

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Naming and Numbering in Gaza War Coverage

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Abstract

This paper examines how victims are represented in international news media coverage of the Gaza war, with reference to linguistic features of naming and numbering. The paper is based on ten news stories of CNN and Al Jazeera English about five similar events, which undergo qualitative analysis through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) incorporating the ideas of Fairclough, Halliday, and van Leeuwen. The results show steady use of numerical representation in both outlets, with victims mostly described in aggregate numbers rather than as individual persons. There is no naming whatsoever in the dataset, which is indicative of a more general tendency towards abstraction in conflict coverage. But differences in framing arise. CNN often uses passive and indirect forms of constructions that background agency and focus on the results. Al Jazeera English, in turn, tends to employ active forms more frequently and include contextual or identity-related information, attributing actions to their actors and placing victims in particular situations. The research claims that the two outlets are similar in structural terms regarding their victim representations, but differences in linguistic decisions determine attitudes towards responsibility and human influence. The research provides a micro-level view of the media discourse and conflict coverage studies, by foregrounding naming over numbering.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, conflict reporting, victim representation, naming and numbering, Gaza war, media framing

Introduction

The media coverage of armed conflict does matter. Not because it simply informs people of what occurred, but because the mode of telling the story predisposes global audiences to perceive it in a certain way. News stories are never neutral accounts only. They select and deselect, stress certain things and omit others, and manipulate language in ways that implicitly direct interpretation. This is not a new statement among people who study media and Critical Discourse Analysis, and it goes without saying that discourse does not simply mirror events; it helps to create them (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1998; Fowler, 1991). This is more so in protracted, politically greasy conflicts such as that of Israel and Palestine, where various parties are pushing opposing agendas, and media find themselves in the middle of the fight (Philo & Berry, 2004).

Much research in recent decades has examined how conflict is framed by international media. Entman (1993) discussed framing, in which particular aspects of reality become visible to express what the audience perceives about things. Iyengar (1991) demonstrated that presenting an event in a certain manner influences the blame game. Applied to the reporting of wars, it is obvious that the media do not simply report violence; they construct it through their decisions. Comparative analysis has revealed that accounts of the same events are often quite different among international broadcasters, and much of this stems from their institutional contexts and geopolitical locations (Seib, 2008; KhosraviNik, 2017).

In this case, CNN and Al Jazeera English are interesting to compare. CNN is rooted in Western media culture and tends to rely on official and institutional sources, which influence how events are framed (Seib, 2008; Philo & Berry, 2004). On the contrary, Al Jazeera English is known for presenting multiple sides of the story, frequently highlighting voices and experiences that receive little coverage in Western media (Miles, 2005; KhosraviNik, 2017). The majority of debates on these differences have remained at the levels of framing and ideology. Less well explored is how those differences actually manifest in the finer details of language.

CDA is where it comes in handy. It looks at how language and power are connected. They have both claimed that word choice, sentence structure, and the portrayal of social actors are highly significant to meaning (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1998). The work on transitivity by Halliday (1985) demonstrates that grammar treats the issue of agency- whether you say that the military bombed the building or that the building was bombed is a real difference. Van Leeuwen (2008) notes that social actors may be represented as individuals or as part of a mass, and that this affects how audiences connect with them.

However, the majority of studies to date have focused on big-picture framing. The lesser, more minor apparatus of representation has not received such thorough treatment. The representation of the victims themselves is one area that has not been studied extensively. That is a problem since the way victims are framed influences not only what people believe happened, but also how they feel about it: whether they are concerned, whether they perceive the victims as individuals.

Some theoretical work on humanization and dehumanization is very handy. According to Haslam (2006), a significant aspect of dehumanization is the denial of individuality. According to Butler (2009), some lives are more grievable than others. These processes may occur in news discourse through subtle linguistic decisions, e.g., whether to address someone by name or simply add them to a count.

This leads me to the difference between naming and numbering. Naming refers to the use of personal information- names, ages, and family roles. That is likely to make the victims feel like certain human beings. Numbering is given as statistics or approximate totals. Big violence does require numbers, of course, but it can also reduce people to types.

This paper, therefore, examines the naming and numbering of victims in CNN and Al Jazeera English news coverage of the Gaza war. By juxtaposing the two outlets' coverage of a series of similar events, I examine how linguistic choices shape perceptions of victimhood. I do not begin with the notion that one of the outlets is partisan, and the other is neutral. Rather, I consider the appearance of differences in the form of subtle changes in language-in agency, context, and representations.

The research accomplishes two things. First, it moves the focus out of the general framing to the narrow linguistic examination, demonstrating the way the discourse does its business in the ground. Second, it makes abstract concepts of humanization and abstraction concrete, that is, naming versus numbering, which provides us with a narrowed method of analyzing the representation of victims in conflict reporting.

Research Objectives

- To explore the portrayal of victims in CNN and Al Jazeera English news about the Gaza war.
- To examine the strategies of representation (naming and numbering).
- To draw comparisons of agency and context construction between the two outlets.

Research Questions

1. What is the representation of victims in CNN and Al Jazeera English news stories?
2. How commonly are the strategies of representation of naming and numbering?
3. What is the agency of event-reporting?
4. What can be said about the differences between the two outlets in terms of linguistic representation?

2 Literature Review

As studies of media discourse have demonstrated, news reporting is never neutral. It is an organized manner of presenting things, influenced by language, institutional pressures, and ideology. In Critical Discourse Analysis, discourse is considered a social practice- it does not merely mirror reality, it assists in its construction (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1998). So, the news media don't simply describe what happened. They take the initiative in organizing events through what they show, what they highlight, and how they word it (Fowler, 1991; Bednarek and Caple, 2012). This is critical when it comes to armed conflict, as the manner in which violence, responsibility, and victimhood are presented to viewers is influenced by such decisions.

One of the more helpful approaches to the analysis of media discourse has been the framing theory. According to Entman (1993), framing is the process of making certain aspects of reality more salient in communication, thereby driving individuals towards particular interpretations. Iyengar (1991) discovered that the manner in which an event is framed influences who people blame, and identified two types of framing: episodic (focused on particular events) and thematic (focused on broader contexts). These framing mechanisms are used in conflict reporting to determine whether violence appears as one-time events or as something related to underlying structural conditions (Philo and Berry, 2004). Research using framing theory in international news has found that various sources tend to frame events in markedly different ways, and such differences are indicative of institutional interests and geopolitical allegiances.

This has been the focus of studying the Israel-Palestine conflict. Studies indicate that the Western media are more inclined to use official sources, particularly governmental and military voices, and that influences the manner in which events are framed (Philo and Berry, 2004; Seib, 2008). Compared to Al Jazeera English, it has been characterized as providing alternative views, including voices that are not well covered in the Western news coverage (Miles, 2005; KhosraviNik, 2017). These variations are reflected in the choice of sources, framing of events, and the general narrative organization. The majority of this research remains at the macro level. It emphasizes general trends in prejudice and ideology rather than the concrete linguistic processes that give rise to these trends.

CDA brings us nearer to the language. Fairclough (1995) posited that discourse operates at several levels, including textual features, discursive practices, and wider social contexts. Vocabulary, syntax, and grammar decisions have a profound influence on textual representation. Fowler (1991) made the same point: the slightest variations in wording can alter the way events are interpreted. Active and passive constructions. That decision influences how responsibility is allocated and is directly related to Systemic Functional Linguistics, as outlined by Halliday (1985).

Halliday's system of transitivity comes in handy. It allows us to examine the representation of actions and participants by distinguishing among the various types of processes and participants' roles. That is why it is possible to observe the way the agency is constructed. Passive constructions used in news reporting may conceal who did something, whereas active constructions reveal agency (Fowler, 1991; Teo, 2000). Conflict reporting studies have discovered that these grammatical selections are not accidental. They are prone to conforming to broader trends in representation and shaping the impression that events and actors make.

The other handy CDA resource is van Leeuwen's (2008) work on the representation of social actors. He provides us with a framework for examining the inclusion and exclusion of individuals and groups, as well

as their classification. Here, the individualization and collectivization are particularly pertinent. Individualization refers to describing actors as individuals, usually by name or other personal information. Collectivization refers to their representation as members of a group, typically by general or numeric reference. These strategies influence the audience's relationship with social actors, both in how they perceive them and in their attitudes towards them.

This relates quite directly to the theoretical literature on humanization and dehumanization. Haslam (2006) opined that one of the major aspects of dehumanization is the denial of individuality, where people are not treated as individuals but rather classified into abstract groups. Butler (2009) went a step further, proposing that certain lives are more worthy of attention and mourning than others. She coined the term grievability. These processes may manifest in the degree of detail and personalization afforded to victims in media discourse.

This is supported by empirical research on conflict reporting. It has been found that victims are often portrayed unequally: some are individualized, while others are introduced without names or as a crowd (Bednarek & Caple, 2012). In reporting on the Gaza conflict in particular, research has found the patterns in which Palestinian victims are often reported on aggregate levels, whereas Israeli victims are more prone to receive a context or individual coverage (Philo & Berry, 2004; KhosraviNik, 2017). That indicates that the process of representation is determined not only by what is reported but by the way it is linguistically assembled.

Nevertheless, a gap in the literature is evident. Framing, ideology, and humanization are discussed, but at a general level. They are not systematically connected with particular characteristics of language. Naming versus numbering, in its specific form, has not received much analytical focus as a category of analysis. The available literature tends to focus on the representation of victims in general, without specifying how individuality or abstraction is created in language.

That gap matters. Basic representational strategies are naming and numbering. Individualization can be achieved by naming, which makes the victim more visible and easier to connect with. Aggregation of people into statistics, which may lead to abstraction. Yes, numbers are an expediency when it comes to large-scale violence reporting. Even when individualizing details are missing, it may still influence how the victims present themselves to the audience.

In addition, such micro-level differences have not always been explored through a comparative analysis of CNN and Al Jazeera English. Framing and ideological differences are well documented. However, the focus has not been on how such differences are realized as particular linguistic practices in victim representation. That is why there is a real need for research that connects macro-level analysis to detailed language analysis.

This study tries to fill that gap by focusing specifically on naming and numbering as key strategies of victim representation in CNN and Al Jazeera English coverage of the Gaza war. The study provides a finer-grained description of the process of representation than current research typically does by examining how these strategies operate on the events of interest. To that extent, it contributes to the study of media discourse by showing that abstract notions such as humanization and abstraction can be analyzed in terms of tangible linguistic elements.

Methodology

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative, comparative design rooted in Critical Discourse Analysis. CDA works well for examining media discourse because it focuses on how language builds social reality and reflects power relations underneath the surface (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1998). News reports are not treated as neutral accounts. Instead, they are seen as discursive constructions shaped by word choices and institutional routines.

The study compares two international news outlets—CNN and Al Jazeera English—to see how they represent victims in their coverage of the Gaza war. These two were picked because they reach global audiences and are often compared in existing research on conflict reporting (Seib, 2008; KhosraviNik, 2017). The goal is not to assume bias from the start, but to examine how differences manifest in language.

Data Selection

The dataset includes ten news reports, five from CNN and five from Al Jazeera English. They cover five major events from the Gaza war (2023–2025). For each event, one report from each outlet was selected to enable direct comparison.

A purposive sampling strategy was used to select articles that aligned with the research focus. The selection followed these criteria:

- The report covers a clear event where people were killed or injured
- Victims are explicitly mentioned somewhere in the report
- The article is straight news, not opinion or analysis
- The reports from both outlets are comparable in timing and what event they cover

The selected events include incidents involving both Palestinian and Israeli victims. But most of the dataset focuses on Palestinian casualties. That simply reflects how media coverage was distributed during the period under study.

Analytical Framework

The analysis draws on specific concepts from several CDA frameworks, rather than applying any single model in full.

At a general level, Fairclough's (1995) CDA model guides the study, especially his emphasis on textual analysis. The focus is on how headlines and news reports construct meaning through linguistic features.

To look at agency, the study uses Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional Linguistics, specifically the transitivity system. This helps identify active versus passive constructions and shows whether actors are explicitly represented or pushed to the background.

The central concern of the study—naming versus numbering—comes from van Leeuwen's (2008) framework on social actor representation. The distinction between individualization and collectivization is used to analyze whether victims are shown as identifiable individuals or as aggregated groups.

Some insights from Wodak's (2009) Discourse-Historical Approach are also used, particularly around contextualization—how much situational detail gets included or left out.

These frameworks are used together, each one helping to examine a different dimension of the same data, without making the analysis messy or unfocused.

Analytical Procedure

The analysis was conducted through close reading of the selected texts, paying attention to recurring patterns. Four dimensions guided the process:

- Naming vs Numbering: whether victims are shown as individuals or as numbers
- Agency: whether actions are expressed through active or passive sentences

- Lexical Representation: how events are framed through word choices, especially in headlines
- Contextual Detail: whether situational or identity-related information is present or absent

Each event was analyzed comparatively across the two outlets. The findings are presented in structured tables, which allow for clear comparison of linguistic features, followed by brief analytical commentary.

Data Presentation

The results are shown using a mix of analytical tables and simple visuals. The tables give a detailed side-by-side comparison of headlines, agency, and victim representation across events. A comparative bar graph and pie charts are included to summarize the main patterns in the dataset.

These visuals are just there to support qualitative interpretation. They are not meant to suggest statistical generalization.

Ethical Considerations

The study is based entirely on publicly available news reports. No human participants were involved. All sources are properly cited, and the analysis sticks to textual features. It does not make evaluative judgments about specific individuals or organizations.

Data Analysis and Findings

Corpus Overview

Event	Al Jazeera Headline	CNN Headline	Date (AJE)	Date (CNN)
E1 Jabalia Camp	Israeli strike on northern Gaza's Jabalia refugee camp kills 22	Catastrophic damage after second Israeli airstrike hits Gaza refugee camp	Oct 12, 2024	Oct 31, 2023
E2 Rafah Strikes	Israel kills dozens in Rafah strikes, frees two captives	Israeli airstrikes kill more than 100 in Rafah as international alarm mounts	Feb 12, 2024	Feb 12, 2024
E3 Hospital Attack	Israel's attacks on Kamal Adwan Hospital and Nuseirat home	'Catastrophic' Israeli barrage hits hospital in northern Gaza, doctor says	Dec 7, 2024	Dec 13, 2024
E4 Double Tap Attack	Israel bombs hospital, kills journalists, medics, dozens more across Gaza	Outrage after Israel kills five journalists in 'double-tap' attack on Gaza hospital	Aug 25, 2025	Aug 25, 2025
E5 Oct-7 Attack	What happened in Israel? How Hamas attack unfolded	Netanyahu says Israel is 'at war' after Hamas launches surprise attack	Oct 7, 2023	Oct 7, 2023

Table 1. Corpus Overview

Table 1 presents the dataset used in this study, consisting of five comparable events reported by CNN and Al Jazeera English. Each event includes one report from each outlet, allowing direct comparison of how similar incidents are linguistically constructed. The dataset includes both Palestinian and Israeli victim cases, though Palestinian-focused events are more frequent, reflecting the broader distribution of coverage during the selected period.

Headline Representation

Event	CNN Headline	Al Jazeera Headline	Focus of Representation	Key Difference
E1	Catastrophic damage after second Israeli airstrike hits Gaza refugee camp	Israeli strike on northern Gaza's Jabalia refugee camp kills 22	Damage vs deaths	CNN foregrounds damage; AJE foregrounds killing
E2	Israeli airstrikes kill more than 100 in Rafah as international alarm mounts	Israel kills dozens in Rafah strikes, frees two captives	Outcome vs action	CNN adds reaction; AJE keeps action central
E3	'Catastrophic' Israeli barrage hits hospital in northern Gaza, doctor says	Israel's attacks on Kamal Adwan Hospital and Nuseirat home	Impact vs action	CNN emphasizes effect; AJE emphasizes action
E4	Outrage after Israel kills five journalists in 'double-tap' attack on Gaza hospital	Israel bombs hospital, kills journalists, medics, dozens more across Gaza	Reaction vs action	CNN foregrounds outrage; AJE foregrounds violence
E5	Netanyahu says Israel is 'at war' after Hamas launches surprise attack	What happened in Israel? How Hamas attack unfolded	Political response vs event	CNN centers response; AJE centers event

Table 2. Headline Representation (Textual Level)

Table 2 shows how headlines structure the representation of events. CNN frequently foregrounds outcomes or reactions, such as “damage” or “outrage,” which shifts attention away from the act of killing itself. Al Jazeera English, in contrast, more often centers the action and explicitly highlights death through verbs such as “kills” and “bombs.” While both outlets report the same events, the difference lies in what is emphasized: CNN tends toward consequences and responses, whereas Al Jazeera emphasizes action and impact.

Transitivity and Agency

Event	CNN Construction	Al Jazeera Construction	Agency Type (CNN)	Agency Type (AJE)	Key Observation
E1	Airstrike hits... damage occurs	Strike kills 22	Indirect	Active	AJE links action to deaths clearly
E2	More than 100 have been killed	Israel kills dozens	Passive	Active	CNN removes actor
E3	Barrage hits hospital	Israel attacks hospital	Vague	Active	AJE maintains clear agency
E4	Israel kills journalists (with outrage foregrounded)	Israel bombs hospital, kills journalists, medics	Semi-active	Strong active	AJE intensifies action
E5	Hamas launches attack	Hamas attack unfolded	Active	Less direct	CNN clearer here

Table 3. Transitivity and Agency

Table 3 highlights how agency is constructed through grammatical choices. CNN frequently uses passive or indirect constructions, such as “have been killed,” which remove or background the actor responsible. Al Jazeera English, on the other hand, consistently employs active constructions that explicitly identify the agent, particularly in reporting Palestinian casualties. However, in the case of Israeli victims (Event 5), both outlets use more direct forms, suggesting that agency representation varies depending on context rather than being applied uniformly.

Naming vs Numbering (Core Analysis)

Event	CNN Representation of Victims	CNN Type	Al Jazeera Representation of Victims	AJE Type	Key Insight
E1	No individuals mentioned	Numbering	“kills 22”	Numbering	Both rely on numbers
E2	“more than 100 killed”	Numbering	“dozens killed”	Numbering	Both aggregate victims
E3	No names provided	Numbering	No names provided	Numbering	Complete absence of naming
E4	“five journalists”	Numbering + category	“journalists, medics, dozens more”	Numbering + identity	AJE adds identity markers
E5	“Israelis”	Collective category	“hundreds”	Numbering	Both use group labels

Table 4. Naming vs Numbering (Victim Representation)

Table 4 presents the central finding of the study. Across all events, individual naming is entirely absent in both CNN and Al Jazeera English. Victims are consistently represented as numbers (“22,” “hundreds”), categories (“journalists”), or collective identities (“Israelis”). This indicates a strong tendency toward collectivization, in which individuals are merged into groups rather than presented as identifiable individuals.

However, a subtle difference is visible. Al Jazeera occasionally supplements numerical representation with identity markers such as “journalists” or “medics,” which introduce a degree of specificity. CNN, by contrast, tends to rely more strictly on numerical or generalized expressions. Despite this difference, both outlets predominantly construct victims through abstraction rather than individualization.

Contextualization and Detail

Event	CNN Contextual Detail	Al Jazeera Contextual Detail	Contextual Level (CNN)	Level (AJE)	Key Difference
E1	Focus on damage	Refugee camp context	Low	Medium	AJE adds setting
E2	Mentions casualties + global reaction	Includes location and situation	Medium	High	AJE more detailed
E3	Focus on hospital impact	Links multiple locations	Low	Medium	AJE expands scope

Event	CNN Contextual Detail	Al Jazeera Contextual Detail	Level (CNN)	Level (AJE)	Key Difference
E4	Focus on outrage	Highlights victims and roles	Medium	High	AJE adds identity
E5	Focus on political response	Focus on unfolding event	Medium	Medium	Different emphasis

Table 5. Contextual Detail

Table 5 shows differences in the level of contextual detail. CNN headlines tend to be more compressed and event-focused, often presenting incidents with minimal situational information. Al Jazeera English more frequently includes contextual elements, such as location, victim roles, or circumstances. These details make the events more concrete and reduce abstraction, even when numerical representation is still used.

Overall Patterns

Across all five events, several consistent patterns emerge:

- Victims are never named in either outlet
- Numbering dominates as the primary form of representation
- CNN relies more on passive and indirect constructions
- Al Jazeera English uses more active and contextualized language
- Differences are gradual, not absolute

These findings suggest that while both outlets share similar structural practices, they differ in how language shapes the perception of events and victims.

Visual Summary

Table 6. Summary of Linguistic Patterns

Feature	CNN	Al Jazeera English	Overall Pattern	Key Insight
Headline Focus	Outcome / reaction-oriented (e.g., “damage,” “outrage”)	Action-oriented (e.g., “kills,” “bombs”)	Different emphasis	CNN abstracts events; AJE foregrounds action
Agency (Transitivity)	More passive / indirect constructions	More active constructions	Variation in agency	AJE links actions to actors more clearly
Victim Naming	No individual names used	No individual names used	Completely absent	No individualization in either outlet
Numbering	Frequent use of numbers (“more than 100”)	Frequent use of numbers (“dozens,” “hundreds”)	Dominant strategy	Victims constructed as aggregates
Identity Markers	Rare (mostly neutral categories)	More frequent (e.g., “journalists,” “medics”)	Slight difference	AJE adds limited humanizing detail

Feature	CNN	Al Jazeera English	Overall Pattern	Key Insight
Contextual Detail	Limited / general	More situational detail	Clear difference	AJE reduces abstraction through context
Overall Representation	More abstract and generalized	More contextualized but still aggregated	Shared structure, different intensity	Both rely on abstraction, but to different degrees

The summary highlights that while both outlets rely heavily on numerical representation and avoid individual naming, differences emerge in the use of agency, contextual detail, and lexical emphasis. These variations suggest that representation is not fundamentally different in structure, but differs in degree and framing.

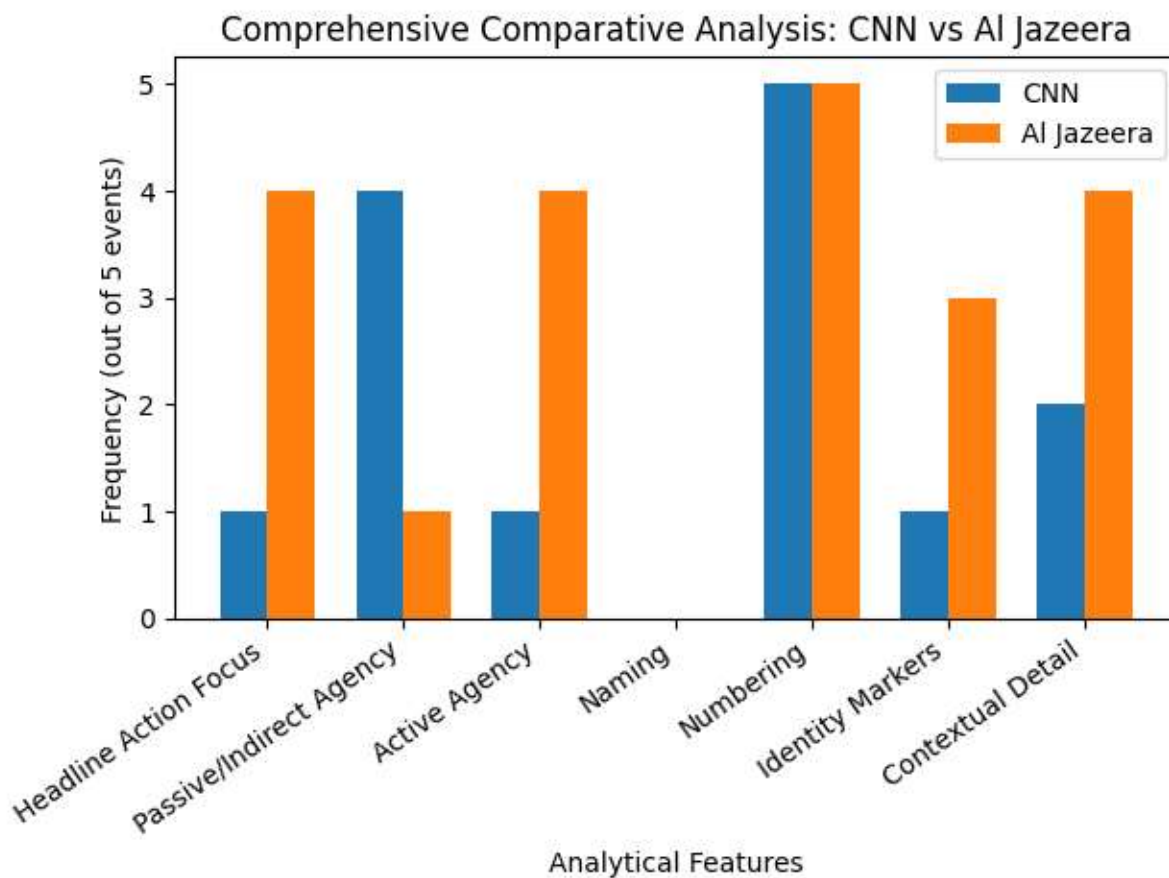


Figure 1 presents a comprehensive comparison of linguistic features across CNN and Al Jazeera English. The graph shows that both outlets rely entirely on numerical representation, with no instances of individual naming observed. However, clear differences emerge in other areas. Al Jazeera demonstrates a higher frequency of action-focused headlines, active constructions, identity markers, and contextual detail. In contrast, CNN shows a greater tendency toward passive or indirect constructions and more generalized reporting. These findings indicate that while both outlets share structural similarities, they differ in how linguistic choices shape the representation of events and victims.

5 Discussion

The results of this research indicate the convergence and divergence in the way CNN and Al Jazeera English portray the victims in their news coverage of the Gaza war. Although previous studies have mostly focused on variations in framing and ideological positioning (Entman, 1993; Philo and Berry, 2004; KhosrowaviNik, 2017), the current analysis reveals that, at the level of linguistic detail, there are representational strategies common to both outlets.

Most notably, the dataset's overall lack of naming indicates a high degree of collectivization. Victims in all five events are not individuals but are reported as numbers or broad categories. This observation is consistent with the idea of collectivization proposed by van Leeuwen (2008) and reinforces more general ideas in the literature that mass suffering in media discourse is frequently conveyed in abstract terms. This trend is also supported by the graph, which shows that the two outlets are fully dependent on the numbers and that there are no instances of naming people separately.

Meanwhile, significant variations are evident in the realization of this common form. CNN shows a higher propensity to passive or indirect constructions, which result in background agency and focus on outcomes or reactions. This is evident in both the event-based analysis and the visual summary, where passive constructions prevail in CNN coverage of events. Al Jazeera English, on the other hand, makes more use of active constructions, directly attributing actions to recognizable actors. This distinction confirms previous CDA studies about transitivity, which indicates that grammatical decisions are important in the process of attributing responsibility (Halliday, 1985; Fowler, 1991).

Dissimilarities can also be observed in the construction of headlines. CNN headlines are more likely to preempt consequences or reactions (e.g., damage, outrage), whereas Al Jazeera English more frequently places the act of violence in the foreground (e.g., kills, bombs). This distinction, although subtle, influences how events are interpreted. The fact that CNN is more results-oriented and Al Jazeera is action-oriented yields more mediated and direct accounts, respectively.

One more area of divergence is the use of contextual detail and markers of identity. Whereas the two outlets use numerical representation more often, Al Jazeera tends to complement it with the mention of the victim's identity (e

One more area of divergence is the use of contextual detail and markers of identity. Whereas the two outlets use numerical representation more often, Al Jazeera tends to complement it with the mention of the victim's identity (e.g., journalists, medics) and circumstances. The graph clearly indicates that there are more contextualization frequencies on Al Jazeera than on CNN. These additions do not constitute complete individualization, but they add a degree of specificity that diminishes abstraction. On the other hand, CNN is more inclined toward a more general style, with little context elaboration.

Notably, these results complicate the notion of a simple dichotomy between biased and neutral reporting. Instead of introducing radically different representations, both outlets work within a common structural framework of numerical reporting. Those differences that arise are at the biggest differences of degree, not of kind. CNN and Al Jazeera English are both based on abstraction; however, the difference lies in the degree to which that abstraction is mitigated by agency, context, and lexical choice.

Theoretically, the study's contribution lies in the operationalization of the notions of humanization and abstraction, grounded in a set of specific linguistic characteristics. Although these concepts have been mentioned previously in general terms (Haslam, 2006; Butler, 2009), the current analysis shows how they may be studied in concrete terms through naming, counting, and other discursive strategies. The lack of naming implies a constraint of individualization, whereas the use of contextual and identity signs implies partial efforts to revitalize human particularity.

Limitations

A weakness of this research relates to the size and distribution of the data. It is analyzed using five events that, although relevant to the qualitative comparison, do not permit generalization. Moreover, the data set consists of more cases of Palestinian victims due to the availability of reports over the period of choice. The Israeli coverage of victims is covered, but the imbalance can affect the general trends that are observed.

The other limitation is connected with the emphasis on headlines and the chosen textual characteristics. Although headlines are a more concise and persuasive form of representation, a more detailed examination of the entire article or multimodal content (images and videos) might be insightful.

6 Conclusion

This paper aimed to analyze the treatment of victims in CNN and Al Jazeera English news coverage of the Gaza war, particularly the differences between naming and numbering. The goal of the study was to provide a detailed description of the role of linguistic choices in representation, using a qualitative CDA method and examining selected events in both outlets.

The results show a consistent use of numerical representation, in which victims are described far more often as aggregated numbers rather than as individuals. The lack of naming in each case underscores a broader preference for abstraction in conflict reporting. Meanwhile, the variations between the two outlets appear in the use of agency, contextuality, and lexical emphasis. Al Jazeera English is more inclined to active constructions and contextualization, whereas CNN uses passive constructions and generalized reports more often.

This evidence indicates that the structural practices of both outlets are similar, but they differ in how language use shapes the image of the events and victims. Rather than merely stating bias, the study emphasizes the importance of examining minor linguistic aspects that affect representation.

On a larger scale, the research highlights the importance of micro-discourse analysis in the media. Through its analysis of naming and numbering as tangible categories, it provides more explicit insight into how concepts such as humanization and abstraction operate in reality. Future studies may build on this methodology by using larger samples, engaging with more media outlets, or conducting multimodal analyses to further examine the representation of victims in conflict coverage.

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