

A Critical Discourse Analysis of War-Related Terms in BBC and CNN Of Gaza Israel: NOW Corpus (2024)

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Submission date: 17-Jul-2025 09:28AM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 2716154521

File name: FIB_Sastra_Ingggris_1612100096_Etia_Surya_Rahma_Wardani.docx (4.75M)

Word count: 6318

Character count: 37321



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Abstract. In an era of rapid digital communication, news media play a pivotal role in shaping public perception, especially during global conflicts. The language used in media reporting can subtly influence readers' understanding, emotions, and opinions through particular word choices and framing techniques. In the case of the Gaza-Israel conflict, international news media play a key role in constructing narratives through their lexical and discursive choices. This research aims to analyze the use of war-related terms, particularly the "airstrike," in the reporting of the Gaza-Israel conflict by international media BBC and CNN, using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) based on Teun A. van Dijk's model. The data were collected from the NOW Corpus (News on the Web), which compiles online news articles from various countries. The analysis was conducted at the micro (textual structure), meso (social cognition), and macro (social context) levels to uncover hidden ideologies and power dynamics embedded in media discourse. The finding shows that the term "airstrike" frequently co-occurs with specific state actors, particularly "Israeli," and is often used in contexts emphasizing destruction, civilian casualties, and humanitarian consequences. The implication of this study is that word choices in news reporting, such as "airstrike," can subtly reflect bias and influence public perception of global conflicts. Both BBC and CNN frequently associate the term with Israeli military actions, but CNN places greater emphasis on humanitarian impact and civilian suffering.

Keywords: Airstrike, BBC, CNN, Critical Discourse Analysis, NOW Corpus

INTRODUCTION

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a linguistic framework used to explore how language is employed to express and maintain power structures and ideological beliefs within specific social contexts, including media discourse. As McEnery (2012) explains, CDA investigates how different social groups use language to construct their identities, interpret others, and define key social issues. As McEnery (2012) explains, CDA investigates how different social groups use language to construct their identities, interpret others, and define key social issues. Fairclough (2013) views discourse as a form of social practice that both shapes and is shaped by society. Similarly, McEnery (2012)

emphasizes that CDA adopts a political and sociological lens in analyzing discourse. Van Dijk (2015) also emphasizes that CDA focuses especially on how language is connected to ideology.

One of the most viral and gained significant global attention news topics in 2023 was the Gaza-Israel conflict. The war between Gaza and Israel continues to this day, and this news has spread to all social media platforms, especially news media. Gaza and Israel conflict is a conflict between two countries which want to establish a state on the same land. The Passfield White Paper (1930) contains about "The Mandate for Palestine to both Arabs and Jews, it proposed restrictions on Jewish immigration and land purchases to address Arab concerns over economic displacement and demographic changes. British promises to Arabs and Jews made both of them feel entitled to the Gaza territories." Given the long-standing and complex history of the Gaza-Israel conflict, the role of news media in shaping public understanding and opinion has become increasingly significant in recent years. Platforms like X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and TikTok have served as real-time channels for citizens, journalists, and activists to share videos, photos, and personal accounts from the conflict zone.

The conflict is not only in present social media platforms but also in international news media. The BBC and CNN was chosen because it has significant data due to its global reach and reputation for impartiality. The BBC is available in over 200 countries, reaching millions of viewers daily. This means it covers global events with international perspectives, not just national ones. Similarly, CNN's extensive network of correspondents and bureaus around the world allows it to provide real-time coverage and diverse viewpoints on international issues, including the Gaza-Israel conflict. In obtaining the data, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can be assisted by Corpus Linguistic namely English Corpora Website for data collection.

The NOW Corpus was selected for this study due to its specific focus on contemporary online news articles, capturing real-time developments and the dynamic nature of modern media. The News on the Web (NOW) Corpus ranks as one of the largest and most detailed news corpora globally. According on English-Corpora.org, the NOW Corpus currently contains around 14.6 billion words and is continuously updated, adding approximately 180 to 200 million words each month. Specifically, The NOW Corpus can be used to identify word frequency, collocations, and lexical patterns related to "war" in BBC and CNN articles and provide insights into how language influences the portrayal of the Gaza conflict.

The term "airstrike" was selected due to its specificity, making it more appropriate for detailed analysis. Another reason are; The Gaza-Israel conflict involves aerial military tactics, and "airstrike" directly refers to these actions. Israel is widely reported to conduct frequent airstrikes on Gaza, making the term central in media coverage. Words like airstrike are commonly found in headlines and body texts from BBC and CNN as media.

The following issues will be the main focus of this research.: (1) What are the most frequently collocation of "AIRSTRIKE" words in adjective occur? (2) How does BBC and CNN portray War in Gaza Israel with "AIRSTRIKE" words in Critical Discourse Analysis?

Previous research has often focused on corpus-based methods. According to the study by Mardikantoro et al. (2022) published under the title "Construction Of Women In Media: A Critical Discourse Analysis On Violence Against Women In Newspaper". This journal analyze violence against women in several Indonesian newspapers with the media such as; Kompas, Republika, Jawa Pos and Suara Merdeka. After that, an article written

by Hou and Shi (2022) "Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics in the Perspective of Chinese and Foreign Media: A Corpus-Based Study of Critical Discourse Analysis". This journal examines international media coverage of the Beijing Winter Olympics and explores how it was received by foreign audiences. The data were collected from China Daily, the official Chinese news website (www.chinadaily.com). Then, journal from by Li and Zhang (2022) "A Corpus-Based Study Of Representation Of Islam And Muslims In American Media: Critical Discourse Analysis Approach". This journal representation of the terms "Muslim" and "Islamic" in two British newspapers, by The Guardian and The Times as a media and WordSmith Tools for collecting the data.

This research is focused on Corpus Linguistic and Critical Discourse Analysis. Corpus Linguistic as a tool to collect the data using NOW Corpus and Critical Discourse Analysis for analysis the data. This research is limited to news report published by BBC and CNN as found in the NOW Corpus. The corpus provides contemporary news data from various countries, but this research specifically analyzes BBC and CNN that report on the Gaza Israel conflict. The data is drawn only from news articles available in the NOW Corpus between October 2023 to October 2024, and thus is constrained by the corpus's availability, accuracy, and representativeness at the time of access.

This study aims to examine how such terms are employed in the reporting of the Gaza-Israel conflict using the NOW Corpus (2024) and explore their function in shaping social cognition and public discourse. This research addresses a distinct gap by combining Teun van Dijk's CDA framework with corpus-based methods using the NOW Corpus, which allows access to real-time and large-scale data from BBC and CNN articles.

LITERATURE REVIEW

First, a study which is written by Klomkaew and Kanokpermpoon (2023): "Meaning Representations of "Trans, Transgender, Transsexual and Tranny": A Corpus-Based Analysis in Digital News and Magazines". The study investigates the meanings and representations of the terms "trans," "transgender," and "transgenderism" within the NOW Corpus using a corpus-based and CDA approach. The study employs Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA. This study fills the gap by the theory of Fairclough and different data for analyzing word terms such as "trans," "transgender," "transsexual," and "tranny" in NOW Corpus.

Second, a study written by Yao (2023) "Research on Extended Units of Meaning: A Case Study of 'Data' in the NOW Corpus". This article utilizes the online corpus News on Web (NOW) as its primary data source. To collect data for analysis, the NOW online corpus was searched using the term "China's digital economy", and a small corpus was then established. The WordSmith Tool 6.0 was utilized to generate a word list, which facilitated further research. This finding strongly indicates that Western media places significant emphasis on data-related issues in China's digital economy, particularly data security and protection. The gap is this article does not use CDA for analyzing the data.

Third, an article from Mardikantoro et al. (2022) "Construction Of Women In Media: A Critical Discourse Analysis On Violence Against Women In Newspaper". This study focuses on analyzing the textual representation, discursive strategies, and sociocultural contexts of violence against women as portrayed in selected Indonesian newspapers. The data collection process involved three phases: describing the data, interpreting it, and providing an explanation. The data in this study were collected from selected news articles about violence against women which were retrieved from Indonesian newspapers, especially Kompas and Republika (national newspapers), and

Jawa Pos and Suara Merdeka (local newspaper). The research gap is this article does not use Corpus Linguistic as a tool for collecting the data.

Fourth, an article written by Hou and Shi (2022) "Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics in the Perspective of Chinese and Foreign Media: A Corpus-Based Study of Critical Discourse Analysis". This study examines international news reporting on the Beijing Winter Olympics and analyzes how it was received by foreign audiences. It employs a corpus-based approach as the research method and applies critical discourse analysis as the main theoretical framework to investigate both domestic and NOW corpus data related to the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics. The study use the theory by Fairclough (1989) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and the NOW corpus to help the results more objective through extensive data. The data taken from the official Chinese news websites China Daily (www.chinadaily.com). This gap highlights the need for discourse studies that not only analyze how media construct narratives but also consider the audience's reception particularly in non-Chinese contexts.

Fifth, a study written by L. Pavlichenko (2022) "Polarization In Media Political Discourse On The War In Ukraine: Critical Discourse Analysis". This study aims to examine how the Russian-Ukrainian war and its prominent political figures are represented linguistically in British and American political media discourse. This research employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), drawing on the frameworks developed by Norman Fairclough and Teun A. van Dijk. The analysis focuses on examining the discursive strategies of polarization used by British and American media in reporting on the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The research gap is this article does not use Corpus Linguistic as a tool to collect the data, meanwhile CDA for analysis.

Sixth, article from by Li and Zhang (2022) "A Corpus-Based Study Of Representation Of Islam And Muslims In American Media: Critical Discourse Analysis Approach". This study investigates the representation of the terms "Muslim" and "Islamic" in two British newspapers The Guardian and The Times through a corpus-based approach, specifically applying Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and corpus linguistics tools. The author compiled two corpora from each newspaper, consisting of articles published in 2010, and used WordSmith Tools to examine word frequency, collocations, and concordance lines. The study found that both newspapers frequently associate "Muslim" and "Islamic" with terms related to extremism, terrorism, and violence, which may contribute to negative stereotyping. However, The Guardian occasionally provides more contextual and balanced representations, whereas The Times often emphasizes security concerns and threats, reflecting a more securitized discourse. This gap highlights the different media and different corpora for the analysis.

Seventh, a study which is written by Peng et al. (2022) "Sportswomen Under The Chinese Male Gaze: A Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis". The article investigates how Chinese mainstream media discursive constructs the image of sportswomen, focusing on the online representations of two Chinese female athletes: Su Bingtian and Gong Lijiao on the Weibo accounts of two state-run media platforms: People's Daily and Xinhua News Agency. Using Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) as the primary theoretical and methodological framework, the study explores how gender ideologies are linguistically encoded in sports media narratives within China's patriarchal and nationalist contexts. The findings reveal a strong tendency in media discourse to marginalize and trivialize sports women's professional achievements. While male athletes like Su Bingtian are celebrated for their speed, strength, and national symbolism, female athletes such as Gong Lijiao are often reduced to their appearance, personal life

(especially romantic or marital status), or stereotypical feminine qualities. The research gap is this article does not use Corpus Linguistic as a tool to collect the data, meanwhile FCDA for the analysis.

Eighth, written by Lukin and Marrugo (2024) "War In Law: A Corpus Linguistic Study Of The Lexical Item War In The Laws Of War". This study explores how the word "war" is used in legal texts by applying corpus linguistics, a method that uses large collections of texts (called corpora) to analyze language patterns. The research examines two specific legal corpora: the Corpus of US Supreme Court Opinions (SCOTUS) and the Corpus of Founding Era American English (COFEA). By using frequency, collocates (words that appear near "War"), and concordance lines (how the word appears in context), the study reveals how the term is understood and applied in legal settings. The theoretical basis of the study is rooted in Corpus Linguistics (CL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This gap highlights the different corpora for the analysis.

Ninth, written by Sujatna et al. (2022) "Picturing "Coronavirus" In News On The Web (Now) Corpus: A Corpus Linguistic Study". This research utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to achieve a more comprehensive analysis. The findings revealed a significant rise in the frequency of the word "coronavirus" in the NOW Corpus, increasing from 16,073 to 64,100 occurrences around April 27, 2020. The gap is this article does not use CDA for analyzing the data.

Last, from Kenalemang-Palm (2023) "The Beautification Of Men Within Skincare Advertisements: A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis". This study employs the theoretical framework of Social Semiotics along with the methodology of Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) to explore how skincare advertisements directed at men are constructed through both text and visuals. The study highlights the need for further exploration of how aging men are visually represented in advertisements, addressing the underrepresentation of men in skincare research and the implications of the growing market for male skincare products. It underscores the importance of understanding the cultural narratives surrounding masculinity, aging, and beauty in contemporary advertising. The research gap is this article does not use Corpus Linguistic as a tool for collecting the data, meanwhile MCDA for the analysis.

This research have similarities with previous studies in the use of Critical Discourse Analysis as the theory for analysis and the application of Corpus Linguistics as a data collection tool in several of the referenced articles. All the studies reviewed, most studies adopt either Fairclough's three-dimensional model or Teun Van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework, which examine how language reflects ideologies and power structures. The differences in this research is the specific focus on the lexical item "AIRSTRIKE" and how it is constructed and represented in BBC and CNN reporting on the Gaza conflict, using the NOW Corpus as a primary data source. Additionally, the research employs Teun Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, incorporating the micro (textual), meso (cognitive), and macro (social) levels, to uncover how linguistic choices reflect and reinforce ideological meanings. By combining quantitative corpus-based methods with qualitative CDA, and analyzing up-to-date news data from October 2023 to October 2024, this research offers a fresh and focused perspective on how language shapes public understanding of Gaza Israel conflict, making contribution to media discourse and conflict studies.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative design that combines Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with corpus linguistics to critically examine the use of war-related language in BBC and CNN reporting on the Gaza Israel conflict. Creswell and Plano Clark (2014) explain that qualitative research is a method for exploring and understanding the meanings that people or groups assign to social or human-related problems. This approach emphasizes the importance of subjective interpretation and focuses on the depth and complexity of meaning within social contexts. Rather than relying on numerical data, qualitative research seeks to uncover how people construct meaning through language, behavior, and interaction. This research aims to critically examine war-related term “AIRSTRIKE” used in BBC and CNN reporting on the Gaza conflict.

The study is grounded in Teun Van Dijk’s CDA framework, which analyzes discourse through three interrelated levels: the micro level (textual structures such as vocabulary, grammar, coherence, cohesion, morphological, syntax, and semantic prosody), the meso level (vision and mission of the media), and the macro level (the broader social, political, and ideological contexts that shape and are shaped by discourse). The data are drawn from the NOW Corpus (News on the Web Corpus), specifically from BBC and CNN articles related to the Gaza Israel conflict in 7 October 2023 until 30 October 2024.

This study utilized data obtained from the News on the Web (NOW) Corpus, which is publicly accessible at <https://www.english-corpora.org/nw/>.



Figure 1. Chart of “AIRSTRIKE” in NOW Corpus by Year

This figure illustrates the percentage results of news coverage related to the term “AIRSTRIKE” as found in the NOW Corpus. The column rows that show the highest numbers are from the years 2023 and 2024. In 2023 it was explained that the frequency of “AIRSTRIKE” word appeared 11,240 while in 2024 the word appears 18,832. On October 7, 2023, Hamas carried out a sudden and deadly assault on Israel, prompting a large-scale Israeli military response in Gaza, including airstrikes, ground invasions, and blockades, resulting in severe civilian casualties. Continued to 2024, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza worsened significantly, leading to increased global media coverage, UN attention, and protests. The differences in frequency can be observed between the two years, with the term “AIRSTRIKE” being reported more frequently in the news during 2024. The data was collected from the 100 most frequent collocations of the word “AIRSTRIKE,” with the analysis focus on lexical words, particularly adjectives. Adjectives were selected because they help convey a clearer understanding of the news topic or subject. Additionally, selected concordance lines were taken based on the reliability of the news sources.



Figure 2. Top 16 Collocation of "AIRSTRIKE" word in NOW Corpus

This research followed several procedures to collect the data: (1) using the account by login in the English.Corpora.org corpus tool. (2) Select collocates, fill in the column word/phrase with "AIRSTRIKE" and "ADJ" in the column collocates, with the span 4 left and 4 right, and then click find collocates. (3) After that, the top 100 collocate lists appear. (4) Then, click one by one on the word of collocate list to know the context for critical discourse analysis. (5) Lastly, click "limits" to set the time range from 07 October 2023 to 30 October 2024 with the media BBC or CNN, then click "limit/sort". (6) After that, a concordance list appears. (7) Then, take the sentences one by one to collect the data for analysis, especially those that discuss the Gaza-Israel conflict.

For the analysis data, the first step is describing the text that has been obtained from concordance lines for the analysis using CDA of Teun Van Dijk theory through the stage of text analysis (micro) such as, vocabulary, grammar, coherence, cohesion, morphological, syntax and semantic. Analysis by sentence that related to the war-related terms of Gaza Israel. In analyzing the textual data using Teun A. van Dijk's micro-level framework, each sentence from the concordance lines is coded to maintain consistency and facilitate interpretation. The coding system uses the format B#S# or C#S#, where B stands for BBC and C stands for CNN, # represents the order of the frequency of the words that appear in collocation (1, 2, 3...), and S# refers to the sentence number by frequency from the word was chosen. For instance, B1S2 refers to the second sentence in the first collocation from BBC, and C2S1 refers to the first sentence in the second collocation from CNN. This method allows for detailed micro-level analysis of each sentence's linguistic features including vocabulary, grammar, syntax, cohesion, and semantic prosody.

Then, describing the analysis with social cognition (meso). At the meso level of analysis, the study examines the BBC's and CNN's vision and mission statements. Then, cross checks them again ³³ the background of the news producers (e.g., authors, editors, or institutional policies). The results of the textual and discursive analysis are then linked ³⁴ to these institutional objectives to evaluate whether the BBC and CNN maintains its claimed neutrality.

The last, describing the analysis with social context (macro). At the macro level, the analysis explores whether the news content genuinely reflects broader social realities or merely presents isolated news events. This involves examining the discourse from a socio-political perspective to determine its relevance and alignment with ongoing social issues. After the analysis is complete, conclusions are drawn.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

In the findings of this study, the word “AIRSTRIKE” was chosen as the node word for analysis. A span of 4 to the left and 4 to the right was used. Within this span, the frequency of collocates identified as adjectives associated with “AIRSTRIKE” in the NOW Corpus totaled 59,893 words. All words within that span are referred to as collocations. From these, the top 100 most frequent words were selected for further analysis, which are israeli, russian, military, syrian, southern, islamic, recent, saudi-led, heavy, iranian, u.s.-led, deadly, retaliatory, american, indian, us-led, residential, other, houthi, civilian, new, international, northern, intense, rebel-held, eastern, turkish, multiple, afghan, central, suspected, palestinian, overnight, militant, alleged, ukrainian, massive, latest, saudi, lebanese, top, reported, iraqi, terrorist, pakistani, western, relentless, early, ongoing, devastating, targeted, past, dead, taliban, injured, besieged, fresh, iran-backed, nigerian, surgical, major, killed, kurkish, french, separate, indiscriminate, senior, apparent, british, iranian-backed, late, coordinated, limited, joint, armed, continued, large, local, possible, key, previous, responsible, successful, intensified, damaged, special, pre-dawn, similar, chemical, human, nearby, deadliest, humanitarian, entire, arab, constant, punishing, destroyed, extensive, and foreign.

The term “AIRSTRIKE” is typically accompanied by three groups of co-occurring words: commonly associated terms that define its actors, attributes, and impacts; broadly used or generic descriptors with weaker contextual ties; and unique or context-specific words that highlight special circumstances or narrative emphasis.

The first group is co-occurring words: These related terms can be grouped into three main categories. First, military or countries often associated with “AIRSTRIKE” include “israeli,” “russian,” “syrian,” “iranian,” “u.s.-led,” “american,” “indian,” “turkish,” “pakistani,” “british,” and “french,” among others. Second, airstrike attributes are typically described using adjectives such as “heavy,” “deadly,” “retaliatory,” “targeted,” “indiscriminate,” “surgical,” “coordinated,” “limited,” “relentless,” or “successful,” which indicate the scale, intent, or execution of the strikes. Third, terms related to targets and impacts include words like “civilian,” “residential,” “militant,” “terrorist,” “rebel-held,” “injured,” “killed,” “destroyed,” and “humanitarian,” which highlight the consequences or focus of the attacks. These patterns of language use are significant because they reveal how airstrikes are framed in media reporting, often shaping public perception through the choice of descriptors and associations.

The second group of words demonstrates a weaker or more indirect connection to the term “AIRSTRIKE”, as they are generally broader, less specific, or contextually generic. This set includes descriptors such as “new,” “other,” “early,” “late,” “past,” “recent,” “major,” “local,” “large,” “small,” “top,” “similar,” “apparent,” “special,” “continued,” “separate,” “ongoing,” “previous,” “responsible,” “entire,” “foreign,” “successful,” “key,” “international,” and “constant.” These terms often serve temporal or descriptive functions.

The third group consists of unique or context-specific words that are less commonly found in standard airstrike reporting. This category includes terms such as “chemical,” “human,” “alleged,” “suspected,” “overnight,” “central,” “western,” “eastern,” “northern,” “southern,” and “armed.” These words tend to be more situational or indirectly related to the core concept of “AIRSTRIKE”. For instance, “chemical” typically refers to chemical attacks, which are a separate form of warfare, while “alleged” and “suspected” introduce legal or investigative uncertainty into reports, signaling

unconfirmed information or claims. The term “overnight” is temporal but stylistically distinct, often used to emphasize the timing or suddenness of an event in journalistic narratives.

While this research focuses primarily on the co-occurring words group of adjectives and the unique group also for a deeper CDA analysis. Terms such as ‘all eged’, ‘overnight’, and regional descriptors contribute to how media construct urgency, uncertainty, or spatial framing of airstrikes, and thus are briefly explored as supporting elements. The weaker group is excluded from deeper analysis due to its generic.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Textual Analysis

After analysis using the NOW Corpus with collocates “AIRSTRIKE,” a more detailed micro-level discourse analysis following Teun van Dijk’s framework was applied, focusing on co-occurring words and unique words to explore how meaning is constructed. The Purpose is to examine how the word war-related term “AIRSTRIKE” is used in the news, whether it is emphasized, minimized, replaced, or framed in a specific way. The analysis is divided into two, the first analysis uses BBC ‘limits’ as the first media, and CNN ‘limits’ as the second media. The purpose is to analyze and compare how two different news media outlets linguistically construct the term war-related terms “AIRSTRIKE” at the micro-level, by examining their word choices, sentence structures, and textual features to reveal underlying framing strategies and ideological biases.

1. BISI

bbc.com    later killed in captivity. Hamas said his death was the result of an **Israeli airstrike**, which Israel said was likely. #
Figure 4.2.1.1 The Collocation of “Israeli” with BBC limitation

(4) “later killed in captivity. Hamas said his death was the result of an **Israeli airstrike**, which Israel said was likely.”

The sentence “later killed in captivity. Hamas said his death was the result of an **Israeli airstrike**, which Israel said was likely” uses strong vocabulary like killed, captivity, and airstrike to describe a violent and serious event. From a morphological view, words are formed by combining roots and suffixes, like captivity (from captive + -ity) and airstrike (a compound of air + strike). In terms of syntax, the first part (later killed in captivity) is a sentence fragment because it has no subject or main verb. The second part is a full sentence with a subject (Hamas), reporting verb (said), and an object clause (his death was the result...), followed by a relative clause (which Israel said was likely). Cohesion is shown through words like his death, which, and repeated references to the same event. Coherence is mostly clear; the sentence presents a sequence of events and opposing views from Hamas and Israel. Semantically, it tells us that someone died in captivity, and there are claims that an Israeli airstrike caused it, showing the uncertainty and conflict in reports during war. In this sentence, the phrase ‘Israeli airstrike’ demonstrates negative semantic prosody, as it is directly linked to the death of a captive individual. Despite the attribution to both Hamas and Israel, the framing constructs an association between Israeli military action and fatal outcomes, reinforcing a negative evaluative tone.

2. C1S1

edition.cnn.com    . # Four children were killed in an attack on Tuesday morning by an **Israeli airstrike** on a house belonging to the Abu Al-Sha'ar family in the eastern area of Gaza

Figure 4.2.1.2 The Collocation of "Israeli" with CNN limitation

- (3) "Four children were killed in an attack on Tuesday morning by an **Israeli airstrike** on a house belonging to the Abu Al-Sha'ar family in the eastern area of Gaza"

The vocabulary includes emotionally charged terms like "children," "killed," and "family," which evoke vulnerability, innocence, and personal loss, while "Israeli airstrike" specifies a military actor, implicitly assigning responsibility. The grammar uses a passive construction ("were killed"), which downplays direct agency while still naming the source of the attack later in the sentence. Morphologically, the past passive form intensifies the sense of completed, irreversible harm, especially to a vulnerable group. The syntax structures the sentence to begin with the outcome "Four children were killed" foregrounding the human cost before introducing the cause, reinforcing emotional impact. Cohesion is maintained through a clear narrative link between the event (attack), the actor (Israeli airstrike), the victims (children), and the location (house in eastern Gaza), while coherence is achieved through a chronological and spatial progression: time (Tuesday morning), cause (Israeli airstrike), and location (house of the Abu Al-Sha'ar family). Semantically, the sentence constructs a meaning frame that emphasizes civilian suffering and implicitly critiques the proportionality or consequences of military action. In this sentence, the phrase 'Israeli airstrike' exhibits strong negative semantic prosody, as it is associated with the death of four children and the destruction of a civilian home. The collocation with emotionally charged words such as 'killed,' 'children,' and 'house' intensifies the negative evaluative framing, highlighting the human cost of military action and evoking sympathy for the victims.

3. C5S1

CNN    the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), as Palestinian militants retaliated against ongoing **heavy airstrikes** from the Israeli military. The IDF has been targeting what it says are Islamic

Figure 4.2.1.6 The Collocation of "heavy" with CNN limitation

- (4) ⁶ "the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), as Palestinian militants retaliated against ongoing **heavy airstrikes** from the Israeli military. The IDF has been targeting what it says are Islamic"

The sentence employs military and conflict-centered vocabulary, such as "⁶Israel Defense Forces (IDF)," "Palestinian militants," "retaliated," "airstrikes," and "targeting," highlighting a violent exchange between opposing forces. Grammatically, the sentence is formed from two clauses: the first is a dependent clause introduced by "as," indicating simultaneous action, and the second is a main clause beginning with "The IDF has been targeting..."; the phrase "what it says are Islamic" is a noun clause expressing reported speech. Syntax shows a clear cause-effect and action-response structure, typical of conflict reporting. Cohesion is maintained through the repetition of actors and the reference to prior actions ("retaliated against ongoing heavy airstrikes"). Coherence is supported by the logical flow of actions and reactions. Semantically, the sentence presents both sides of the conflict but includes hedging

("what it says are") which distances the writer from fully endorsing the IDF's claims, contributing to a more cautious and potentially more balanced tone. In this sentence, the phrase 'ongoing heavy airstrikes' demonstrates negative semantic prosody, as it is associated with escalation and provokes a retaliatory response from Palestinian militants. The collocates 'heavy' and 'ongoing' intensify the perception of destruction and continued aggression, contributing to a portrayal of the Israeli military as the initiating force in the conflict sequence.

The micro-level analysis reveals that most of the data are sourced from CNN, with significantly more sentence samples and discourse features compared to BBC. This is because CNN provides more detailed and emotionally loaded reporting, especially on humanitarian aspects such as civilian casualties, damaged infrastructure, and the suffering of vulnerable groups like children and refugees. These elements are more frequently highlighted in CNN articles, resulting in a greater number of linguistically rich sentences suitable for critical discourse analysis. Furthermore, the findings show that the majority of the CNN data tend to be not neutral or negative semantic prosody. Through specific vocabulary choices, sentence structures, and emphasis on the consequences of Israeli airstrikes, CNN's reporting often implicitly critiques the military actions and foregrounds civilian impact. BBC's reporting often maintains a neutral tone or positive semantic prosody, presenting both sides of the conflict and focusing on the statement. This framing reflects an ideological stance that, while not overtly stated, aligns with humanitarian perspectives and subtly influences public perception.

4.2.1 Social Cognition Analysis

This level investigates how the information presented in the text is processed, understood, and mentally represented by both the producers (journalists, editors, media institutions). It involves analyzing the mental models, that is, the shared beliefs, ideologies, and knowledge structures that influence how people interpret and react to the discourse. This research examines institutional values and editorial policies (such as CNN's and BBC's visions and missions), and then connects these with the patterns found in the textual analysis.

In analyzing the news discourse of BBC and CNN using Teun A. van Dijk's meso-level framework of social cognition, it becomes clear that both media institutions are shaped by distinct values, experiences, and ideologies that influence their portrayal of the Gaza-Israel conflict, particularly through the word "airstrike." The BBC reflects its values of impartiality, public service, and balance by often using neutral structures and attributive reporting, such as quoting both Hamas and Israeli sources, which aligns with its mission to inform and educate without bias. Meanwhile, CNN shows a stronger emphasis on humanitarian concern, urgency, and emotional resonance, frequently highlighting civilian casualties, children, and schools, in line with its mission to engage and empower global audiences through impactful journalism. These reporting styles are influenced by each outlet's institutional experience BBC's tradition of public broadcasting and editorial restraint versus CNN's live, real-time crisis reporting model and reveal the underlying ideologies of balanced public service versus human-centered advocacy. The individual meanings constructed by journalists also differ; BBC reporters tend to frame events cautiously and objectively, while CNN reporters frame them in a way that amplifies victim perspectives and moral urgency, indicating different cognitive and ideological approaches to the same conflict.

4.2.2 Social Context Analysis

This section presents the social context analysis of war-related terms, particularly the word “airstrike”, in news reports from BBC and CNN using Teun A. van Dijk’s macro-level framework. At this level, discourse is examined within broader societal structures, including political power, historical conflict, and social ideologies.

The dominant theme found in the news articles from both BBC and CNN is the humanitarian crisis and civilian casualties resulting from Israeli airstrikes in Gaza. Terms like “children killed,” “mosque and school hit,” and “Gaza in rubble” reflect how the conflict is framed not only as a military operation but also as a tragedy affecting civilians. This theme highlights the destruction of infrastructure, the death of non-combatants, and the disruption of daily life in Gaza, according to CNN report in C6S4 line (10) “The deadly Israeli airstrike on Beit Lahiya is “ the reality for children and families in Gaza every single day,”. These news articles do not simply report isolated incidents but illustrate an ongoing narrative of suffering, displacement, and moral urgency (a sense of immediate moral responsibility). Linguistically, both media outlets use emotionally impactful terms to construct powerful images of vulnerability, especially when reporting on attacks that struck humanitarian zones or schools. In this way, the media reporting does not only deliver the facts, it invites readers to emotionally engage with the reality of the conflict.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings from the micro-level analysis revealed that the term “airstrike” is most frequently collocated with words such as “Israeli,” “military,” “deadly,” “civilian,” “retaliatory,” “killed,” and “residential.” These collocates highlight the central actors (e.g., Israeli military), the nature of the strike (e.g., deadly, targeted), and its human impact (e.g., civilians, injured, killed). Both CNN and BBC commonly use these terms, but CNN tends to foreground humanitarian consequences more explicitly, using emotionally charged language and emphasizing civilian suffering, especially children and aid workers. BBC, in contrast, demonstrates more neutral syntactic framing, using passive voice and hedging devices to maintain institutional objectivity.

The findings demonstrate that the term “airstrike” carries strong negative semantic prosody in both news sources, reinforcing narratives of destruction and civilian suffering. This research confirms that language in media discourse is mostly not neutral. The repeated use of specific lexical patterns, narrative structures, and collocational framing reflects deeper ideological positions and contributes to the construction of public understanding about war. Through the integration of corpus linguistics and CDA, this research demonstrates how a single term like “airstrike” can become a powerful tool in constructing meaning, asserting power, and shaping collective memory in times of conflict. This research also emphasizes the importance of critical media literacy to recognize how language subtly influences thought, bias, and ideological alignment in global news coverage.

Therefore, the media's role is not limited to delivering information but extends to constructing reality. In the case of Gaza and Israel, the “war” is fought not only with weapons but also with words, and how those words are used determines what the world chooses to see and ignore.

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