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The Representation of Gaza's Humanitarian Crisis in the BBC News Report: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Article Info

Abstract
This paper applies critical discourse analysis (CDA)theories to media discourse. The researcher selects the humanitarian crisis in Gaze after the 7 October Palestinian attack on Israel and how Israel responded aggressively. A few studies have applied critical discourse theories to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Kandil (2009) studies Corpus-Based Critical Discourse Analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in Arab, British, and American Media. On the other hand, Yasmin Aldadah (2018) wrote her M.A. thesis about the Jerusalem Conflict on BBC and AJE. Ahmed and Hussain (2022) and Raza, Hakimi, and Malik (2023) also study the Israel-Palestine conflict. However, none of the studies examines the Israel-Palestine conflict after the 7 October 2023 attacks and its massive effect on innocent women and children in Gaze. Moreover, this study aims to investigate BBC news reports depicting this humanitarian crisis according to Wodak's (2001; 2009) *discourse-historical approach* and van Leeuwen's (2008) *sociological representation of social actors* to fill this gap in the study. The selected news report is analyzed at two levels: linguistic and ideological. The researchers conclude that political Discourse dramatically affects the lives of innocent women and children. This paper addresses the following research questions:

- What macro-topics are associated with representing Gaza's humanitarian crisis in the BBC News report?
- What micro-strategies and categories are associated with representing Gaza's humanitarian crisis in the BBC News report?
- How do macro-topics and micro-strategies uncover the ideology of the participant?

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Introduction

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a field that analyzes spoken and written texts. CDA shows the digressive sources of dominance and power. It observes how these digressive sources are reproduced within historical, political, and social contexts (Rogti, 2019, p.3332) [13].

The term "discourse" dates back to the 14th century. It is derived from the Latin word "discursus," which means a "conversation." (Mahmood & Majeed, 2019, p.68) [11]. According to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2001: 388), Discourse is "a serious speech or piece of writing on a particular subject." Stubbs (1983, p. 1) [14] states that Discourse is "language above the sentence or above the clause" and that "the study of discourse is the study of any aspect of language use." Meanwhile, Fairclough argues that "discourse constitutes three dimensions of society: knowledge, social relations, and social identity – and these correspond respectively to three major functions of language … Discourse is shaped by relations of power and invested ideologies" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 8) [3].

Later, it was used by "critical linguists". Critical Linguistics (CL) is founded by J. H. Thompson (1984) and the Frankfurt School.

Wodak (2001) [16] states that using Discourse and language can lead to constructing social actions that explain systematic analysis. Hodges & Nilep (2007) [6] view the term "critical" in discourse analysis as "implying a broad understanding of critical scholarship" (p.04). Critical Discourse Analysis is also driven by a critical theory of language that studies language's use as a form of social practice (Rogti, 2019, p.3332) [13].

Moreover, the main idea of CDA was developed by post-modernist and Neo-Marxist social theories, with Pecheux (1975) and Foucault (1972), who introduced the relation of Discourse with ideology. It became the primary device by which ideology is reproduced (Rogti, 2019, p.3332) [13].

Fairclough (1993) [4] defined CDA as an application of discourse analysis that studies structural relationships among power, dominance, control, hidden agendas, ideology, and power abuse. (Yasa, 2018; Yasa, 2020, p.33) [19, 20]. Generally, discourse-based methods can study the social and humanities sciences that may be used in CDA research. CDA does not limit its analysis to precise structures of talk or text but analytically relates these to the sociopolitical context. CDA is used to study rhetoric in political speech acts and other forms of speech that impress and manipulate the audience. (Hossain, 2022, p. 438) [7].

Fairclough & Wodak (1997) [5] set up the following eight basic principles of CDA as follows: (i) CDA studies social problems; (ii) power relations are discursive; (iii) discourse establishes culture and Society; (iv) discourse does ideological work; (v) discourse is historical; (vi) the connection between Society and text is mediated; (vii) DA is explanatory and interpretative; (viii) discourse is a form of social action (cf. Van Dijk, 1995:353; Jahedi, Abdullah & Mukundan, 2014:29; Hossain, 2022, p. 438) [15, 8, 7].

CDA has also been applied to advertisement texts, media studies, heritage language, English language teaching, and environmental and socialization sciences (Hossain, 2022, p. 438) [7]. CDA is a qualitative approach for critically explaining, interpreting, and describing how discourses maintain, legitimize, and construct social inequalities. CDA believes that the use of language is purposeful, regardless of whether our words are chosen consciously or unconsciously (Hossain, 2022, p. 438) [7]. Thus, critical discourse analysis is a theory and methodology used to examine hidden agendas (Zabihi, 2011: 8).

2. Methodology and Data Analysis
This section outlines the analysis of the selected new report from the BBC entitled " Gaza aid ship expected to sail from Cyprus." The researcher examines this news report by adopting Wodak's (2001; 2009) [17] discourse-historical approach and van Leeuwen's (1996; 2008) [16] sociological categories of actor representation. Each sentence in a news report is studied according to two levels: linguistic and ideological. At the linguistic level, there are two levels of analysis: the first level analyses the macro-topics, and the second level deals with the micro level of analysis, including the referential and predictional strategies, with the amalgamation of the categories used to identify these strategies.

2.1 Macro-level analysis
Discourse topics were identified and analyzed at the macro-level analysis, as shown below.

2.1.1 Discourse Topics
An overview of the discourse topics or contents of the selected news reports is provided, along with arguments constructed around specific topics. This aligns with Wodak's (2006, p. 74) [18] view that "topoi or loci can be described as parts of argumentation which belong to the obligatory, either explicit or inferable premises." Thus, the researcher highlights the central topoi that refer to the representation of social actors, as discussed below with examples.

Topoi of War and Death
1. "Obtaining aid in the Gaza Strip has been increasingly complex and dangerous".
2. "complete chaos and violence"
3. "Israeli military launched an air and ground campaign in the Gaza Strip after Hamas's attacks on Israel on 7 October,"
4. "in which about 1,200 people were killed and 253 others were taken hostage".
5. "More than 30,800 people have been killed in Gaza since then".
6. "The conflict has created a growing humanitarian crisis, and the U.N. has warned that famine in Gaza is 'almost inevitable'".
7. "At least 576,000 people across the Gaza Strip—one quarter of the population - are facing catastrophic levels of food insecurity"
8. "one in six children under the age of two in the north are suffering from acute malnutrition,"
9. "on the brink of famine, and children are starving to death."
10. "They are already dying from malnutrition, and saving their lives is a matter of hours or days - not weeks,"

Israel launched a devastating attack on the Gaza Strip as a reaction to Hamas's attacks on Israel on 7 October. This was the beginning of an awful war. During Hamas's attacks "about 1,200 people were killed, and 253 others were taken hostage." While Israel's attacks caused the death of more than "30,800 people," the majority of them were women and children. This conflict has created a vast humanitarian crisis, as many hospitals were bombed by Israeli air and ground attacks, and no food was allowed to enter the Strip for months. The U.N. states that a "famine in Gaza" is almost inevitable, as in (6). More than a quarter of the population is facing "catastrophic levels of food insecurity," which means 576,000 people are going to die from the lack of food, regardless of the war victims. In the north of the Gaza Strip, one in every six children under the age of two suffers from acute malnutrition, as seen in (7, 8, 9, and 10).

Topoi of Help
1. "Gaza aid ships are expected to set sail from Cyprus".
2. "A ship carrying desperately needed humanitarian aid is expected to set sail this weekend, bound for Gaza".
3. "loaded with 200 tonnes of food provided by U.S. charity World Central Kitchen,"
4. "from the World Central Kitchen has been building a pier to receive the aid, he said. The group has 60 kitchens throughout Gaza, where it will be able to distribute the food."
5. "After President Joe Biden announced that the U.S. plans to build a temporary floating port to Gaza's shoreline."
6. "several nations have turned to air drops, but the

situation in Gaza is so dire," After this humanitarian crisis has continued for months, some countries started sending food. Charity World Central Kitchen sent 200 tons of food. This food is expected to arrive by ship from Cyprus. American President Joe Biden stated that the United States plans to "build a temporary floating port to Gaza's shoreline" to make it easy to deliver food to Gaze. The U.S. charity World Central Kitchen announced that it had set up more than "60 kitchens throughout Gaza" to help distribute food, water, and vital supplies to Palestinian civilians. However, several countries tend to deliver food in airdrops, and the situation is still heartbreaking.

Topoi of Struggle
1. "With no functioning port and shallow waters, it is still unclear where the ship will dock when it reaches Gaza."
2. "the most complicated operation",
3. "With land deliveries near impossible"
4. "that five people had been killed by a falling aid package,"

Many difficulties are faced in delivering food to Palestine, aside from it being a war zone, which makes it "the most complicated operation" for delivering human aid. Gaze was isolated from the world, and providing food through the sea was another problem as there was no functioning port, and the waters were shallow. It is uncertain where the ship will dock, as seen in (1), which makes this delivery "the most complicated operation." Moreover, because Gaze is a war zone, this makes land "deliveries near impossible"; thus, some countries tend to deliver medical, food, water, and other humanitarian aid through airdrops, which results in another tragedy as five people dead because of "a falling aid package" as its parachute failed to open appropriately as seen in (4)

2.2 Micro-Level Analysis
Discourse topics are identified and analyzed at the micro-level analysis, as shown below.

2.2.1 Referential Strategy
Generalization
1. "A ship carrying desperately needed humanitarian aid"
2. "The Spanish vessel, Open Arms, is scheduled to depart from Cyprus"
3. "it is still unclear where the ship will dock when it reaches Gaza."
4. "The U.N. says a quarter of the Strip's population is on the brink of famine and children are starving to death."
5. "The ship is expected to reach Gaza in the next few days,"
6. "belongs to the Spanish charity of the same name, Open Arms."
7. "The ship is expected to depart Cyprus' Larnaca port this weekend,"
8. "He added that the final mile of the journey"
9. "President Joe Biden announced that the U.S. plans to build a temporary floating port to Gaza's shoreline."
10. "The port will be able to receive large ships carrying food, water, medicine and temporary shelters,"
11. "children there "cannot wait" for the time it may take to build a temporary port to eat."
12. "Doctors Without Borders said the U.S. plan for a temporary pier …"

In his book "Discourse and Practice," van Leeuwen (2008:36) states that generalization may be "realized by the plural without an article or by the singular with a definite or indefinite article." According to the above extracts, the article is generalized using singulars with an indefinite article, "A ship," referring to a ship carrying humanitarian aid to Gaze. In (2), the reporter refers to the same boat by another generalization using singular with the definite article "The Spanish vessel," "the Spanish charity," and "the ship in (3,5, and 7). In extract (4), there are two different generalizations, "The U.N." is generalization via using singular with a definite article, and "children" which is plural without an article. In addition, extracts (8,9 and 10) are generalization by using singular with a definite article. However, "children" and "Doctors Without Borders" are generalizations that use plural without any article.

Assimilation
1. "carrying food provided by U.S. charity World Central Kitchen"
2. "a team from the World Central Kitchen has been building a pier to receive the aid"
3. "The group has 60 kitchens throughout Gaza, where it will be able to distribute the food."
4. "World Central Kitchen said its team had been waiting for a sea corridor to open to be able to scale up its efforts in Gaza"
5. "World Central Kitchen said it had been preparing for the aid trip for weeks, waiting for the shipping route to open."

Van Leeuwen (2008) states, "Individualization is realized by singularity and assimilation by plurality" (p. 37). Assimilation may be understood by a mass noun or a noun denoting a group of people (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 37). Thus, all the above underlines "U.S. charity World Central Kitchen,"" a team from the World Central Kitchen," and "World Central Kitchen" are assimilation as they are all nouns representing a group of people.

Individuality and Nomination
1. "It will tow a barge loaded with 200 tonnes of food provided by U.S. charity World Central Kitchen, Open Arms founder *Oscar Camps* told the Associated Press".
2. "The ship is expected to depart Cyprus' Larnaca port this weekend, and will take around two to three days to reach an undisclosed location off the coast of Gaza, *Mr Camps* told the news agency."
3. "The maritime corridor was announced by European Commission chief *Ursula von der Leyen* on Friday while she was in Cyprus".
4. "*President Joe Biden* announced that the U.S. plans to build a temporary floating port to Gaza's shoreline".
5. "It is unclear whether, or how, the U.S.' temporary pier and the E.U.'s sea corridor will work together, as neither *Mr Biden* nor *Ms Von der Leyen* mentioned the other's plans".

Van Leeuwen (1996, p.53) [14] mentions three types of nomination, first, *formal nomination* (surname only with or without honorific), second, *semi-formal* (given name and surname), third, *informal nomination* (given name only)

(Amerian & Fateme, 2015, p.91). In extract (1), the reporter introduces "Open Arms founder Oscar Camps" using a semi-formal nomination as the reporter uses first and given names. The reporter also uses honerification, which is when one adds ranks and titles of the participant; here is "Open Arms founder." Later, the reporter refers to the same individual again using "Mr. Camps," as seen in (2), which is a formal nomination with verification "Mr." Another individual is "President Joe Biden," which is a semi-formal nomination via using a given name and surname with honerification as the reporter introduces his rank and "President." Later, the reporter refers to him as "Mr Biden," a formal nomination with honerification, as seen in extract (5). In (3), the reporter uses *semi-formal* (given name and surname) "Ursula von der Leyen" with her title as honerification "European Commission chief". Lastly, the reporter also refers to her as "Ms. Von der Leyen" in extract (5), which is again *semi-formal* with honerification yet this time, her title stands for her gender "Ms" rather than her job as in the former mention.

Aggregation
1. "It will tow a barge loaded with 200 tonnes of food provided by U.S. charity World Central Kitchen, Open Arms founder Oscar Camps told the Associated Press."
2. "will take around two to three days to reach an undisclosed location off the coast of Gaza,"
3. "He added that the final mile of the journey - which is about 216 nautical miles in total."
4. "The group has 60 kitchens throughout Gaza, where it will be able to distribute the food."
5. "Our tugboat stands prepared to embark at a moment's notice, laden with tons of food, water, and vital supplies for Palestinian civilians."
6. "The Pentagon later said it would take up to 60 days to complete and need about 1,000 troops to build - none of whom would go ashore."
7. "A Pentagon spokesman said the pier could help to deliver up to 2 million meals every day."
8. "And on Friday, there were reports that five people had beenkilled by a falling aid package,"
9. "Israel on 7 October, in which about 1,200 people were killed and 253 others were taken hostage."
10. "More than 30,800 people have been killed in Gaza since then, the territory's Hamas-run health ministry says."
11. "At least 576,000 people across the Gaza Strip - one quarter of the population"
12. "are facing catastrophic levels of food insecurity, and one in six children under the age of two in the north are suffering from acute malnutrition, a senior U.N. aid official warned last week."

Open Arms founder Oscar Camps promises that "200 tonnes of food" is prepared by World Central Kitchen. This is a numerical aggregation. To deliver the food from Cyprus to Gaze, the food is expected to reach "around two to three days." This is aggregation by using the quantifier "around." The journey will take a long time as the distance between Cyprus and Gaze is "216 nautical miles". This exact number is numerical aggregation. However, to help distribute the food, World Central Kitchen has set "60 kitchens throughout Gaza" as a numerical aggregation, mentioning the exact number. The delivery will contain "tons of food, water, and vital supplies." This is a statistical aggregation, as the precise number is not mentioned.

Joe Biden stated that the U.S. aims to build a temporary port to help deliver food for Gaze. Accordingly, the Pentagon states that it will take "up to 60 days" and "about 1,000 troops" to build the port, which is statistical aggregations. However, with this port, it is possible to deliver "up to 2 million meals every day", which is again statistical aggregations. When some countries use airdrops to provide humanitarian aid, some fall on people; thus, " five people had been killed by a falling aid package," and this is a numerical aggregation as the reporter mentioned the exact number. Later, the reporter gives a quick flashback of how this conflict started. It started on "7 October" when Hamas launched attacks on Israel in which "1,200 people" were killed and "253 others" were taken hostage". Thus, Israel has reacted aggressively by killing "30,800 people" so far, among them many children and women. Israel also launched a Complete siege on Gaze, preventing any food, water, or even medical supplies from entering the Strip. The situation is entirely chaotic and violent, with Israel bombing everything, even hospitals.it is altogether catastrophic, with more than "576,000 people" and "one quarter of the population" across the Gaza Strip dying from hunger. The numbers (9, 10, 11, and 12) are all numerical aggregation by giving the exact number.

3. Conclusion
This paper examines the depiction of the humanitarian crisis in Gaze according to a critical discourse study. The researcher selected Wodak's (2001; 2009) [17] discourse-historical approach and van Leeuwen's (2008) sociological representation of social actors to examine whether political Discourse can affect people's lives. Thus, the analysis shows that political Discourse significantly affects innocent people's lives as Israel launched awful attacks for months on Gaze and prevented any food, water, and medical supplies from entering the Strip. The study also concludes the macro-topics are represented mainly in topoi of war and death, topoi of help, and topi of struggle. The researcher answers the second research question that micro-strategies and categories that are associated with the representation of events mainly using genericization, Assimilation via using massive nouns, Individuality, and Nomination with formal and semi-formal nomination only, and lastly, aggregation via both numerical aggregation, statistical aggregation, and aggregation by using different quantifiers.

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