

Representations of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict on Twitter: A Corpus-based Linguistic Analysis

Rehab Hassan Mahmoud

Languages Department, College of Language and Communication, Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, Alexandria, Egypt.

E-Mails: rehabhassann@aast.edu

Received on: 25 March 2025

Accepted on: 04 April 2025

Published on: 22 April 2025

ABSTRACT

The present study aims not only to linguistically analyze the tweets produced in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from October 7th to 30th in 2023, which is the first twenty-three days of the conflict but also to present a multi-layered analysis of the linguistic elements in the selected tweets. It also investigates the representations of the conflict in 475 tweets of a number of Western public figures and international organizations, which were analyzed in a quantitative and qualitative study design. The study employs a triangulation of three theoretical frameworks, namely, Halliday's (2014) framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics, Fairclough's (1989) three-dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis, and van Dijk's (1993) socio-cognitive framework of ingroup and outgroup representation. In a corpus-based approach, the study explores the frequency of not only conflict-related lexical elements but also their two- or three-word clusters in the selected tweets by using the software program; that is, AntConc (3.5.7, 2018), which helps identify the keywords and clusters that are frequently used and distributed in the tweets. Results demonstrate a preponderant use of a number of words as well as two- or three-word clusters related to Israel, Hamas, Gaza, etc, which not only contribute to the writer's construction of meaning but also present the West's support towards Israel's military operations in Gaza.

Keywords: Corpus, Critical Discourse Analysis, Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Twitter.

1. INTRODUCTION

Used as public communication channels, social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, among others, have emerged and been globally used as "the most notable manifestation of the world's information and communication technology" (Alhadlaq and Alnuaim, 2023). According to Zeitzoff (2017) and Chan (2016), social media not only "allow people to follow and exchange ideas and information with other users or groups" but also "play a major role in modern democracies, enabling individuals to openly discuss political and societal issues as well as respond to crises and emergencies" (p.1). Gonzalez et al. (2021) regard Twitter as "an important means of conveying social attitudes" (p.2). According to Twitter statistics, in 2023, the number of Twitter users will reach 528.3 million, reaching 652.23 million by 2028. This echoes the importance of propagating information through social media.

The ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict has become not only one of the most aggressive military conflicts in the Middle East but also the most vicious one against the Palestinian people since 1948. It commands the attention of the whole world and drastically divides international public opinion towards critical conflict in the Middle East. On October 7th, 2023, Israel started waging a military action against the Palestinian nation as a result of Hamas' attacks. It has done a complete siege of the Gaza Strip, which is part of the Palestinian state.

In the context of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is essential to investigate the representations created by the West about such conflict. Furthermore, there are few studies that employ social media, namely Twitter, as a primary data source to both quantitatively and qualitatively examine online tweets in the context of a prolonged crisis event, namely, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. There is also a scarcity of research

that not only examines such conflict from the linguistic perspective but also examines the representational practices of social media from a critical perspective. Accordingly, the present study extends the growing political communication research on Twitter by examining the representation of such conflict.

With an interdisciplinary nature, the present study adopts Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics in order to explore the various representations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the tweets of a number of Western sources which were posted in the first twenty-three days of the conflict. It not only adopts Fairclough's (1989) three-dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis, which would help in the description, interpretation, and explanation of the data in the tweets but also makes use of Van Dijk's (1993) socio-cognitive framework of representation.

The present study seeks to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the different categories of the lexical elements in the selected tweets in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
2. How is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict represented in the selected tweets?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents an account of the three areas of interest in the present study, which formulate an essential foundation for the investigation of the ingroup and outgroup representations, positions, and identities constructed in the selected tweets from a linguistic perspective.

2.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics

Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) provides a functional study of language in different settings or contexts and seeks to investigate the relationship between language and society. It also seeks to examine how language is constructed as a semiotic system. Liu (2017) argues that the SFL theory "characterizes language as a social semiotic or meaning-creating resource, with meaning resting in the connections between alternatives in meaning systems" (p.30). In SFL, there are three layers of meaning: ideational, interpersonal, and textual meta-functions. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), modality is defined as "one of the most important linguistic functions in language communication; that is, it could be used for the function of expressing any of the following:

possibility, permission, probability, obligation, certainty, and requirement" (p. 172). They also argue that there is a close connection between modality and subjectivity which focuses "not only on the expression of the speaker or writer but also on the representation of his/her perspective in texts" (2014, 177); that is to say, a speaker's or writer's imprint in discourse. As a result, a writer or a speaker stipulates his/her stances or positioning, which is in conformity with or in diversion from the other perspectives or voices. Fairclough (2010) claims that modal auxiliaries "can be used to express speakers' social and economic relationships with their addressees" (p.82).

2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

As a major branch of Discourse Analysis, the three-dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), embedded in the Critical Theory, employs a critical approach to social research (Fairclough 2003), which "makes explicit the implicit relationship between discourse, power, and ideology, and contributes to social change" (p.279). It is considered a theoretical foundation for the analysis of discourse, which critically links the three levels of text, interaction, and social context.

Fairclough (1995) provides an orientation toward language that links linguistic text analysis to the social theory of language in political and ideological contexts. According to Fairclough, CDA aims to "discover the systematic properties of language for the purpose of displaying a clear configuration of texts, including talks, debates, speeches, agreements, and interviews, and to uncover the ideological and power patterns in them" (p.25). In a recent study, Khawaldeh and Abu Hatab (2018), as cited in Almahasees and Mahmoud (2022), argue that CDA primarily focuses on identifying how power and ideology are connected in discourse. Van Dijk (1995) regards ideology as "a set of beliefs with cultural and political functions enacted in implicit discourse" (p.244).

As a theoretical framework, social media critical discourse analysis combines CDA with social media. According to Wodak and Meyer (2009), CDA has been used to investigate the use of language in social media and to determine the various elements of power, authority, and ideology that are presented in social discourse by means of some common sense ideas. Although these ideas go unnoticed by the general public, CDA contributes to raising the public's awareness of how language can impact viewpoints and shape public opinion about particular events such as crises, conflicts, and wars. In their recent study, KhosraviNik and Sarkhoh (2017) consider this methodology an essential aspect of analyzing social

media communication. Sorrells (2020, 251) claims that social media "allow people to become active producers, that is, participants in the construction of meanings through a range of media resources." Klimava and Moyer (2016) employ CDA in their study in which they investigate "how language is used to establish particular ideological viewpoints in the international press coverage of the war in Ukraine before the start of the 2022 conflict" (p.5).

2.3 Socio-Cognitive Framework of Representation

In his framework of ideology, van Dijk (1993) explores the relationship between social cognition, society, and discourse. He presents a paradigm in which he represents the four discursive strategies utilized in texts in order to describe the different social groups and their relations. The macro-strategies of self-presentation include emphasizing its positive points and de-emphasizing its negative points, whereas the other macro-strategies of negative presentation include emphasizing its negative points and de-emphasizing its positive points. These strategies categorize people into ingroup vs. outgroup, reflecting "their attitudes and identity construction which may affect the interpretation of social practices or discourses that group members engage in" (van Dijk 2009).

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The present study follows the triangulation technique of adopting three analytical frameworks, namely, Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics, which considers language not only as a means for meaning creation but also as a form of social practice; Fairclough (1989) Model of Critical Discourse Analysis; and van Dijk (1993) socio-cognitive framework of representation. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), the clause is the vehicle for the expression of the written message, and as a result, an insight is provided to

explore not only what a writer says but also what he/she does by means of language.

According to Fairclough's (1989) Model of Critical Discourse Analysis, there are three dimensions of analysis, namely, description, interpretation, and explanation. The present study provides a three-layered analysis, in which the first part is based on the description of the selected tweets related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from October 7th to 30th, 2023. The linguistic analysis of the selected tweets focuses on the lexical elements used by the writer as well as their frequencies. In the second part of the analysis, the study examines the two- or three-word clusters of all categories of the lexical elements in order to investigate the ingroup and outgroup representations of the conflict by the West on Twitter. In the third part of the analysis, the study provides an explanation of the connection between the selected tweets and socio-cultural practices in the context.

3.1 Data Collection

Data were collected from the accounts of a number of public figures and international organizations on Twitter from October 7th to 30th, 2023. The selected tweets are presented in English, whereas the Arabic tweets associated with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are discarded from the study. The English tweets are considered a manageable corpus for the analysis, whose size is large enough to provide a sufficient number of occurrences of the selected lexical elements. These tweets fall into three categories: tweets from public figures, tweets from international organizations, and tweets from Western activists. The public figures are President Joe Biden, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and President Macron of France. Activists are a group of journalists, writers, Parliament members, and editors, whereas international organizations include UN agencies, the European Union, and the European Commission. Table 1 shows more detailed information about the selected tweets, which form the corpus of the study.

Table 1. Tweets related to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict from October 7th to 30th, 2023

Type	Ex.	No. of tweets	No. of words	Percentage	
Public figures	Biden	56	2,214	31.12%	
	Blinken	105	3,739	52.56%	
	Netanyaho	11	1,129	15.87%	
	Makron	1	31	0.43%	
Total			7,113		37.86%
International Organizations	UN	137	5,103	86.66%	
	EU & EC	22	785	13.33%	
Total			5,888		31.34%
Activists	Journalists, writers, Members of Parliament	144	5,786	100%	
Total					30.79%
Total of the three categories of tweets			18,787		100

As shown in Table 1, the largest number of tweets is delivered by public figures, as they comprise approximately 37.8% of all the tweets, followed by the ones posted by international organizations, which comprise approximately 31.3% of all tweets. The least number of tweets are the ones posted by activists make up approximately 30.7% of all tweets. International organizations comprise 31,34% of all categories.

The selected linguistic elements are lexico-grammatical in nature. Selecting from the list obtained from the software program, all the linguistic elements are compiled into a list for a more careful investigation. These linguistic elements fall into five main categories, namely, proper nouns, hate- and violence-based words, aid-based words, reference-based, and modal auxiliary verbs. Table 2 demonstrates the list of all the linguistic elements under study. The words in each category are alphabetically ordered.

Table 2. A list of all the linguistic elements under study

Category	Linguistic Element	Linguistic Element	Linguistic Element	Linguistic Element	Linguistic Element
Proper nouns	America	Bahrain	Egypt	Emirati	Gaza
	Hamas	Israel	ISIS	Jew	Jordan
	Jihad	Muslim	Palestine	Qatar	Rafah
	Saudi	Turkish			
Total					17
Percentage					21.25%
Hate- and Violence-based words	Attack	Anti-semitism	Assault	Airstrike	Actions
	Bomb	Conflict	Crisis	Crime	Enemy
	Escalation	Genocide	Hostage	Holocaust	Islamophobia
	Massacre	Terrorist	Terror	Tragedy	Violence
	Victim	War			
Total					22
Percentage					27.50%

Aid-based words	Assistance	Aid	Ceasefire	Humanitarian	Humanity
	Law	Peace	Right	Support	Security
	Solidarity	Supplies	Territory		
Total					13
Percentage					16.25%
Reference words	I	Me	My	You	Your
	He	Him	His	She	Her
	It	Its	We	Us	Our
	They	Them	Their		
Total					18
Percentage					22.50%
Modal auxiliary verbs	Can	Could	Have to	May	Might
	Must	Shall	Should	Will	Would
Total					10
Percentage					12.50%
Total of all categories					80
Percentage					100%

Table 2 demonstrates that the most frequently used lexical elements in the selected tweets, as produced by the concordancer, are the hate- and violence-based words that are used by Western sources on Twitter, as they comprise approximately 27.50% of all categories. This highlights the use of violence and brutality in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the part of Israel, neglecting the Seville Statement (Adams 1991) on violence and the construction of peace, as internationally recognized by UNESCO. This category of words is followed by reference words, which comprise 22.50% of all categories. The use of first-person singular and plural pronouns reflects the degree of solidarity that the West expresses towards Israel in the handling of the crisis.

3.2 Procedures

Using a free concordance software program, namely, AntConc, the corpus, i.e., the 475 tweets, is uploaded as a text document in order to search for the linguistic elements under study. One of the reasons for employing this free concordance software program

is that it provides an alphabetically ordered list of 'Keywords,' which is a list of all the keywords that are proven to be frequent in the uploaded file or corpus. This list is filtered, attempting to exclude all the words that prove to be of little significance to the objectives of the present study. Besides, doing a computer-aided analysis helps highlight the linguistic elements quantitatively, which contributes to the interpretation of the linguistic data. The list obtained by the program also indicates the occurrence, frequency, and ranking of the linguistic elements in the uploaded file.

3.3 Data Analysis

The linguistic analysis of each of the selected tweets is made up of three parts based on Fairclough's Model of Critical Discourse Analysis, which is description, interpretation, and explanation. The description part is carried out at the word level by investigating the frequency of all the linguistic elements in the study. Table 3 demonstrates the ranking of the first five frequently used keywords in each category of the selected tweets.

Table 3. The ranking of the first five frequently used keywords in the tweets

Rank	Biden	Blinken	Netanyahu	UN	EU	Activists
1 st	Israel	Israel	Israel	Gaza	Israel	Gaza
2 nd	Hamas	Hamas	Hamas	Humanitarian	Hamas	Palestinian
3 rd	Gaza	Attacks	War	Supplies	Humanitarian	Israel
4 th	Humanitarian	Terrorist	Gaza	Aid	Gaza	Genocide
5 th	Assistance	Gaza	Terrorist	Ceasefire	Aid	Hamas

Table 3 shows that *Israel* ranks first in the occurrence and frequency of the keywords in the selected tweets of Biden, Blinken, Netanyahu, and the EU. This highlights the West's support of Israel in its conflict against Hamas, which is considered a Palestinian resistance group against Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories, seeking a free and independent state. On the other hand, *Gaza*, as part of the Palestinian state, ranks first in the tweets of the UN and the various Western activists, who feel their humanitarian responsibility towards the innocent

Palestinian civilians in Gaza. *Ceasefire* ranks fifth in the UN tweets, which highlights the importance of this strategy as implemented in the International Humanitarian Law but rejected by Israel. *Genocide* ranks fourth in the activists' tweets, in which the killing, siege, and inhumane practices executed by Israel against Palestinian civilians have been condemned and rejected by a category of international public opinion. Table 4 displays the frequency and percentage of the proper nouns that are realized and manifested in the selected tweets.

Table 4. The frequencies and percentages of the proper nouns in the selected tweets

Category	Linguistic Element	Biden	Blinken	Netanyahu	UN	EU	Activists		
		Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Total	Percentage
Proper nouns	America	24	12	1	0	0	2	39	2.53%
	Bahrain	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0.19%
	Egypt	5	10	0	214	2	100	331	21.49%
	Emirati	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0.12%
	Gaza	18	32	9	123	9	165	356	23.11%
	Hamas	26	63	14	4	14	27	148	9.61%
	Holocaust	1	0	1	0	0	3	5	0.32%
	Israel	44	118	22	17	22	123	346	22.46%
	Islam	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	0.25%
	ISIS	1	0	2	0	0	0	3	0.19%
	Jew	7	2	3	0	0	10	22	1.42%
	Jordan	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.12%
	Jihad	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	0.25%
	Muslim	1	0	0	3	0	3	7	0.45%
	Palestine	18	33	0	12	5	175	243	15.77%
	Qatar	0	8	0	0	0	0	8	0.51%
	Rafah	0	1	0	9	0	2	12	0.77%
	Saudi	0	8	0	0	0	0	8	0.51%
	Turkey	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0.12%
	Total							1,540	100%

Table 4 illustrates that *Gaza* is the most frequently used proper noun of all the categories, which comprises approximately 23.11%, followed by *Israel*, which is 22.46%. This highlights that the attention of the international sources of the West has been strongly directed toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is considered the most aggressive one at present. As a form of complete support, President Biden, being pro-Israel, visited the Israeli territories to attend the war Cabinet, which is considered the first occasion an American president traveled to Israel during wartime. *Egypt* comes next in its frequency, as it comprises 21.49%, which reflects Egypt's major

role in an attempt to resolve this crisis by opening its borders for humanitarian aid deliveries into Gaza, particularly through the Egyptian Rafah crossing. The least frequently used proper nouns are a number of Arab countries such as *Jordan*, *Turkey*, and *Emirati*, which comprise approximately 0.16% of all proper nouns. This implies the ineffective impact of such Arab countries on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly the ceasefire. Table 5 displays the frequency and percentage of the hate- and violence-based words that are realized and manifested in the selected tweets.

Table 5. The frequencies and percentages of the hate- and violence-based in the selected tweets

Category	Linguistic Element	Biden	Blinken	Netanyahu	UN	EU	Activists		
		Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Total	Percentage
Hate- and violence-based words	Attack	16	56	1	0	0	16	89	14.73%
	Anti-semitism	5	0	0	0	0	0	5	0.82%
	Assault	2	0	0	14	2	0	18	2.98%
	Airstrike	0	0	0	0	0	8	8	1.32%
	Actions	1	0	0	123	9	2	135	22.35%
	Bomb	0	0	0	4	14	8	26	4.30%
	Conflict	3	19	0	0	0	2	24	3.97%
	Crisis	1	5	0	17	22	1	46	7.61%
	Crime	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	0.66%
	Enemy	0	0	5	0	0	1	6	0.99%
	Escalation	1	0	0	4	0	0	5	0.82%
	Genocide	1	0	0	0	0	27	28	4.63%
	Hostage	9	22	1	13	0	1	46	7.61%
	Massacre	1	1	0	0	0	4	6	0.99%
	Terrorist	25	53	8	0	8	5	99	16.39%
	Terror	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.66%
	Tragedy	3	1	0	0	0	0	4	0.66%
	Violence	0	3	0	10	0	0	13	2.15%
	Victim	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0.33%
	War	5	3	12	11	2	7	40	6.62%
	Total							604	100%

Table 5 shows that the most frequently hate- and violence-based word is *actions*, which comprises approximately 22.35% of all words. Since the US and European sources have classified Hamas as a terrorist group, Israel's military actions and operations against Hamas were justified by the West As a violation of the Law of War and International Humanitarian Law; these actions include a prolonged series of airstrikes targeting the Palestinian populated areas in Gaza, which are full of innocent civilians. This reflects the double-standard policy implemented by Israel and the West.

The second most frequently used word is *attack*, which comprises 14.73% of all words. The international opinion has been divided between condemning Hamas' attacks and Israel's military operations. As a result of Israel's prolonged occupation of Palestine, Hamas, as a resistance group, directed a number of attacks against Israel as a legitimate response to Israel's brutal violence. Table 6 displays the frequency and percentage of the aid-based words that are realized and manifested in the selected tweets.

Table 6. The frequencies and percentages of the aid-based words in the selected tweets

Category	Linguistic Element	Biden	Blinken	Netanyahu	UN	EU	Activists		
		Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Total	Percentage
Aid-based words	Assistance	13	11	0	12	0	0	36	7.27%
	Aid	3	10	0	32	7	5	57	11.51%
	Ceasefire	0	0	0	15	0	14	29	5.85%
	Humanitarian	18	23	0	80	12	8	141	28.48%
	Humanity	1	0	0	13	0	8	22	4.44%
	Law	5	1	0	8	0	3	17	3.43%
	Peace	5	6	0	9	0	2	22	4.44%
	Rugths	8	17	0	9	0	13	47	9.49%
	Security	3	11	2	9	0	0	25	5.05%
	Solidarity	2	5	0	0	5	5	17	3.43%
	Support	0	17	3	8	3	8	39	7.87%
	Supplies	2	0	0	41	0	0	43	8.68%
	Total							495	100%

Table 6 demonstrates that the most frequently used aid-based word is *humanitarian*, which comprises approximately 28.48% of all words. This highlights that a large group of the West has been discussing humanitarian assistance to Gaza even though the international community was reluctant or even muted towards its responsibility to ensure the security of Gaza and its innocent people in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Through the Egyptian Rafah crossing, large amounts of water, fuel, and food supplies have been transported to Gaza, which is considered part of Egypt's fundamental role and responsibility

in defending not only Gazan civilians but also the Humanitarian Law. The least frequently used word is *law*, which comprises approximately 3.43% of all words. This reflects that even though there have been a large number of calls to comply with International humanitarian law, the West has expressed solidarity toward Israel's military operations in Gaza. Israel has discarded such a law in a form of brutal violation and persisted in not ceasing fire against innocent Palestinian civilians. Table 7 displays the frequency and percentage of the reference words that are realized and manifested in the selected tweets.

Table 7. The frequencies and percentages of the reference words in the selected tweets

Category	Linguistic Element	Biden	Blinken	Netanyahu	UN	EU	Activists		
		Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Total	Percentage
Reference words	I (first person singular)	48	64	16	26	4	30	188	19.20%
	He (third-person singular)	2	8	3	1	0	33	47	4.80%
	She	0	0	0	1	0	8	9	0.91%
	It	14	33	11	18	4	39	119	12.15%
	You (second person singular/plural)	5	10	12	1	0	44	72	7.35%
	We (first person plural)	70	82	39	67	20	85	363	37.07%
	They (third person plural)	22	21	15	48	2	73	181	18.48%
	Total							979	100%

Table 7 shows that the most frequently used reference word is the first-person plural pronoun *we* in the selected tweets by the West. This highlights that the West, represented by the US and European Union, has backed and fully supported Israel by expressing a strong sense of solidarity with its military practices

in Gaza, being reluctant to put an end to this horrific war, which has escalated by Israel. Table 8 displays the frequency and percentage of the auxiliary modal verbs that are realized and manifested in the selected tweets.

Table 8. The frequencies and percentages of the auxiliary modal verbs in the selected tweets

Category	Linguistic Element	Biden	Blinken	Netanyahu	UN	EU	Activists		
Auxiliary modal verbs		Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Total	Percentage
	Can	7	0	1	9	2	8	27	8.91%
	Could	0	1	0	1	0	3	5	1.65%
	Have to	1	3	0	0	0	1	5	1.65%
	May	1	2	0	0	0	0	3	0.99%
	Might	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.33%
	Must	13	12	1	38	2	9	75	24.75%
	Shall	0	1	0	0	0	73	74	24.42%
	Should	0	3	2	2	0	0	7	2.31%
	Will	30	25	19	13	5	12	104	34.32%
	Would	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0.66%
	Total							303	100%

Table 8 demonstrates that the most frequently used auxiliary verb in the sentences of the selected tweets is *will*, which comprises approximately 34.32% of all auxiliary verbs, which indicates a high degree of probability, whereas *must* and *shall*, as a manifestation of obligation, totally comprise nearly 50% of all auxiliary verbs. The West expresses not only the importance of delivering humanitarian aid to Gaza but also the urgent need to spare the civilians from Israel's violence.

The second part of the linguistic analysis, that is, the interpretation, is carried out at the sentence level by investigating the two- or three-word clusters of the first five frequently used words in the selected tweets. Table 9 shows the number of two- or three-word clusters of the first five frequently used words, which are produced by the software concordancer used in the present study.

Table 9. Number of clusters of the first five frequently used lexical elements in the selected tweets

Type of lexical element	No. of clusters	Percentage
Israel	188	26.18%
Hamas & Gaza	388	54.03
Humanitarian & Assistance	142	19.77
Total	718	100%

Table 9 highlights the high frequency of the two- or three-word clusters of both Hamas and Gaza in the selected tweets. This reflects that the West's attention has been strongly drawn towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly Hamas' attacks against

Israel, without considering that such attacks have been the legitimate response to Israel's prolonged, brutal occupation of the Palestinian territories. The frequency of clusters related to the selected lexical elements demonstrates the West's complete support

towards Israel, which was claimed to be attacked by Hamas, and hostages were held as a result. However, Israel's military operations have not been condemned by a large group of the international community. Both the US and European Union have emphasized Israel's right to defend itself. This demonstrates the double-standard policy employed by Israel and the West in handling this crisis. The frequency of the various two- and three-word clusters is related to the word *Hamas*, which has been classified by the West as a horrific and brutal terrorist group. According to the announcements and claims of the West in its tweets, one of the objectives of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been to destroy Hamas. Israel was not condemned in its military operations, which led to the forced displacement of innocent Palestinian civilians to the north of Gaza. As a result, the death toll and bloodshed in Gaza have been intermittently growing. Although Western opinion has been divided between providing humanitarian assistance to Gaza, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has not expressed any intention to deliver any humanitarian aid to Gaza, which is a brutal violation of International Humanitarian Law. His sole strategy has been based on the siege and killing of Palestinian civilians in his military operations.

At the third level of the analysis, the underlying ideologies and issues of the social actors' representations were revealed in a way to express support for the Israeli military actions in Gaza. The frequency of violence-based linguistic elements demonstrates how effective the social actors' propaganda and representation of such conflict are in digital communication. This also highlights a Pro-Israeli position.

4. RESULTS

The present study comprises three layers of analysis in order to conduct a linguistic analysis of the tweets of both public figures and international organizations that are associated with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on October 7th, 2023. Twitter was chosen as the social media platform that provided the main corpus of the study. The primary objective of the study is to investigate the most frequently used lexical elements employed by Western sources, that is, public figures and international organizations, in the selected tweets, as well as their ideological meanings. 80 lexical elements were obtained by means of the software program AntConc 3.5.7, and the top five keywords

(Table 3) were shown due to their representativeness. To offer a more comprehensive analysis of the selected keywords, they were categorized into five groups that are proper nouns, hate- and violence-based words, aid-based words, reference works, and auxiliary modal verbs in a list (Table 2) triggering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

5. CONCLUSION

The investigation of the frequently used lexical elements related to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, which represent the corpus of the present study, leads to a rich account of a number of lexical choices as a linguistic feature of language. The frequency rate of the different types of words that are used and distributed in the selected tweets reflects the West's major role in the war. It also indicates that every individual or organization uses linguistic choices not only to give information on events and people but also to express their opinions, attitudes, and judgments in the selected tweets. The findings of the study demonstrate the preponderant use of the first-person plural pronouns, which reflects the West's attitude towards and solidarity with Israel. This indicates the writer's assumed intention of foregrounding their observation to their thoughts, attitudes, and judgments of the events.

The findings obtained from the linguistic analysis of the selected tweets, as well as the ideological meanings, complement each other and lead to a significant finding that the West follows a double-standard policy, which is reflected and realized in discourse. The linguistic analysis of the present study might suggest that approaching social media is best carried out by means of the different linguistic choices made by the writer or speaker. It also has implications for the role of auxiliary modal verbs as a modality manifestation in discourse and in expressing meaning among participants who convey their ideas, thoughts, and feelings. The results of the present study also suggest that language and ideology may work together to express the writer's main theme.

The results of this study also suggest that there is a growing interest in the use of corpus-based concordance programmes to analyse large corpora in social media. This highlights the fundamental motivation for using concordance data sets in corpus-based studies in modern corpus linguistics.

REFERENCES

- Adams, David. *The Seville Statement on Violence: Preparing the Ground for the Construction of Peace*. France: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)., 1991.
- Alhadlaq, Aseel, and Abeer Alnuaim. "A Twitter-Based Comparative Analysis of Emotions and Sentiments of Arab and Hispanic Football Fans." *Applied Sciences* 13, no. 11 (May 31, 2023): 6729. <https://doi.org/10.3390/app13116729>.
- Almahasees, Zakaryaia, and Sameh Mahmoud. "Persuasive Strategies Utilized in the Political Speeches of King Abdullah II: A Critical Discourse Analysis." *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 9, no. 1 (December 31, 2022). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2022.2082016>.
- Chan, Michael. "Social Network Sites and Political Engagement: Exploring the Impact of Facebook Connections and Uses on Political Protest and Participation." *Mass Communication and Society* 19, no. 4 (July 3, 2016): 430–51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/015205436.2016.1161803>.
- Dijk, Teun A. Van. "Discourse Semantics and Ideology." *Discourse & Society* 6, no. 2 (1995). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926595006002006>.
- Dijk, Teun A. van. "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis." *Discourse & Society* 4, no. 2 (April 1, 1993): 249–83. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926593004002006>.
- Dijk, Teun A. Van. *Society and Discourse: How Social Contexts Influence Text and Talk*. *Society and Discourse: How Social Contexts Influence Text and Talk*, 2009. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511575273>.
- Fairclough, Norman. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- . *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. London: Routledge., 2003.
- . *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Longman, 2010.
- . *Language and Power*. London: Longman, 1989.
- González, Luis-Millán, José Devís-Devís, Maite Pellicer-Chenoll, Miquel Pans, Alberto Pardo-Ibañez, Xavier García-Massó, Fernanda Peset, Fernanda Garzón-Farinós, and Víctor Pérez-Samaniego. "The Impact of COVID-19 on Sport in Twitter: A Quantitative and Qualitative Content Analysis." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no. 9 (April 25, 2021): 4554. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18094554>.
- Halliday, Michael, and Christian Matthiessen. *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Routledge, 2014.
- Khawaldeh, Sami K., and Wafa abu Hatab. "King Abdullah II Anti-Terrorism Ideology: A Critical Discourse Analysis Perspective." *International Journal of Linguistics* 10, no. 6 (December 6, 2018): 97. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v10i6.13202>.
- Khosravinik, Majid, and Nadia Sarkhoh. "Arabism and Anti-Persian Sentiments on Participatory Web Platforms: A Social Media Critical Discourse Study." *International Journal of Communication* 11 (2017).
- Klimava, Hanna, and Melissa Moyer. "The Ukraine Crisis as Represented in the News: A Critical Discourse Analysis." Autonomous University of Barcelona., 2016.
- "Laurence Anthony's Software," 2018. <https://www.laurenceanthony.net/software.html>.
- Liu, Feife. "Strategies for Affiliation in Media Editorials : Persuading and Aligning Readers." University of Technology, 2017.
- Meyer, Michael. "2 Between Theory, Method, and Politics: Positioning of the Approaches to CDA." In *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, 14–31. 6 Bonhill Street, London EC2A 4PU : SAGE Publications, Ltd, n.d. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9780857028020.d4>.
- Sorrells, Kathryn. *Intercultural Communication: Globalization and Social Justice*. London: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2020.
- Zeitzoff, Thomas. "How Social Media Is Changing Conflict." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61, no. 9 (October 4, 2017): 1970–91. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002717721392>.