.
- Van Dijk, T. (1993). Principles of CDA. *Discourse and Society*, 4 (2), 249-283.
- Wodak, R. (1999). The discursive construction of national identity. In Wodak, R. et al. *The discursive construction of national identity*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Publications.