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**A MULTIMODAL CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF
ARAB AND WESTERN MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS
OF CHILDREN IN GAZA**

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For the Master's Degree in Linguistics**

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Dedication

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Abstract

The present research investigates children's representation in the Gaza Strip in selected Arab and Western media through the lens of multimodal critical discourse analysis. This study addresses the lack of critical research concerning how children are symbolically portrayed in conflict coverage and represented through linguistic and visual elements. Six media sources are examined for this study: three from Arab outlets (Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, Arab News) and three from Western outlets (BBC News, The Guardian, The New Yorker), based on the theoretical framework established by Machin and Mayr (2012). The study highlights important linguistic components such as word connotation, overlexicalization, suppression/lexical absence, and structural opposition, followed by visual components like iconography, attributes, settings, and salience. The findings indicate that both types of media portray children as victims of war; however, there are differences in their framing styles and ideological implications. Arab media depict children in narratives that emphasize their survival, resilience, education, and the intervention of humanitarian aid, accompanied by appropriate images. In contrast, Western media often emphasizes immediate urgency and distressing trauma, as well as emotional hardship, frequently employing sensational and dramatic language along with impactful visuals. These differences illustrate ideological positions and audience expectations, underscoring the influence of cultural and political contexts on media discourse. This research contributes to the fields of media and discourse analysis through a comprehensive comparison of child representation in conflict reporting. The study concludes by suggesting that the media should adopt more ethical practices and calls for further research to be conducted on the portrayal of vulnerable groups in global journalism.

Keywords: Arab and Western Media, Children in Gaza, Ideologies, Linguistic and Visual Strategies, Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis.

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List of Abbreviations.

CL: Critical Linguistics.

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis.

SFL: Systemic functional language.

MDA: Multimodal Discourse Analysis.

MCDA: Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis.

PTSD: post-traumatic stress disorder.

CNN: Cable News Network.

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation.

UNRWA: United Nations Relief and Workers Agency.

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

USA: United State.

General Introduction

1. Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the longest and most enduring conflicts in modern history. Its influence extends far beyond territorial disputes and political negotiations, affecting the daily lives of millions of people (Hopenfeld, 1991). This is increasingly evident in Gaza, where years of blockade, war, and displacement have led to a long-standing humanitarian crisis. Children are among the most vulnerable victims of this conflict, suffering from war trauma, displacement from their homes and families, the collapse of the education system, and constantly living under the threat of danger (Hein et al., 1993). These children are not only affected physically but are also often the focus of intense international media attention as symbols of suffering, innocence, and resilience. However, the portrayal of children in the media is rarely neutral or straightforward. These representations are shaped through specific linguistic and visual choices that influence how readers and viewers interpret the conflict. In today's fast-paced and image-rich media environment, news reports do more than merely inform. They establish narratives, provoke emotions, and shape public perceptions, particularly during a conflict (Machin&Mayr, 2012). Images of children in conflict zones tend to evoke strong emotional responses, capturing international attention and sympathy. At the same time, these depictions can also be manipulated to serve particular political objectives, justify military intervention, and reinforce ideological perspectives (Jamaluddine et al., 2025). The visual and linguistic portrayal of children in conflict zones carries deeper cultural, political, and moral implications. Thus, the media creates a significant space where meaning is produced, and the image of the child victim can be utilized for various purposes.

Despite the importance of children in the media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there is a notable absence of critical research that analyzes their portrayal,

particularly through texts and images. Most media and conflict analyses focus on political framing, one-sidedness, and power relations while ignoring how children are portrayed. Also, existing studies rarely take a comparative method across different media outlets, e.g., Arabic and Western, or even debates how imagery and language together construct meaning. This introduces a gap in the literature that this study aims to fill. Understanding how children are represented in media goes beyond mere headlines or images; it is to uncover how societies tell stories of innocence, vulnerability, blame, and justice.

This research examines the portrayal of children who live in Gaza in the selected Arab and Western media news through the framework of a multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA). Based on the examination of the linguistic and visual resources of the selected media outlets, this study aims to explore the construction of narratives, the ideologies they transmit, and the impact of cultural context on these representations. It is based on the framework developed by Machin and Mayr (2012) media text analysis, which enables for a qualitative analysis between language and images in the transmission of messages.

2. Statement of the Problem

The media's role in conflict reporting is significant in influencing public perception and international responses. Children, particularly those in conflict areas like Gaza, are often portrayed as powerful visual and emotional symbols. Despite their frequent appearance in news coverage, there has been a lack of critical research on how Palestinian children are visually and linguistically represented. The current research problem stems from a lack of comprehensive understanding of the differences in how children in Gaza are portrayed by Arab and Western media. Both types of media depict children, and these portrayals can differ greatly due to cultural, political, and ideological influences. As a result, this study seeks to examine how the selected media sources maintain various ideologies regarding the representation of children in this conflict.

3. Aim of the Study

This study has three primary objectives. The first objective is to analyze the portrayal of children in the Gaza Strip in a selection of Arab and Western media in terms of language, imagery, and narratives, utilizing Machin and Mayr's (2012) multimodal critical discourse analysis framework. The second objective is to examine the differences and similarities in how children in Gaza are depicted by both Arab and Western media outlets. Finally, the third objective is to demonstrate the conveyed ideologies of textual and visual elements used by media outlets about children in Gaza.

4. The Research Questions

This study is conducted to seek answers to the following research questions:

1. How do Arab and Western media represent children in Gaza regarding language, imagery, and narratives?
2. What are the key similarities and differences in the representations of children in Gaza by Western and Arab media?
3. What are the conveyed ideologies of both textual and visual components used by media outlets to depict children in Gaza?

5. Research Methodology

To achieve the objectives of the study, a qualitative research approach was utilized, with Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) being employed as the main analytical framework. This approach allows for an in-depth examination of both language and visuals in order to understand the construction of media messages. The data include six media articles: three sourced from Arab media platforms (Al Jazeera 2014, Al Arabiya 2024, Arab News 2025) and three from Western outlets (The New Yorker 2014, The Guardian 2024, BBC News 2025). Each article consists of written text and images depicting children within the

context of the war in Gaza. These selected texts were examined based on Machin and Mayr's (2012) framework, emphasizing specific linguistic choices (word connotation, overlexicalisation, suppression or lexical absence, structural opposition) and visual components (iconography attributes, settings, and salience). This approach is used to identify the underlying ideologies and framing strategies adopted by the media when portraying children during times of war.

6. Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it looks closely at how children in Gaza are represented in the media, specifically during times of war. While news media frequently include children in their coverage, there have been a few studies conducted to examine how the language and images of these reports impact the manner people understand the conflict. The present research highlights the importance of utilizing a multimodal critical approach that extends beyond written discourse to incorporate visual elements to construct meaning. The latter allows for an exploration of how various cultural and political contexts influence the portrayal of children. Additionally, it illustrates how the integration of language and imagery operates to create powerful messages that shape public perceptions. Moreover, this research study provides a valuable contribution to the field of media and discourse through its focused analysis of the portrayal of children, a topic that is frequently depicted but rarely subjected to critical examination. Furthermore, the results of this study can assist journalists and media organizations about the influence of their choices, to reflect on the ethical considerations of their reporting, especially when dealing with vulnerable populations like children during humanitarian crises. This study promotes an informed and ethical practice of reporting in the media, emphasizing the significant role that the media plays in shaping public perception of humanitarian issues and its potential to affect international responses and foster empathy.

7. Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is structured with a general introduction, two main chapters, and a general conclusion. Each chapter is further divided into sections and sub-sections to facilitate a systematic and cohesive development of the research.

The thesis begins with a general introduction that explains the study's background, highlights the research issue, defines the aim of the study, research questions, methodology, and gives an outline of the thesis structure. The first chapter demonstrates the theoretical framework of the study and is divided into three main sections. The first section provides an understanding of media discourse. This section also illustrates the media representation and its role in shaping public perception, particularly in conflict zones. The second section traces the historical development of multimodal critical, focusing on Machin and Mayr's (2012) framework. The third section examines the selection of previous related studies. Moreover, the second chapter focuses on the practical application of the theoretical framework and is divided into three sections. The first section presents the study's methodology, followed by the second section, which is devoted to analyzing the selected Arab and Western media reports through a multimodal discourse analysis perspective. The third section summarizes and discusses the main findings obtained from the analysis. The thesis concludes with a general conclusion that summarizes the main insights gained from the research and highlights its contributions. It also discusses the study's limitations, offers suggestions for future research.

Chapter One: Review of the Literature

1.1. Introduction

The present chapter consists of three interrelated sections. The first introduces media representation and its role in shaping public perception. The second section provides an overview of Machin and Mayr's framework of how visual and linguistic elements collaborate to shape media representation. Finally, the third section includes a selection of previous studies related to the research topic.

1.2. Section One: Introduction to Media Discourse

This section focuses mainly on introducing discourse and media. The latter follows a theoretical understanding of ideology, power, and media construction of reality in general. Additionally, it outlines the influence of media on public perception in conflict contexts. Moreover, it includes a brief examination of media coverage in conflict zones, focusing on both Arab and Western perspectives.

1.2.1. Discourse

Discourse is a fundamental concept in linguistics, which refers to language in use, either spoken or written, that is structured according to social and communicative contexts (Brown & Yule, 1983). That is to say, the term discourse points to a particular style of communication, often associated with public speeches or, more broadly, to spoken language and its various forms (Dijk, 1997).

Discourse is like a conversation; it uses language to share thoughts, knowledge, and ideas. To be called discourse, a piece of writing needs to be more than just a sentence. It needs to be longer and have a clear goal and meaningful meaning (Kramer, 2024).

1.2.2. Defining Media

Media is a complex concept encompassing various communication outlets to store, deliver, and disseminate information to the public (Haghshenas, 2017). It includes traditional forms like print, radio, and television, as well as newer digital platforms. Media serve multiple functions, including informing, educating, and entertaining society (Mughal, 2011). That is to say, the media is similar to a teacher because it teaches and provides individuals with information. It also functions like a storyteller by relating experiences, incidents, and stories. It can also be seen as a friend because the media provide a sense of belongingness, especially when people see their own lives being reflected in it.

According to Devereux (2007), most media scholars believe that media texts articulate ways of seeing the world, even if those perspectives shift. These texts help to define the world and provide models for appropriate behavior and attitudes.

1.2.3. Media Discourse

Media discourse or media texts refer to all forms of content produced by media organizations. This includes newspapers, television programs, websites, and social media posts (Tavadze et al., 2024). This form of discourse is a powerful force that shapes society's values and public thinking over time (Shesterina et al., 2024). In other terms, media discourse is about how language, images, and other methods of communication are used in the media to create meaning, shape public opinion, and influence social norms. In this context, people need to think critically about the media they consume to detect any biases or hidden messages the news might contain (Farkhodovna, 2023). In short, the different forms of media discourse, namely articles, movies, or the internet, can shape how human beings perceive the world and what they hold as beliefs. Therefore, individuals should closely study such media messages and reflect on any hidden ideas or assumptions they may contain.

As O'Keeffe (2011) notes, media discourse goes beyond just conveying information; it involves uncovering the hidden ideologies, opinions, and meanings. It also, serves as a crucial indicator of common and widespread political, social, and cultural trends. Thus, understanding media discourse is essential for critically evaluating the information presented.

News media, as a specific form of discourse, do not simply reflect reality. It is a constructed narrative that reveals the ideology of the reporter, not just the importance of the events (Burak, 2018). In addition to that, the News is not just a mirror showing what is happening. It is a story told by reporters that reflects beliefs, not just the facts. In short, media discourse is important as it helps shape how people view the world around them.

1.2.4. Ideology, Power Dynamics, and the Construction of Reality

1.2.4.1. What is ideology?

The concept of ideology is a central aspect in the field of critical discourse analysis. It came via the French philosopher Destutt de Tracy during the early 1800s. Even though it was at one time connected to Karl Marx, its meaning has changed. Initially, ideology was viewed as a tool that was used by several powerful groups to control multiple less powerful ones. Currently, it is understood quite broadly as including multiple belief systems held by people as well as groups (Machin&Mayr,2012). In other words, ideology is a complex word that means a set of beliefs that people have or share.

According to Althusser (2006), ideology is a system of representations that have a historical existence and a special role in a given society. That is to say, ideology is a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that shape how people understand the world and their place in it, influence thoughts, actions, and how people interpret events.

In this regard, Devereux (2007) reported that scholars analyze media products to understand their ideology, which is a system of meaning that defines and explains the world and makes

value judgments. As a matter of fact, ideology is not just about politics but also encompasses worldview, belief system, and values. The key is the interplay between images and words in a text and social and cultural issues. That is to say, ideological analysis of media is not just looking at what is on the surface, but to understand the deeper meanings and beliefs that are woven into the stories, images, and words. Therefore, media analysis aims to uncover how media constructs and reinforces specific perspectives on society, culture, and social issues.

According to Media-Studies.com (2022), media studies often examine how the media represent gender, race, and social class, exploring the cultural ideologies placed within these representations. Dominant ideologies are reinforced through common interpretations of media, but new ideologies can gain acceptance and become normalized through their repeated appearance in various media platforms.

In short, ideology in media discourse refers to interest-linked perspectives that legitimize the views of particular social groups (Philo, 2007). Media is not neutral, as ideologies play a vital role in shaping societal attitudes and propagating specific interests. Language in media discourse represents different ideologies, with lexical choices constructing particular ideological stances (Nawaz et al., 2013). This demonstrates how media discourse can become a tool for ideological transmission, influencing societal changes.

1.2.4.2. What is Power and Power Dynamics?

The terms power and power dynamics are two interrelated concepts that are central to the field of media discourse. They both describe the innate power relations and effects that exist between people and groups in a particular setting. These two concepts differ subtly, despite their apparent similarity. On the one hand, power is the ability to do and obtain what one desires. It can also be defined as the capacity to affect or dictate outcomes in various contexts. It involves the ability to influence decisions, behaviors, and perceptions, whether on an

individual or societal level (Cleary et al., 2019). This can manifest in different forms, such as political power, economic power, or social influence. On the other hand, power dynamics explores more complex areas of influence, dominance, privilege, and communication styles than just authority or control (Hecker & Kalpokas, 2023). It is defined as the science and analysis of power negotiation among people and groups, as well as the strategies that help to achieve objectives (Buffalmano, 2024). This concept indicates the relationships that exist between people in an organization (Cogar, 2024). That is to say, it refers to the degree of influence or control one person, or group of people, can exercise over another person or group of people.

According to Wodak and Meyer (2009), understanding power is crucial for analyzing news discourse, as it reveals the unequal power dynamics at play. In fact, media representations cannot be fully grasped without considering power structures. This stems from the fact that media representations are deeply connected to the issues of ideology and power; the way meaning is assigned to events reveals the existence of multiple, often conflicting, perspectives on reality (Burak, 2018). Language itself reflects power, and its use becomes particularly evident in situations where power is contested or challenged. That is to say, power is a fundamental concept in understanding how news is created and consumed. News discourse reflects the power dynamics within society, highlighting the inequalities that exist.

1.2.4.3. Construction of Reality (Public Perceptions)

Fairclough (1995) believes that new media have the strength to affect people's knowledge, beliefs, values, social relations, and identities. In this sense, the media's influence extends beyond shaping public discourse to impacting the language used within a speech community. By popularizing certain terms and expressions, the media can influence the way individuals think and communicate. According to Liao (2023), achieving altruistic behavior among the

audience depends on whether they perceive the news from the media positively or negatively. The fact that the audience shows behavior that either supports or does not support altruism depends on their perceptions and attitudes toward the positive and negative impacts of mass media news.

For Kumar (2023), the media, with its wide reach, can amplify certain issues, highlight specific viewpoints, and often direct the conversation in a particular direction. This means the media does not just inform, it also influences the way people perceive the world around them. Kumar (2023) added that media hold a dual role when it comes to public opinion. On one hand, it articulates and reflects public sentiments, often giving voice to a range of perspectives. On the other hand, it actively shapes and molds those opinions by framing issues, presenting specific narratives, and even determining which stories are worthy of attention. This dual role makes the media an essential player in the process of public discourse, acting as both a mirror and a shaper of society.

Liao (2023) illustrated that the media plays a significant role in shaping public perception and behavior by disseminating information, raising awareness, and educating people. It facilitates communication and provides insights into global issues, fostering altruistic behavior. The internet, television, and newspapers are the most common sources for information on international topics like climate change, natural disasters, and political issues. Media coverage is a major influence on people's understanding of these subjects, ultimately impacting their beliefs, opinions, and actions. The way people form opinions on a given issue, as well as what sorts of opinions they form, depends partly on their immediate situations, partly on more-general social-environmental factors, and partly on their preexisting knowledge, attitudes, and values (Davison & Phillips, 2025). In other words, people develop opinions on a specific issue, and the nature of those opinions is influenced by a combination of factors. These

include their current circumstances, the broader social context, and their pre-existing knowledge, beliefs, and values.

According to Kumar (2023), another foundational theory that explains media influence on public opinion is Agenda Setting. It is proposed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in the 1970s, posits that the media does not just tell people what to think; it tells them what to think about. In other words, the media have the power to prioritize certain issues by giving them more coverage, thereby influencing the public agenda. When a particular topic is highlighted repeatedly in the media, it becomes more salient in the minds of the public, making it appear more important and urgent than other issues. In the same context, Liao (2023) asserted that media coverage of lesser-known issues can impact the level of public concern for these matters, leading to increased attention from the public. In other words, media news can significantly shape people's attitudes. For instance, if news narratives consistently portray altruistic acts in a positive light, emphasizing the benefits and impact of helping others, it can foster more positive attitudes toward altruism in the audience. Nevertheless, if news often focuses on negative aspects of society or portrays altruism as ineffective or naive, it could lead to more negative attitudes and a reduced inclination to engage in altruistic behavior.

According to Davison and Phillips (2025), opinion leaders, especially political figures, have the power to shape public discourse. They can elevate a relatively unknown issue to national prominence by highlighting it in the media. This influence extends to individual opinions, as people often look to these leaders for guidance on important matters. That is to say, influential people, especially politicians, can make an issue important by talking about it in the news. This can affect what people think about that issue.

The following is a visual representation framework adapted from Liao (2023, p.8) to understand the influence of mass media news on altruistic behavior.

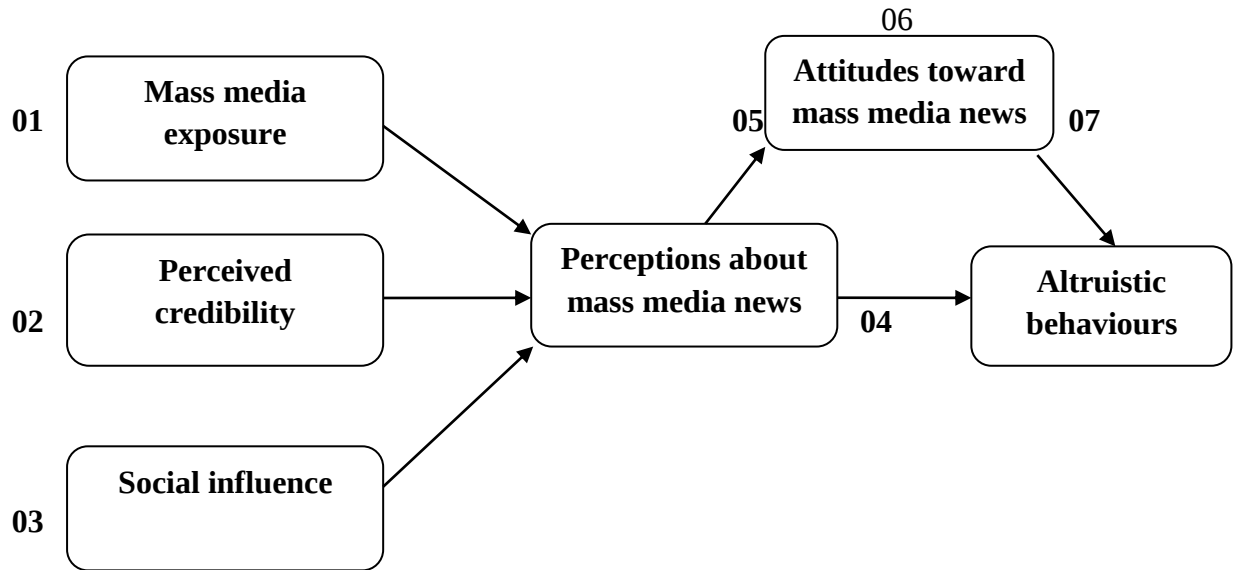


Figure 01:The influence of mass media news on altruistic behavior. *Adapted from Liao (2023, p. 8).*

Liao (2013) explained that the factors in the figure above are interrelated and impact how people react positively to media news. Factor 01 said that exposure to mass media positively relates to the increased positive perception of mass media. Factor 02 illustrated that the credibility of mass media (reliability and proficiency) positively relates to the public's positive perception of the mass media news. He added in factor 03 that social influence positively relates to public perceptions of mass media messages. In addition, factor 4 mentioned that perceptions of mass media news positively relate to altruistic behavior; to react and take action. Factor 05 included perceptions about mass media news that positively relate to attitudes toward mass media messages. Factor 06 stated that attitudes toward mass media news moderate the relationship between perceptions and altruistic behavior. Finally, the factor 07 introduced it as people's positive attitudes towards mass media news are positively associated with their altruistic behavior.

The most famous and well-known cases where media discourse has power, impact, and influence on public perception and constructs reality are in the circumstances of the conflict zones. Where there is pain, sorrow, tears, distress, grief, misery, heartbreak, desolation, and catastrophe. The media always took a look at his presence to report the news because they are the most sensitive information to gain people's hearts and affect their perception.

1.2.5. The Role of Media in Shaping Public Perception in Conflict Contexts

The media plays a significant role in shaping public perception during conflicts, often reflecting dominant discourses and framing news along official lines (Joseph, 2014). International media outlets like CNN and BBC have been criticized for employing biased frames in conflict coverage, potentially misleading public opinion (Waleed&Fadi, 2024). Media framing can influence international perceptions, as seen in Turkey, where nationalistic portrayals align with government narratives (Arslan, 2024). The mass media's impact on conflicts is complex, serving as both a constructive and destructive force. In sub-Saharan Africa, the media have been used for propaganda, regime defense, and transforming political interests into public concerns (Adeyanju, 2018). While establishing a direct causal relationship between media and violent conflicts is challenging, its influence on shaping perceptions in fragile environments is evident. The concept of peace journalism has emerged as an alternative to conventional conflict coverage (Joseph, 2014).

According to Al Makahleh (2023), it is impossible to ignore the psychological aspect of media narratives since they can influence the motivations and morale of the opposing sides. Media often shapes how people feel during conflicts by portraying one side as a hero and the other as a victim or aggressor. This kind of storytelling is a form of psychological warfare. It evokes emotional influence that can impact public opinion and international support. He added that media stories often obscure the line between reality and perception. It

becomes hard to make a difference between what is real and what is not. Governments and independent groups both shape these narratives to influence how people see the conflict. These narratives can deeply affect how the war is understood. That is to say that, to make sense of today's wars, it is important to look closely at the reasons behind these stories and how they are told.

According to ACLED (2025), Conflict zones are widespread across the globe, reflecting a complex landscape of ongoing and emerging conflicts. As an illustration, the Middle East, the region is marked by several intense conflicts, including the Israel-Palestine War, Iran, and Israel. Also, Eastern Europe as the Russia-Ukraine War, moreover Africa conflict zones in Sudan and the Sahel region.

The role of media in shaping public perception in conflict contexts depends on how media transform actors' claims and their ability to amplify content, as well as factors like media freedom, audience attitudes, conflict intensity, and involvement of external actors (Meyer et al., 2017). The relationship between communication and violent conflict has been a longstanding concern (Baden & Meyer, 2018). Across different regions, including the media-saturated West, the TV-dominated East, and radio-reliant African societies, researchers in media studies, communication, political science, and international relations have examined the significant role of media in conflict dynamics. In the same context, Singh (2024) affirmed that the media plays a significant role in shaping public perception of war by influencing how events are framed, perceived, and understood. Media significantly shape public perception of war by framing events, but their negative role through biased reporting, propaganda, misinformation, and selective coverage can fuel division and deepen conflicts, as seen in the Israel-Hamas war. It holds the power to both inform and manipulate.

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a controversial issue that has lasted for many decades. The events of this conflict have traveled beyond borders and into the minds and hearts of many worldwide and making people eager to understand what is happening between the two nations.

It is well recognized that this conflict, rooted in long-standing territorial, religious, and political disputes. The media plays a key role in shaping public opinion about it, especially when the issue is about children. The latter are the most innocent and the most affected ones. Such coverage underscores the media's power to frame the narrative and influence global discourse on the conflict.

1.2.6. Arab Media in Conflict Zones

Arab media in conflict zones refers to the various forms of news dissemination television, radio, newspapers, and digital platforms that operate within or report on areas experiencing armed conflicts, political turmoil, or socio-economic instability. According to Lahlali (2011), language in Arab media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and reflecting sociocultural values. He added that media discourse during conflicts serves not only to report on events but also to influence public attitudes and opinions, which can have significant implications for intergroup relations and international perceptions. According to AlAhmad (2024), Arab satellite television networks, including Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya, fulfil a dual function, providing news coverage while influencing political discourse in regions affected by conflict. Their coverage often reflects national interests. Particularly when covering conflicts in Syria, Palestine, and Yemen. This shows how Arabic media can guide public opinion through stories shaped by national and ideological viewpoints.

1.2.7. Western Media in Conflict Zones

Western media in conflict zones are news organizations from Western countries that report on wars and crises around the world. These include big names like the BBC, CNN, The New

York Times, and The Guardian, and they provide a global audience with information about conflicts, political problems, and humanitarian emergencies.

According to McCombs and Shaw (1972), media professionals, including editors and broadcasters, significantly influence public perception of politics by selecting and presenting news in a way that conveys importance and relevance; thereby, shaping readers' opinions and priorities. In other words, news organizations have a big influence on how people understand political events. The way editors and journalists choose and present news stories shapes public opinion. Readers not only learn about an issue, but they also learn how important it is, based on how much space it gets in a news story and where it is placed.

1.2.8. Origins of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict originated in the late Ottoman era and intensified during the British Mandate period (Fishman, 2020). It began as a struggle between two ethno-religious nationalisms competing for the same land, and the 1917 Balfour Declaration, supporting a Jewish national home in Palestine, further fueled tensions (Waldman, 2011). The conflict escalated with increased Jewish settlement and Palestinian resistance, leading to the 1948 War and Israel's establishment (Slater, 2020). The 1967 War resulted in Israel's occupation of additional territories, including the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Waldman, 2011). While some view the conflict as a tragedy with legitimate claims on both sides (Slater, 2020), others argue that a long-term solution must protect the legitimate interests of all parties involved (Hopenfeld, 1991). The conflict has evolved from an existential struggle to a border dispute, with efforts towards establishing a Palestinian state (Waldman, 2011). In this sense, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was provoked by the Zionist movement's quest to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine, which led to the displacement of Palestinians and the creation of the State of Israel with Western support. The conflict has continued since, marked by

numerous wars, occupations, and unresolved disputes over land, resources, and political rights, leading to cycles of violence.

1.2.9. Children in the Conflict Zone: Palestine-Gaza

The number of children living in conflict zones has steadily increased, almost doubling since the mid-1990s. Today, 19% of children worldwide live in conflict zones, up from 10% in the 1990s. Exposure to armed conflict has profound, long-lasting effects on children, with varying levels of intensity (Stop the War, on Children, n.d.). Moreover, every child, no matter where they live, deserves to live a safe, happy, and healthy life. However, right now, children who are living in conflict zones face extremely insecure and frighteningly challenging situations that can have a lasting impact on their lives. Over one billion children, nearly half of the world's child population, live in conflict zones, facing violence, displacement, poverty, and limited access to basic services, which negatively impacts their development and future (Lee-Koo, 2017).

According to Dimitry (2011), Children and adolescents in the Middle East, particularly in Palestine-Gaza, have faced decades of trauma due to ongoing armed conflicts and wars. Exposure to these traumatic events can lead to significant mental, behavioral, and emotional problems. In addition to that, research on children in Gaza reveals significant mental health challenges resulting from exposure to political violence and trauma. Studies have found high prevalence rates of conduct disorders, attention deficit-hyperactivity disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among school-age children (Miller et al., 1999). Common symptoms include nervousness, fears, sleep disturbances, and aggressive behavior (Hein et al., 1993).

Children in Gaza suffer disproportionately due to the blockade, military strikes, and destruction of infrastructure. According to Jamaluddine et al. (2025), women, children, and

the elderly make up the majority of casualties in the ongoing crisis, with thousands of children being killed or injured. Bilbeisi (2025) reports that nutritional anemia is prevalent among children under five due to food shortages and inadequate healthcare access. The blockade restricts essential food supplies, worsening the crisis. In the same context, Phillips and Ritchie (2025) document how constant displacement and bombings prevent children from attending school, affecting their long-term opportunities. The cumulative effects of ongoing violence, forced displacement, and a lost school year are putting an entire generation of children at risk of being forgotten, with lasting consequences for their lives (Irc, 2024). In short, the conflict in Gaza has caused a serious humanitarian crisis for children. Many are dealing with trauma, forced displacement, hunger, and a lack of education. Children are especially vulnerable during military attacks; they are paying the highest price in injury and death.

In conclusion, this section has shown a theoretical understanding of discourse and media. Followed by ideology, power, and media construction of reality in general. Then, highlighted the influence of media in conflict zones. Moreover, illustrated a brief examination of media coverage in conflict zones, focusing on both Arab and Western perspectives.

1.3. Section Two: Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis

This section illustrates the historical and theoretical development of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), and Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA). Through the representation of Machin and Mayr (2012) framework. This section tends to highlight and explain the interplay between linguistic and visual choices in media representations.

1.3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

As stated by Leeuwen (2015), Critical discourse analysis (CDA) originated in the late 1980s and has since been widely used for the analysis of language in texts and speech. What unites various CDA approaches is not a singular theory or method, but a common objective. He

defines CDA as aiming to surpass mere description in order to provide an explanation and critical examination of how language contributes to the perpetuation of inequality, injustice, and oppression within society. In simple terms, critical discourse analysis explores how language serves to foster and maintain inequality and justice, revealing how power is exercised through verbal and written communication, as seen in instances of sexism, racism, and other forms of discrimination.

Wodak (2011) explains that the terms Critical Linguistics (CL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) were once used interchangeably, though increasingly over the years, CDA has become the more commonly accepted terminology. This transition serves to describe how language represents power, inequality, and resistance within society. Bukhari (2013) elaborates that critical discourse analysis began with critical linguistics in the late 1970s. It was developed by Fowler, Hodge, Kress, and Trew of the University of East Anglia in the United Kingdom. The latter has written a book named *Language and Control*, published in 1979. It can be considered one of the first significant works in the field. That is, Critical linguistics examines how language can potentially be used to promote certain ideas and beliefs. It explores how texts categorize things and people, focusing on what is emphasized and what is left out.

As stated by Ahmadvand (2011), Critical Discourse Analysis delves into the relationship between language and society, culture, and politics, seeking to uncover the hidden meanings and ideological messages in texts. Although CDA approaches may differ in theory as well as method, they have highlighted critique, relations of power, and how ideology is embedded in language and in analyzing the complex interplay between language and power. In this sense, Critical Discourse Analysis digs into the hidden messages and beliefs behind the words. Thus, Critical Discourse Analysis explores the underlying messages and assumptions within the language.

According to Machin and Mayr (2012), "in critical discourse analysis, ideology has been used to describe the way that the ideas and values that comprise these ideas reflect particular interests on the part of the powerful"(p.25). In other words, Critical Discourse Analysis looks at how language is used to maintain power. It uses the idea of ideology to explain how powerful groups use language to promote their own beliefs and interests. Fairclough (2003, as cited in Wodak, 2011), a prominent figure in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), sees CDA as a valuable tool for understanding and addressing social and cultural change. He argues that CDA can be used alongside other research methods to analyze how language shapes power dynamics and contributes to social change. In fact, Fairclough, like other CDA scholars like Kress and van Leeuwen, draws upon Halliday's linguistics to analyze how language constructs social identities, relationships, and systems of knowledge. This highlights the interconnectedness of language and social practices, emphasizing how language use actively shapes our social world.

Linguists are increasingly recognizing that meaning is not solely conveyed through language. While linguistic analysis can be insightful, it often overlooks the crucial role of other semiotic modes, like visual imagery, in communicating meaning. Machin and Mayr (2012) illustrated an example of an advertisement that may use strong language, but its meaning also comes from visuals like colors, images, and layout. This shows the importance of looking at different ways of communication, not just words.

1.3.2. Multimodal Discourse Analysis

The study of how meaning is created through signs can be traced back to ancient times. But it became more developed as a field in the second half of the 20th century. Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce are seen as the main thinkers who helped shape modern semiotic theory (Gunes, 2013).

According to Wodak (2011), Halliday in the 1970s highlighted the strong link between language and its social uses. He explained that Halliday identified the SFL theory, systemic functional linguistics, which contains three key functions of language: to express ideas (ideational), to build relationships (interpersonal), and to create clear connected texts (textual). Halliday's work illustrates that language not only communicates, but also shapes how to understand the world and relate to others. Similarly, Kress was influenced by Halliday's ideas and started in Critical Linguistics, focusing on how language supports power and ideology. After, he expanded his work to include a vast semiotic approach. He studied how images, sounds, and words create meaning in social settings. One of his basic ideas is that form and meaning cannot be separated, which means how something is shown affects what it means.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2020) felt that visual analysis requires clear tools for a detailed and accurate study. They believed that some ideas from Halliday's (1978) theory of language could also be used to understand visuals. Just as CDA looks at word and grammar choices in text, they wanted a method to study choices in images like color, layout, and framing.

The field of Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) emerged in the 1990s with the aim to study how meaning is constructed through various modes of communication beyond verbal language (Feng et al., 2013; Geenen et al., 2015). It relies on the assumption that all communication makes use of different modes like images, sound, and layout, not words (Yu, 2022). According to Feng et al. (2013), MDA started using linguistic theories to analyze visual elements, but has since developed its analytical frameworks. It now borrows concepts from linguistics, media, and cognitive science and tends to utilize digital tools to investigate meaning in areas like education, media, and ethical contexts.

According to Zhao and Djonov (2014), Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are key methods used in fields like linguistics, education,

and media. MDA examines how various modes, such as text, images, and sound, interact to convey meaning within specific social and cultural contexts. On the other hand, CDA focuses on how language reflects and shapes power, frequently reinforcing or combating inequality and dominant interests. However, both MDA and CDA provide insights into the functioning of communication. MDA demonstrates how meaning is constructed across various media platforms, while CDA uncovers how language can either uphold or challenge power dynamics and societal norms.

1.3.3. Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis

As Joy et al. (2024) illustrate, Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) is a modern and flexible approach focused on how meaning is created in the involvement of various modes of communication. It develops on the classical Critical Discourse Analysis with including other forms of communication such as images, videos, sound, and graphics. MCDA examines the interplay of various modes to construct meaning and reinforce dominant ideologies or power. Additionally, it delves into the ways in which meaning is constructed through the combination of communicative modes within specific social and cultural environments (Zhao and Djonov, 2014; Jones, 2012). The popularity of MCDA is on the rise as individuals are increasingly acknowledging that all forms of communication naturally involve multiple modes (Geenen et al., 2015).

Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) is a new, developing approach that comes from language and visual communication research. It looks at the way different forms like text, speech, images, and sound are used to achieve political purposes (Machin, 2013). As outlined by Analyzer (2024), Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) analyzes how power, ideology, and social inequality are expressed through different modes of communication. It is used in areas like the media, politics, and education. It helps to reveal

how modes come together to shape opinions, advance specific messages, and support particular ideologies.

1.3.4. Machin and Mayr's (2012) Framework for Media Analysis

Machin and Mayr (2012) explain that multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA) uses a structured approach to analyze how meaning is constructed through text and images. By closely examining features and interactions between these elements, hidden messages and intentions can be revealed in multimodal content. They explained that features like color, layout, font, and positioning are analyzed to comprehend the decisions of the author. It aims to observe how these components create meaning, evoke emotion, engage with the audience, and have a purpose. MCDA also considers how these texts reinforce current power, social norms, and ideologies. Machin and Mayr (2012) came up with a useful framework for the combination of critical discourse analysis with multimodal analysis. According to Analyzer (2024), their approach helps researchers examine how power, ideology, and inequality are communicated through different forms like language, images, sound, and gestures. By analyzing how these come together, Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) gives a better understanding of how meaning is constructed and how power is depicted or challenged in daily life communication.

Machin and Mayr (2012) offer an extensive framework for examining linguistic components as well as visual elements within the context of multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA). They studied lexical choices in language, then the visual choices and after that they returned to consider how these two modes communicate together.

1.3.4.1. Linguistic Components (Lexical choices)

Linguistic components are the selection of intended words in a text to create meaning and express specific perspectives. They involve different types of choices such as word connotations, overlexicalisation, suppression/lexical absence, and structural opposition.

A. Word Connotations

Words hold significance beyond their literal definitions. While denotation refers to the dictionary meaning, connotation delves into the emotional and cultural associations attached to a word.

According to Braasch and Pedersen (2010), word connotation refers to the additional associations, emotions, and attitudes evoked by a lexeme beyond its primary meaning. In other words, word connotation refers to the extra implications of meaning associated with a word, beyond its basic dictionary definition. These implications can include emotions, cultural associations, and personal experiences.

Machin and Mayr (2012, p.32) illustrated word connotation in the following sentences:

Youths attack local building

Youths attack local addresses

Youths attack family homes

They explained that *family* and *home* in the final sentence powerfully contrast with the earlier lines, evoking a deep sense of sanctity and personal meaning. These terms carry rich cultural associations, safety, belonging, and cherished values, subtly conveying the youths' moral outrage. Without directly condemning their actions, the writer uses these carefully chosen words to imply disapproval, letting the emotional weight of *family* and *home* speak for it.

B. Overlexicalisation

Overlexicalisation in news writing occurs when using too many similar words, making the writing feel repetitive and less effective. "Overlexicalisation gives a sense of over-persuasion

and is normally evidence that something is problematic or of ideological contention” (Machin&Mayr, 2012, p.37). To put it another way, it refers to the excessive use of similar words, which often creates a sense of being overly persuasive, like someone trying too hard to convince you. According to Amalia and Munandar (2024), Overlexicalization is a linguistic phenomenon where certain concepts receive excessive lexical representation. In translation, it can manifest as the addition of lexical items and complex meanings compared to the source text.

Machin and Mayr (2012, p.37) illustrate overlexicalization using words such as *male nurse* and *female doctor*, in which gender is specified to indicate social stereotypes regarding which gender tends to perform a particular occupation. In these examples, the need to specify gender in job titles highlights a deviation from social norms, implying an unusual situation. This unusualness, however, often serves as a clue to the dominant ideology at play. For example, if a job title like *female doctor* is used, it implies that the dominant ideology expects doctors to be male. This deviation from the norm exposes the underlying assumptions of the dominant ideology.

C. Suppression or Lexical Absence

In simpler terms, suppression in representation occurs when crucial information or aspects of an event are intentionally omitted or minimized. This can happen to control the narrative, protect specific interests, or simply because the information is deemed unimportant. The real agents in texts are concealed to make things appear natural or inevitable (Fairclough, 2003). This indicates that the actors or responsible parties of a given event are deliberately removed and suppressed from the representation. For instance, “in the sentence *cuts to the education budget resulted in a drop in standards*, who made the cuts has been deleted. In such cases, we must ask what ideological work is being done” (Machin&Mayr, 2012, p.224). By omitting the actors responsible for cuts to the education budget in the provided definition, it clouds agency

and responsibility, potentially shifting blame and legitimizing the cuts through an ideological lens.

D. Structural oppositions

Structural oppositions refer to the use of one side of a contrast to implicitly suggest its opposite. This creates an indirect way to influence the reader's perception without explicitly stating the negative aspects. Machin and Mayr (2012) state that:

“...in representational strategies, it may be common to find that one side of an opposition is used to apply its opposite, which is absent from the text. In news texts that represent criminals, their evilness or immorality is emphasized, thus implying the morality and goodness of the rest of the social order. Or a management text may refer to the importance of now being dynamic, innovative, forward-thinking. What is not stated is that therefore staff must currently be static averse to change and thinking only about now and the past” (p.224).

When such oppositions are more overtly included in text, they may not be communicated to the audience directly but through what Van Dijk (1998) calls “ideological squaring” (as cited in Machin&Mayr, 2012, p. 40). Forming our opinions about the qualities of some participants in opposition to the qualities of other participants in the text. Thus, words are defined in opposition to other words in the same text. In other words, a way to manipulate the reader's understanding of a situation by subtly emphasizing certain aspects while downplaying others. It is a form of hidden persuasion that can be used to influence public opinion and shape perceptions.

“As in the case of ‘youths attack local family homes’, a set of ideas around what youths are and are not can be activated” (Machin&Mayr, 2012, P.40). In this example the word *youths*

contrast with the word *family*, because it is linked with the word *attacks*. The latter positioned the word *youths* as *aggressive* and *family* as *safety* and *community*. This opposition gives the reader an idea about between the *danger* and the *victim*.

1.3.4.2 Visual Components.(Visual choices)

Visual components are the intended implementation of visual elements in order to construct meaning and determine interpretation. They include important elements like iconography, attributes, settings, and salience.

A. Iconography

According to Flannery (1993), iconography is the study of subject matter and meaning in visual art, tracing the history and evolution of images, symbols, and ideas. In other words, iconography is the study of the meaning behind images. It looks at how symbols and ideas have changed over time. In this context, Machin and Mayr (2012) reported that:

“Iconography is the visual equivalent of lexical analysis. It is the analysis of the visual elements and features of any image, layout, picture, or photograph. As with lexical analysis, the aim is to carry out careful descriptive analysis in order to show discourses are being communicated”
(p.220).

In other words, iconography is like analyzing words in a text. It means looking closely at the visual elements of an image, like its layout, colors, and objects, to understand what it is trying to convey. Just like analyzing words helps us understand the meaning of a text, analyzing these visual elements helps us understand the message of an image.

Semiotic analysis often focuses too much on the implied meanings (connotations) of images, neglecting the importance of what they show (denotation). For example, a picture of a large house depicts a big building, but it might connote wealth or excess (Machin and Mayr, 2012).

B. Attributes

According to Marchesotti et al. (2014), visual attributes are important features in image analysis, serving as mid-level representations that bridge low-level features and high-level semantics. They can be learned automatically from large datasets containing images, scores, and textual comments. In other words, Visual attributes are crucial for image analysis as they act as a bridge between basic image features (like color and texture) and higher-level meanings (like what objects are present). These attributes can be automatically learned by analyzing large sets of images, along with their associated scores and textual descriptions.

Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 52) provide the following illustration of attributes in a Marie Clair photograph, accompanying text on work, where a woman is shown holding a notebook or agenda and a pen, whose clothing is less glamorous and informal and perhaps creative, complete with hippy beads. This suggests a kind of work which requires an agenda or somewhere to write down ideas, therefore suggesting a kind of job that does not have a daily, repeating routine. The clothes also suggest no formal regimentation, as might be characteristic of a faceless bureaucratic job, but someone who can choose their clothing, importantly, someone who has the power to do so. While the text communicates a cynical self-interest by using trendy language and confident directives along with technical business terms, the image appears much softer, creative, and pleasant.

C. Settings

According to Machin and Mayr (2012), settings are more than just locations; they actively contribute to the meaning of a narrative or image by communicating ideas, reflecting values, and shaping characters and their actions. As an example of the reporting of the media news, they often provide photographs of war, followed by destroyed buildings and deserted streets to enhance the narrative of suffering. As mentioned in the example above of the Marie Claire

photograph, they showed that the settings only hint at the office work, and there is a luxury of space with very large windows and a high ceiling (p.52).

D. Saliency

According to Jänicke and Chen (2010), saliency is a main process to facilitate visual attention. A good visualization guides the viewer's attention to the appropriate aspects of the representation. In other words, a good visualization effectively directs the viewer's attention to the most crucial information using saliency. The way this saliency is distributed within the visualization directly reflects its quality. In this regard, Machin and Mayr (2012) state that:

“...in images, there are a number of ways that elements and features can be made to attract our attention or be given importance. In this case, they are given saliency. For example, a feature might be foreground given a brighter color or a central position. Different elements and features can be given different kinds of saliency to draw attention in different ways and create different hierarchies of importance” (p.223).

In simple terms, saliency is about making certain parts of an image stand out. This can be done by using bright colors, positioning important elements, or adding contrast. These elements help to attract the viewer's attention and illustrate which are the most significant in the image.

1.3.5. The Role of Visual and Linguistic Strategies in Media Representation

As has been highlighted by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2020), linguistic and visual strategies play an important role in determining how the media affects the audience. The visual elements use processes such as framing, symbolism, and overgeneralization to guide attention, set up specific emotions, and strengthen cultural expectations. Although the linguistic elements employed to shape how the message is decoded and how the public reacts. How the media combines the visual and linguistic strategies has a significant impact on how individuals perceive information. While also discovering ideologies and the power of specific viewpoints.

These strategies not only convey information but also actively shape their interpretation and meaning.

The media uses both linguistic and visual choices to shape how people think, discover ideologies, and maintain power. In terms of linguistics, they use strategies like word connotation, overlexicalisation, oppositions, and suppression (Machin&Mayr, 2012). For example, repeating certain words or phrases can make an idea seem normal or more important, especially in politics and news. Media representations manipulate language and visuals to influence people's perceptions and emotions. The selection and organization of words in narratives about global events reveal underlying ideologies and power dynamics (Jha& Kumar, 2023).

According to Machin and Mayr (2012), the media uses strategies like settings, iconography, salience, and attributes. Salience plays a key role in directing viewers' attention towards specific elements within an image through the manipulation of size, color, and positioning. This practice guides individuals on what to concentrate on and highlights the most crucial aspects. Iconography, on the other hand, employs symbolic representations to shape viewers' perceptions of an image, often influenced by cultural context. They added that it is crucial to have a critical mindset in order to unveil and comprehend the underlying messages conveyed within media representations.

In conclusion, this section represents how media discourse impacts public opinion, focusing on the analysis of linguistic and visual choices. Also highlighted the Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) framework of Machin and Mayr (2012), by showing how this approach can be used to examine media narratives, specifically in conflict zone, to discover certain perspectives.

1.4. Section Three: A Selection of Previous Related Studies

The present section summarizes previous studies conducted on media discourse, with an emphasis on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Most of these researchers investigated how Western and Arab media described this conflict. Scholars have examined the Palestinian-Israeli conflict from various perspectives, including critical discourse analysis, multimodal discourse analysis, and multimodal critical discourse analysis.

In an influential study, Kareem and Najm (2024) examined the biased roles of Western media in covering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They selected different texts from various YouTube channels as data for their study. The data were analyzed using Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis approach. The findings revealed that Western media often perpetuate biased coverage of this conflict. Also, Palestinians are frequently represented negatively, using terms such as combatants, suicide bombers, and terrorists. In contrast, Israeli actions are legitimized and depicted as defensive and reactionary.

In a similar study, Amer (2024) analyzed the online discourse of *Hamas*, a Palestinian movement, on Twitter using a multimodal critical discourse analysis approach. The data consisted of tweets and retweets by Hamas's agency, Shehab News Agency. These data were analyzed qualitatively using Kress and Leeuwen's (1996, 2006) social semiotic and critical discourse analysis. The results showed that the term occupation الاحتلال is the most common word in these tweets. Also, the hashtag Hamas is associated with the following terms: #Terror, #Gaza, #theykidnappedgaza, and #hamasterrorists, among others. These hashtags provide a negative representation of *Hamas* and legitimize actions conducted against it by Israel or others.

By the same token, Khalil (2023) conducted a qualitative study on the visual representation of the Israeli-Hamas conflict, adopting Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) multimodal

discourse analysis approach. He analyzed visual images, focusing on the narratives constructed by both *Hamas* and *Israel*. The researcher selected four images relevant to the conflict, which were extracted from the official websites of Al Jazeera, TRT World, BBC, and The Economist. The findings indicated that both sides use images to construct narratives that serve their political and ideological interests. That is, *Hamas* created a favorable image of itself, while *Israel* attempted to portray *Hamas* negatively

Amer (2022) investigated the media's portrayal of the May 2021 Israeli onslaught on Gaza from a critical discourse analysis perspective. His research focused on examining how language is employed in media texts to reveal the underlying power relations, ideologies, and social structures. The study focused on analyzing the media content produced by the BBC and the New York Times to identify how media narratives are constructed and framed. According to the findings, the two media outlets exhibited certain similarities in covering the Israeli attack on Gaza. They portrayed Israel positively and described this attack on Gaza as a violent confrontation against *Hamas*, which is represented as a terrorist group. In addition, the two media deny the fact that Israel kills Palestinian civilians.

In similar research, Assaiqeli (2021) analyzed images and posters representing the Palestinian Nakba. These images were produced by Palestinian artists and analyzed using the Grammar of Visual Design proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006). From the analyses, one finds that the visual modality has considerably taken part in rememorating and reconstructing crucial Palestinian identity and national themes such as ethnic cleansing and the right of return.

From another perspective, SharafEdin (2019) investigated the news coverage of the war in Gaza by Arab and Western media channels. The lexical choices in headlines used in the following media were analyzed: CNN, the New York Times, Al-Ahram Weekly Online, and Al

Jazeera English. The data were analyzed using Fairclough's (2003) three-dimensional model and Van Leeuwen's (2008) Social Actor Approach. The results showed that both Western and Arab media outlets have lexical and ideological biases. The Arab media used emotive language to condemn Israeli attacks and draw sympathy towards Palestinian civilians. The Western media, on the other hand, portrayed Israeli military forces as not initiators of violence but rather respondents to the Hamas onslaught.

In critical discourse analysis research, Osborn (2017) investigated the construction of the Israeli and Palestinian identities in *World History* textbooks and *World History* teachers' discourse. He sought to analyze how Palestinian and Israeli identities, ideologies, and relations of power are constructed and represented in these learning tools. It was found that Palestinians and Israelis are mainly presented in relation to war and conflict. Also, the content of these materials assigned biased roles to Palestinians and Israelis. That is, the Israelis are portrayed as defending themselves against Palestinian violence and terror.

Finally, Zaher (2009) explored the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian war in Arab and Western newspapers, applying critical discourse analysis. The researcher chose to take a close look at the following newspapers: *The New York Times*, *The Arab News*, *The Guardian*, and *The Times*. The findings revealed that the discourses of these newspapers are ideological and subjective because their representations of the actions performed by both sides are biased. The western press has always succeeded in delegitimizing Palestinian actions, while the Israeli ones are often justified, mitigated, and framed as resistance. On the other hand, the Arab newspapers often legitimize the Palestinian actions and condemn the Israeli ones.

To summarize, the studies mentioned above looked at the media discourse of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from various perspectives, including multimodal discourse analysis (Khalil, 2023; Assaiqeli, 2021), critical discourse analysis (Kareem and Najm, 2024; Amer,

2022; Zaher, 2009), and multimodal critical discourse analysis (Amer, 2024; SharafEdin, 2019; Osborn, 2017). Most of these studies (e.g., Khalil, 2023; SharefEdin, 2019; Zaher, 2009) focused on the biased roles perpetuated by Western and Arab media in reporting this conflict. Other scholars addressed significant topics relevant to this war; for example, Amer (2024) examined the portrayal of Hamas on the Twitter platform. Assaiqili (2021) highlighted the visual representations of the Palestinian Nakba, and Osborn (2017) studied the construction of Palestinian and Israeli identities in educational materials. The major findings obtained from these studies show that media discourse typically promotes ideologies while reporting on war zones. It was revealed that Western media depict Palestinians as violence initiators and terrorists, while it legitimizes and defends Israeli actions, which are described as self-defense. In contrast, Arab media supported Palestine and condemned Israeli actions.

The literature review demonstrated a scarcity of research exploring the portrayal of Palestinian children in the context of war, notably children living in Gaza. As a result, the current study differs from previous research in that it attempts to establish a new research context. Particularly, it aims to investigate the representation of Palestinian children by Western and Arab media, using a multimodal critical discourse analysis approach. It examines both visual and verbal choices made by various media in representing Palestinian children, particularly those living in Gaza.

1.5. Conclusion

The present chapter illustrated three interrelated sections. The first presented media representation and its role in shaping public perception. The second section illustrated an overview about Machin and Mayr's framework of how visual and linguistic elements combined to shape media representation. Finally, the third section included a selection of previous studies related to the research topic.

Chapter Two: Methodology, Results, and Discussion

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the practical part of the study, covering the methodology, analysis, findings, and discussion. It explains the research method, the data collection tools, and the analytical procedures based on multimodal critical discourse analysis. The chapter is divided into three sections: the first describes the methodology; the second provides the analysis of selected Arab and Western media texts and images; and the third presents and discusses the main findings and the answers to the research questions. This chapter connects the theoretical background to the practical outcomes, showing how media representations of children in Gaza reflect broader ideological narratives.

2.2. Section One: Research Methodology

This section describes the methodology adopted in this study. It outlines the method adopted and the data collection tools. In addition, it explains the specific tools employed for data analysis, outlines the detailed analytical procedures, and describes the overall research process followed in this study.

2.2.1. Method

Research methods are various steps, strategies, and techniques researchers use to conduct a study. According to Goundar (2012), these methods are systematic, objective, and carefully planned. Their main purpose is to help researchers gather data from participants and find answers to research problems. This study uses a qualitative method, which is appropriate for exploring meaning, discourse, and representation in media texts. It focuses on textual and visual analysis rather than quantitative description. For Öhman (2005), qualitative research focuses on people's experiences, thoughts, emotions, and behaviours rather than numbers. It

explores how individuals perceive and interact with the world, emphasizing meaning over measurement. Unlike quantitative research, it focuses on numerical data and statistical patterns.

The qualitative method is appropriate for this study because it seeks to interpret meanings, explore ideologies, and understand the complexities of media representation rather than quantify them. This method allows for an in-depth exploration and examination of the linguistic and visual elements and how they work together to shape narratives about media coverage reporting children in Gaza, which is a conflict zone.

2.2.2. Data Collection Tools

The main tools for data collection were online newspaper articles and accompanying images. A total of six media reports were selected because they were relevant to the research topic and were published between 2014 and 2025: three from Arabic media, namely Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, and Arab News, and three from Western media, including The New Yorker, The Guardian, and BBC News. The articles of 2014 were selected to provide a historical context and illustrate how the earlier representations of Arab and Western media outlets were created during the past conflicts in Gaza. This selection also aimed to confirm the longstanding existence of the conflict in the region. The year 2014 was specifically chosen because there is very little access to the ancient reports on the conflict problem. Even if they do exist, their images are vague and obscure, and the analysis is unclear. Those of the years 2024 and 2025 reflect more recent descriptions, enabling a comparison with the past portrayals. Also provide very current perspectives into the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Specifically, the tragic and the terrifying events that have occurred in recent years. The types of media outlets of Arab and Western media where specifically chosen for their reputation and regional influence and journalistic styles, they are well known and widely followed in

their region; Arab and Western ones. They are known and famous for their coverage about Middle East conflicts, including Palestine-Gaza. Each one has a unique way to cover about the conflict to represent range ideologies which help to ensure a comparative analysis between Arab and Western media representations about children in Gaza.

The selection was based on relevance, availability, and focus on the representation of children in Gaza. All the content was collected directly from official news websites; each media report contains one article and its appropriate represented images. Two Arab media outlets, Al Jazeera and Arab News, published articles containing multiple images. Three images were selected for the analysis because they most clearly depicted children and best illustrated the narrative tone of those reports. In all, a total of ten images were selected. The articles and their images were examined using Machin and Mayr's (2012) multimodal critical discourse analysis framework, focusing on linguistic and visual elements. Additionally, the Al Arabiya article was originally written in Arabic and was translated by the researcher into English with the use of dictionary and was checked by an English teacher to preserve the original tone and meaning. The English version was useful and helpful for the researcher in the analysis rather than the Arab one.

2.2.3 Data Analysis and Procedures

The data were analyzed using a multimodal critical discourse analysis framework proposed by Machin and Mayr (2012). The latter is a useful toolkit for analyzing how different communicative modes, such as written language and visual images, work together to construct meaning. It is particularly relevant for media studies, where text and image often combine to transmit a single ideological message. This framework focuses on two main aspects. The first one is linguistic choices; they include the examination of word connotation, overlexicalisation, suppression/lexical absence, and structural opposition to uncover how

narratives were built. Special attention was paid to strong emotional terms, framing of figures (Israel, Hamas, children), and the ideological positioning of language. The second aspect is about visual choices, including iconography (what or who is shown), attributes (facial expressions, gestures, body language), settings (location and environment), and salience (what the viewer is drawn to most). The combination of linguistic and visual analysis helped to uncover how each media outlet constructed its narrative about children and emphasized suffering, resilience, victimhood, and survival.

The study followed a structured process consisting of five main steps. First, six articles were selected; three from Arab media and three from Western media based on their focus on children and the integration of both texts and images. Second, images were chosen for analysis. In the two articles that included multiple images (Al Jazeera and Arab News), three images were selected from each, based on visual salience, symbolic value, and relevance to the article's overall message.

In the third step of the research process, the article from Al Arabiya, which was originally written in Arabic, was translated into English by the researcher with the help of a dictionary. The latter was checked by a English teacher to ensure the integrity of the original meaning was preserved. Moving on to the fourth step, an in-depth analysis was conducted on each image and its accompanying text using the multimodal critical discourse analysis framework established by Machin and Mayr (2012), with a specific focus on both linguistic and visual components. Lastly, the fifth and final step involved observing and organizing the findings to highlight the key similarities and differences in ideological framing and communicative strategies from both Arab and Western media representations.

2.3. Section Two: The Analysis

This section provides an in-depth analysis of the selected media texts and images from Arab and Western sources, employing Machin and Mayr's (2012) multimodal critical discourse

analysis framework. It explores the use of visual and linguistic components portraying children within the context of the Gaza conflict. The objective is to discover how language and imagery coordinate to shape meaning, communicate ideologies, and impact audience interpretation.

2.3.1. Arab Media

Arab media outlets, such as Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, and Arab News, tend to cover the representation of the Gaza conflict through a regional and cultural perspective. Their coverage emphasizes human suffering, especially that of children. The latter points out the themes of injustice and resistance. The following analysis explains how these news media use imagery and language to construct powerful narratives about Palestinian children.

2.3.1.1. Al Jazeera News

This data sample is taken from Al Jazeera News article published in 2014, focusing on the humanitarian impact of conflict on children in Gaza. The article includes multiple photographs, of which three were selected for analysis due to their clear depiction of children and their relevance to the article's narrative and tone. Each selected image combines strong visual elements with contextual significance that aligns with the goals of the study. Shot one shows two young children walking in the courtyard of a school that has been converted into a shelter. Shot two captures a group of children entertaining with volunteers. The image emphasizes the collective experience of crisis and the dependency of children on humanitarian support. Shot three depicts four boys standing amid rubble, smiling and raising their fingers in peace signs.



Figure 02: Selected shots from Al Jazeera News coverage (Al Jazeera, October 12, 2014)

2.3.1.1.1 Visual Choices Analysis

The visual components of the Al Jazeera report play an important role in shaping the viewer's understanding of the situation in Gaza. Through specific visual elements such as iconography, attributes, settings, and salience, the image constructs a narrative that

emphasizes resilience, care, and humanitarian response in the core of conflict. The following analysis applies Machin and Mayr's (2012) framework to examine how these components contribute to the overall message.

A. Iconography

Iconography refers to the people, objects, and symbols shown in an image that help communicate meaning. The first shot above represents two children standing out in a school transformed into a shelter. The latter represents disruption of normal life for children and families and displacement and loss of stable housing. The presence of laundry in the balconies of the school is an iconographic element indicating long-term displacement; it signifies that this space is not just a temporary shelter but a makeshift home. Moreover, the covered object in the left corner of the image with a blue and white represents hidden resources and stored belongings of the families. The second shot shows a large group of children and emphasizing the impact of displacement. The raised hands of children indicate engagement and participation, suggesting an attempt to create a sense of normalcy. Also, the image seems to show that some children have some sweets in their hands, a gesture that brings them joy. In addition to that, the large water tank in the background may suggest basic necessities for water in the shelter. Then, the volunteer interacting with children symbolizes support and humanitarian effort to restore some normalcy to children's lives. The backdrop of the building with Arabic script which appears to be a school, which seems turned into a shelter; this represents the disruption of normal life and the repurposing of educational space. Moreover, while the children are being entertained but some of them seem a smile on their faces, some do not, which shows psychological distress and emotional fatigue despite the external efforts. The third shot illustrates four children who are the central subjects and symbolize innocence, vulnerability, and hope for the future. Since all of them are showing the V hand gesture,

which is a symbol of peace or victory. This latter suggests resilience and defiance in the face of the destruction behind the ruins and rubble that signifies war, devastation, and loss.

B. Attributes

Attributes refer to the physical appearance in facial expressions, clothing, and body language of people in an image. In the first shot in the image presents the clothing worn by the people around the children appears to be everyday wear. This suggests that they are ordinary civilians who have been displaced from their normal lives. The children's clothes look worn and faded. This visual detail may reflect their exposure to hardship and a lack of access to basic resources. These attributes emphasize the civilian nature of the affected population and highlight the vulnerability of children living under crisis conditions. The holding hands gesture of the children shows emotional support. Moreover, their faces appear neutral to unfeeling faces without expressions, avoiding smiles and engagement with the camera might express detachment from the observer. Next to that, the adults in the background symbolize resilience and adaptation to the situation. The second shot illustrates that the children's clothing is varied and consists of everyday wear. This suggests displacement and reliance on whatever resources are available. Despite the difficult circumstances, the children's smiling and engaged expressions highlight their adaptability and emotional resilience. The presence of an adult volunteer interacting with them signifies external support. It reflects efforts to provide care, entertainment, and psychological assistance. Although there is a clear absence of toys or colourful learning materials, the interaction of the children with their hands and playing together, this itself becomes a source of emotional and social engagement in the environment despite their harsh situation in the war. The third shot shows the children are wearing casual and colorful clothes, which stand in contrast to the gray and dusty background. This contrast highlights a sense of normalcy and childhood joy despite the harsh environment.

The peace signs they display reinforce themes of hope and defiance. Their relaxed and joyful body language, with arms around each other, suggests solidarity and unity among them.

C. Settings

Settings refer to the physical location and environment where the scene takes the place. The first shot represents a school that has been turned into a shelter. This is visible through the spread of personal belongings and blankets on the balconies. The wet and dirty ground adds to the sense of poor living conditions. The overall environment reflects despair and reinforces the themes of displacement and instability. Also, the setting shows a combination of public tragedy with private suffering, due to the transformation of public school into an intimate place for children. The second shot demonstrates that the setting is inside a school, which is clear from the educational posters on the wall. However, the space has shifted from a place of learning to emergency accommodation. The buildings and visible structures in the background confirm that this is a temporary environment. The posters and learning materials contrast with how the space is currently used. This visual contrast highlights the interruption of education. Additionally, the lack of proper seating for the children shows that the area is no longer functioning as a classroom but as a space adapted to crisis. The third shot portrays the setting of the children in a post-conflict zone. The heavily damaged buildings and rubble around them suggest recent violence and destruction. This background clearly indicates that the area has experienced airstrikes or shelling. The setting frames the children as survivors within a harsh and unstable environment.

D. Salience

Salience refers to the elements in an image that stand out most and attract the viewer's attention. The first shot represents the children in the centre of the image. This positioning draws the viewer's attention directly to them. Even though the background is filled with belongings and adults, the children remain the main focus. Their placement underscores

vulnerability in a conflict zone and a refugee setting. The blue and white colors of the building are highlighted against the muted colors of the courtyard. This contrast distracts the viewer's eye and helps to convey a sombre and difficult atmosphere. The second shot depicts the group of children within the frame as the most remarkable aspect. Their position demands immediate attention and emphasizes their interaction and participation with the volunteer. This placement adds emphasis to the fact that an activity is being actively performed. The children's colourful clothing is set against the muted background colors, making them stand out even more. The volunteer's involvement had drawn the viewer's eye as well. This adds emphasis to the presence of community support and humanitarian effort in the image. The third shot highlights the children as the strongest salient element of the image. Positioned centrally to draw immediate attention. Their bright clothing differentiates from the dusty and muted tones of the ruins in the background. Their hand gestures are highly visible and draw the viewer's focus to their defiance and positivity. Their cheerful, smiling faces and expressions contrast powerfully with the destruction surrounding them, reinforcing the emotional impact of the image.

2.3.1.1.2. Linguistic Choices Analysis

This part of the linguistic analysis focuses on the language employed in the article published by Al Arabiya that corresponds with the image. Using Machin and Mayr's (2012) framework, it focuses on word connotation, overlexicalization, suppression/lexical absence, and structural opposition. These elements reveal how the text frames the situation and constructs meaning around children, health, and conflict.

A. Word Connotation

Word connotation refers to the emotions, ideas, or associations that words carry beyond their literal meaning. The language used in the Al Jazeera article is rich with negatively connoted words that emphasize the depth of suffering, trauma, and destruction experienced by children

in Gaza. Words such as *toll*, *losing*, *die*, *shelters*, *restrictions*, *violence*, *killed*, *trauma*, and *lost* evoke a sense of despair and highlight the devastating consequences of the war conflict. The phrase *toll on Gaza's children* conveys not just physical damage but an emotional and psychological burden, suggesting that the impact is deep and enduring. Similarly, the sentence *losing their homes and watching family members die* underscores the personal and intimate nature of the tragedy, drawing attention to the emotional devastation faced by children. The reference to children who *require psychological support* further reflects the severe emotional impact and the urgent intervention for need. Descriptions like *still living in shelters* and *school-turned-shelters* signal displacement and the loss of normalcy, transforming places of safety and learning into sites of survival. The statement *under current restrictions, the process will take 20 years* reinforces a sense of hopelessness because it will take a very long time to rebuild the destroyed buildings by the Israeli military. The word *restrictions* imply external control by Israel, and ongoing blockade. Moreover, the assertion that *the chance of another round of violence remains high* introduces a coming threat from Israel, suggesting that instability is a persistent reality. The use of terms like *psychological costs have already been immense* and *trauma endured by all the young survivors is hard to overestimate* stresses the severe and widespread psychological harm inflicted on the younger generation. The article also mentions Gaza as a *besieged territory*, a powerful term that conveys the idea of systematic isolation and suffering. The statement that *each war is worse than the last* amplifies a sense of escalating violence and growing hardship. Phrases like *struggling with life-long disabilities* and significant support not only quantify the damage but also imply the lasting effects through the ongoing conflict and scale of need. Despite the sombre circumstances depicted, there are instances of resilience and hope in the mention of *rebuilding from the rubble*. The necessity for a considerable amount of psychological and social rebuilding suggests a combination of devastation and determination. *Flashing the ubiquitous*

peace/victory sign is an incredible contrast to what is being destroyed around children, highlighting the enduring and unbreakable spirit and optimism of Gaza's children in the face of harsh conditions.

B Overlexicalisation

Overlexicalization refers to the repeated use of similar words or phrases within a text, often used to emphasize a particular idea, viewpoint, or emotion. The Al Jazeera 2014 article employs overlexicalization to reinforce the emotional weight of the narrative and to frame children as the primary victims of the conflict. The word *children* recurs in various forms throughout the text, including *youth*, *young survivors*, *Gaza's children*, *more than 500 children*, and *3,500 children were injured*. This repetition ensures that the reader remains focused on the central role of children in the story and views them as a vulnerable population in need of protection and attention. By continually referencing children in different ways, the article appeals to the reader's empathy and makes the crisis more relatable and emotionally impactful. Other repeated terms include *psychological impact*, *involving psychological support*, *psychological costs*, and *psychological and social rebuilding*. This underscores the mental health effects of the Israeli war on Gaza and stresses the long-term emotional damage experienced by young survivors. It also positions psychological healing as an essential and urgent aspect of post-war humanitarian aid. Additionally, repetitive references to violent and destructive actions such as *violence*, *war*, *air strike*, *killed*, *injured*, *ruddle*, *demolished*, and *decimated* help to convey the intensity of the war on children and the massive destruction it has caused. These terms create a strong atmosphere of destruction and chaos, emphasizing the vulnerability and suffering of children in Gaza's war zone. Finally, the repeated use of phrases such as *losing their homes*, *lost their homes*, and *ruddle of their demolished homes* highlights not only the physical destruction of homes but also the emotional loss of security and safety. The home, typically seen as the most secure place for a child, is portrayed as

shattered, reinforcing the depiction of trauma and instability. Through this lexical repetition, the article powerfully frames the conflict as a humanitarian tragedy, with children facing the most significant hardships.

C. Suppression / Lexical Absence

Suppression refers to what is left unsaid in a text; the omission of specific words, ideas, or perspectives. This absence can shape meaning by limiting what the reader knows, often concealing responsibility, conflict, or debatable details. In this text, several instances of suppression and lexical absence can be observed, particularly in how the conflict and its causes are addressed. Although the article highlights the suffering in Gaza, mentioning *destruction, death, injury, and the need for psychological and physical rebuilding*, it avoids directly naming the political actors responsible for these outcomes. For instance, it suggests that the United States of America (USA) is always behind Israel in supporting them, portraying them as an armed military force. The USA consistently provides the Israeli military with weapons for protection and prevention. Moreover, while it refers to *an air strike that decimated the neighborhood in Rafah*, it does not specify that the air strike was conducted by Israeli forces. The term *air strike* is presented neutrally, rather than utilizing more emotive and charged words such as *bombing*, which could immediately assign blame or provoke outrage. Similarly, while the text refers to *restrictions* and describes Gaza as a *besieged territory*, it does not characterize Gaza as a *blockade* or *occupation*, terms that would clearly attribute responsibility to Israel as the agent enforcing these conditions. These linguistic choices suggest the existence of the siege and political control without directly assigning blame by clearly stating who is responsible. The phrase *under current restrictions, the process will take 20 years* serves as another example. While the restrictions refer to the blockade that limits materials and aid from entering Gaza, the text does not specify who is

enforcing these barriers. This form of lexical absence softens the political framing, potentially reducing the reader's awareness of the power dynamics involved in the crisis.

D. Structural Opposition

Structural opposition refers to how a text contrasts two ideas, groups, or situations to create a clear division between them. The text demonstrates several clear examples of structural opposition, where contrasting ideas are used to highlight the complex reality of life for children in Gaza. One of the strongest oppositions is between *life* and *death*, seen in statements like *at least 2,150 people in Gaza were killed during the most recent war* versus *those who survived previous wars*. This contrast draws attention to both the devastating loss of life and the ongoing trauma experienced by survivors. Another opposition is between *home* and *shelter*. The phrase *after losing their homes... children are still living in shelters* and *school-turned-shelter* reflects a shift from stability and safety (home) to temporary and crowded survival spaces (shelters), suggesting a loss of normalcy and security. A third structural opposition is seen between *past* and *future*, particularly in *for those who survived previous wars*, contrasted with *the chance of another round of violence remains high*. This presents a view of suffering, where the trauma of the past is closely tied to fears about what lies ahead. Finally, the text balances *hope* and *despair*. Despair is conveyed through descriptions of *loss, injury, displacement, and the death of over 500 children*, while hope is expressed through *children flashing the peace/victory sign* and mentions of *efforts to rebuild from the rubble*, symbolizing resilience and the will to recover.

2.3.1.2. Al Arabiya News

This sample is taken from Al Arabiya News, published in 2024. It includes both visual and linguistic components. The image shows a young child receiving an oral polio vaccine, surrounded by adults and other children.



Figure 3: Selected shot from Al Arabiya coverage (Al Arabiya, September 16, 2024)

2.3.1.2.1 Visual Choices Analysis

A. Iconography

In this image, a child opening his mouth to receive a vaccine is the central icon. This action symbolizes both vulnerability and resilience despite the difficult circumstances in the war. It highlights the importance of humanitarian efforts in a war zone and reflects the urgent need for protection and medical care. The healthcare workers' hand giving the vaccine represents organized humanitarian intervention in the middle of the crisis. It shows the ongoing initiative to care for children despite the difficult circumstances. On the other hand, the background appears chaotic and disordered, with children waiting their turn for vaccination. This imagery

highlights the critical and urgent need for medical assistance to the affected population. The image portrays the hope delivered by humanitarian assistance and its continuous efforts to provide as much possible vaccines to all the children.

B. Attributes

This image portrays a child of a young age and small physical appearance, underscoring innocence and vulnerability, which brings a feeling of empathy to the viewer. The child's open mouth and tilted head indicate not only a desire to cooperate, but also a deep trust in the adult administering the vaccine. This is a reflection of the child's dependence on others for survival and protection. The healthcare workers' hands appear stable and gentle, suggesting professionalism, calmness, and compassion. These physical cues work together to create an overall impression of a supportive and protective environment, despite the surrounding conflict. The contrast between the child's fragility and the caregivers' hands reassuring presence strengthens the image's emotional appeal and reinforces the urgency for humanitarian assistance.

C. Settings

In this image, the setting is informal, it lacks of typical medical equipment and hospital features. This absence indicates limited access to suitable healthcare facilities due to the continuing conflict. The background is crowded with children representing the high need for basic healthcare and the collective impact of the war on children. The setting serves to underscore the challenging circumstances under which humanitarian activities are being carried out. It also illustrates the larger context of a community facing obstacles in delivering essential services in the middle of instability and destruction.

D. Salience

This image features a child wearing a bright yellow shirt, enhancing his visibility and drawing the viewer's attention. The choice of color emphasizes the child's central role in the scene and represents themes of innocence and hope. Another salient aspect is the drop of the vaccine being placed in the child's mouth. This action is emphasized visually and conveys a very strong message of life-saving assistance. These elements draw the viewer's focus to the act of humanitarian aid and emphasize the need for protecting children in conflict zones

2.3.1.2.2 Linguistic Choices Analysis

A. Word Connotation

In this text, the words نجاح *success*, احترام *respect*, توفر *availability*, and المساعدة *assistance* create a positive tone regarding the vaccination campaign. They suggest that the effort was well coordinated, effective, and supported by the humanitarian organization (UNRWA), who care for children's welfare. On the other hand, words like الصراع *conflict*, قيود *restrictions*, أوامر *evacuation orders*, and نقص *shortage* highlight the challenging situation in Gaza to deliver the vaccine to all the children due to the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas. These terms talk about the hardship caused by war, including limited medications, displacement, and lack of essential materials. Also, the pressure that the healthcare organization is facing to keep vaccinating all the children under the respective temporary ceasefire from both the Hamas and Israeli sides. This highlights the urgency and hardship affecting both the healthcare system and children's lives.

The phrase احتراماً طرفا الصراع إلى حد كبير الهدن الإنسانية المختلفة المطلوبة *both sides of the conflict largely respected the necessary humanitarian truces* suggests a careful tone. The expression *largely respected* implies general cooperation, but also leaves room for possible exceptions for violations. This wording suggests that both Hamas and the Israeli sides made as many

efforts as possible to reduce violence temporarily, allowing humanitarian organizations to operate and provide assistance to children.

التحدي المقبل *the next challenge* expresses that the vaccination process is an ongoing struggle. This reinforces a sense of adversity that the health care organization (UNRWA) still and will have to face difficulties when it comes to vaccination or the aid process.

قيود على الوصول للمنطقة وأوامر إخلاء ونقص في الوقود *Access restrictions, evacuation orders, and fuel shortages* highlight obstacles facing humanitarian efforts in Gaza. These include limited access to certain areas due to Israeli military control, forced displacement of families from their homes, and lack of essential resources like transportation and electricity. These obstacles highlight the portrayal of Gaza as a region where daily life is significantly disrupted by crises, posing challenges to the effective delivery of aid and the protection of children's well-being.

B. Overlexicalisation

The repetition of *أطفال* children and *القطاع* the section: Gaza highlights that the vaccination campaign specifically targets a vulnerable population—namely, the children in a heavily affected area. This consistent usage raises awareness of the high number of children in need and the scale of the operation across Gaza. Furthermore, the frequent mention of the term *شلل الأطفال*, polio, underscores the necessity for health interventions. By focusing on a particular disease, the text reinforces that this is not just a general health issue but a critical emergency demanding immediate action to protect children from long-term harm. Moreover, the repetition of terms like *الصراع* conflict, *الهدنة الإنسانية* humanitarian truce, and *تحدي* challenge illustrates the difficult environment in which the campaign is taking place. These terms emphasize the obstacles healthcare workers face in their efforts to provide aid amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas. The need for ceasefires, the presence of challenges, and the persistent conflict all underline the gravity of the situation. This repetition

enhances the reader's understanding that humanitarian efforts are not only important but also extremely challenging to carry out under such circumstances.

C. Suppression / Lexical Absence

The text avoids specific details about the conflict's nature. For example, it does not mention which parties are responsible for the violence, nor does it describe the military actions, bombings, or blockades that have led to a humanitarian crisis. Additionally, it does not place blame on the Israeli military, which is responsible for the dire situation of the children. Instead, the focus remains on the outcomes, such as displacement and healthcare needs, without addressing the underlying causes. There is also a noticeable lack of critical commentary on the root causes of the crisis. For instance, Israel has controlled the Palestinian territories for a long time. The Hamas organization is defending the Palestinian civilians and their homeland. The article does not explore how Israel's ongoing occupation, political tensions, or international reactions have contributed to the situation in Gaza. By omitting these aspects, the text oversimplifies the circumstances, limiting the reader's understanding of the full context.

D. Structural Opposition

This text sets up a contrast between *طرفي الصراع* the two sides of the conflict and *الأونروا*/UNRWA, framing the former as the source of tension and violence between Israel and Hamas. The latter is framed as a neutral humanitarian actor focused on helping children. This structural opposition emphasizes the role of UNRWA as a stabilizing force working to alleviate the suffering caused by the ongoing conflict. Additionally, the opposition between *التحدي* challenge and *نجاح* success illustrates the difficult conditions under which the vaccination campaign was carried out amid the war between Hamas and Israel, as well as the achievement of reaching 90% of children despite those obstacles. This contrast reinforces the narrative that, although the situation in Gaza is extremely difficult, humanitarian efforts can

still lead to positive outcomes. Such oppositional themes guide the reader to view the humanitarian side as constructive and effective, while the conflict remains a background obstacle.

2.3.1.3. Arab News

The third sample is taken from Arab News, published in 2025. It contains both textual and three visual images that document the impact of war on children's education and well-being in Gaza. The article focuses on school destruction, displacement, and malnutrition, with input from organizations like UNICEF and Save the Children. The first shot shows children sitting in a classroom, raising their hands. The second shot depicts a boy holding a cardboard sign that reads *I need my school*, visually representing children's demand for education and their struggle under conflict. The third shot captures children gathering around a large container to collect food. This image illustrates the hard living conditions and food insecurity they face.



Figure 4: Selected shots from Arab News coverage (Arab News, September 03, 2025)

2.3.1.3.1. Visual Choices Analysis

A. Iconography

The first shot shows a school setting with the raised hands of children showing learning and engagement, while symbolizing normalcy, education, and hope. The children's expressions of excitement contrast with the reality of the conflict. The second shot draws two children holding a global symbol of protest demand for basic rights, the handwritten message, namely *I need my school*, emphasizes urgency, personal appeal, and children's seeking their basic

right, which is to receive education, like the other children in the world. The third image portrays the traditional depictions of famine and humanitarian crises. The large pot of food, which is nearly empty, represents shared resources and scarcity; also, the children gathering around it represent basic survival needs.

B. Attributes

Shot one shows children are engaged in an academic context, eager to learn, dressed in casual clothing, and their raised hands suggest enthusiasm. The second shot paints the direct look of the child, shows a strong connection with the viewer, and the handwritten written creates an emotional call with the seriousness and the determination on his facial expression. The third shot presents the children's facial expressions and body language, show urgency and hunger. Even the need and the starvation for food, this image shows that some children are laughing at each other and others collect the leftovers from the pot; these actions show their socio-economic vulnerability.

C. Settings

The first shot represents the absence of high technology resources, suggesting limited educational infrastructure, even if the classroom signifies a structured learning environment. The second shows the blurred background with other children holding signs, showing collective action, but taking focus only on the child and the sign. The third one illustrates that the background indicates other children looking for food and waiting for their turns, which indicates displacement, poverty, and lack of resources.

D. Salience

The first shot portrays the children's bright expressions and raised hands are the most salient, standing out against the more muted classroom background, reinforcing the message of resilience, and highlighting their active participation. The second shot symbolizes the contrast between the dark text and the light background enhances readability, also, the sign is written

twice in Arabic with the red color to enhance the message, or maybe the child is referring to the red color with the blood of children since the school is a simple right for them. The third one depicts the large pot of food as the focal point that draws attention to the issue of hunger. The children's faces and hands reaching for food emphasize desperation and communal effort.

2.3.1.3.2. Linguistic Choices Analysis

A. Word connotation

The phrase *crisis level of hunger* introduces a sense of extreme urgency and widespread suffering, emphasizing that the situation is not simply difficult but life-threatening for children living in Gaza. The term *amid the ongoing conflict* serves as a neutral expression that refrains from attributing direct responsibility and blame to Israeli or Hamas attacks, further emphasizing the presence of enduring and unresolved war. The statement: *more than 32,000 Palestinians have been killed*, quantifies the gravity and the severity of the situation, while the description of *relentless bombardment* conveys images of continuous, aggressive military operations by Israel, illustrating images of devastation and suffering children. Calling Gaza an *embattled territory* evokes an image of continuous hardship and struggle faced by its children. The phrase *deprived of schooling* connotes injustice and a lack of control, defining children not only as victims but as individuals deprived of basic rights. The statement *grave violation of children's rights* holds both ethical and legal weight, meaning that what is happening is not just ethically wrong but also violates international human rights standards. The statement of *deliberately starving civilians* indicates international harm, adding a serious accusation against Israeli military actions. Likewise, the phrase *massive wave of children that ultimately will need special treatment for malnutrition* depicts an image of an extensive humanitarian crisis, highlighting children as the most vulnerable group affected. The use of the term *safe zone* is shown in a contradictory manner, suggesting that this zone provides only the illusion of safety and a false sense of security amid continuous danger. Lastly, describing starvation as

a *weapon of war* portrays it as a deliberate tactic used by Israel to cause harm one which is considered illegal under international law. Words like *evacuated* also suggest forced displacement of children from Gaza and instability, often linked with loss of home, security, and identity. These connotative choices frame the Palestinian children primarily as innocent victims of a violent and unjust environment.

B. Overlexicalisation

Words like *damaged* and *destroyed* appear several times, emphasizing the severe impact of the ongoing bombardment on Gaza's buildings and schools by the Israeli military. The frequent mention of *displaced* underscores how many people, especially children, have been forced to leave their homes, highlighting the scale of the humanitarian crisis caused by the war. The continued use of the word *schools* reinforces the article's central focus: the disruption of education. It helps the audience sympathize with students missing out on their right to learn. Similarly, the repetitions of the words *starve* and *starvation* add emotional weight. These terms frame the suffering of civilians, particularly children, as not accidental but as the result of deliberate actions by the Israeli military. They have used starvation as a weapon of war by cutting off any assistance from other countries entering Gaza. The terms suggest a clear power imbalance between those enforcing the conditions (Israel) and those affected by them (children). Lastly, repeating the word *international* reminds readers that the crisis in Gaza is not just a local issue; it has drawn global attention, and the actions being described may be viewed as violations of international law or moral standards.

C. Suppression / Lexical absence

While the article refers to *the bombing of schools*, it does not include the Israeli justification beyond a brief mention that Hamas allegedly uses schools as command centres. This omission limits the reader's understanding of the Israeli perspective. Similarly, Hamas's role in the broader conflict is barely addressed, apart from a short reference to the *Hamas-led attack on*

October 7. The article also does not mention Israeli civilian casualties or the suffering of Israeli children, which suggests a one-sided portrayal that centres only on Palestinian victims. This selective framing creates an imbalance in representation. In addition, the role of international actors such as the *United Nations* or the *United States* for peace-building or negotiations is largely absent, minimizing the broader diplomatic context, and showing that there is no external support. The term *war* is not explicitly used to describe the situation; instead, words like *bombardment* and *attacks* are used, which place focus on Israeli military actions while avoiding broader political or historical explanations about the aggressive acts. Moreover, Hamas is not described as a terrorist group, even though Israel labels it that way. These omissions shape and influence how readers interpret responsibility and victimhood in the conflict: Who enforces the power (Israel), and who is affected by it (children).

D. Structural Opposition

The article utilizes structural oppositions to create a clear contrast between Palestinians and Israelis, shaping the narrative through opposing roles. One of the most notable oppositions is between *Palestinian suffering* and *Israeli restrictions*, which highlights the divide between those enduring the consequences and those exerting control. The article also contrasts *children deprived of education* with *Israeli bombardment*, suggesting that the loss of schooling directly results from military action. Throughout the text, Gaza's children are portrayed as innocent victims; they are described as malnourished, displaced, and emotionally traumatized. Conversely, Israel is depicted as the aggressor, through references to *relentless bombardment* and *deliberately starving civilians*, language that implies intentional harm. This opposition between *victims* and *aggressors* reinforces a cause-and-effect relationship, where in Israeli military operations (aggressors) are portrayed as the reason for Palestinian civilian suffering (victims).

To conclude, Arab media, such as AL Jazeera, Al Arabiya, and Arab News, frequently portray children in Gaza as being part of a bigger narrative of hardship, resilience, and endurance. This coverage highlights their daily challenges and the solidarity of their community. These outlets seek to evoke deep emotions of empathy, particularly among the Arab audience.

2.3.2. Western Media

The following analysis focuses on selected Western media outlets, namely The Guardian, BBC News, and The New Yorker. These sources were chosen for their international reach and influence in shaping public opinion. The analysis explores the depiction of Palestinian children in these media platforms by analyzing their linguistic and visual components.

2.3.2.1. The New Yorker

This sample, taken from The New Yorker in 2014, includes both a powerful visual and a detailed written article. The image depicts two young Palestinian boys peeking through a large hole in a bomb-damaged concrete wall, symbolizing vulnerability and the impact of conflict on children. The accompanying text discusses the escalation of violence in Gaza and Israel, focusing on the killing of four children while playing on the beach, waiting for their fisherman father. The temporary cease fire ends due to the Israeli operation, then the economic hardship, political pressure, and failed negotiations between Israel and Hamas, which resulted from recurrent violence and calls for immediate action to stop the violence against Gaza and Israeli children.



Figure 5: Selected shot from The New Yorker coverage (The New Yorker, July 18, 2014)

2.3.2.1.1. Visual Choices Analysis

A. Iconography

The image shows two boys looking from a hole in a damaged concrete wall. It draws a strong destruction, bullet holes, and debris. The latter is a symbol of conflict and war between Hamas and Israel in Gaza. The children representing innocence are set against this harsh background, which intensifies the emotional impact. Their expressions seem to convey a mix of fear, curiosity, and perhaps a sense of being trapped or exposed. The photographer captures this moment to reflect the silent suffering of children in war zones.

B. Attributes

The children in the image are seen to be young, small, and dressed in simple clothes, which do not appear completely, aligning with the text's focus on children as victims of the conflict. Then children indicate they are caught in ordinary circumstances. Their gaze is directed outward, as if observing something beyond the damaged structure. There are no visible weapons, no adult figures to protect them, reinforcing their innocence and vulnerability.

C. Settings

The image shows the setting as a heavily bombarded environment, a ruined building likely in a residential area. The fact that the children are in this unsafe setting instead of a protected space highlights the danger they live with daily. There is no visible safe space for them. This visual reinforces the theme of helplessness and exposure.

D. Salience

The salience in the image is very clear: the boys' faces and their gaze are the most striking parts of the image. The light coming through the opening makes their faces brighter than the rest of the image. It directly attracts the viewer's attention, especially the bullet holes, which show that the children are facing danger. The background is grey and dusty, making the boys' darker skin tones more prominent and notable.

2.3.2.1.2 The Linguistic Choices Analysis

A. Word Connotation

The text mentions words such as *war zone*, *air strikes*, and *blast* to describe how the four young children were simply playing on the beach waiting for their fisherman father, a place normally associated with fun, peace, and freedom, and suddenly an airstrike attacked them. The mention of a *blast* and *war zone* shows how war has taken over even the most innocent spaces. The beach becomes a symbol of how nowhere is safe anymore, especially for children. The fear replaces what should have been joy. Immediately signal violence and

danger, turning ordinary places like a beach into spaces of fear. The use of *kidnapped*, *murdered*, *dragged*, *beaten*, and *burned alive* evokes deep emotional reactions, emphasizing brutality and horror. In the phrase *bodies of the Bakr cousins, scattered on the beach*, the description reflects both tragedy and dehumanization, making the death of children feel deeply personal and shocking. The expression *the sky turned red tonight* is metaphorical, but powerfully visual; it evokes *fire*, *blood*, and *chaos*, linking it to intense destruction due to the exchanged of Hamas and Israeli missiles. Phrases like *the rollout of Israeli tanks* and *relentless pounding* emphasize the large-scale nature of Israeli military action, painting a picture of ongoing violence. Additionally, terms such as *Iron Dome*, “*missile defence*,” and “*rocket capabilities*” introduce technical Israeli military language that normalizes warfare and fighting. Meanwhile, phrases like *victims of Hamas* and *victims of Israeli bombing* frame civilians, especially children, as caught between two violent forces, Hamas and Israel, underscoring their vulnerability. The description of a young boy with black hair was laying on the sand face down, with his legs lying beside him in an unnatural way. In the distance, waves were still crashing, giving the scene an appearance of normalcy. As it is mentioned in the text *strewn beside him in an unnatural position adds* to the sense of horror and loss, making the violence feels intimate and painful. Furthermore, *abject failure* is a very strong phrase. *Abject* means something is completely hopeless or miserable. When the writer says that Hamas has proved to be an *abject failure*, it is not just a criticism; it is a clear and harsh judgment that their leadership has failed. This frames Hamas as unable to provide for its people or handle the conflict effectively. Words such as *kids*, *restless* and *trying to forget* remind readers of the children's innocence, suggesting that despite the violence, they are still children seeking normalcy. Lastly, expressions like *all eyes should turn to Gaza* and *ceasefire must mean something* serve as moral calls to action, urging global attention and a meaningful resolution.

B. Overlexicalisation

The text uses a high concentration of words related to violence and conflict, such as *war zone*, *attack*, *bombing*, *rocket*, *ceasefire*, *conflict*, *fighting*, *air strikes*, *missile defence*, *Iron Dome*, and *shelling*. These repeated terms create a strong and constant atmosphere of war and tension, reminding the reader of the intense and continuous violence. The vocabulary also highlights the destructive and military tone of the war situation between Israel and Hamas, especially with repeated mentions of Israel's advanced military tools like *Iron Dome*. In addition to this, there are multiple mentions of death and suffering, with the use of terms like *bodies*, *killed*, *burned alive*, and *unnatural position*. These emotionally charged expressions emphasize the scale of human casualties and the horror of the experiences being witnessed and endured by children in Gaza. Another crucial pattern is the repetition of words related to children, such as *young boys*, *children*, *kids*, *Palestinian children*, *Israeli children*, and *Bakr cousins*. These repetitions bring out attention to the innocence and vulnerability of the young, centring them as victims of the conflict and highlighting sympathy from the reader. Lastly, *Hamas* is referred to several times throughout the text as well. This repetition emphasizes its position as a central actor in the conflict, frequently associated with aggression or blame. The repeated appearance of Hamas in contexts of violence or political failure reinforces its image as a primary antagonist in the story.

C. Suppression / Lexical Absence

Although the text makes mentions to Israeli civilians seeking refuge in shelters, it lacks in-depth or emotional descriptions of their encounters and experiences. In contrast to the portrayal of Palestinian suffering, it is characterized explicitly with graphic imagery and emotional language. The mention of the Israeli suffering civilians is implicit in a detached and muted way. Moreover, the article describes the Israeli military by using technical terms, such as the *rollout of tanks* or *strike warnings*, presenting them in a cold, distant manner, and as

natural actions, without criticizing their human consequences. The article lacks an in-depth analysis of how these actions affect the lives of Israeli citizens. It also briefly mentions international actors like the United Nations and Egypt, but it does not delve into their roles in initiatives and intervention. Notably, Western nations, especially those with significant political power in the region, are entirely absent from the narrative. A key example is the USA, which strongly supports Israel. Furthermore, while Palestinian civilians, especially children, are described in emotional and vivid detail, Israeli civilians are only mentioned in terms of seeking shelter, with little attention given to their losses or emotional state. This representation takes a selective approach, focusing mainly on the suffering Hamas has inflicted on Gaza from Israel's perspective. By doing so, it avoids accusing Israel while overlooking or ignoring Israel's role in the conflict.

D. Structural Opposition

One clear contrast is between *peace* and *violence*. The article mentions hopes for peace through a *temporary ceasefire*, *all eyes should turn to Gaza*, but then shows how quickly that hope disappears when *Israeli tanks* move in and the fighting continues. This shows how fragile peace is during the conflict. The text also shows a difference between *desperation* and *power*. It says that Hamas is *desperately squeezed* by pressure, while Israel is shown as very strong, with things like *the Iron Dome* defense system and *tens of thousands of soldiers*. This contrast shows that the two sides, Israel and Hamas, are not equal in strength or control. There is also a contrast between *innocence* and *the military*. Innocence children are shown playing and living ordinary lives, but this is placed against serious violence of the military in *rockets*, *tanks to fight*, *bombings* and *the sky turning red*. This latter refers to the color of the intensified rockets' smoke billowing, by the Israel and Hamas military attacks. This reminds that children are not part of the war, but they are the ones who suffer from it. The children

instead of enjoying their time, this innocence are living in fear. This makes the effect of the military actions tragic.

2.3.2.2. The Guardian News

This sample, published by The Guardian, contains both visual and linguistic elements focusing on the impact of war on children in Gaza. The image shows three young girls sitting on rubble, each holding a doll, with tents in the background indicating displacement. The accompanying text highlights the high death toll, widespread displacement, and psychological trauma faced by children, using emotionally charged language and statistics from UN agencies.



Figure 6: Selected shot from The Guardian coverage (The Guardian, December 24, 2024).

2.3.2.2.1. Visual Choices Analysis choices

A. Iconography

The image features three young girls sitting among the rubble, a powerful symbol of destruction and human suffering. The broken concrete and debris surrounding them visually represent the physical toll of war on civilian life. The presence of two dolls, held tightly by the children, acts as a strong symbol of lost childhood and innocence. These toys are commonly associated with safety and play. This latter appears out of place in the devastated environment, creating a stark contrast between normal childhood and the reality of conflict. In the background, there are numerous white tents expanding into the distance, suggesting a large-scale refugee camp or temporary shelter. This supports the article's mention of widespread displacement. The fact that the children are still holding onto their dolls emphasizes their emotional resilience and their desire to maintain a sense of normalcy amidst chaos. Overall, the visual component in this image underlines the heartbreaking and tragic disruption of childhood and displacement caused by war and displacement.

B. Attributes

The children in the image seem to be quite young, belonging to nearly the same age group, and most impacted by the conflict. Their clothing is casual and warm, but it looks dusty and worn, indicating the unstable and harsh conditions they are in. Their facial expressions are peaceful yet distant, possibly showing an effort to maintain a sense of normal life amid destruction around them. Each girl is holding a doll, highlighting their need for comfort and familiarity. However, these dolls also appear dusty, reflecting the ruined environment surrounded. This visual detail aligns with the mention in the text of children being “scarred physically and emotionally,” underscoring how both their external surroundings and inner emotional state are profoundly affected by the ongoing crisis.

C. Settings

The picture shows a large amount of broken concrete and rubble in the foreground, indicating that this place used to be a residential or public area that has been affected by conflict. The children can be seen sitting on the debris, showing the lack of safe and adequate shelter. The young girls' position among the ruins highlights their vulnerability. In the background, a lot of white tents spread out, forming a temporary camp for displaced families. These tents show that displacement is not isolated but widespread. Also, suggest that the displacement is ongoing and not just a temporary situation.

D. Salience

In the image, the children are positioned at the centre. This placement ensures that they are the first element to catch the viewer's attention. Their presence immediately draws focus, highlighting their importance in the visual narrative. The contrast between the children and the gray rubble surrounding them further emphasizes their vulnerability. Although the environment is colorless, the children and their toys appear slightly more colorful. This visual contrast makes them stand out. Additionally, the destruction that surrounds the children guides the viewer's eyes directly toward them, reinforcing their emotional and visual centrality in the image.

2.3.2.2.2. Linguistic Choices Analysis

A. Word connotation

Words such as *killed*, *war*, *death toll*, *displaced*, *forced to flee*, and *fatalities* immediately create a negative and tragic tone. These terms are not neutral; they are chosen to emphasize the human cost of the conflict, particularly for children. For instance, the phrase *one child killed every hour* is highly emotive and shocking, emphasizing the severity of the crisis. Moreover, *lives cut short* uses metaphorical language to depict unnatural deaths of children in Gaza, evoking powerful emotional responses from the audience. The statement *killing*

children cannot be justified is an absolute moral judgment, leaving no space for counterarguments. Similarly, *scarred physically and emotionally* emphasizes both external wounds and invisible trauma, suggesting the long-term psychological impact of war. In the terms *deprived of learning* and *sift through the rubble* they do not simply underline the destruction of education but also depict children as victims looking for survival amid chaos. The metaphor *the clock is ticking for these children* creates a sense of urgency, indicating that time is running out to help the children impacted by the Israeli war on Palestinian children. The expression *losing their lives, their futures, and mostly their hope* employs a triple structure to highlight the consequences of the conflict, from physical loss to emotional and psychological distress. By describing Gaza as the main focus of a *war on the territory*, it emphasizes the idea of widespread violence and destruction. Lastly, highlighting how children were *forced to flee their neighbourhoods* underscores their lack of agency and control, framing them as innocent victims who had no choice but to abandon their homes and live with uncertainty. These connotations create a highly sympathetic depiction of Palestinian children, drawing readers' attention to the immense suffering and the urgent need for a humanitarian response.

B. Overlexicalisation

The repetition of the word *children* in phrases such as *one child killed every hour*, *Palestinian children*, *boys and girls in Gaza*, *these children*, and *half of that number are children* emphasizes the focus on children as the primary victims. This repetition creates a strong emotional appeal, capturing the reader's attention to their vulnerability and suffering. Aside from repetitive mention of children, the text relies heavily on large numbers: for instance, *14,500 Palestinian children killed*, *44,000 deaths*, *44% of fatalities were children*, and *1.9 million Palestinians displaced*. These numbers are not just informative; they are used to emphasize the gravity and the large scale of the crisis, helping the audience realize the

massive human cost, particularly for young people. Besides, a series of emotionally charged action verbs such as *scarred*, *deprived*, *sift through*, and *losing* emphasize the increasing suffering faced by these children. These verbs are not neutral; they are subjective, show emotional and physical damage, portraying children as both victims of the violence and symbols of a larger humanitarian tragedy.

C. Suppression/ Lexical Absence

While it talks about the destruction and killing caused by Israeli airstrikes, it avoids directly naming the Israeli military or government as the responsible agent in the main narrative. For example, the phrase *killing children cannot be justified* appears, but without stating clearly who is doing the killing. This creates a tone of condemnation while still allowing room for interpretation, avoiding direct political accusation. In addition, the article does not mention any Palestinian armed groups such as Hamas, nor does it include terms like fighters, militants, or rockets. This lexical absence helps keep the focus solely on the suffering of civilians, especially children. By leaving out references to military actors or causes of violence on either side, the article shifts the attention away from politics and emphasizes humanitarian concerns. This strategy may be intended to evoke greater emotional engagement from the audience by focusing on children. Since the latter is a very sensitive subject to attract the reader's sympathy.

D. Structural Opposition

The key contrast is between *life* and *death* as seen in the phrases *losing their lives*, and *their futures and mostly their hope*. This creates a progression from survival to emotional collapse, showing how even those children who are alive are losing more than just physical safety; they are also losing their dreams and sense of security. Another clear opposition is between *survival* and *long-term suffering*, as shown in the contrast between *killing children cannot be justified* and *those who survive are scarred physically and emotionally*. While some children

survive the violence, the trauma they carry highlights that survival does not mean escape from harm. There is also an opposition between *childhood* and *war*, most evident in the line *deprived of learning* and *boys and girls in Gaza sift through the rubble*. These descriptions place children in a setting of destruction instead of school, replacing education and normal life with scenes of crisis and loss. This contrast challenges the expected image of childhood as a protected and nurturing period, replacing it with suffering, instability, and fear due to the ongoing conflict between Palestine and Israel.

2.3.2.3. The BBC News

This sample is taken from a BBC News article published in 2025. It contains both visual and linguistic elements. The article discusses the revived airstrikes on Gaza by Israel and the breakdown of a ceasefire agreement. It explains how the situation has declined again and highlights the political disagreements between the two sides. The photo included shows two young girls carrying empty water containers while walking through destroyed buildings. This image reflects the difficult conditions faced by civilians and children during the conflict. The image and the text show how political decisions and military actions have affected the daily lives of innocent children in Gaza.



Figure 7: Selected shot from BBC News (BBC News, March 19, 2025)

2.3.2.3.1. The Visual Choices Analysis

A. Iconography

The image shows two young girls carrying empty large plastic containers of water. These containers look heavy, and the girls' small bodies show how difficult this task is for them. They are forced to take on responsibilities beyond their age. Their school bags appear out of place, highlighting how the war has taken away their childhood and replaced it with struggle. The presence of the water containers also shows how even basic needs like clean water have become hard to access. The background is filled with rubble and broken buildings, symbolizing the destruction caused by war. This connects directly to the article's mention of Israeli air strikes, showing the real-life impact on children living in these conditions.

B. Attributes

The girls' appearance tells a lot about their situation. Their clothes are simple and dusty, showing that they are living in tough conditions, displacement, and hardship. Their shoes and

faces are also marked by the dirt and debris around them. It seems in the image they look tired from carrying the containers. This adds to the feeling of suffering and hardness, although the girls are smiling at each other. These small details show how the war has forced children to take on big responsibilities and how unsafe their environment has become.

C. Settings

The background of the image is full of rubble and destruction; there are broken buildings, and no signs of normal life, like trees or clean streets. The children are walking through all this destruction, and it makes the situation look very serious. The setting helps to understand how much damage the Israeli war on Gaza has caused, and how hard it is for people, especially children in Gaza, to live there. It shows that they are not only homeless but also trapped in a dangerous environment.

D. Salience

The two young girls are the most salient figures; the image makes the children stand out by using bright colors in their clothes and water containers. This draws the viewer's attention immediately against the grey background of the rubble. The way the light shines on the young girls also helps to focus the attention on them. The children are placed in the centre of the picture, making them the main focus. This shows their difficult journey and daily struggle to survive. The photographer chooses the right and preferred moment to capture the image when the girls are smiling, which represents the adaptation to their miserable living conditions.

2.3.2.3.2. Linguistic Choices Analysis

A. Word Connotation

The term *fragile truce* suggests that the peace of the ceasefire was weak and easily broken. *Deadly aerial campaign* is a powerful phrase that immediately signals death and destruction caused by Israel's airstrikes, framing the attacks as a continuous and violent effort. The expression *strong action* implies aggression and Israeli military power, used to justify further

escalation. Phrases like "repeated refusal" and an *increase of Hamas activity* present Hamas as uncooperative and threatening, reinforcing the Israeli repeated blame. The use of *complete deception* by some ministers' critics portrays the Israeli government as dishonest and misleading, while *distract from damaging legal and political crises* suggests that Prime Minister Netanyahu may be using the conflict to cover up personal problems. For example, to avoid the damage caused by Hamas in his own home. Saying the blame was laid *at Hamas's door* personalizes the accusation, Israel directly naming Hamas as responsible for breaking the truce of the ceasefire agreement. Meanwhile, terms like *fled their homes* highlight the suffering of civilians, especially children, and emphasize their victimhood and forced displacement. *Fundamental dispute* and *failure of recent efforts* point to deep divisions and unsuccessful peace talks about the ceasefire between the two sides, Israel and Hamas. Words like *struck targets* and *posing a threat* frame Israel's actions as strategic and necessary, justifying them as a defence for protection from Hamas. In the terms *subject of contention* and *pulled out of deal* they suggest ongoing disagreements and missed opportunities for peace, with *could have brought everyone home* adding a sense of lost hope by the hostages. The *ceasefire* reference suggests there was a chance to stop the violence. These word choices create a picture of an emotionally heavy situation characterized by Israeli military actions and human suffering on Gaza's children and civilians.

B. Overlexicalisation

There is a focus on violence and military actions, with repeated depictions such as *bombed Gaza*, *Israeli fighter jets unleashed a wave of bombardment*, and *deadly aerial campaign*. These all refer to the intensity and strength of Israel's operations, outlining a situation of relentless and enormous attacks. Through constantly using this sort of language, the article keeps the reader's awareness on the ongoing escalation and destruction of the war between Israel and Hamas. Similarly, there is repetition in how Hamas is framed, as in *repeated*

refusal to release our hostages, rejection of US proposals, and regroup their forces, reaffirming the picture of Hamas as the main obstacle to peace. This continuous highlighting of Hamas's actions according to the Israeli perspective suggests they are largely responsible for the renewal of violence. Additionally, political criticism appears multiple times, with phrases like *subject of contention, complete deception, and distract from damaging legal and political crises*. These expressions emphasize the internal political tensions in Israel and imply that the leadership may be using the conflict to shift attention away from its own problems. As it is mentioned in the text, it was a matter of heated disagreement between Hamas and Israel.

C. Suppression/ Lexical Absence

While it briefly mentions that *many Gazans fled their homes*, it does not include any personal accounts or direct voices from Palestinian civilians. There are no quotes or emotional descriptions that highlight their suffering. Instead, the article mainly focuses mostly on political statements and military actions, rather than highlighting the impact of the bombings on ordinary people in Gaza. In addition, the article fails to mention any losses experienced by Israeli soldiers or civilians, leaving out the perspective of Israel as a party affected by the conflict. This absence contributes to a narrative where Israel is framed only as the actor taking action. Besides the short mention to *the US proposals rejected by Hamas*, the article excludes the role of other international actors such as the United Nations, humanitarian groups, or Arab nations. This narrow view of the situation presents the conflict as a struggle between Israel and Hamas, with no broader international interest or involvement. In omitting perspectives and human experiences, the article presents a limited view of the conflict.

D. Structural opposition

One of the main contrasts is between *Israel* and *Hamas*. In fact, Israel is depicted as responding to threats of Hamas in *instructed to take strong action*, and Hamas is characterized as *posing a threat to its troops*. In addition, Hamas is portrayed as the side blocking peace and

efforts as in *refusal to release hostages, rejection of US proposals*. The latter shows Israel as the force reacting to provocation, with Hamas being depicted as the reason for instability. The second opposition is between *peace* and *violence*. The text introduces the idea of a *fragile truce* and quickly shifts to *wave of bombardment* and *deadly aerial campaign*, underscoring the breakdown of peace into revived violence. The third opposition appears in the contrast between *action* and *inaction*: the Israeli government is presented as taking concrete steps *strong action*, while Hamas is associated with rejecting efforts at peace. Finally, there is an opposition between *hostage release* and *military action*. The article suggests that Israel's airstrikes are justified by Hamas's refusal to release hostages, showing a divide between peaceful negotiation and a forceful military response. These structural oppositions shape the reader's comprehension and understanding of each side's role in the conflict.

To sum up, Western media, namely The New Yorker, The Guardian, and The BBC News, uses more extensive statistics, facts of destruction, and distant and haunting images to highlight the hardship faced by children. There is more urgency and emotional tone involved. The intention is to capture the conscience of the world and look for their interest.

2.4. Discussion of the Findings

This section represents the main findings from the multimodal critical discourse analysis of three Arab media sources (Al Arabiya, Al Jazeera, and Arab News) and three from Western media sources (The Guardian, BBC News, and The New Yorker). It highlights the similarities and differences of how each side represents children in Gaza using both linguistic and visual components. The results show how language, imagery, and framing construct ideologies and shape public perceptions of the conflict.

2.4.1. Similarities in Arab and Western Media Representations

Shared Discursive Strategies	Representation in Arab and Western Media
Child-centred framing	Children are portrayed as symbols of innocence and suffering.
Use emotionally charged language and statistics.	To stress the scale of damage and devastation.
Highlight humanitarian challenges	Such as a lack of food, education, health, and shelter.
Visually emphasize vulnerability and innocence.	Through images of children in ruins, shelters, or engaging in ordinary activities amid crisis.
Avoid negative graphic depictions of armed combatants.	Instead, focus on the impact of war on civilians, especially children.

Table 1: Similarities between Arab and Western Media Narratives

Despite the differences between Arab and Western media outlets in their representations, they share several important similarities in how they represent children in Gaza. In both types of media, children are placed at the center of the narrative, showing them as innocent, vulnerable, and human beings most affected in conflict. Whether in Arabic media like Al Jazeera, Arab News, and Al Arabiya or Western sources like BBC News, The Guardian, and The New Yorker, the language and images consistently emphasize the emotional and physical toll of war on young lives. Both media types highlight the suffering of children, often showing them displaced and deprived of education, or in need of psychological support. Phrases such as *scarred emotionally*, *deprived of learning*, or *faced to flee their homes* appear across all sources, showing a shared focus on trauma and loss. Visually, the children are often placed in ruined settings or shelters, surrounded by signs of conflict. In all the images, salience is used

to focus the viewer's attention on children through positioning, lighting, or facial expression, making them the most emotionally powerful elements in the frame. Additionally, both Arabic and Western texts emphasize humanitarian organization challenges and the need for action. This focus appears in references to vaccination campaigns and calls for ceasefires. While the media outlets may differ in political tone or intensity, they all use similar linguistic and visual strategies to present children as the most affected group in Gaza, innocent, powerless, and in need of urgent attention and care.

2.4.2. Differences in Arab and Western Media Representation

Category	Arabic media	Western media
Tone	More helpful and community-oriented.	More urgent, tragic, and emotional.
Framing of children	Emphasis on resilience, survival, and humanitarian aids (e.g., polio vaccination, classroom engagement).	A few mentions of humanitarian aid, the emphasis is more on the victimhood, trauma, and large-scale destruction (e.g., one child killed every hour).
Visual representation	Children are often shown smiling, participating in aid activities, and demonstrating peacefully.	Children are shown in rubble, dirty clothes, with haunting or distant gazes.
Narrative focus	Highlights collective action and international efforts to protect children (volunteers, aid campaigns).	Focus on external reactions, the death toll, and calls for global attention.

Linguistic strategy	Uses terms like <i>challenge</i> , <i>success</i> , and <i>humanitarian truce</i> with a balanced tone, suppresses direct blame, and the Hamas role in violence.	Uses stronger emotional phrases like <i>killed every hour</i> , <i>deliberate starvation</i> , and <i>war zone</i> , which often imply blame and accusation.
Suppression	Often avoid mentioning political blame, occupation, or internal Palestinian divisions.	Sometimes omits Palestinian voices or lacks context about Gaza's internal situation, like Hamas rule beyond the blaming, also lacks mention about Israeli civilian suffering, and omits the military acts.
Use of numbers and statistics	Limited but meaningful figures are used to support health and educational efforts.	Heavy use of numbers to stress urgency, including the child death toll, air strike statistics, and displacement rates.
Intended audience reaction and ideological framing	Inspire solidarity and perseverance within the regional audience, also it frames community survival and endurance under siege.	Provokes global sympathy and urgency for action, also it frames a humanitarian emergency and an international appeal for intervention.

Table 2: Differences between Arab and Western Media Narratives

Both Arab and Western media represent children in Gaza as the most affected by the war. They differ significantly in the way they frame and represent these children. Arab media outlets such as Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, and Arab News tend to emphasize framing about resilience, active humanitarian efforts, and community support. Focusing on survival despite hardship, with less emotional exaggeration. For instance, children are shown receiving vaccines, participating in school activities, or being protected by healthcare workers. These visuals and narratives seek to keep hope and emphasize internal efforts to care for children amid the conflict. On the other hand, Western media such as The New Yorker, The Guardian, and BBC News often rely on powerful statistics, haunting visuals, and emotional language to represent the situation. Children are often depicted in ruined settings, with dusty clothes, weird facial expressions, and surrounded by rubble. These reinforce a sense of helplessness, sorrow, misery, and despair. The language used is more tragic, urgent, and emotive, such as in phrases like *one child killed every hour* and *lives cut short*, dominating the narrative. Moreover, Western media focuses strongly on the toll and physical devastation, while Arab media illustrates more stories of daily life, health campaigns, and moments of normalcy. Western reports more openly describe Israeli military actions with defence, justification, and blame to the Hamas acts. Arab sources frequently suppress direct blame, avoiding politically sensitive depictions like *occupation* or *siege*. In addition, Arab media in their visuals and texts always refer to the humanitarian workers' aids (*volunteers, campaigns, vaccination*), however, the Western ones rarely mention them in *call for ceasefire*, which was agreed to happen in the final decision. While both media groups humanize children, they do so with different intentions. Arabic media uses children to highlight community survival, humanitarian progress, and internal solidarity. Western media uses children to mobilize emotional responses, highlight the scale of tragedy, justice, and intervention.

These differences reflect the ideological positions and audience expectations of each group. Arabic media seems to communicate to a regional audience familiar with the conflict and already know and aware of the political situation, while Western media addresses an international public that may respond more aggressively and strongly to emotionally charged appeals and statistics due to their heavy and harsh words to report about the situation without forgetting that they show what only they want to know and spread for the public, but the real truth is always hidden by their side.

2.4.3. Summarizing the main Findings

The results of this research show that both Arab and Western media use children as central figures in their reporting on Gaza, but they differ in tone, strategies, and ideological goals. Arab media, including Al Jazeera, Arab News, and Al Arabiya, present children as survivors and participating in community life, despite the harsh conditions of war. Their images show children in schools, at vaccination campaigns, or standing peacefully in shelters. The language used is more restrained and focuses on collective endurance, humanitarian efforts, and social rebuilding. In contrast, Western media such as The Guardian, BBC News, and The New Yorker tend to highlight the helplessness and suffering of children through powerful emotional language and visuals. Their reports often rely on shocking statistics and tragic imagery to evoke international sympathy. Children are usually shown as injured, grieving, and set in ruins with language that emphasizes death, trauma, and displacement. These findings suggest that both Arabic and Western media use children not only to report and reflect the human cost of war but also to connect with their audiences emotionally and ideologically. Arabic media aims to strengthen internal unity and portray Gaza as a community still resisting collapse. Western media, on the other hand, appeals to the international conscience and perspective for their interest, often simplifying the conflict by focusing on emotional impact over political complexity.

2.4.6. Comparing the Findings to Related Studies

The findings of this study are strongly supported by several related studies reviewed earlier. The research confirms that Kareem and Najm (2024) found that Western media often frames Palestinians negatively and as victims with limited context, while emphasizing perspectives as defensive. In the analysis of *The New Yorker*, for instance, children are described as scattered bodies on a beach, while Israeli military responses are framed in terms of revenge and defence. This supports the idea that Western media construct narratives that focus on Palestinian suffering but avoid giving full agency or political voice to Palestinians. The findings also align with Amer (2022), who observed that the BBC and the New York Times framed Israeli military actions in terms of necessary defence while downplaying or underestimating Palestinian narratives. In the analysis of this study, BBC News framed the conflict as a response to Hamas' refusal to release hostages, and affirmed that the actions of Israel's military are defensive, while the voices of children and civilians themselves are not directly heard. On the Arabic side, the findings of this research reflect those of Assaiqeli (2021), who noted that Arab media emphasizes community-based responses, local solutions, and national resilience. Also added that the visuals had brought importance to show more about the Palestinian issue. For example, the analysis of this research in *Al Arabiya's* report on the polio vaccination campaign shows how children are depicted not only as victims but as part of a collective that is surviving through organized efforts, even during war. This aligns with the idea that Arab media often presents Palestinians as active, enduring people rather than just victims. Khalil (2023) argued that visuals in Arab and Western media serve ideological goals. The current findings support this. In *Arab News*, children are shown in a moment of education and care, while in *The Guardian*, children are surrounded by rubble and described as cut off from education and hope. This difference in iconography reflects the broader ideological positioning: Arab media attempts to highlight life and survival, while

Western media highlights crisis and urgency. This study also complements SharafEdin (2019), who found that Arab media may avoid directly blaming Israel to focus on the humanitarian point of view, while Western media often mentions Israeli air strikes and actions as responses to Hamas attacks and report them with limited historical and political context. In the current analysis, Al Jazeera reports on children's deaths and displacement without always stating the cause explicitly, instead emphasizing calls for ceasefire and humanitarian access, western media, especially The New Yorker, The Guardian, adopt more emotionally intense tones, showing strong critics of the conflict's impact and always defends and advocates the Israeli's actions as a response and protection from Hamas. Finally, while previous research has explored the representation of Palestinians, Hamas, and the political conflict in both Arabic and Western media, very few studies have focused on how Palestinian children in Gaza are represented. Even fewer have done so using a multimodal critical discourse analysis approach that examines both textual (linguistic), and visual (image) strategies side by side. This study uniquely applies Machin and Mayr's (2012) framework of multimodal critical discourse analysis to investigate how children, a very sensitive subject, are used to construct different narratives in Arabic and Western media. This focus on children provides a fresh lens through which to analyze the ideologies, emotional appeals, and framing strategies used in conflict reporting. This research fills a gap in relation to previous related studies by offering a detailed, comparative examination of how media images and texts work together to impact public perceptions and understanding of the war and humanitarian suffering through the portrayal of children.

2.4.7. Answering the Research Questions

This study aims to answer three key research questions, focusing on how Arab and Western media outlets represent children in Gaza during the ongoing conflict. The analysis showed that both media outlets place children at the centre of their coverage; they portray them as innocent victims of war. However, the language, imagery, and narrative structures differ. Arabic media, such as Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, and Arab News, tend to use more restrained, neutral language and community-focused reporting, portraying children as survivors. Visuals frequently represent children participating in aid activities, schooling, and receiving medical care, reinforcing a message of endurance and community support. The overall narrative emphasizes resilience and collective support. In contrast, Western outlets such as The New Yorker, The Guardian, and BBC News use highly emotive language, focusing on death, injury, and trauma. The imagery is often dark and distressing, showing children in destroyed areas and grieving. The narrative structure in Western media centres on helplessness, tragedy, and urgency, aiming to provoke sympathy and emotional reaction from the global audience.

The visual and linguistic choices made by both media types significantly demonstrate ideologies about the conflict and the children affected by it. In Arab media, the use of supportive language and hopeful framing with constructive images may build a sense of solidarity, resistance, and resilience among Arab viewers, since the Arab countries always support the Palestinian case. It creates a narrative of children's survival under oppression. In Western media, the repeated use of emotive language and graphic visuals of injured and grieved children reinforces them as victims. This framing may evoke sympathy and international appeal for an agreement for Israel to evacuate the remaining population in the Gaza Strip, as they consider Palestine as their land, since most international countries, especially the USA, are on their side. So, it becomes easier for Israel to bring support and protection. In addition to that, the framing simplifies the political reality, presenting children

mainly as symbols of suffering without agency, and risks, reducing their experience to a narrative of endless victimhood and becoming a normal issue of daily life news. These choices shape how the global public understands the conflict and shape ideas about responsibility, justice, and intervention, particularly in relation to who is seen as powerful, helpless, and accountable.

2.5. Conclusion

To summarize, this chapter outlined the methodology adopted in this study. In addition, it has discussed the key findings, showing how Arabic and Western media represent children in Gaza by using different linguistic and visual strategies, then comparing these findings with previous related studies, and answering the research questions. This chapter highlights how media discourse is shaped by ideology, power, and the audience's perception and comprehension.

General Conclusion

The present study focuses on analyzing the representations of Gaza's children in the selected Arab and Western media through a multimodal critical discourse analysis approach. During an era when the media influence on public opinion, the reports of children in conflict zones such as Gaza go beyond simple representation; they provoke questions regarding ethical responsibility, ideological implications, and emotional influence.

Children are often represented in the media as symbols of suffering, innocence, and hope, but their experiences are influenced by the political and cultural context of the news outlets. This study involved an analysis of six media reports to expose the linguistic and visual practices used to construct narratives of children in Gaza. Three reports were chosen from Arab media outlets Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, and Arab News, as well as three from Western media outlets, including The New Yorker, The Guardian, and BBC News. The study's results revealed a combination of differences and similarities between the two sources of media.

Generally speaking, both Arab and Western media employed Gaza's children as victims of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the use of emotional language and affective imagery. Arab media, however, depict children not just as war-affected groups but also as part of the narrative that highlights the collective struggle of Palestinian civilians and children. This includes their relationship with family, their struggle to survive through hardship, and their role in overcoming resistance and resilience.

The language used was frequently calm and restrained, while the images depicted children being taken care of by receiving vaccines, returning to school, and playing with humanitarian aid. Western media used more dramatic language and emotional images, focusing heavily on grief, trauma, and physical damage. These differences are not merely a function of stylistic writing or image selection; rather, they reflect consideration of the deeper beliefs and aims of

both news media outlets. For example, the suffering of children in Arab media is likely to be part of a wider struggle and resistance, calling for a shared cultural and political solidarity with Palestinians. In contrast, Western media highlights children as innocent victims to focus on the human cost of the war, without giving full context and imposing responsibility directly on *Hamas*. These choices are shaped by what each media outlet expects its audience to relate to and the political position taken by the media outlet towards the conflict.

This research contributes to the existing literature in the field of media discourse. It offers a focused and comparative investigation of how children, one of the most symbolically powerful yet critically underexamined groups, are portrayed in conflict coverage. The adoption of Machin and Mayr's (2012) multimodal critical discourse analysis framework allowed the researcher to move beyond the surface-level interpretation to reveal the underlying ideologies perpetuated in both Arab and Western media outlets.

The research analysis focused on language and visual interaction to construct meaning. The Linguistic features like word connotations, overlexicalisation, suppression or lexical absence, and structural opposition, were compared with visual elements, such as iconography, attributes, settings, and salience. It helped to uncover implicit ideologies and power dynamics embedded in the media discourse.

This study has addressed an important issue and emphasized the importance of research on how children in war are constructed by different media. This has been shown that media representations are not simply reflective but actively shape narratives around war, innocence, and blame. By analyzing how these narratives are being constructed through language and imagery, this study gains an understanding of the ideological functions of media to shape international opinion and political discourse.

In conclusion, the portrayal of children in Gaza is more than a journalistic detail; it serves as a lens through which societal human perception of human and children suffering, justice, and moral responsibility are discovered. This study encourages critical thinking about how these portrayals affect public understanding and calls for media practices that maintain accuracy, context, and empathy. In the face of ongoing global conflicts, the way in which children are depicted, the most vulnerable group, must remain a central concern not only for journalism but within broader human ethics and responsibility.

1. Limitations

In any academic study, it is crucial to cite the several limitations that have been encountered. The analysis of this study focused on a selected set of images and texts from specific known media outlets: the Arab outlets (Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, Arab News) and the Western outlets (The New Yorker, The Guardian, BBC News). This does not fully represent the entire media landscape. Also, the analysis covers a specific period (2014, 2024, and 2025) of the conflict; media representation may evolve, especially in long-term conflicts, which could change narrative patterns. Then, while the multimodal approach covers texts and images, it does not include audio-visual content such as videos or live broadcasts, which are also powerful in shaping public perception. Furthermore, this study focused on media production and content, but it did not explore how the audience interprets or reacts to these representations. Therefore, including audience analysis could offer a deeper understanding of media impact. In addition to these structural limitations, the study also faced certain practical challenges. It was challenging for the researcher to gather relevant references for the theoretical chapter, specifically in the part explaining the multimodal critical discourse analysis framework, as there are few studies and they all rely on the same references. In addition, the limited time did not allow a detailed analysis of the texts and pictures employing linguistic and visual strategies that encompass several components. More importantly, analyzing emotionally

charged and politically sensitive content requires careful reflection and attention while staying objective and avoiding complete subjectivity. Finally, there was limited access to certain news archives, especially when it was related to dates; there were difficulties in finding reports from earlier and ancient times, only fewer were existed, and some of their images were not at all clear to analyse.

2. Recommendations

Both Arab and Western media place children at the center in their coverage, but often exclude the direct voices of Palestinian civilians, especially children themselves. Future reporting should include personal stories and perspectives from those living through the conflict to enrich public understanding. Comparative studies across periods may also help to analyze changes in media discourse. Then, future academic researchers are encouraged to explore other media types, such as social media platforms, video news, journals, television, or broadcast, to better understand how digital spaces construct narratives of children in conflict zones. Also, future researchers could adopt another analytical framework, such as Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) multimodal discourse analysis. In addition to that, expanding this research to compare the representation of children in other global conflicts, like in Syria, Yemen, and Ukraine, would offer valuable insights into universal and context-specific media themes. Moreover, instructors teaching media literacy or conflict studies should integrate multimodal critical discourse analysis methods to help students critically engage with how media constructs meaning. This framework can be a valuable tool for uncovering hidden ideologies and perspectives in news content.

3. Implications

This study has several academic and practical implications. Academically, it contributes to the field of media discourse by applying a multimodal critical discourse analysis to the under-researched subject of children's representation in conflict zones. It also highlights the

importance of combining linguistic and visual analysis to fully understand media narratives. Practically, the study underscores the need for more responsible and sensitive media practices, especially when covering children affected by war. It also suggests that audience perceptions are not just shaped by what is said, but by how it is shown, emphasizing the role of visual framing in media. These insights are useful for journalists, human rights organizations, teachers, professors, or policymakers interested in ethical media reporting and child protection in conflict areas. Moreover, this study will help researchers to find and collect data, also understand more about the field of multimodal critical discourse analysis, and how to analyze linguistic and visual elements in media reports; they can use it as a copy example and have a version of how to analyze for facilitating their work. To add more, this study could raise public awareness about how the media frames children and make them curious to search more about the issue and to know the hidden truths.

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يتناول البحث الحالي دراسة تقديم الأطفال في قطاع غزة عبر وسائل الإعلام العربية والغربية المختارة من منظور تحليل الخطاب النقدي متعدد الوسائط. وتستجيب الدراسة لنقص البحوث النقدية المتعلقة بكيفية استخدام الأطفال رمزيًا في تغطية الصراع وتمثيلهم من خلال استخدام المكونات اللغوية والبصرية. وقد تم فحص ستة مصادر إعلامية للدراسة، ثلاثة منها من مصادر عربية (الجزيرة، العربية، والأخبار العربية) وثلاثة من مصادر غربية (بي بي سي نيوز، والغارديان، ونيويورك) استنادًا إلى الإطار النظري الذي وضعه ماشين وماير (2012). وتسلط الدراسة الضوء على المكونات اللغوية المهمة مثل دلالة الكلمة، والإفراط في التضمين، والإخفاء/ الغياب اللغوي، والتضاد البنائي، ثم المكونات البصرية مثل الأيقونة، والسمات، والإعدادات، والوضوح. وتظهر النتائج أن كلا النوعين من وسائل الإعلام يصور الأطفال كضحايا للحرب، مع وجود اختلافات في أساليب التأطير والمضامين الأيديولوجية. فوسائل الإعلام العربية تصور الأطفال في سرديات تسلط الضوء على نجاتهم وصمودهم وتعليمهم وتدخّل المساعدات الإنسانية، وتقدم المعلومات بطريقة محايدة مصحوبة بصور مناسبة. وعلى العكس من ذلك، غالبًا ما يركز الإعلام الغربي على إبراز الحاجة الملحة العاجلة والصدمات المؤلمة، بالإضافة إلى المصاعب العاطفية، وغالبًا ما يستخدم لغة مثيرة ودرامية مع صور مؤثرة. وتوضح هذه الاختلافات المواقف الأيديولوجية وتوقعات الجمهور، مما يؤكد تأثير السياق الثقافي والسياسي على الخطاب الإعلامي. يسلط هذا البحث الضوء على أهمية استخدام مناهج متعددة الوسائط للكشف عن المعاني الكامنة في النصوص الإعلامية. وتختتم الدراسة باقتراح ضرورة تبني وسائل الإعلام ممارسات أكثر أخلاقية وتدعو إلى إجراء المزيد من البحوث حول تصوير الفئات المستضعفة في الصحافة العالمية

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأطفال في غزة، الأيديولوجيات، الإعلام العربي والغربي، الاستراتيجيات اللغوية والبصرية، تحليل الخطاب النقدي متعدد الوسائط

Résumé

La présente étude porte sur la représentation des enfants de la bande de Gaza dans les médias arabes et occidentaux sélectionnés, du point de vue de l'analyse critique multimodale du discours. L'étude répond au manque de recherche critique sur la façon dont les enfants sont utilisés symboliquement dans la couverture des conflits et sont représentés par l'utilisation de composants linguistiques et visuels. Six sources médiatiques sont examinées pour l'étude, trois de sources arabes (Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, Arab News) et trois de sources occidentales (BBC News, The Guardian, The New Yorker) sur la base du cadre théorique établi par Machin et Mayr (2012). L'étude met en évidence les composantes linguistiques importantes telles que la connotation des mots, la surlexicalisation, la suppression/l'absence de lexique et l'opposition structurelle, suivies des composantes visuelles telles que l'iconographie, les attributs, les décors et la saillance. Les résultats montrent que les deux types de médias présentent les enfants comme des victimes de la guerre, mais qu'il existe des différences dans les styles de cadrage et les implications idéologiques. Les médias arabes décrivent les enfants dans des récits mettant en avant leur survie, leur résilience, leur éducation et l'intervention de l'aide humanitaire, en présentant les informations de manière neutre et en les accompagnant d'images appropriées. Au contraire, les médias occidentaux mettent souvent l'accent sur l'urgence immédiate et les traumatismes pénibles, ainsi que sur les difficultés émotionnelles, en utilisant fréquemment un langage sensationnel et dramatique avec des images percutantes. Ces différences illustrent les positions idéologiques et les attentes du public, soulignant l'influence du contexte culturel et politique sur le discours des médias. Cette recherche met en évidence l'importance de l'utilisation d'approches multimodales pour découvrir les significations sous-jacentes des textes médiatiques. L'étude conclut en suggérant que les médias devraient adopter des pratiques plus éthiques et appelle à la poursuite des recherches sur la représentation des groupes vulnérables dans le journalisme mondial.

Mots clés: analyse critique multimodale du discours, enfants de Gaza, médias arabes et occidentaux, idéologies. Stratégies linguistiques et visuelles.

The Appendices

A. Appendix of Arab media reports

1. Al Jazeera

In Pictures: The toll on Gaza's children

After losing their homes and watching family members die, many children in Gaza require psychological support.

An estimated 60,000 civilians - more than half of whom are children - are still living in shelters across the Gaza Strip, including UN-run schools.

Politicians and donors from around the world are meeting with Palestinian officials in Cairo to talk about rebuilding Gaza. The conservatively estimated price tag from the last war is \$4bn, and aid agencies have said that under current restrictions, the process will take 20 years.

But the chance of another round of violence in the coming years remains high. For those who have survived previous wars, the psychological costs have already been immense – especially for the children.

More than half of the population in Gaza is below the age of 18. Most of the youth in this besieged territory have already witnessed three wars, each one worse than the last. At least 2,150 people in Gaza were killed during the most recent war, including more than 500 children. More than 3,500 children were injured, many now struggling with life-long disabilities.

The psychological trauma endured by all the young survivors is hard to overestimate: The United Nations believes that over half of the children in Gaza now need significant support. Tens of thousands witnessed firsthand the killings of family members, neighbours and friends, and many lost their homes.

Today, as residents look to rebuild from the rubble of their demolished homes, a considerable amount of psychological and social rebuilding must happen simultaneously.

One week before classes were to resume, volunteers did what they could to entertain children at this school-turned-shelter.

The neighbourhood in Rafah where these boys live was decimated by an air strike, but they still flash the ubiquitous peace/victory sign.

2. Al Arabiya

90% من أطفال غزة تلقوا جرعة أولى من لقاح شلل الأطفال

"مفوض الأونروا أكد أن "طرفي الصراع احترما إلى حد كبير الهدن الإنسانية المختلفة المطلوبة

قال فيليب لازاريني المفوض العام لوكالة الأمم المتحدة لغوث وتشغيل اللاجئين الفلسطينيين "الأونروا" اليوم الاثنين إن تغطية حملة التطعيم ضد شلل الأطفال في قطاع غزة وصلت إلى 90%، مضيفاً أن الخطوة المقبلة هي ضمان حصول مئات الآلاف من الأطفال على جرعة ثانية بنهاية الشهر الجاري

وشكلت الحملة الرامية لتحصين نحو 640 ألف طفل دون العاشرة في القطاع تحدياً كبيراً للأونروا وشركائها بسبب الحرب بين إسرائيل وحركة حماس. وبدأت الحملة في الأول من سبتمبر الجاري

جاءت الحملة بعد أن أكدت منظمة الصحة العالمية الشهر الماضي إصابة طفل بشلل جزئي بسبب فيروس شلل الأطفال من النوع الثاني في أول حالة من نوعها في الأراضي الفلسطينية منذ 25 عاماً

وتلقى أكثر من 446 ألف طفل فلسطيني في وسط وجنوب القطاع اللقاح هذا الشهر قبل بدء حملة لتحصين العدد الباقي الذي يبلغ 200 ألف طفل في شمال القطاع في العاشر من سبتمبر رغم قيود على الوصول للمنطقة وأوامر إخلاء ونقص في الوقود

وقال لازاريني إن الجولة الأولى من حملة التطعيم في قطاع غزة انتهت بنجاح وأضاف أن 90% من أطفال القطاع تلقوا الجرعة الأولى

وأضاف على إكس: "احترم طرفا الصراع إلى حد كبير الهدن الإنسانية المختلفة المطلوبة مما يشير إلى أنه مع توفر الإرادة السياسية يمكن تقديم المساعدة دون عراقيل. التحدي المقبل الذي نواجهه هو تقديم جرعة ثانية للأطفال بنهاية "سبتمبر".

The text translated by the researcher.

90 per cent of Gaza children received first dose of polio vaccine

UNRWA Commissioner emphasised that 'both parties to the conflict have largely respected the various humanitarian truces requested'

Philippe Lazzarini, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), said on Monday that coverage of the polio vaccination campaign in the Gaza

Strip has reached 90 per cent, adding that the next step is to ensure that hundreds of thousands of children receive a second dose by the end of this month.

The campaign to immunise some 640,000 children under the age of 10 in the Gaza Strip has been a major challenge for UNRWA and its partners due to the war between Israel and Hamas. The campaign began on 1 September.

The campaign came after the World Health Organisation (WHO) confirmed last month that a child was partially paralysed by the polio type 2 virus in the first case of its kind in the Palestinian territories in 25 years.

More than 446,000 Palestinian children in central and southern Gaza have received the vaccine this month before a campaign to vaccinate the remaining 200,000 children in northern Gaza begins on September 10, despite access restrictions, evacuation orders and fuel shortages.

Lazzarini said that the first round of the vaccination campaign in the Gaza Strip ended successfully and added that 90 per cent of Gaza's children received the first dose.

He added on Xinhua: 'Both sides of the conflict have largely respected the various humanitarian truces requested, indicating that with political will, assistance can be delivered unhindered. Our next challenge is to deliver a second dose to children by the end of September.'

3. Arab News

Children in Gaza face the grim prospect of another year without schooling — unless a ceasefire is agreed soon

Almost 88 percent of Gaza's schools have been damaged or destroyed under Israel's relentless bombardment

LONDON: As schoolchildren around the globe prepare their backpacks for the new academic year, more than half a million pupils in Palestine's embattled Gaza Strip face a second year in a row without an education.

Over the past year, some 625,000 children in Gaza have been deprived of schooling, according to the UN children's fund, UNICEF. With little prospect of a permanent ceasefire, they are unlikely to return to schools this month.

According to the cluster, which made a damage assessment using satellite imagery, direct Israeli strikes have severely damaged 212 of the enclave's schools and caused moderate to minor damage to a further 282.

Some 70 percent of the schools operated by the UN Relief and Works Agency have also suffered damage. However, since October, around 95 percent of these schools have been transformed into shelters for displaced households.

Attacks on schools are deemed a grave violation of children's rights and are prohibited under international humanitarian law.

Israeli authorities have insisted they do not target civilians or civilian infrastructure, instead accusing Hamas of using schools and hospitals as command centers from which to launch attacks and using their occupants as human shields.

In August, the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services concluded that nine UNRWA staff members may have been involved in the Oct. 7 Hamas-led attack, while the records of 10 others are still being reviewed.

UNRWA employs 32,000 people across its area of operations — 13,000 of them in Gaza. The UN launched the investigation after Israel said in January that 12 UNRWA staff had taken part in the Oct. 7 attack. Seven more cases were brought to the UN's attention in March and April.

Save the Children warned in April that "when children are out of school for a long period, their learning does not just stop but is also likely to regress. We know from previous crises that the longer children are out of school, the greater the risk that they do not return.

"This risks their prospects in the longer-term, including their income, and their mental and physical health, while they may also be at greater risk from violence and abuse."

More than 34 people, at least 28 of them children, have already died from severe malnutrition, Gaza's health authority reported in late June.

The international community has accused the Israeli government of using the starvation of civilians as a weapon of war.

In May, the International Criminal Court’s prosecutor Karim Khan requested arrest warrants for Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, accusing them of deliberately starving civilians.

The Israeli government has repeatedly denied the accusations. However, high-ranking officials, including Gallant himself, publicly stated their intention to deprive civilians in Gaza of food, water and fuel at the outset of the conflict last year.

At least 1.9 million of Gaza’s 2.2 million-strong population have been displaced — many of them multiple times — as the Israeli military has evacuated Palestinian families from one “safe zone” to another. In the process, children have been deprived of the stability required for learning.

B. Appendix of Western media reports

1. The New Yorker

The Children of Gaza and Israel

Ordered to stay indoors for another day as Israel continued its Gaza air strikes, the four young boys—all cousins, the sons of local fishermen—decided to slip out. They were on the beach, playing, when the first blast sounded. Perhaps they had been trying to forget, for a few moments, that their playground had become a war zone, that there were airplanes whizzing overhead. The captured image is the stuff of nightmares: a little boy with a shock of black hair lying face down on the sand, his legs strewn beside him in an unnatural position, waves still crashing in the distance, as if this were an ordinary scene.

There's no escaping the sense that the real victims of the latest conflict are children—as they have been in so many other recent conflicts. The current fighting began when three Israeli teen-agers were kidnapped and murdered. A Palestinian teen-ager was subsequently dragged into a Jerusalem forest, beaten, and burned alive. At least forty-five Palestinian children have been killed. Thousands of Israeli children are finding refuge in bomb shelters on a daily basis. And then this: the bodies of the Bakr cousins, ranging in age from seven to thirteen, scattered on the beach on a summer day.

This was on Wednesday, Day Nine of the fighting in Gaza: seventeen Palestinians had been killed and a hundred and thirty-two rockets launched by Hamas at Israel. By the end of the week, the Palestinian death toll had passed two hundred and fifty, and Hamas had fired more than a thousand rockets at Israel.

Thursday began with a flurry of mixed messages: the United Nations called for a temporary ceasefire to begin on Friday, and Reuters reported that a permanent truce had been proposed by Egypt and accepted by Israeli representatives. All this came on the heels of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's oft-repeated statement during his round of Sunday talk-show interviews that the military's goal is to achieve "sustainable quiet" for the people of Israel—a relatively modest aspiration compared to the war rumblings coming from some members of his coalition.

Then, on Thursday, thirteen Hamas militants crossed the border through an underground tunnel, and were detected outside a kibbutz near Gaza. This thwarted attempt suggests a

change in Hamas strategy—from the use of rockets to the use of tunnels. As Israel’s much lauded missile defense system, known as Iron Dome, has diminished Hamas rocket capabilities, the organization has fought back with a low-tech, manual offense—the digging of tunnels leading deep into Israeli territory. This tactic is extremely hard to combat. Left unaddressed, it could allow a Hamas cell to enter Israel and attack a population center.

Before Thursday, a temporary ceasefire—known in Israel as “quiet for quiet”—had seemed possible, if unlikely, but the day ended with the rollout of Israeli tanks and the announcement of a ground operation in Gaza. Israel’s goal is to “damage the underground tunnel tunnels constructed in Gaza leading into Israeli territory,” according to the defense minister, Moshe Ya’alon; fifty thousand reservists have been mobilized, and an additional eighteen thousand began to get called up overnight. Reports have come in that twenty Palestinians and an Israeli soldier were killed. A witness to the military’s bombings on Thursday told the Israeli news site Ynet that “the sky turned red tonight.”

For years, the Israeli occupation of Gaza created unconscionable strictures on movement and impoverishment, all while Israel continued to construct settlements in the area. In 2005, Israel pulled its military and citizens out of the Gaza Strip; the following year, Hamas won a free election there. Since then, Hamas has turned its iron fist on an entire population. Ten days ago, a desperately squeezed Hamas fuelled the conflict largely due to its economic woes: Israel had leaned on Qatar to freeze payments to forty thousand Hamas employees in Gaza, and the Gaza border had been sealed not only by Israel but by an Egyptian President whom Hamas considers an enemy. A temporary lull, accepted by Netanyahu on Tuesday, was brushed off by Hamas as “indicative of Israel’s weakness.” When Israel issued repeated strike warnings this week, Hamas called on Gazans who had evacuated their homes to “return to them immediately” and “not leave the house,” undoubtedly knowing that they could be killed. Hamas has declared that all Israelis are “legitimate targets” in its fight. With unemployment in Gaza of at least forty per cent and an increasingly disgruntled population, the Hamas government has proved itself an abject failure. The recent escalation can be seen as its attempt to be counted.

Apparently feeling the pressure, Hamas on Wednesday reportedly published its own set of conditions for a ten-year truce. These included the opening of border crossings, an easing of the Israeli blockade on the Gaza seaport, the release of Palestinian operatives who were freed in a 2011 swap and rearrested in the aftermath of the teen-agers’ abduction, and unimpeded

entry to Palestinians wishing to pray in Jerusalem's al-Aqsa Mosque. It was because of Israel's rejection of these last two demands, according to a Times of Israel report, that negotiations in Cairo between the two sides and delegates from the Palestinian Authority broke down on Thursday, hours before Israel embarked on its ground operation.

School is out for the summer. The sun is beating down on Israel and Gaza. Kids are growing restless. So that they don't have to pay with their lives for a game of hide-and-seek on a beach, so that they don't have to duck for cover every time a siren sounds, all eyes should turn to Gaza in hopes that this conflict finally comes to an end.

2. The Guardian

Middle East crisis: one child killed every hour in Gaza, UN says – as it happened

One child gets killed every hour in Gaza, Unrwa says

Quoting Unicef figures, the UN agency for Palestine refugees (Unrwa) has said that 14,500 Palestinian children have been killed since the start of Israel's war on the territory last October.

In a post on X, Unrwa, which has been banned from operating within Israel and occupied East Jerusalem by the Israeli parliament, wrote:

One child gets killed every hour. These are not numbers. These are lives cut short. Killing children cannot be justified. Those who survive are scarred physically and emotionally.

Deprived of learning, boys & girls in Gaza sift through the rubble. The clock is ticking for these children. They are losing their lives, their futures & mostly their hope.

The estimated death toll from Israeli airstrikes in Gaza (in early December this year) was more than 44,000 and a recent assessment by the UN Human Rights Office found that 44% of the fatalities it was able to verify were children. About 1.9 million Palestinians in Gaza, approximately 90% of the territory's total population, have been displaced, many several times. Half of that number are children who have lost their home and been forced to flee their neighbourhoods.

3. The BBC News

Why has Israel bombed Gaza and what next for ceasefire deal?

Many Gazans have fled their homes against after Israel renewed air strikes.

Israeli fighter jets unleashed a wave of bombardment across the Gaza Strip through the night, ripping into a fragile truce that has mostly held since it came into effect in January.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu overnight laid the blame at Hamas's door for the renewal of his deadly aerial campaign.

The Israeli leader's statement said the military have been instructed to take "strong action" against Hamas following their "repeated refusal to release our hostages" as well as its rejection of US proposals.

In local press, Israeli military sources have also talked about seeing an increase of Hamas activity to regroup their forces in recent days. While the truce mostly held until last night, officials at the Hamas-run Ministry of Health in Gaza have said that over 140 people have been killed by Israel in the two months since it came into effect in January.

In recent weeks, the Israel military has said it's repeatedly struck targets they've identified as Hamas fighters posing a threat to its troops stationed in Gaza.

But the reasons for Netanyahu's decision to return to attacking Hamas is a subject of contention.

The Hostages and Missing Families Forum has accused the government of "a complete deception" by pulling out of a deal "that could have brought everyone home."

While some of the prime minister's most staunch critics suggest that the attacks are an attempt by Netanyahu to distract from damaging legal and political crises he faces closer to home.

Most critically, there is a fundamental dispute between the Israeli and Hamas sides about who is to blame for the failure of recent efforts to progress the ceasefire.