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A Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Social Media Influencers' Attitudes towards the Gaza War

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تحليل نقدي للخطاب حول مواقف المؤثرين في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي تجاه الحرب على غزة

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Abstract

Based on Fairclough's three-dimensional Model, this study provides a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of an interview between Bassem Youssef, a Middle Eastern political satirist, and Piers Morgan, a Western media figure. The study utilizes a qualitative method to explore how attitudes and conceptions related to the Gaza conflict are formed and conveyed through the use of language by the two figures. It centers around investigating the influencers' lexical choices, rhetorical strategies, and underlying ideologies. The findings reveal that the discourse of the interview is not reflecting a neutral media interaction, but representing an arena of discursive conflict between a dominant Western media and an oppositional humanistic critical discourse which partially succeeded in deconstructing the prevailing biased conceptions and reconstructing the event of the Gaza War in its humanistic and ethical dimensions. **Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Social Media Influencers, Attitudes, War on Gaza, rhetorical strategies.**

المستخلص

تمثل الدراسة تحليلاً لغوياً نقدياً لمقابلة أجريت بين كاتب سياسي ساخر من العالم العربي وهو باسم يوسف، وشخصية إعلامية غربية وهو بيرس مورجان، وذلك لاستكشاف الطريقة التي يستخدمان بها اللغة لتكوين ونقل مواقفهما التي تتعلق بالحرب على غزة بالاستناد الى نموذج فيروكلو الثلاثي الابعاد. وتؤكد الدراسة على الخيارات اللغوية للمؤثرين واستراتيجياتهم البلاغية وايدولوجياتهم الكامنة. وتشير النتائج ان خطاب المقابلة لم يعكس تفاعلاً إعلامياً محايداً بل كان يمثل ساحة صراع خطابي بين وسائل الاعلام الغربية المهيمنة، وخطاب نقدي انساني معارض نجح وبشكل جزئي في تفكيك المفاهيم المتحيزة السائدة وإعادة بناء الحدث. الكلمات المفتاحية: التحليل النقدي للخطاب، المؤثرون على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، المواقف، الحرب على غزة، الاستراتيجيات البلاغية.

1.Introduction

In general, language serves as a powerful tool through which speakers convey their thoughts, concepts, and opinions. Notably, language and power are interconnected particularly in political discourses where language is indispensably used as a tool for communicating ideas and opinions while advocating certain policies during political debates. Properly manipulating specific linguistic skills and rhetorical strategies, political speakers are able to effectively communicate their opinions, and promote their ideologies to their audience. No doubt, the power of effective communication would be a result of having necessary language skills and using some rhetorical strategies, which reflect the speaker's linguistic abilities used to achieve impact on their audience (Nurkhamidah, Fahira and Ningtyas, 2021: 74-75); in the same vein, Rubinelli (2018:17) suggests that language has a great role in politics since politicians depend mainly on using language to affect their audiences and make decisions. Certainly, media language is thought to be one influential type of discourse that largely contribute to frame public views especially, when addressing political issues with humanitarian concerns like the Palestinian

issue. Hence, media, beside reporting on events, assist in framing and interpreting them, and either gives or removes intelligibility from those who are engaged in them. In this regard, the interview between Bassem Youssef and Piers Morgan stands as a noteworthy event due to its impact in revealing a direct dispute between two opposed ideological perspectives in a dominating Western media atmosphere. The present study first begins with exploring the controversial claim that the western media discourse about the Gaza conflict utilizes language as an ideological means for fortifying power relations. This, necessitates a critical discourse that goes beyond the mere description of language to deconstruct its deep structures and social functions. This study fits in the discipline of Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth, CDA) according to which language is considered as a social practice linked to power and ideology. One of the most outstanding proponents in this field of study is Norman Fairclough (1989-1995) who claims that that discourse mainly contributes in shaping and reflecting social reality. His three-dimensional model analyses discourse in terms of three connected layers:

1. The textual level which, underscores the linguistic features of the text.
2. The discursive practice level, which focuses on the discourse production, circulation, and consumption.
3. The social practice level, which associates discourse with some important types of ideological structures and power relations.

Consequently, the model is mainly adopted in this study for its ability to bring strict linguistic analysis together with critical social interpretation. Despite the numerous studies that have addressed Western media discourse on the Palestinian issue, most have focused on news coverage or newspaper articles, with a relative neglect of televised debates as interactive discursive spaces where power is directly manifested. Furthermore, there is a scarcity of studies that rigorously and systematically apply Fairclough's (1989-1995) model to current media events with global resonance. Therefore, this study seeks to bridge this gap by analyzing a specific televised debate that represents a moment of discursive clash between a dominant discourse and a counter-discourse, thus adding a new applied dimension to studies of critical media discourse analysis. The political, military, and ideological antipathy has historically identified the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Even though traditional media outlets have had roles in influencing the generally expected discourse related to the conflict, the development of social media has significantly altered the way in which information is conveyed, and public opinion is shaped. It is not an overstatement to suggest that social media influencers have become among the most prominent figures impacting contemporary political discourse simply because of their potential to communicate with large numbers of audiences. Nevertheless, the language tactics used by these influencers to characterize, describe, and establish narratives related to the Israeli-Palestinian struggle are not often recognized. A profound knowledge of the way in which influencers utilize certain discursive strategies to spread ideologies, shape public opinion, or challenge established power dynamics in connection to international crises is really deficient. Definitely, the Gaza war represents a turning point in altering the public opinion and attitudes concerning Israel. It influences the way in which the international community looks at the Israeli-Palestinian struggle. For this reason, the study specifies the need to analyze a social media discourse on the War on Gaza, emphasizing the importance of understanding influencers' attitudes and their potential influence on public perception. It briefly highlights the role of social media influencers in shaping public opinion by employing certain linguistic and rhetorical strategies. By analyzing how each figure either fortifies or challenges prevalent dominant narratives, the study will clarify how media figures contribute to the public discourse related to the Gaza conflict, shaping the perceptions of the global audience. As such, the study aims at:

1. Investigating the discourse tactics used by social media influencers in connection with the Gaza conflict.
2. Exploring social media influencers' ideological positions on the Gaza conflict.
3. Investigating the way in which social media influencers define Israel and Palestine—as enemies, friends, or being victimized—and how these representations impact the way their followers perceive current political issues.
4. Evaluating the ethical aspects of social media influencers' involvement in the political conflict under discussion. The researcher suggests that the impact of social media influencers in shaping public opinion is an important topic to investigate as it can have implications for various domains such as politics, culture and society. Therefore, the study seeks is to answer the following questions:

1.How do social media influencers utilize language and framing techniques to create narratives that affect public opinions and attitudes regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the participating countries, and the larger geopolitical context?

2. What are the basic lexical choices and rhetorical strategies utilized by the influencers to construct their attitudes and influence the audience's opinion?

2.Literature Review

2.1 Discourse and Ideology

Indeed, many critical discourse studies suggest the intricate relationship between discourse and ideology. Simply, discourse can be defined as a piece of language used for communication (Cook,1989). Foucault (1972), believes that 'discourse' is a system of representation that generates knowledge and limits what may be spoken and thought during a certain period of time. The use of language, Fairclough (1992) suggests, is a form of social practice that cannot only be a linguistic activity, but also one that both shapes and is shaped by social systems. Likewise, Bourdieu (1991), emphasizes the role that linguistic practices have in maintaining social stratification via the symbolic power of discourse. It is through discourse that institutions can promote dominant ideologies (Althusser,1971) specifically when talking about political discourse which can be employed to gradually construct and reconstruct dominant ideological narratives (Wodak,2009). Precisely, ideology indicates a set of concepts, beliefs, and values that shapes and mirrors social realities. In media and institutional contexts, this set of concepts is constructed and reproduced through the use of language (Van Dijak,1998).Ideology is seen as the medium through which individuals correlate into social structures—i.e., how people come to accept certain beliefs as natural or common sense (Althusser 1971). Therefore, discourse and ideology are closely related to each other in the sense that the former serves as a vehicle for creating, expressing, maintaining and contesting the latter. According to (Marx & Engels, 1970), ideology is described as the elite's conceptions and ideas that reinforce current power relations. Ideological interests and stances of individuals representing higher positions and having powerful status like politicians and the elite can be obviously reflected in the discourse of media. (Fowler,1991; Faiclough,1989,2001,2003; Van Dijak,1997)

2.2 Social Media and Their Role on Public Perception about War

As a concept, social media is used to signify online platforms which can help individuals and groups interact, share information, and take place in the diverse kinds of communication via the internet (Obar & Wildman, 2015).Various types of social media have emerged during the last few years including: YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc. Each of these platforms can be used according to some intended purposes. The main purpose of using online platforms is to create personal profiles, build business networks, interact through comments, subscribe to channels, and share content such as text, images, video, and audio with a wider audience. Thus, they assist social interaction, and speed up information reciprocity between users (Yohanna, 2020).Social media has enabled its users to build a network of online friendships with individuals who can be family members, co-workers, or even people they have never physically met before (Appel et al., 2020). After all, the use of social media platforms is not away off possible difficulties or problems regarding private information security, expansion of spurious news, and the possible psychological effects of superfluous online interaction. However, implementing these platforms really enables influencers to express their opinions, attitudes and perspectives related to a wide range of topics and aspects. Nowadays, various digital media platforms make it attainable for everyone to participate in public online- discussions tackling different social, religious or even political issues. Significantly, social- media influencers, with their credibility and authenticity, can play an influential role in moulding their followers' perceptions and responses towards their content (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2016). The role of social media influencers in shaping and directing public perception has become progressively significant in the digital era. Moussaïd (et al., 2013) asserts that public opinion is the outcome of the society individuals' interaction who share their own experiences, opinions, information and so forth. It represents views, attitudes, beliefs, and judgements held by a group of people towards a particular issue, event, or topic that is socially relevant (Mallinson & Hatemi, 2018). It seems true that the crucial role of social media can be reflected on the form and development of public opinion (Dwivedi et al., 2023) as it has participated in the emergence of dynamic public areas where different speech activities like debates, dialogues, interviews, and information broadcasting would happen in an extraordinary speed(Arisanty et al., 2020). Public opinion comprises the individuals' perceptions or views concerning a variety of everyday life aspects which can be related to political, social, economic, cultural, and other issues. Significantly, public opinion can vitally participate in the states' democratic process as well as in decision-making in society. In addition to the

Governments, different types of institutions, organizations, and companies give too much importance to public opinion as formulating policies, developing products or services, and assessing responses to certain initiatives (Gadzali et al., 2023; Harahap, Kraugusteeliana, et al., 2023) Globally, individuals with different nationalities, ages, and backgrounds have been turning to social media platforms for information, entertainment, and product recommendations. Social media influencers, with their ability to create content and establish trust with their followers, have emerged as powerful public leader who can skillfully impact public opinion on a wide range of topics, from lifestyle preferences to political views. It is suggested that the significance of public opinion in the context of a society that complies with democratic principles cannot be ignored (Masferrer, 2023). This important role has become crucial since political decisions, and the social development patterns which impact many individuals are mostly determined by the desires and expectations of the majority (Burstein, 2003). Since its inception, Social media has played an influential role in shifting public attitudes and impacting trends in different ways. One of these influences can be expressed in terms of propaganda and promotion biased toward the side controlling it. Increasingly, social media has become one influential means of brainwashing and publicity of Zionist thoughts in order to justify the Israeli abuse and crimes committed against the Palestinians. Pervasively, the Palestinians issue has received an overwhelming sympathy from the majority of Arabs who always offer assistance and support to their brothers in Palestine due to the inherited Islamic and Arabic nationality links between them. When burst in 2024, Israel and Hamas war has propagated considerable attention on social media. Influencers across platforms like Twitter, Tik Tok, and Instagram made posts and videos about their views on the war and lots of content including breaking news updates have been shared. Of course, These posts, pictures, videos, etc. shared across different social media platforms, have their influence on how the public is perceiving the struggle. Professor Elise Labott, a journalist and founder of Zivvy media states that: Social media has significantly influenced how the public perceives the Israel-Hamas war, impacting both understanding and opinions. It involves a mix of algorithm-driven content curation, the challenge of misinformation, and changing generational views. There is also a declining trust in mainstream news outlets, pushing people toward alternative online sources and social media for information. <https://www.american.edu/sis/news>

2.3 Social Influence Theory

Awareness of the principles of Social Influence Theory can spell out the way in which social media influencers can strengthen their relationships with their followers to affect their choices (Cialdini, 2007). The theory is developed by Kurt Lewin in the mid-twentieth century with the aim of examining how individuals are influenced by their social environment, including peers, opinion leaders, and influencers. It looks into the power of interpersonal relationships and the influence of social interactions could have on attitudes, opinions, and behaviors. Social media influencers play a significant role in shaping public opinion by acting as modern opinion leaders. They create content that powerfully resonates with their followers in order to create a specific influence on their perceptions and decisions. According to the Two-Step Flow theory, put forward by Paul Lazarsfeld, Elihu Katz, and their colleagues in the 1950s, information drifts from media to opinion leaders and then to the wider public. These opinion leaders can diligently take up with media content and then partake their explanations and suggestions with the audience. In the case of war, understanding how information drifts from social media influencers to their audience is significant. Recently, influencers are considered opinion leaders due to their ability to shape public opinion via mediating and interpreting information from various sources and then sharing these interpretations with the followers. (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). As for the Selective Exposure Theory, developed by Joseph T. Klapper (1960), people mostly resort to select information that comes in line with their real views and attitudes. Those individuals try always to follow social media influencers who tackle certain types of topics related to the beliefs and attitudes of their followers (Klapper, 1960).

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

In general, 'discourse' is used to refer to any piece of language larger than a sentence. This piece of language can be spoken or written. Discourse analysis is a method used for analyzing language in relation to a specific social context in order to explore how language is used in real- life situations. A wide range of meanings and intentions can be traced as language is used in different social context. This language use is considered as a type of social practices through which a variety of social relations can be replicated and different interests are achieved. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a branch of discourse analysis that focuses on the variation and relationship between society and power, which is often embedded in the social context, as well as its interest in

revealing power relations and ideologies underlying social contexts. According to Van Dijk (1998:1), CDA is " a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context". It is assumed that the aim of CDA is mainly to change "the existing social reality in which discourse is related in particular ways to other social elements such as power relations, ideologies, economic and political strategies and policies"(Fairclough,2014). Primarily, CDA focuses on investigating how text is represented, misused and resist other powers in the social and political context. The primary work in Critical Discourse Analysis is that conducted by Norman Fairclough (1989-1995) who has presented the three - dimensional framework. The basic purpose of this framework is to analyze how discourse is practiced in societal context. The model's proposed dimensions include: the object of analysis, the processes by means of which the object is produced and received, and the socio- historical conditions which control the mentioned processes. Fairclough states also, that these inter-related dimensions demand a different type of analysis; text analysis, processes analysis, and social analysis. In the textual dimension, Fairclough studies the relationship between words and analyzes representation, relationships and identity within the text. Discourse practice focuses on the production and consumption of text and takes into account how it is created and used. The social and cultural practice dimension considers external influences that shape discourse, such as social attitudes and cultural backgrounds. It is likely that Fairclough's model (1995) can be applied to different types of texts, including ancient manuscripts, historical novels, news media, and literary works. By analyzing these dimensions, the model allows for a comprehensive understanding of how language and power interact in discourse. The interview between Piers Morgan and Bassem Youssef yields substantial material for a critical discourse analysis (CDA), particularly with regard to identity, media power dynamics, ideology, and the negotiation.

4. Methods and Material

The study will conduct a qualitative method to analyze the two- round interview between Bassem Youssef, an influential Arab media personality, and Piers Morgan, a prominent British journalist, aired on October 17, 2023, and November 2, 2023. Seeking to achieve the study aims, the analysis will, first, start with choosing representative extracts on the bases that they contain distinctive linguistic choices used by the mentioned public figures to direct the way in which the audience comprehend the Gaza conflict and to frame related issues in a way that raises moral or emotive responses. Secondly, the meaning of each extract will be explained before determining the dominant linguistic choices and frames in the discourse.

4.1 Data collection

Basically, the research provides a critical discourse analysis of a two-part conversation between two recognized figures – Bassem Youssef, a satirist and influencer, and Piers Morgan, British author, broadcaster, journalist, on the show *Piers Morgan Uncensored*. The first online interview, titled "Israel-Hamas War: Piers Morgan vs. Bassem Youssef On Palestine's Treatment," aired on October 17, 2023 and lasted approximately 33 minutes and 15 seconds. It quickly attained popularity after catching more than 17 million views by October 22. Lasting for an hour, 46 minutes, and 47 seconds, the second part, however, is a face to-face interview broadcasted on November 1, 2023 and recorded in Los Anglos. This part of the interview presented a more in- depth, long conversation. The interview is selected for its popularity on the social platforms and applicability to the research questions. The process of data collection includes: identifying the interview, transcribing the content, gathering background information, and organizing the data. Based on the Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model (1989-1995), the discourse of the interview is analyzed focusing on three interconnected levels. While the first level spotlights the linguistic features of the interview, including language choices, vocabulary, grammar, and discourse structure, the focus of the second level will be on the discourse production, distribution, and consumption in the context of media concerns, societal norms and power relations. Lastly, the focal point of the third level speculates the role of discourse in constructing and fortifying power relations in society.

5.Data Analysis

Employing Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model, the two-part interview between Bassem Youssef and Piers Morgan on October 17, 2023, and November 2, 2023 will be analyzed, focusing on how Bassem employed emotional appeals, metaphors, and critical framing to expose Israeli human rights violations and amplify Palestinian suffering, positioning the conflict as a struggle for justice and survival.

5.1 The Discourse as Text (Discourse Analysis)

5.1.1 Linguistic Features in the Interviews

5.1.1.1 Vocabulary Choices

Analyzing the language used by both Bassem Youssef and Piers Morgan demonstrates some implicit power relations and ideologies behind their word choices. Hence, Youssef's critical and ironic view on both Western media narratives and regional conflicts is vividly reflected in his choice of words that are often consumed with emotional connotations. His selected vocabulary is purposefully manipulated to challenge mainstream views or enquire the impartiality of universal power participants in the Gaza struggle. Very often, language users tend to use emotive language in some situations when they try to get the people to empathize with their speech. This use, according to Burke's identification, mainly reflects the speakers' skill of using pathos as a rhetorical technique to create the impression that they identify with the audience's expectations, needs and values (Higgins & Walker, 2012). In political interaction, the use of emotive language is required for evoking feelings, particularly when it is related to discuss issues concerning national identity, conflict, or security (Charteris-Black, 2011). When it comes to explain the way in which pathos can be achieved, Gagich and Zickel (2022) suggest that speakers usually tend to use variant methods including detailed descriptions that help the listeners visualize the thing or the idea being described. A description like this can be accomplished via manipulating an obvious imagery that evokes the listener's emotions. In relation to this, certain types of vocabulary can be used emotively to enhance integration, harmony, and likeness between the listeners and the thing being described. From a humanitarian perspective, arguing against unjust treatment and segregation is justified "if a political action or decision does or does not conform with human rights or humanitarian convictions and values" (Wodak & Meyer, 2001: p.75). Hence, to represent the conflict in Gaza as a struggle of persecution and human rights contravention, Bassem Youssef, as in Extract (1) below, employs emphatic language filled with affectional and moral implications; the word '**prison**', for example, is likely used to illegalize the blockade, illuminate its humanitarian consequences, and thus call upon the viewer's sense of justice and empathy for the Palestinians who experience the difficult circumstances of the Israeli prison system. The word '**prison**' appears as one frequent choice in Youssef's speech; he uses the word to emphasize the metaphor of restricted movement and collective punishment forced by the Israeli siege. Clearly, the image of prison in extract (1) below is mainly related to the idea of inhibition, discrimination and injustice.

Extract (1): "**Now, right now, in Palestine, in West Bank, and Gaza, 20% of Palestinians go through Israeli prison system, whether imprisonment, whether interrogation, whether torture. And the rest of them, they live a life of daily loss of land, of homes, of life. And they are... They are suffocated by this...**" Similarly, the word '**apartheid**', appeared in Extract (2): "**Israel is a racist apartheid country that is projecting this shiny example of secularism and democracy for the people so people can accept whatever they do because they look at Palestinians as lesser people.**", is used to depict the Israeli brutal treatment of the Palestinians associated with the unjust blockade and Gaza-West Bank split. Thus, Youssef relates Israel's policies with the racial segregation and discrimination identified in South Africa during the 20th century. He reveals that Israel is merely an apartheid state against its citizens, regardless of their origin, and provides evidence that the claim of being a democratic and secular state for all of its citizens regardless of their origins is only a big lie.

Extract (3):

"I mean, this, I want to discuss something that is very important because we have been talking about Israel being a democratic state, a secular state for all of its citizens, including its Arab residents, right? Wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong. In 2018, there was a resolution that was offered in the Knesset that said that Israel should be a state for all of its citizens."

And intending to portray the savage killing of the Palestinians during the Israeli military operations, Youssef used the word '**genocide**' in Extract (4): "**as you see, the Holocaust happened, the most orchestrated, industrialized, horrible genocide in our modern time.**" to promote awareness about the proportion of the Palestinian civilians' deaths and the international legal and moral implications of Israel's military forces. In most of his interviews and social media posts, Youssef is used to utilize the word '**massacre**' to attribute the Israeli military operations especially when talking about circumstances involving excessive civilian deaths in Gaza. In Extract (5): "**Ana during that, there was a lot of, as you know, Zionist militia the Irgun, the Haganah, all of these people were killing Palestinians, the famous massacre of Deir Yassin.**", he contests the vindications of the Israeli's operations through his choice of the word '**massacre**' bringing up horrible images of mass killing and humanitarian crisis. In Extract (6): "**Oh yeah, overnight Fame, this size, it's toxic, terrible, terrible. It corrupts, it goes into your soul and it's not good. It's not, I actually didn't enjoy it and the worst part about is that like you're trying to do comedy in a very controversial Climate about very**

controversial ", Bassem tries to emphasize the moral decay and emotional effects of sudden celebrity through the use of hyperbole demonstrating how sudden celebrity seems like a contagious disease for ones who are inadequate. The sentence length, in addition, reflects emotional exhaustion and psychological burden and portrays the way that celebrity may lead to stress and discomfort. Table (1) below, provides some additional examples of exaggerated language with their meanings and functions:

Table (1) Examples of Exaggerated Language with Their Meanings and Functions

Examples of hyperbole	Meanings	Functions
1. "People would always choose, most of the time, they always choose the military form rather than the religious form because they kind of like, at least they are not infringing on my personal freedom, not yet."	The phrase "not yet" conveys an expected danger, indicating a possible threat.	It causes a sense of continuous tension and confusion about the individual's personal freedom.
2. "I bombed hard. I bombed hard and I went home crying. I said like, 'I'm not going to make it.'"	"bombed hard" is repeated to intensify the feeling of pessimism and disappointment	Conveys emotional difficulties associated with any attempt to start over.
3. "I have been having death threats, like, did never stop since 2011, never stopped."	Demonstrating the nature of continuous threats.	Amplifies feelings and depicts the threat Bassem encounters.
4. "Overnight Fame... it's toxic, terrible, terrible. It corrupts, it goes into your soul."	Sudden fame is depicted as a poison which corrupts the soul.	Demonstrate how sudden celebrity can be harmful on the one's well-being.
4. "People accusing me of something. All I did in that episode was just being a mirror of what is happening in the street and showing them how ridiculous it is."	"Being a mirror" Implies comprehensive and precise reflection, focusing on his role as a truth-teller.	Shows himself as sincere and courageous while telling the reality.
5. "I'm still trying to [kill my wife]."	His dark comedy style is made clear through the use of humor and hyperbole	Utilizes shock value to provide a sense of humor and to create intimacy.
6. "It's a circus, two gladiators in the"	Exaggerated representation of violence and	Criticizing the unacceptable dehumanizing aspects in the public discourse.

Coliseum, two pigs fighting in the mud.”	dehumanization in media and political conflict.	
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Vividly, Youssef's vocabulary choices reflect his strategy of illuminating the extravagant Israeli violence, contesting the justifications of its military operations, and demonstrating Israel as the real assailant in the struggle. Instead of looking at the conflict from a rigorous political or military perspective, these vocabularies, beside many others, call upon the audience to view the situation from a humanitarian perspective. Therefore, Bassem Youssef describes the situation in Gaza as a humanitarian crisis in which the Palestinians are suffering daily. So, The Palestinians' state of suffering is emphasized here to raise the audience empathy with them While appealing for international empathy with the suffering people in Palestine, Youssef asserts the necessity of taking useful steps to deal practically with situation in Gaza because Words alone won't change their reality. He calls for accountability, and commitment to justice for the people of Gaza as in Extract (7): " **So, as an Israeli citizen, I need to hold my Israeli government accountable, and as an American citizen, I want to know all of these money that we are giving to Israel.**" Pronouns like "we, they, you, I", etc. can be used to delegate the speaker's authority, establish his stance in relation to others, or assign or deny accountability to specific individuals. Bassem Youssef, in some examples like: "**They killed 106 people**", and "**They control everything.**", uses "They" to assign agency to oppressors referring to Israeli forces and Western policies. This, in fact, reinforces a power divide obviously identifying responsibility or authority and assigns distance and power domination as well. The inclusive pronoun "we", in "**We should give them more weapons, right?**" is ironically used to refer to West and the international power uncovering complicity and hypocrisy in the global responses. In "**We are used to them being bombed every time...**" the pronoun "We" implicates Western audiences' media alongside Palestinians, distributing responsibility for apathy and normalizing violence. By using "you" in "**You want me to condemn Hamas, but you won't condemn Netanyahu.**", Bassem questions the interviewers' stance and directly contests him for moral accountability for selective outrage against human rights. He confronts Morgan's faith in official narratives by imposing moral responsibility on him- "**If you were a journalist, wouldn't you be skeptical of anything that an authority figure says?**" Meanwhile, Bassem draws attention to the hypocrisy in the discourse surrounding "**cancel culture**" and free speech in Extract (8) when he talks with Piers Morgan saying that "**You are someone who's always spoken against culture, cancelled culture. Right now, a whole culture is cancelled.**" Another example of an indicative usage of pronouns is Bassem's use of "I" to deflect allegations through humor and proclaim personal experience— assigning agency to himself briefly to turn a topic on its head. By employing 'This' rather than 'They', or 'Israel' in Extract (9): "**This is not an eye for an eye anymore... it's a whole population—for an eye.**" Bassem highlights the scope of victimization by giving collective agency to the continuous escalation without identifying a single perpetrator. In this way, he intends to refer to a broader system of oppression or war— Israel and other global powers. Indefinite pronouns like '**Nobody**', appear in Bassem's speech in some situations like in Extract (10): "**So, what happens when people hear that? You know, killing babies is horrible, but when you say decapitated 40 babies, you are planting a certain image trigger in people's mind. Who said that? Nobody said that?!?**" It is used here as a tool for reducing authority and extending responsibility. In other parts of his speech, Bassem assigns agency to specific individual -" the 71-year-old guy" through the repeated use of "he" like in Extract (11): "**Because of that propaganda, that guy in Illinois, the 71-year-old guy, he killed... and he used to play with him.**" On the other hand, Morgan's use of the pronoun "they" in phrases such as "**They killed innocent civilians**" and "**They're using human shields**" implies that Hamas and Palestinians are interchangeable. He places guilt and blame on them collectively in this way. Additionally, he promotes individual accountability for collective actions by directly assigning ethical agency to Bassem as the spokesperson for the Palestinians through the usage of the pronoun "you" as in: "**Why won't you condemn Hamas?**" and "**Do you support what they did?**" Morgan utilizes 'we' in statements like "**We all agree terrorism is wrong.**" to build solidarity so as to force Bassem to accept a moral framework in order to assign common moral standards. As such, Piers skillfully uses the inclusive pronoun 'we' so as to establish common ethical ground and consequently resonates the audience's values making it challenging for Bassem to announce different views without upsetting the audience. Meanwhile, using the pronoun 'I', allows Morgan to establish himself as an objective observer who maintains narrative control while expressing his viewpoint in sentences like: "**I do think Israel has lied.**" and "**I'm not going to dispute that**". Further, he uses the personal pronoun 'I' in "**No? Oh, okay, maybe I am wrong.**" in order to confront his responsibility for committing mistakes and

thus demonstrates openness and confrontation. Further examples of pronouns used by the two figures are introduced in the following Table (2).

Table (2) Pronouns: Responsibility and effect

Pronouns	Examples	Speaker	Responsibility assigned to	Effect
They	1. They killed 106 people and despite that they knew it's a refugee Camp, they said, 'Oh, maybe it's a one time off.'	Bassem Yousif	oppressors referring to Israeli forces and Western policies	reinforces a power divide obviously identifying responsibility or authority and assigns distance and power domination as well
They	" ---- they are a terror group.	Piers Morgan	Hamas and Palestinians.	implies that Hamas and Palestinians are interchangeable. He places guilt and blame on them collectively in this way
You	"... You want me to go ham? I will condemn Hamas."	Bassem Yousif	Piers Morgan	questions Morgan's stance and directly contests him for moral accountability for selective outrage against human rights
Nobody	"Nobody said that?!?"	Bassem Yousif	Anonymous	deflects agency, making the claim collective and anonymous
He	2. "And because of that propaganda, Mr. Morgan, that guy in Illinois, the 71-year-old guy, he killed, stabbing the six years old Palestinian kid in Illinois, 26 times. And he used to play with him."	Bassem Yousif	the killer	puts personal responsibility on the killer
Who	"Who has said that?"	Piers Morgan	Implicitly assigns agency to Bassem	directly presses Bassem to take responsibility for claims
I	1. "No? Oh, okay, maybe I am	Piers Morgan	Morgan takes personal	1. Mitigates the confrontation and admits error

	wrong.” 2. "I do think they've lied. I'm not going to dispute that. I do think they've been caught lying. I do think they said things that turned out not to be true. I also think that two weeks ago a hospital was bombed."		responsibility for error	2.establishes Morgan as an objective observer who maintains narrative control while expressing his viewpoint
We	“Only terrorist can commit the kind of Act of terrorism we saw”	Morgan	Inclusive agency	constructs a common moral ground, positioning oppositions as exterior.

Ideological perspectives can also be detected through analyzing prominent grammatical structures, sentence form and how rhetorical devices are used. Therefore, as a means of defying, rhetorical questions are used by Youssef to confront the interviewer's framing of the conflict as a battle between terrorism and self-defense.

Extract (12):

"For some reason, I just like went with the flow. I went to the interrogation wearing the big hat. I went to the show. I just wanted this to be a farce because I, I just like, 'You're really coming after the comedian.' And I just tried to enjoy myself. But deep inside, I was dying. " Emphasizing the absurdity of particular situations, at a certain point of his discussion about the limits of humor, Youssef, asks: "**You are really coming after the comedian?**". The rhetorical question, here, is manipulated to confront the audience to consider the contribution of comedy in liberate societies and autocratic ones. Bassem tries to subvert the regime's somberness by making them appear laughable; he manifests the breakability of power when satire considered threatening. Tactfully, rhetorical questions are used to engage the viewers in critical thinking in a non- confrontational way. Bassem shows how ridiculous authoritarianism is by portraying humor as a threat. Commonly, Youssef's manipulation of rhetorical questions reflects a skillful way of provoking the audience thought, creating a sense of irony, or turning their attention to some recent societal contradictions. In addition, they are intended to invite the audience to have different stand points relating to the currently discussed issues i.e., the issue of Gaza conflict. Often, some of these rhetorical questions are used to break up the flow of the conversation or to invoke the audience critical consideration of the issue or to create a sense of irony. Most of these questions like "how did we end up here", "what do you thing to happen?" suggest a sense of disbelief or sarcasm. Considering how Bassem employs rhetorical questions in Extract (13): "**But I don't know, but there's no Hamas in the West Bank and they're still dying there. So, what's your excuse? __ Okay, what's ... What's your explanation? Sorry, sorry, uh, my earpiece went down.**" reveals that he tries to assert that Israel is an exact example of a racist apartheid state. He argues that since Hamas is no longer present in Gaza, therefore, there is no excuse for Israel to kill innocent civilians there. Likewise, he challenges the assumption that Israel is merely defending itself and it represents a brilliant example of secularism and democracy. Bassem's question represents a non-violent dissent against the perceived systemic violence and international silence. Both sarcasm and impersonation are purposefully used to confront the audience with moral reflections. Extract (14): "**So, we know, expect the future death of Palestinians, and we'll be happy to it.**" ultimately, implies a grim acceptance of the violence that persists and indicates that the international community has become indifferent to or complicit in the deaths of Palestinians. Then, the speaker is mockingly expressing what they believe to be the Israeli military's or government's justification that violence is acceptable as long as there are no

repercussions. Extract (15): "Oh, if I was Israel— I would do exactly like Israel did. Kill as many people as possible since the world is letting me do it." suggests a cynical analysis of power without responsibility that implies the capacity for violent actions being equated with moral justification. Yet, Youssef attempts to prompt some ethical reflection or imagine solutions in Extract (16): "I condemn H... Hamas is the source of all evil, they are the reason for this. And you know what, let's for a minute imagine a world without Hamas. What will this world look like?" Using "Let's for a minute imagine a world without Hamas.", and "Oh, if I was Israel— I would do exactly like Israel did. Kill as many people as possible since the world is letting me do it.", Youssef presents a hypothetical situation that mirrors his wishes to avoid the current complicated scenario of the conflict and to shift the audience's focus to that imagined peaceful future. The second question, "If I was Israel, what would I do?" is intended to consider the conflict from the Israeli viewpoint, calling forth the audience's empathy with the Israeli decision-making. It seems that the basic role of the manipulated rhetorical questions in the speech of Bassem Youssef is to confront the inconsistency or injustice: they question the political or moral justification for complicity or inactivity. They also spotlight power dynamics by heightening concerns about the international community's passivity or inaction and arguing that might makes right. Furthermore, they serve to express the speaker's anger and frustration. On the other hand, Piers Morgan selects a direct or provocative language. His questions call forth strong reactions or current views that are lined up with specific political stances. Morgan's language reflects the pre-eminent Western standpoints on Gaza, emphasizing security concerns, terrorism, or international law.

5.1.1.2 Intertextuality

In order to place his assertions in line with the wider, universally identified discourse, reference to specific international statements, other media sources, news reports, or historical events associated with the Gaza conflict is made to enhance discourse intertextuality. In Extract (17) below, Youssef mentions the 'massacre of Deir Yassin', and refers to 'TANTURA', a movie produced in 2022 by the Israeli director Alon Schwarz. It explores the ambiguous circumstances associated with the 1948 Arab-Israeli War's occupation of the coastal Palestinian village of Tantura, which the Palestinians refer to as 'the Catastrophe' or 'Al Nakba' (Grapey, 2022). The documentary *Tantura* has reignited a long-dormant controversy within Israeli society. Over two decades ago, an Israeli graduate student named Teddy Katz submitted a thesis investigating the events that took place in the Palestinian village of Tantura in 1948. Based on numerous interviews, his research suggested that following the capture of the village, Israeli forces killed a significant number of Palestinian civilians. According to this interpretation, the actions were not merely part of wartime conflict, but constituted a deliberate massacre (Kenigsberg, 2022).

Extract (17)

"You're talking about the atrocities of October 7 is horrible, but in the Arab mind, there is Deir Yassin where there is an incredible movie called 'TANTURA' where the Israeli members of those militias, they talk about the atrocities that they did including opening up the pregnant woman bellies and having bets if the boy inside is a boy or a girl. It is one of the most horrific things and they talk about it. Some talk about with regret and some talk about with pleasure." Youssef, also, refers to certain historical events like the recently happened atrocities of 7 October, 2023 and Deir Yassin, a massacre of Palestinian villagers by Zionist militaries in 1948 during the Arab-Israeli conflict. Doing so, the interviewee, firstly, attempts to place himself in the present Arab-Israeli political context and make a link between his speech and the real world of the Gaza conflict. Secondly, he tries to manipulate a powerful historical intertext that is referred to in the Arabs' common narratives of trauma and memory. In the first part of the interview, Bassem Youssef makes a comparison between the Israeli military strategies and those adopted by the terrorist groups, highlighting the different ethical complexities of the struggle. He also critiques the Western coverage of the conflict questioning the consistency of moral principles applied to different conflicts.

Extract (18)

So, this is exactly what terrorist organizations do because terrorist organizations will have no chance beating a whole nation in battle. So, they terrorize and they kill the civilians in order to spread fear and terror, so they can turn against their government to change their policy or to resign. When trying to emphasize the lack of media representation, Bassem draws a distinction between dominant narratives and those that are purposely silenced by the dominant powers. Using hedging like "I'm not going to say bias" allows him to criticize Western media while still reasonable. At the same time, repeating "certain voices" in Extract (19): "For many years, the media covering the Middle East has been showing a certain point of view. I'm not

going to say bias, but I would say it did not allow certain voices, certain voices from the other side to be heard." emphasizes exclusion and elicits strong feelings. And, to emphasize Israel's infringement of international law, Youssef refers to the United Nations resolutions and Oslo Accords. Additionally, he compares the Gaza conflict to other conflicts like apartheid South Africa so as to highlight the organized brutality of the Israeli agenda in Palestine. Again, in the second part of the interview, Bassem refers to 'Tahrir square', in extract (20): " **And I went live for the first time and it was about the Arab Spring, it was about what was happening in Egypt. And at the same time, you in Egypt were actually in Tahrir Square helping wounded protesters, actually medically treating them.**" to relate his narrative to a more important revolutionary event-'Arab Spring'. Bassem also manipulates historical political events in Extract (21) below when he links the January 6th U.S. political crisis to a broader discussion about media, democracy, and public indignation in the US and the Middle East. This application implies worldwide links between media complicity and despotism by contrasting Western media with its own standards.

Extract (21) "Well, during January 6th, you know, the insurrection, you know, uh, you tweeted something about it and I was so angry at what's happening. And I remember you having you and Donald Trump in a picture and I said, 'Said the guy who had Donald Trump with him, whatever.'" In the same extract mentioned above, Bassem introduces the interviewer, Piers Morgan, into Trump-time debates to communicate his critique of ideology without going into direct argumentations. He refers to an internationally recognized figure to emphasize sarcasm and hypocrisy. Likewise, making reference to these events and well-known figures is intended to establish accessibility and authenticity with different audiences and enhance various interpretations particularly, with humorous or critical context. Further, these intertextual references demonstrate the way in which local and international politics integrate through media discourse and point out that all speech is often influenced by earlier speech. This interplay highlights the complexity of communication and how humor can be used as a weapon and a shield in political discourse. In addition to criticizing the current situation, Bassem contests the audience to consider their own views and opinions by merging various stories.

5.1.1.3 Modality

Whether the speakers' attitudes are certain or uncertain can be revealed through analyzing modality. Using "could" and "would" is often intended to critique certain policies actions or standards, or to denote uncertainty. For Bassem, utilizing "would" allows him to control the tone and weakens Morgan's arguments as in Extract (22) " **If you are a Palestinian living into these conditions for decades, would you... would you sympathize with your oppressor or sympathize with the people who claim they resist them, even if they are terrorists?**" The word "could" is commonly used to convey possibilities, oblique suggestions, or hypothetical situations. In a hypothetical manner, Bassem uses 'could' to reveal hypocrisy so as to get the audience to consider the alternative state and the prejudice of the West. As such, "could" is frequently used to express possibility, indirect suggestions or hypothetical scenarios. Bassem manipulates it to disclose hypocrisy in a hypothetical manner such as in:

Extract (23):

" **And you could be someone who hates Zionist, who don't like Zionist, and you are Semite. You could even be Jewish. And guess what, you could be a Zionist, like those people, uh, supporting Israel and at the same time, you hate the Jews because the chant, 'Jews will not replace us,' these echoed in Charlottesville. It did not echo in Gaza. I mean, in Gaza, they say war stuff in, in between the bombing, under downtime.**" He tries to get the audience to the consider the alternative state and the Western bias. In another question-" **Could you call that proportional?**", "could" enables the speaker to construct his inquiry without being directly confronting the interviewer. In this way, he tries to mitigate his challenges as he keeps his speech rhetorically polite. Meanwhile, in " **Could they maybe drop leaflets before bombing?**", Bassem manipulates " could" to satirically foreground the farce of Israel's justifications for its actions in Gaza. Table (3) below provides some other examples of using 'could' in Bassem's discourse, illustrated with its functions and meanings. **Table (3) Functions of 'Could' and Their Meanings in Bassem's Discourse**

Sentence	Function of could	Meaning
"All we could do is just provide...."	Possibility	We were only able to provide medical help
"You couldn't see me...."	Inability	You were not able to see me

You could be someone who hates Zionists..."	Possibility	It's possible someone is anti-Zionist and Semitic
You could even be Jewish."	Possibility	Even a Jewish person could be anti-Zionist
"You could be a Zionist... and still hate Jews."	Possibility	Someone may support Israel yet hold antisemitic views

Nevertheless, Piers Morgan often uses "have to" to convey his assertive viewpoint on the situation in Gaza in statements like: **"You have to condemn this."** in which assurance and authority can be displayed. In some other phrases, Morgan "should" and "must" are employed to deliver obligation, as in: **"You must condemn terrorism."** and **"They shouldn't be targeting civilians."** But, when he occasionally intends to make his claims soft and needs to pose inquiries to appear objective, Piers uses **"would"** or **"could"** such as in: **"Some would say..."** and **"It could be seen as..."**

5.1.1.1.4 Discursive Strategies

As for discursive strategies, humor, sarcasm, or irony are basically used by Bassem Youssef to denounce the war on Gaza and Western participation in the conflict. Using these strategies in this context helps Youssef defy the seriousness of the situation or the way it's being dominated by the world's great powers, indirectly indicating a condemnation through entertainment. Occasionally, dark humor is manipulated to emphasize persistence and eliminates tension. Thus, it functions as either a way of survival or an approach of introducing the audience to challenging topics. When Piers reminds Bassem about how he has started his speech during the first round of the interview, he states that "..... **you've been trying to kill her and she was using your kids as human shields and stuff.**" Bassem's reply suggests insistence through the use of dark humor as in Extract (24) **"I'm still trying to. But I, but you know what, when I failed, you know what I did? I went out to the house and I just like randomly slapped other neighbours. You know....** Considerably, humor and irony are used in some situations to unveil the absurdity of the oppression systems and to reveal some examples of humanitarian nature which can be captured in these systems' institutions as well. This is ironically exposed in (25) when Youssef says **"The guards were taking selfies with me... it turned into a writer's room."** So, humor can turn inaccessible topics into approachable ones whereby Bassem's background as a comedian and satirist is vividly reflected in the first part of the interview, Bassem utilizes repetition in **"So, what's your question? What's the question? Oh, if I was Israel –"** to express disdainful and aggressive feelings. Therefore, he suggests that any attempt at questioning or critiquing is either unworthy or already answered by the speaker's position. Repetition, here, ends the debate and communicates the speaker's belief that the situation appears evident or indisputable. However, in the interview's second part, repetition appears in Bassem's first sentences. He repeats sentences like **"Does he know?" "I don't know"** when he arranges to turn up at Piers Morgan's show after being blocked by the latter on Twitter. In addition to offering the context a sense of realism and accessibility while generating rhythm and humorous effect, Bassem creates comic suspense and emphasizes the irony of being invited by the same person who has previously cancelled on him. This is used as anxious banter or to mimic the inner thoughts. Simultaneously, in Extract (26) below, he uses this personal platform block as a metaphor for selective platforming and the great powers' control over voices.

Extract (26)

So, I, and then I said like, 'Does he know?' 'I don't know.' 'Does he know?' 'I don't know.' 'Does he know?' 'I don't know.' So, I walked into the studio and the moment I was being seated and they were preparing before we went on air and you said, 'Oh, hi Bassem, it seems that you have more followers than me, but it seems that I blocked you. Why?' (laughter) And I told you, and then we, we said the story on air and it was funny because I made a joke; You have always been standing against cancel culture and you just canceled me on Twitter." Demonstrating the contradictory nature of social media and not stopping different public commentary is reflected in Bassem 's frequent use of repetition and parallelism where contrast and juxtaposition are purposefully dramatized in Extract (27) below:

Extract (27) **"Oh, you didn't do that, you didn't do that.' Thing is, this is like you're damn if you do, you're damn if you not. Right? If you don't speak up, 'Why don't you speak up?' If you speak up, 'You didn't speak up.' If you're done, 'Why are you?' If you speak up too much, 'Oh, you're taking all the attention on you."** Thus, he attempts to expose the unachievable standards of activism and public expectation, and emphasize the ineffective position Arab commentators encounter. Bassem's speech, particularly in Extract (28)

" **And I love that fact because people always who accuse people of being the center of attention, they are actually not very happy that the attention is not on them.**" underlines his effort to assert his viewpoints in the neck of being surrounded by different dominant power structures like Egypt's military government, religious leaders and media censors. So, the power tactics of media attention is demonstrated as sorts of symbolic capital whereby authenticity and political authority are correlated to what is being heard. Further, triviality of serious issues is exposed in the following long sentence when Bassem uses the metaphors of 'circus', 'gladiators in the Coliseum' and 'two pigs fighting' to refer to political discourse or media news.

Extract (29) " **The problem is, the news today, it's not about the news anymore, it's about the people giving you the news. So, it becomes a show, a circus, two gladiators in the Coliseum, two pigs fighting in the mud. And this is why people don't get anything out of it, it's a circus.**" Thus, he describes the news as an open public show in which participants fight for supremacy and dominance highlighting the combative, entertainment-focused character of current media. And when talking about 'olive oil' in Extract (30), Bassem symbolizes legacy and cultural continuity amidst hard time because these trees, he suggests, 'know' and 'survive up to 600 years.'

Extract (30) " **Before, We, can I? Okay, so this is a gift from me and my wife. This is olive oil from the West Bank. Piers: Ah. Bassem: Whenever you go to...I go to Jordan a lot but my wife also asks for the oil from the West Bank. Piers: It's very good? Bassem: It is the best oil ever. And the thing is, olive trees, they know, they survive up to 600 years. And they are passed from one generation to the other and it is like a family heritage.**" Besides adding emotional depth, this culture gesture highlights continuity, family and heritage, humanizes the issue and mitigates the political tensions. In another part of the interview, Youssef intends to belittle his importance as in the following long sentence: Extract (31) " **Now I am the least qualified person ever to talk about this conflict and yet just because I relate some of the talking points that we say and we hear the whole time, people felt hurt.**" Obviously, saying this is not intended to express modesty, rather, it is one of Bassem's rhetorical strategies that is clearly used to distribute hostility, get rid of didactic discourse, and project an image of authenticity and reliability. At the same time, it allows him to express politically sensitive ideas with less danger—a rhetorical strategy often used in satire. Moreover, Youssef contests the current Anglo-centric media epistemology by presenting himself as a spokesperson of silenced perspectives rather than an expert. The result is a crucial ideological shift. He points to injustice, or the denial of the legal standing of specific groups in international discourse. In Extract (32) Bassem evolves his multifaceted identity as a surgeon-- " **I was a heart surgeon until, yeah, I spent 19 years in that career, 7 years in medical school, 12 years as a practicing doctor.**"-- who turned to become a political satirist, a suppressed individual, and a link between the East and the West cultures. His statement in Extract (33), " **when you manage to offend everybody, you know you're right.**" suggests his identity as an agitator whose aim is to bridge the gap between two different ideologies, claiming that real critique must provoke all sides. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that by listing the number of the enemy casualty, Bassem creates symmetry in the conversation while highlighting the disproportion of loss, as the numbers are drastically different. The tactic is intended to challenge military-based framing of conflict and uphold unbiased perspectives that esteem every human life.

5.2 Discursive Practice (Interpretative Analysis)

5.2.1 Production of Discourse

As outcomes of various media environments, Youssef and Morgan's discourse structures mirror the different roles they play. As a comedian and influencer, Youssef is active in an occupation where mainstream Arabic media as well as digital platforms inspire the opinion he holds. In his speech, Bassem challenges dominant narratives in Western media regarding Gaza crisis. On the other hand, Piers Morgan exemplifies a typical mainstream and the Western media stance. To sum up, producing discourse is heavily impacted by the interview's configuration notably its structure, target audience, and media networks.

5.2.2 Distribution of Discourse

The interview is viewed by a huge audience and broadcast via worldwide channels of communication media. Yet, the way the Gaza crisis is framed might vary depending on the network and the particular political or social goals of that media organization. With its international audience, Piers Morgan's show positively impacts the way in which people are influenced by the interview. One unique aspect of Youssef's dissemination is his huge popularity social media, where he regularly communicates with a great variety of audience specifically young fans. His dynamic, collaborative and critical discourse that contest typical narratives reflects the significance of new media on forming current debate regarding contemporary international conflicts.

5.2.3 Consumption of Discourse

The two-part dialogue is differently consumed in accordance with the way audiences follow their influencers. Thus, people who are used to view traditional television usually interpret the interview through the perception of the current power structure, whereas social media viewers might have different perceptions, or more participatory attitudes. Bassem's viewers, who follow him on social media platforms like Instagram or Twitter might be more sensitive to the opposing opinions related to the Gaza conflict, and this significantly may influence the way in which the narrative related to Gaza is consumed.

5.3 Social Practice:

5.3.1 Political Context

The interview between Bassem Youssef and Piers Morgan happened during October and November of 2023, as emotions were at their peak and there were thoroughly contrasting attitudes toward the Israel- Gaza conflict. The conflict itself, the current humanitarian circumstances in Gaza, and international involvements have their impact on the interview. As for Bassem Youssef, he criticized how the media and states of power have treated the issue, calling attention to the violation of human rights, and the absence of the expected interference from the international powers. However, Morgan's speech can be understood as promoting the Western political discourse related to the Israel- Palestine struggle through his clear comments on terrorism, security, and humanitarian interventions.

5.3.2 Ideology and Power Relations

Fairclough's three-dimensional model primarily underscores the interconnection between ideology and discourse. This connection clearly appears in the interview between Bassem Youssef and Piers Morgan. Bassem discussed the artificial intelligence's bias in favor of Israel and against the Palestinian people. He told Pierce that he asked Chat GPT whether Israel deserves to be free or not, and the answer was "Yes" Israel deserves freedom like everyone else, but it comes to say that Palestine should be free it turns to be a complex and sensitive issue. Accordingly, the entire globe is suggested to stand against Gaza and its people, since artificial intelligence is controlled by Westerners. Therefore, setting a strong example of moral and social values and meaning will have a significant influence on world public opinion.

Extract (34)

"Well, you know what, so what? I did, I went to the machines, yeah, and I asked ChatGPT, simple questions. 'Do Israelis deserve to be free? 'And you know what they tell me? Yes, Israelis deserve the right, like any other people. And then I asked the same question, 'Do Palestinians deserve to be free? 'And you know what they tell me? It is complex, it is a sensitive issue."Bassem's speech confronts Morgan's stance as a prevalent person supporting the Western political ambitions and goals. His speech represents a quite different perspective, which comes in contrast with dominant narratives related to the Gaza War, and introduces other interpretations of the struggle, the role played by the media, and the participation of the international interventions in establishing an end to the war. Accordingly, the discourse of the interview can be taken as an indication of wider international divides, such as the East- West divide regarding political power and conflict framing. The two figures' ideologies and the media experiences highlight the intricate relationship between discourse and power dynamics. Regarding to his humorous reaction to a question, Bassem commented in Extract (35) that **"We've seen this movie before. So yeah, and when I saw this, I couldn't explain to my fellows in the kibbutz how come our Israeli government is trading human lives for another piece of land"**. Here, he went into one of the common Western discussion points, which is the topic of proportionality. Throughout the interview, the host asked Bassem about this issue and about how Israel should respond to the massacre of the innocent civilians. Bassem mentioned that the question is unsuitable since Israel will kill as many people of Gaza as it wants and the conflict has never been equal. From a moral perspective, Youssef asserted that the current situation in Palestine represents an ethical challenge to the West, which has previously positioned itself as the advocator for human rights yet remains indifferent to the Israeli violence against the Palestinians. He emphasized that the Israeli attacks weakened the ethical standards of the West and its dedication to liberal principles. Meanwhile, he stated that Hamas is not the mere target of Israel; rather, it also targets all residents in Gaza. In Extract (9), he said that **"They go in, they, this is not an eye for an eye anymore. This is an eye, a limp, a life, a house, a neighborhood, a whole population for an eye."** emphasizing that it is no longer about Hamas and there is no adherence to the principle of 'an eye for an eye' retribution.

6. Results and Discussions

From the very beginning of his speech, Bassem intended to win the Western viewer who looks at the Gaza issue in a different way neglecting the real environment and situations in which Arabs in Gaza live. Successfully, he

had his role in the interview using the Western viewer's language so as to convince him and get him on his side. Bassem mentioned the names of the people involved, the thing that aroused the curiosity of Western viewers who will next, look for these sources in order to discover the reality. He highlighted how the conflict began, and demonstrated the fact that this issue is completely a European concern for which they unfairly consider Arabs responsible.

In this interview, Bassem contributed greatly to proving the Israelis' falsehood and reducing their authority in the minds of the Western audience. He affirmed that the Israelis' claim that their state is the only democratic one in the region is merely a big lie since it has appeared as the apartheid state against the people who live in Palestine irrespective of their nationality. Far from being provocative, the tone of the interview was so calm, which reflected Bassem's skill in keeping the smooth flow of the discussion. Evidently, he was adequately prepared for the debate and thought about where Morgan could take him. Since the interview started, Bassem has appeared competent to attract the audience's attention from the host so as to apprise the Western media about the other different standpoint, which is not only Arab, simply because it can be expanded to include a vast range of political and legal discussion and discourse opposing the Western authorities behind them. In the second part of the interview, Youssef avoided his usual satirical style, preferring a direct confrontation with Morgan on topics related to antisemitism and the historical Arab-Israeli conflict. The value of Bassem's speech lies in his way of criticizing the media platforms and depicting them as being failures because they tackle the issue superficially, neglecting the historical fact of the conflict and the reason behind this assault.

7. Conclusions

The study conducted a critical discourse analysis of social media discourse demonstrating how influencers, like Bassem Youssef and Piers Morgan, utilize language to develop their narratives, inspire public opinion, and represent a contribution to the current discourse connected to the Gaza struggle. Exploring the power strategies and social practices which support the two figures' speech was the primary focus of the study which has conducted a critical discourse analysis to examine the influencers' manipulated lexical choices, framing, and social implications. It demonstrated the influence that social media have in developing narratives and molding public conceptions during the time of the conflict. The comparison made between the utilized linguistic strategies and ideological positions, demonstrated that Bassem Youssef employed emotional appeals, metaphors, and critical framing to expose the Israeli human rights violations and amplify the Palestinians' suffering, positioning the conflict as a struggle for justice and survival. To criticize the current struggle between Israel and Gaza, he used black humor in his speech with Morgan. He employed black humor and sarcasm, which functions as a strategy for discussing the terrible truth of the conflict and the current state of affairs. The emotional effects and despair encountered by numerous people in the region are confirmed through his reference to his personal connection to Gaza through his wife's family who live in Gaza. Opposed to this, Morgan employed framing techniques such as the formalization of brutality and destructiveness, and the framing of Israel's actions as lawful self-defense against terrorism. Bassem's discourse represented a challenge to the generally expected discourse related to the conflict, while Piers Morgan's speech reflected a more prevailing perspective that coincides with Western political interest. Rather than being neutral, discourse functions as a powerful strategy through which power, social inequality, and dominant ideologies are constructed and maintained. The discourse of the interview not only represented but also promoted dominant ideologies and power relations, impacting the way in which people interpret the conflict and the role played by media in molding public opinion. It is concluded that discourse about the Israeli-Palestinian struggle is not that unbiased representation of the real situation in the area but is to, a great extent, impacted by the power of the media dynamics, the political goals of the involved parties, and the wider socio-cultural context.

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