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A Frame Semantic Analysis of the Israeli Narrative of Victimization in Gaza wars

A B S T R A C T

The Gaza War has been significantly influenced by victimization narratives. Israel portrays itself as a victim in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while possessing superior military might. Fake news can have a big impact on global public opinion, whether it is deliberately propagated or happens accidentally. It influences public support, impacts policy decisions, and adds to the conflict's ongoing nature. Ten Israeli storylines that were included in news articles, TV shows, and social media platforms between June 6, 2017, and February 15, 2024, were examined by the researcher using a mixed method using a frame semantic model. By identifying the frame semantics of victimization narratives, observers might lessen the likelihood of negative outcomes and better assess the objectives of reporters. Fillmore's frame semantics (1977b) has been demonstrated to be present in the Israeli victimization narrative through both qualitative and quantitative study. It's been discovered that Israeli narratives have different types of Victimization, and the most frequent types are political, terrorist, humanitarian, ethical, and religious.

تحليل الإطار الدلالي لسرديات الإيذاء الإسرائيلية في حروب غزة

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جامعة واسط جامعة واسط

الملخص

لقد تأثرت حرب غزة بشكل كبير بالروايات الاسرائيلية المتقمصة لدور الضحية. تصور إسرائيل نفسها كضحية في الصراع الإسرائيلي الفلسطيني، في حين تمتلك قوة عسكرية متفوقة. حتماً يمكن أن يكون للأخبار المزيفة تأثير كبير على الدعم العالمي وعلى الرأي العام ، سواء تم نشرها عمدًا أو حدثت عن طريق الخطأ؛ فهي تسهم في إدامة الصراع؛ لذلك هناك حاجة لتحليلها؛ وعليه اختبرت الدراسة عشر قصص إسرائيلية تم تضمينها في المقالات الإخبارية والبرامج التلفزيونية ومنصات التواصل الاجتماعي بين 6 يونيو 2017 و 15 فبراير 2024 وظفت الدراسة تحليلا كميا ونوعيا لدلالات الإطار. وقد ثبت أن دلالات الإطار لفيلمور (1977ب) موجودة في سرد الضحية الإسرائيلي. وقد اكتُشف أن الروايات الإسرائيلية تحتوي على أنواع مختلفة من الإيذاء المزعوم ، وأن أكثر الأنواع استخداماً هي روايات الإيذاء السياسي، والإرهابي، والإنساني، والأخلاقي، والديني .

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإطار الدلالي، سرديات الإيذاء، صراع إسرائيل–حماس، حروب غزة

1-Introduction

One day, Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi media and Hitler's arm, said: "Lie and then lie until people believe you." Lying myths and the use of fake narratives of victimization can have significant impacts on public opinion both within the country and on the international stage. It affects policy decisions, influences public support, and contributes to the perpetuation of the conflict. So, It is useless to reveal the truth later. Rumors give the accused a lousy reputation, even if they are denied later. The current study aims to Shed light upon the types of victimization used in the Israeli narrative to reduce the chances of negative outcomes and more effectively evaluate the intentions of reporters. The researchers used a mixed method and a Fillmore's frame semantic model(1977b) to examine ten Israeli storylines that appeared in news articles, TV shows, and social media platforms between June 6, 2017, and February

15, 2024. The study discovered that Israeli narratives have different types of Victimization, and the most frequent types are political, terrorist, humanitarian, ethical, and religious.

1. Literature view

2.1 Victimization Narrative

The victimization narrative refers to the relaying of one's experiences of being harmed or mistreated. It focuses on how people become victims of wrongdoing and how victimization affects their lives (Pemberton et al., 2019). This narrative approach, which emphasizes elements like the speaker, audience, and time, is crucial for comprehending crime victims' stories' character, strength, and potential. (Hourigan et al., 2019). Victimization, or victimization, is the state or process of being victimized or becoming a victim. The field that studies the process, rates, incidence, effects, and prevalence of victimization is called victimology (Hawer & Boulton, 2000).

Jägervi (2014) reveals that Psychologically, victim narratives can affect people's perceptions of themselves and how well they feel (Presser, 2013). Narrative victimology focuses on individuals' understanding of wrongdoing rather than why people damage morals. A study by the psychiatrist Johnston (2022) states that victim narratives can also be seen in the context of identity politics, where they reflect the dynamics of power and representation. He comments, "When we place all responsibility outside ourselves, we also, in the end, put authority outside ourselves."

2.2 Israeli Victimization Narrative

According to Caplan (2012), the story of the Israeli victimization narrative is complicated and conflicting, with many different points of view. It is frequently linked to both the historical experiences of the Jewish people and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel is portrayed in the story as a victim of threats and attacks, with its roots in historical occurrences like the Holocaust and current geopolitical

issues. This story has been the focus of scholarly investigation, with studies examining its effects on Israeli society and conflict dynamics. Further, Aqdas (2023) contends that this story is used to support Israeli occupation policies and to rationalize acts against the Palestinian people. Al Ghezzey (2020) stated that researchers interested in election campaigns, public speeches, political forums, legislation ...etc., have studied the language of politics extensively.

2.3 Lying Myths

Israel uses myths in wars against Gaza to define their identity, land, and the "other"(El-Zein &Abusalem 2015). These myths are narratives that counter threats to their identity and are used to legitimize their actions. Israel portrays itself as facing an existential threat from Palestinians and blames them for their deaths (Baukhol,2015).

Rowland et al. (2011) insist that Israel vilify and dehumanize Palestinians through a media campaign, enabling them to prosecute their operations with minimal criticism. Manor & Crilley (2018) shed light on Israel's discursive dominance as a result of the failure of an official Palestinian media strategy and the news media's reluctance to question Israel's actions. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) also uses social media to craft frames and legitimize its policies during times of war. They use linguistic frames and images to support these frames, invoke the past to illuminate the present and future, and create a shared identity.

2. Methodology

The methodology used in this study are both qualitative and quantitative. It is qualitative since its interpretation of texts is predicated on arguments. A qualitative method, according to Shank (2002), is "a type of systematic empirical analysis into meaning". Systemsatic was described by Shank as "planned, ordered, and public." He defined empirical as having a basis in reality, which describes this kind of inquiry. Williams (2011) defined a quantitative research technique as "the holistic steps a

researcher employs in embarking on research work" (p. 14), which pertains to the quantitative approach. As such, a quantitative study focuses mostly on measuring and analyzing variables to produce particular outcomes. Using certain statistical processes, this method uses numerical data analysis to provide answers to questions such as how, how much, how many, where, what, and who.

The researchers use an eclectic model to analyze the chosen data to achieve the aim of study. In this context, Fillmore's frame semantics (1977b) has adapted.

The key reasons for adopting Fillmore's frame semantics (1977b), which were utilized to deal with prototypes and profiles are: Firstly, it views word meanings as being "relativized to scenes" or background frames that provide context and structure for understanding the relationships between words and concepts. Secondly, frames are useful for explaining how text interpretations can go beyond the literal meaning of the words by invoking relevant background knowledge and conceptual structures. Thirdly, frames can represent the conceptual underpinnings and background knowledge necessary for the appropriate use of words, going beyond just the denotational meaning.

By choosing a qualitative and quantitative analysis, the researchers are supposed to provide a careful description of the Israeli victimization narratives based on the models of frame semantic to find type of victimization. Then according to finding supply a numeric analysis to discover the frequencies of each type of victimization. The analysis will be systematized according to the following steps:

1. The first step is applying Fillmore's frame semantics to each narrative in order to find types of victimization.

2. Based on the findings of qualitative analysis the researchers provide statistical analysis to observe the frequency of each type of victimization.
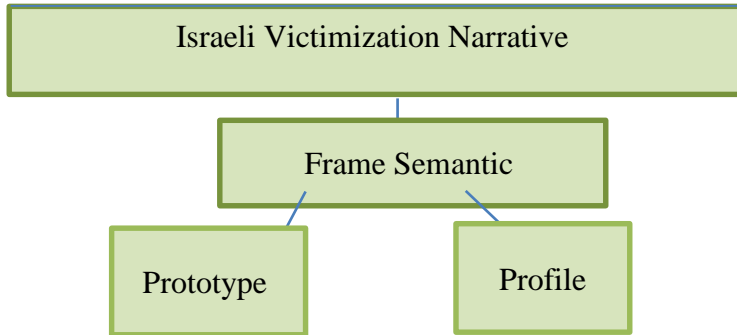
3.

Figure 1: The Proposed Theoretical Framework of the Israeli Narrative of Victimization Narratives based on Fillmore's frame semantics (1977b)

3.1 Frame Semantics

The fundamental theoretical concepts that characterize frame semantics can be attributed to Fillmore and have remained relatively unchanged since his initial writings on this approach. (1977a,1977b,1977c) To explain the most important notions of frame semantics, Fillmore considers a typical example of a ***commercial transaction frame.*** Here, the concept of frame is applied to verbs such as buy to illustrate the relationships between syntax and semantics. The verb buy requires obligatorily a buyer, goods, and, on the other hand, optionally a seller and a price. Verbs with related meanings, such as sell, are expected to have the same meaning slots but in a syntactically different order. This clearly shows the relationship to Fillmore's case frames. Combining these frames results in a commercial transaction.

3.1.1Prototype

"Prototype" is Among the most crucial concepts in frame semantics. Frames should be understood as prototypical descriptions of scenes. Prototypes benefit from not having to cover all aspects of a phrase's meaning; they can offer some of the circumstances needed for a phrase to be used correctly. Fillmore (1977b) illustrates the use of prototypes within frame semantics through an analysis of the concept of widow. "The word widow is specified concerning a background scene in which

people marry as adults; they marry one person, and their lives are affected by their partner's death and perhaps other properties."

3.1.2 Profiling

One further fundamental idea in frame semantics is profiling. Langacker (1987) uses the example of the hypotenuse to explain this concept. It is easy to visualize the idea of the hypotenuse. The interesting question concerning this mental picture is this: Can you imagine a hypotenuse without imagining the whole right triangle? The answer is no. The right triangle and hypotenuse are understood about the triangle and the plane in which it is contained, but they profile distinct parts of the frame. The following example, taken from Goldberg (1995), illustrates the lexical profiling of participants. Consider the following differences between the closely related verbs rob and steal:

1. John **robbed** the rich of all their money.

2. *John **robbed** three million dollars (from the rich).

3. John **stole** money from the rich.

4. *John **stole** the rich (of money).

One possible explanation for these distributional facts is a semantic difference in profiling. When someone robs someone, the victim and the agent (the thief) are profiled; when someone steals something, the agent and the stolen goods are profiled. With bolded profiles of the parties, Goldberg offers the following framework for the rob vs. steal debate:

rob <**thief target** goods>

steal <**thief** target **goods**>

4.Data collection

The researchers collect ten Israeli victimization narrative, they are, "Palestine was a 'swamp' before Israel", "Zionism is not a colonial movement.", "The 1967 war was a war of "no choice" for Israel." "'Anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism", "Inside Hamas Terrorist Tunnel Under Rantisi Hospital in Gaza", "Hamas' slit throats' of babies during kibbutz massacre", "Gaza hospital blast caused by rocket misfire", "Hamas uses civilians as human shields", "The war on Gaza is self-defense", "'Hamas is the same as ISIS.

5. Data Analysis

This section is devoted to the practical part of this study by analyzing the Israeli Narrative of Victimization. The collected data has analyzed semantically based on the adopted model developed in the previous section.

Analysis of Narrative (1)

"Hamas slit the throats of babies during the Kibbutz massacre."

Semantic Analysis

Through the lens of Fillmore's Frame Semantics, which considers the prototype and profile of the linguistic frame.

1. *Prototype*

This claim brings up a picture of enormous violence, cruelty, and the violation of human life, especially that of the most innocent people—infants and children. To increase the emotional impact and moral anger, the vivid metaphor "slit throats" conjures up a stressful and detailed image of a vicious, cold-blooded crime.

2. *Profile*

The profile of this frame includes the key elements: the perpetrator (Hamas), the victims (babies), and the violent action (slitting throats). It also involves the broader context of the "kibbutz massacre," which situates the event within a larger conflict and setting of violence and tragedy.

Analysis of Narrative (2)

"Palestine was a 'swamp' before Israel."

Semantic Analysis

Fillmore's Frame Semantics semantic analysis helps understand how linguistic frames and cognitive structures shape a myth. The primary frame is the "swamp" frame, representing unproductive land and stagnant water. The secondary frame is "Transformation," suggesting Israel transformed the area from a desolate swamp to a prosperous, wealthy country. This frame legitimizes the myth, portraying Israel's creation as a positive change.

Analysis of Narrative (3)

"Israel is not a settler colonial state."

Semantic Analysis

The myth that Israel is not a settler colonial state is analyzed using Fillmore's frame semantics. The prototype of a settler colonial state involves settlers establishing control over Indigenous people, often leading to displacement and exploitation. The profile of Israel as not a settler colonial state emphasizes the Jewish people's historical and cultural ties to Israel, Zionism as a form of nationalism, and the rejection of European culture, Hebrew adoption, and Jews returning to their homeland.

Analysis of Narrative (4)

"The 1967 war was a war of "no choice" for Israel."

Semantic Analysis

According to this narrative, Israel was forced into the conflict by willful outside forces. The proponents of the "no choice" narrative frame the 1967 war in this way; they activate the prototype of an unavoidable defensive war, profiling specific elements that support this view

Table : 1. frame semantic of the narrative part one

The Mental structure of narrative	Involving knowledge
Military Buildup	Emphasis on the mobilization of Arab armies.
Hostile Intentions	Focus on hostile statements from Arab leaders.
Preemptive Action	Highlighting the necessity of Israel's preemptive strike as a defensive measure.

It can be understood how this myth is created and maintained by examining the prototype and profile of "no choice" in relation to the 1967 conflict. According to the prototype, Israel had no choice but to go to war. However, <u>critics</u> might reframe the scenario by highlighting alternative profiles:

Table 2 frame semantic of the narrative part 2

Mental structure of narrative	Involving knowledge
Strategic Calculations	Suggesting that Israel had strategic reasons beyond immediate defense.
Diplomatic Options	Pointing to potential diplomatic solutions that were not exhausted.
Long-term Goals	Considering Israel's interest in territorial gains and regional dominance.

Analysis of Narrative (5)

"anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism"

According to Charles Fillmore, our comprehension of words and concepts depends on mental structures known as "frames" that include various elements of knowledge and context. A frame semantics analysis of the Israeli victimization narrative *"Anti-Zionism is Antisemitism"* requires an examination of the frames, prototypes, and profiles present in this victimization narrative.

Table 3 Frame Semantics Analysis of anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism

Mental structure of narrative	Involving knowledge
Historical Frame	the long history of antisemitism against Jews worldwide, including pogroms, the Holocaust, and other acts of persecution.
Zionism Frame	the political and ideological movement supporting the creation of a Jewish state in Israel as a haven and homeland for Jews**.**
Antisemitism Frame	Prejudice, discrimination, and hostility directed against Jews as an ethnic or religious group.
Political Frame	the contemporary geopolitical environment, which includes the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, international censure of Israeli policy, and the international conversation about nationalism and human rights.

Prototype

When the researcher analyzes the victimization narrative, "anti-Zionism is antisemitism," founded historical examples of antisemitism and modern expressions of anti-Zionism serve as prototypes. These prototypes shape how people understand and categorize new instances of anti-Zionism or antisemitism by comparing them to these established examples

Profile

Concentrating on particular elements of a frame to influence comprehension and interpretation. Profiling: This narrative highlights particular aspects of anti-

Zionism and antisemitism to equate the two. On the one hand, profiling antisemitism emphasizes historical and contemporary examples of prejudice and violence against Jews, focusing on the threats to Jewish safety and identity; on the other hand, profiling anti-zionism highlights extreme examples where anti-zionist rhetoric overlaps with or directly invokes antisemitic stereotypes or calls for the destruction of Israel. By highlighting these aspects, the narrative manipulates public opinion so that anti-Zionism is viewed through a lens of both modern and historical antisemitism.

Analysis of Narrative (6)

"Exclusive: Inside Hamas Terrorist Tunnel Under Rantisi Hospital in Gaza"

In this narrative, multiple **frames** are activated:

Table 4 frame semantic analysis of "Inside Hamas Terrorist Tunnel Under Rantisi Hospital in Gaza."

Elements of the narrative	The mental knowledge
Terrorism	involves elements related to terrorist activities, such as secrecy, threat, violence, and illegitimacy.
Hospital	includes elements associated with hospitals, such as care, healing, neutrality, and safety.
Conflict	Reflects the continual tension, violence, and political instability that characterize the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Prototype

The prototype of **terrorism** involves clandestine operations, threats to civilian life, and activities aimed at causing fear and destruction. The narrative suggests that the tunnel is a typical example of terrorist activity. On the other hand, the hospital prototype **is** a safe, neutral place dedicated to healing and protecting life.

The narrative emphasizes the violation of the hospital's mission by placing this prototype beside the tunnel.

Profile

The narrative describes the tunnel as a physical example of terrorist activity. It draws attention to the tunnel's covert character and its use in Hamas's activities. The hospital's profile is shown as a setting that enhances the sense of risk rather than its usual operations. The story highlights the tunnel's danger by placing it beneath the facility, highlighting the hospital's weakened safety.

Analysis of Narrative (7)

"Gaza hospital blast likely a Palestinian Islamic Jihad rocket misfire"

Using Fillmore's frame semantics, the researcher examines how certain aspects within the frames of "hospital," "blast," and "rocket misfire" become active and profiled in the narrative "Gaza hospital blast likely a Palestinian Islamic Jihad rocket misfire."

Table 5 frame semantic of "Gaza hospital blast likely a Palestinian Islamic Jihad rocket misfire"

Elements of narrative	Prototype Elements	Profiled Elements
Hospital	Care, safety, healing.	Victimization, disruption of safety, site of tragedy.
Blast	Explosion, damage, danger.	Destruction, harm to civilians, unexpected tragedy.
Rocket Misfire	Technical failure, unintended consequence, malfunction.	Accident, lack of intent to harm, tragic error.

The profiling highlights the hospital as a site of victimization, the blast as a severe and tragic event, and the rocket misfire as an accidental cause. This framing shapes our understanding of the incident, eliciting empathy for the victims and potentially moderating blame judgments by emphasizing the event's accidental nature.

Analysis of Narrative (8)

"Hamas uses civilians as human shields."

Analyzing the victimization narrative "Hamas uses civilians as human shields" using Fillmore's frame semantics involves examining the cognitive structures and meanings behind this narrative. The researcher focused on the concepts of prototype and profile to understand how this narrative is constructed and interpreted. The following schedule includes the common attributes and expectations associated with the concept of narrative:

Table 6 frame semantic of "Hamas uses civilians as human shields".

Concepts of narrative	Prototype	Profile
Human Shields	civilians being positioned to protect military targets, often against their will, and being put in a harm way	The focus is on the victimization of civilians and the tactical decisions made by Hamas. It brings attention to the ethical and humanitarian implications of such actions.
Hamas	a militant group fighting Israel with weapons, frequently employing asymmetric warfare and guerrilla strategies.	The narrative foregrounds the role of Hamas as an active agent exploiting civilians. It emphasizes the organization's strategic and military tactics, casting them in a negative light

Based on the previous schedule, The narrative favors established prototypes of "human shields" and "Hamas," invoking typical attributes and scenarios that elicit strong moral and emotional reactions. On the other hand, the narrative profiles specific aspects of civilian victimization and Hamas' strategic decisions, highlighting elements that reinforce negative perceptions and justify certain responses. In sum, the analysis through the lens of Fillmore's model demonstrates how the narrative influences cognitive frames to shape perception, influence emotions, and guide interpretations of actions.

Analysis of Narrative (9)

"The war on Gaza is self-defense."

As the researcher mentioned, frame semantics, developed by Charles Fillmore, focuses on how words and phrases evoke mental structures (frames), which helps to understand such a victimization narrative. In this context, the frame semantics of the narrative "The war on Gaza is self-defense" are illustrated as follows:

Table7 frame semantic of "The war on Gaza is self-defense."

Concept of the narrative	Prototype / Typical Features	Profile of the concept
Self-Defense	• An immediate and direct response to an imminent threat. • The primary goal is protection, not aggression.	• Highlighting Protection • Justification of war • emphasizes the moral legitimacy of self-defense, aiming to evoke sympathy and support for the war

Thus, the prototype of self-defense involves a scenario where an individual or entity (Israel) is under direct, imminent threat and responds proportionally to neutralize that threat, e.g., a person being attacked and fighting back to protect themselves. On the other hand, the profile of self-defense is specifically tailored to justify the war on Gaza by emphasizing protection and moral legitimacy, e.g.(the state (Israel) launching military operations against Gaza, framed as necessary actions to protect its citizens from rocket attacks and other threats.

Analysis of Narrative (10)

"Hamas is the same as ISIS."

Semantic Analysis

Fillmore's frame semantics is a theory that describes how words and concepts are understood in relation to mental structures called frames (Fillmore, 1982). The "Terrorist Organization" frame is the one that occurs in the narrative "Hamas is the same as ISIS." This frame has components like illegitimacy, violence, extremism, and global danger. Both Hamas and ISIS are framed within this structure to emphasize their similarities.

Table 8 Frame semantic of the narrative "Hamas is the same as ISIS."

Elements of the narrative	Prototype	Profile of the narrative
ISIS	the central, most typical example of extreme terrorism known for its brutality, radical ideology, and global reach.	☐ Highlighting the violent actions of both groups. ☐ Emphasizing the extremist beliefs and goals. ☐ Suggesting that both groups pose a significant threat beyond their immediate regions.
Hamas Compared to ISIS	Hamas shares the prototypical characteristics of ISIS e.g. extremism, violence, and a significant threat to security.	

By applying the frame semantics approach, The narrative "Hamas is the same as ISIS" activates the "Terrorist Organization" frame with ISIS as the prototype. The profile draws attention to the most extreme and negative features of this prototype, thus shaping the perception of Hamas in a way that emphasizes its similarities to ISIS. This linguistic strategy reinforces the idea that Hamas is just as dangerous and illegitimate as ISIS.

6. Finding

This section presents the findings of the analysis conducted on ten Israeli victimization narratives. The analysis was conducted using Fillmore's' frame semantics (1977b). Based on this adaption, the researchers summarize the findings in the following table:

Table 9 finding of types of victimization narratives

No.	Victimization narratives	Types of victimization				
		Humanitarian Crimes	Political	religious	ethnical	Terrorist
1	"Palestine was a 'swamp' before Israel"		√		√	
2	"Zionism is not a colonial movement."		√	√	√	
3	"The 1967 war was a war of 'no choice' for Israel."		√			
4	"'Anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism"		√	√	√	
5	"Inside Hamas Terrorist Tunnel Under Rantisi Hospital in Gaza"	√				√
6	"Hamas 'slit throats' of babies during kibbutz massacre"	√				√
7	"Gaza hospital blast caused by rocket misfire"	√				√
8	"Hamas uses civilians as human shields"					√
9	"The war on Gaza is self-defense"		√	√	√	
10	"'Hamas is the same as ISIS'"		√			√

Based on Table (4.17) the total number of Types of victimization is (5). The most frequently occurred type is political, which occurs (9) times and amounts (64%). The second most frequent type is terrorist, which occurs (8) times and amounts (57%). The third most frequent type is humanitarian, which occurs (6) times and amounts (42%). The fourth most frequent type is, ethical which occurs (5) times and amount (35%). The fifth and final type is religious occurs (3) times and amount (21%) .
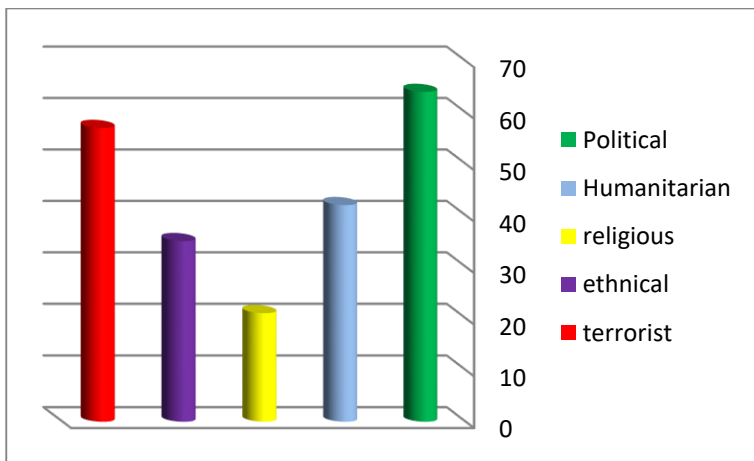

Figure (2) Statistical Analysis of Types of victimization

6. Conclusion

In the light of frame semantic analysis of the data selection, the researchers presents five types of Israeli victimization narratives. The first type is political, which occurs (9) times and amounts (64%). This type of victimization narrative occurs when the narratives shed the light upon the contemporary geopolitical environment, which includes the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, international censure of Israeli policy, and the international conversation about nationalism and human rights. The second type most frequent type is terrorism, which occurs (8) times and amounts (57%), this type occurs when the narratives reflect elements related to terrorist activities, such as secrecy, threat, violence, extremism, and illegitimacy. The third most frequent type is ethical, which occurs (5) times and amounts (35%) this type occurs when the

narrative includes elements related to pogroms, the Holocaust, and other acts of persecution against Jews as an ethnic or based on Anti-Semitism. The fourth most frequent type is humanitarian, which occurs (6) times and amount (42%).It occurs when the narrative promote an inhumanity act and extreme evil or any kind of a violence against Jews as human . The fifth and final type is religious also occurs (3) times and amount (21%) this type occur when the victimization narrative emphasizes Jewish rights to the land and portrays Zionism as a religious group.

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