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Framing the Gaza War: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Muslim Political Leaders on X

by

Samia Maqsood

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the
degree of Master of Science

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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by

Samia Maqsood

(MEN243047)

THESIS EXAMINING COMMITTEE

S. No.	Examiner	Name	Organization
(a)	External Examiner	Dr. Akifa Imtiaz	FJWU, Rawalpindi
(b)	Internal Examiner	Mr. Maqsood Alam	CUST, Islamabad

Dr. Muhammad Umar Farooq

Thesis Supervisor

September, 2026

Dr. Muhammad Umar Farooq

Head

Dept. of English

September, 2026

Dr. Arshad Hassan

Dean

Faculty of Mgmt. & Social Sciences

September, 2026

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I want to dedicate this thesis to my newborn child—whose arrival has not diminished my scholarly ambitions, but rather fortified them. This thesis proves that rather than impeding my career, motherhood has sharpened my purpose and deepened my resolve.

(Samia Maqsood)

Abstract

The Gaza war as one of the critical subjects of discourse on X has secured attention of democrats globally to narrate their political agenda. Similarly, Muslim political leaders are expressing their concerns calling the Israeli atrocities as genocide. This thesis analyzes 500 posts of Muslim political leaders to uncover the power dynamics and socio-political influence created in support of Palestine. Aligned with the objectives, Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), along with KhosraviNik's Social Media Critical Discourse Studies (SM-CDS), was used as the theoretical framework in this research. Textual analysis of the data revealed that the discourse is mostly victim-centered and created a sense of urgency to persuade and unite the public to take action. Different discursive strategies were used in the Posts to support the argument of Muslim politicians in the Gaza war. This discourse not only described the tyranny in the Gaza war but changed the way public perceives it. Ultimately, this research adds value to understanding role of language in deliberately molding public opinion and serving as a mean to drive social action. In the era of social media, this research can be academically helpful to understand the role of X in curating ideologies using discourse.

Keywords: Gaza, Discourse, X, Palestine, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Muslim Political leaders.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Linguists around the world define discourse as language in use, that is, meaningful communication in different social settings. They believe that access to any kind of discourse is a power resource as it influences people's minds and actions.

X, formally known as Twitter is a global platform for public discourse. Users post their raw, unfiltered political opinions in form of Posts regarding wide range of topics from current issues to personal interests. According to a report published by Statista Research Department on June 19th, 2025, around 611 M people use X to interact globally. It provides a diverse data resource for linguists to analyze power as a discursive act. Therefore, X provides linguists access to a massive, real-time, publicly searchable database of unfiltered, everyday written conversation.

In the recent years and currently, one of the major subjects of public discourse on X is the Gaza war. The Gaza war is basically an unresolved Israel-Palestine war which reignited on October 2023. Many people have either lost their lives or are displaced due to the war. It has impacted the world both socially and economically. Since then, it became a controversial subject nationally as well as internationally. Both the general public and political figures used X to exhibit

power via discourse. Linguists use different lenses to critically analyze power, ideology, and narrative control actively contested through language and imagery.

Public, either in support of Israel or Palestine are using X as a digital battleground to create influential discourse to exhibit control and influence audience. The role of political figures in this matter is no exception.

The platform has become a key website for them to wage a digital war of narratives, manage their political image, and engage in international diplomacy. Dozens of official posts from the leadership around the world attempt to actively construct a specific narrative that aligns with their agenda.

One of the primary functions of a politician's Twitter feed is to define the war according to their nation's strategic interests and domestic audience. The framing is often a direct reflection of national policy and alliances. Similarly, the Muslim world leaders are using X to voice their concerns publicly.

To record their protest and condemn the atrocities of the Israeli government, rulers from the Muslim majority nations are sharing posts calling it a genocide.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

A substantial body of research has been conducted on the critical discourse study of language used to report the Gaza war. However, there is a lack of focus on the discourse created by the Muslim political leaders around the globe. This study aims to explore the power dynamics and socio-political influence created by the Muslim world leadership in support of Palestine.

Using Fairclough's 3D model of CDA and KhosraviNik's SM-CDS model as a theoretical framework and research methodology, the purpose of this study is to analyze the language of posts of the Muslim political leadership to uncover the specific meanings and themes behind the discourse. It also investigates the socio-political impact resulting due to the narratives built by the posts of Muslim leadership on the Gaza discourse.

1.3 Research Objectives

- i. To Analyze the linguistic choices of Muslim political leaders on the Gaza war.
- ii. To investigate the role of language with regard to the platform affordances of X.
- iii. To Explore how language shapes ideology and public opinion.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What is the specific vocabulary used in the posts by Muslim political leaders on the Gaza war?
- ii. Which discursive strategies are used by Muslim political leaders on X to construct specific ideologies for the readers?
- iii. How does the discourse by Muslim leaders on the Gaza war shapes public opinion creating opportunities for social change?

1.5 Delimitation of the Study

The study uses Twitter as the primary source of data. There are technical constraints of digital platform that might affect the data collection and analysis. For instance, the Algorithm shows specific posts and hides other, as per the Terms and Condition.

Additionally, the study focuses on the posts posted during a specific time period. Due to the large amount of data available online, it becomes necessary to limit the time period of data collection. The research focuses only on relevant posts, making it limited to a specific narrative.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The focal point of this study is the specific narrative created by the Muslim leaders on the Gaza war through the online discourse. It is a unique perspective in online critical discourse analysis as the global audience look forward to comprehend the role of Muslim identity in the ongoing Israel-Palestine war. Since language is the main source of disseminating information, this research analyzes the lexical choices and discursive strategies to study the specific agendas and societal attitudes of the Muslim leadership representing their narrative on the Gaza war.

This study helps to eliminate the bias created on the digital platforms either misrepresenting or under-representing the Muslim narrative on the issue. It allows us to understand the role of language as a tool of power in building narratives and ideologies.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Historical Background

The Gaza war goes back to the period of the British mandate, ultimately leading to the establishment of Israel which give way to the present-day humanitarian crisis in the region.

The British government declared Palestine as "a national home for the Jewish people" ([Balfour, 1917](#)). It resulted in the Arab revolt as the Arab higher committee boycotted the statement by the British government. In response, the British mandate reacted with demolishing houses, mass arrests and killings of the Palestinian people. To counter the Palestinian voice, Israelis didn't hold back and formed several Zionist militant groups which resulted in a revolt against the British mandatory government on February 1944.

In 1947, The UN proposed a partition plan for Palestine where much of the land was given to the Jewish people including fertile coastal areas. When the Palestinian population rejected the plan, the first Arab Israel war (1947-49) broke out. This war, generally known as The Nakba meaning 'catastrophe' in Arabic resulted in the displacement of thousands of Palestinians from their homeland. The total share of Palestine land was reduced comprising only of Gaza Strip and the West

Bank. Up until 1967 the area initially remained under Egyptian control and then the United Arab Republic.

In 1964, the Palestinian liberation organization (PLO), later acting as a political party named Fatah, was founded to represent the Palestinian people and engage in peace negotiations with Israel.

As United Arab Republic lost its control over Palestine, a 6-day war also called the third Arab Israel war took place in 1967. Israel emerged as the winning side as it captured territories including the Gaza strip, West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan heights. This resulted in the formation of the popular front for the liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which played a significant role in armed resistance against Israel.

In 1973 when Israel was celebrating its holy day known as Youm Kippur, The October war broke out when Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel resulting in significant loss of life and territory, ultimately leading to a ceasefire with the efforts of United States and the Soviet Union.

The United States in 1978 initiated a series of negotiation between Israel and Egypt as a framework for peace treaty (1979) and autonomy for the Palestinian territories. Meanwhile, Israel's attempt to invade Lebanon to hinder the Palestinian resistance groups led to the creation of Hezbollah, an armed resistance group sponsored by Iran.

This unrest in the region resulted in the first Intifada (1987-93) which made international community aware of the Palestinian plight. It also led to the formation of Hamas, which is "recognized as a legitimate political entity by some and designated a terrorist organization by others" ([Elmah, 2023](#), p. 9).

The first Intifada contributed to peace negotiations known as The Oslo Accords between Israel and PLO in 1993. According to the agreement, the Palestine authority would govern portions of the West Bank and Gaza strip for a maximum of 5 years. As a first step towards peace, general elections 1996 was conducted in the

region. The leader of PLO was elected as the president. However, after a short period of four years, the second Intifada began due to large Israeli security presence in Al-Aqsa Mosque. This enraged Palestinians. Protests broke out in different cities across Gaza and resulted in increased Jewish settlements in Palestine.

In 2005, the second general elections were held and the then-PLO-leader was elected. Matters got worse for the Palestinians as an internal rift arose between PLO and Hamas after 2006 legislative elections. The United States once again tried to re-establish direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian authority in 2007 for a two-state solution. However, boycott from Hamas and Iran as well as objections from Israel led the United Nations to withdraw the draft resolution. As a result, a large-scale blockade (2007) was imposed on the Gaza strip which is going on to date.

Israel saw the opportunity and launched four major offensives between 2008-21 in the Gaza strip resulting in further Palestinian displacement and illegal Israeli occupation. Followed by The Great March of Return which marked passionate advocacy of the rights of Palestinians, was the US recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. On 6th May 2021, the Israeli Supreme court ordered forced displacement of Palestinian families living in Sheikh Jarrah. It resulted in mass protests from Palestinians, reciprocal attacks from Israelis and ongoing state war.

The Gaza war once again came in public's eye on 7th October 2023 when the Al-Qassam Brigades of Hamas launched Al-Aqsa flood operation firing thousands of missiles into Southern Israel. This escalation resulted in casualties on both sides. Hamas took around 240 Israeli military personnel captives for future negotiations. However, Israel's reaction turned violent as it targeted civilians and facilities like hospitals, mosques and residential areas.

2.1.1 Religious Aspect

Zionism is the religious ideology of the Jewish people that is the backbone of the Gaza war. The term Zion has religious roots and historically referred to one of the ancient hills in Jerusalem. The Jewish consider regions of Palestine as their

ancestral homeland. This idea is based on Hebrew Bible which describes the land of Canaan as a Divine promise to Abraham and his descendants. Palestinians on the other hand, assert their status as the indigenous people of historic Palestine. This battle over religious history has become the main reason behind the Gaza war, despite the fact that the historical accounts show the first inhabitants of the region known as Canaan were not Jewish but a vast Arab settlement.

2.1.1.1 The Zionist Narrative

According to the religious aspect, the region of Palestine holds significant spiritual connection to Jews. They call it Eretz Israel (the land of Israel) based on the biblical promise of the land of Israel to the Jewish people as mentioned in Hebrew Bible. It refers to the biblical Israelis who are seen as having established a kingdom in the area, including the city of Jerusalem. The current Israeli prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu frequently used biblical references in his public political statements to how to build the Zionist narrative. Based on colonial theme, this narrative tends to claim that Palestine was an unpopulated land calling it 'Terra Nullius' meaning 'land belonging to no one', thus backing the colonization movements.

2.1.1.2 The Palestinian Narrative

According to the Palestinian narrative, the Arab and Palestinian communities in the region of Gaza predates the Zionist immigration even before the periods of foreign rule. They emphasize the Ottoman and Arab rule of Palestine for many centuries before the establishment of his Israel. They had their own culture, language and traditions.

2.1.2 Political Aspect

Austrian activist Theodor Herzl is the pioneer of Political Zionism which turned the religious doctrine into an ideological movement. A significant number of Jews migrated from around the world to Palestine following this ideology. Initially,

Jewish population in Palestine was much less as compared to the Muslim population. On May 1948, World Zionist Organization (WZO) leader David Ben-Gurion declared Israel's independence turning the goal of state-building envisioned by political Zionism movement into reality. The mass migration of Jews into Palestine was a form of demographic re-engineering following the idea of a Greater Israel indicating an expansion agenda, not a compromising one.

[Elmah \(2023\)](#) explains: "The Jewish population accounted for 33% of the total plan, they only owned 6% of the land before the plan's implementation. However, they were allocated 56% and following the 1967 Arab Israel war, Israel increased this share to 78% dividing the remaining 22% in West Bank in the Gaza strip." (p. 12).

Although this political movement of shrinking the public and private sphere of Palestinian people, was against the international law, no commendable action has been successful enough to counter it. The United Nations security council has witnessed the exercise of veto power against the two-state solution on 36 occasions, out of which 34 were employed by the United States and Russia and China exercising this power on two separate occasions.

2.1.3 Socio-cultural Aspect

The biggest issue resulting from the Gaza war is the continual rise in the Palestinian refugees and increasing illegal Jewish settlements. According to the recent data of Palestinian refugees in the occupied West Bank, the number is 700,000 and it is reported that the Israeli government intends to double this by 2027 ([Elmah, 2023](#)).

Another social drawback is the unequal distribution of water between Palestine and Israel because of the shared resources of groundwater like the Mount Aquifer in the West bank. Since the water resources affect agriculture as well as the economic growth of a country as individuals and businesses need water for basic needs and activities, it has proven to be a significant social factor in the war.

The Gaza war has also resulted in economic instability in the region. Restrictions on labor movement has limited job opportunities and resulted in high unemployment rates for the Palestinians.

Furthermore, the Israeli blockade of the Gaza strip in 2007 has resulted in great economic as well as humanitarian crisis in the region.

2.2 Role of Muslim Political Leaders

A substantial body of literature has looked into how different diplomatic nations, specifically the more involved Western and Arab states, have utilized language to express their views or concerns regarding the Gaza war. On the whole, two patterns can be traced in the recent studies. The first, focusing on the individual political leaders of the states and the other, exploring the reactions coming from different regions and their geopolitical alliances. For example, [Shah et al. \(2025\)](#) in his study gathered Posts from 7 international political figures and applied Fairclough's Critical discourse analysis framework on the selected discourse. His findings suggest that the Muslim leader ground their support for Palestinians on the basis of religion and ethics. While the Western politicians use Nationalism justifying the illegal military actions of Israel as self-defense. It shows how CDA exposes the ideologically and strategically selected lexicon to build a narrative that supports the relative ideology of these leaders.

Based on these ideologies, the Gaza discourse has resulted in geopolitical realignment in terms of international relations. A study by [Youcef \(2025\)](#) compares international reactions to the Gaza war, it's impact on the global economy and international relations. The study observes different reactions from different regions. Some countries changed their stance as well. European Union (EU) initially supported Israel, however with increasing casualties in Palestine, it has become critical of Israel's actions. Due to the internal disagreement, EU has a weak position in international discourse. North America, on contrary, has constantly sided with Israel. The president of the time, Donald Trump issued controversial statements, sharing his plan to 'take over the Gaza strip'. Opposite response from

most countries in Africa can be seen as they show strong support for Palestine due to their colonial history. Countries in Asia have been approaching the matter carefully, talking about peace but keeping economic ties with Israel. The Muslim countries, according to the study, openly deem Israel's actions in Gaza as unjust. Some cut off official relations while others took out their ambassadors out of Israel. The Arab league and OIC implements economic boycott of Israel and vocalize their desire to rebuild Gaza. Across these studies, mixed reactions from Muslim countries can be identified. However, the literature lacks critical discourse analysis of the digital argument build by Muslim leaders on the Gaza war. It is important as digital identity holds a significant value in today's diplomacy.

Building on [Shah et al. \(2025\)](#) and [Youcef \(2025\)](#), it is clear that there is a disparity between different political leaders and states based on their support for either Palestine or Israel. It can also be observed from the literature that the Muslim countries are also at odds concerning the Gaza war. [Faitour \(2025\)](#) aligns with this claim, it debates that the normalization of Israeli state by the Sunni leaders has faced intense resistance by Shia community claiming the land for Palestinians based on history and morals. He utilizes Political theology to explore shift in Sunni-Shia leadership in the context of the Gaza discourse. The world has seen Iran Shia politics replacing the Arab Sunni diplomacy over decades.

While we have witnessed almost all the Muslim states voicing its concerns over the oppression of Palestinians on the hands of Isreal in different ways. Some researchers have evidently revealed the fragmentation within the Islamists groups. This debate has been ongoing since 1950 but it has come to the surface again due to the unrest in Palestine after October 7th attack. The differences in the Islamists' reaction come from their Ideological versus strategic interests. According to [Jeroen and Morten \(2025\)](#), overall, the Islamists can be seen supporting Palestine. However, when investigated closely, it can be seen that some Arabs only condemn Israel while others call for their eradication from Gaza. Some even differentiate between Jews and Zionists. For instance, armed resistance can be seen from Houthis and Hezbollah. On contrary, Jordan confides only in non-violent economic boycott and domestic political confrontation of the Israelis. Therefore,

this study provides evidence against the Islamists' claim of homogeneity. It provides us a clarity as to why is it important to critically analyze the statements from the Muslim diplomatic community.

2.3 Media

The term media cannot be traded with either information or news. Rather, it is an institution that is responsible for creating and disseminating ideas to the public on a wider scale. [Al-quran \(2022, p. 147\)](#) defines Media as;

“...the outlets, channels, or tools of general communication” that involve “the process of imparting and exchanging information through mass media outlets to large segments of the population.”

Language is used as the basic tool of human communication. Communication occurs when people share their ideas or reciprocate information, thoughts and feelings. When this act is projected at a larger audience, it is called as mass communication. This idea gave rise to the production of different media platforms. Media (singular ‘medium’) provides the channel for effective mass communication. Today, there exist a variety of media including print media (like newspapers, magazines, etc.), broadcast media (like television, radio, etc.), and the rapidly developing social media (like digital websites and applications).

The media, therefore, is an ever-expanding term that encompasses different ways of communication targeted at wider audiences. In this study, media is used as a channel of political discourse that allows the officials to communicate their ideology with the masses.

2.3.1 Traditional versus New Media

In academic writing, media is differentiated between old or traditional i.e. the printing press and broadcast media, and the new media, that is the digital platforms of mass communication. The advancements in technology have replaced the

traditional sources of information dissemination with new means of communication. As compared to the older one-way communication, today's media provides real-time/instant, data-driven information that not only engages the public but offers customized details. "The Internet-enabled telecommunications technologies have transformed the ways to communicate through enabling global communities to communicate and share information digitally quicker and easier than before" [Al-quran \(2022, p. 148\)](#).

2.3.2 Social Media and it's Platforms

Social media emerged from telegraph in the 1840s, later developing World Wide Web in 1990s. The world's first social media website appeared in 1994 known as GeoCities. The current form of new media i.e. social media, provides user-generated content that allows easy integration as well as interaction among users. The global market of social media has inflated so much over the years that, currently, there are hundreds of websites working for different purposes on the internet. Use of social media for education, information, entertainment, and businesses has become a daily routine of an average smartphone user. [Gong and Yang \(2020, p. 2\)](#) quotes we are Social & Hootsuite (2020), "By January 2020, there were over 3.8 billion active social media users worldwide." Academically, social media has become a great source of dataset for researchers, especially in the field of humanities and social sciences. Social media has also increased the reach and visibility of scholarly content adding to the academic worth. Professionals use social media to track the on-going trends for research purposes.

The following scholarly definitions could be used to understand the meaning of social media;

- i. It is a "group of interactive Web 2.0 Internet-based applications" that provide "valuable data sources for observing and analyzing human activities / behavior" ([Gong and Yang, 2020, p. 1](#)).
- ii. It is "any digital technology that allows users to instantly generate and share information with the public...including social networking platforms

and websites, through which individuals create online communities” (Al-quran, 2022, p. 149).

Ordinary people have the freedom to discuss their political experiences while also being held to strict guidelines for the accuracy of their reporting and upholding civic virtues. These patterns may ultimately prove to be the most innovative features of the new media environment (Gong and Yang, 2020).

Social media can be categorized into microblogging sites, social networking sites, content sharing sites, products and service review sites, collaborative knowledge sharing sites, and others (Gong and Yang, 2020) based on the functions it is performing for users. This study particularly talks about the microblogging website, which is different than the commonly known social networking sites. It is restricted to short messages which can include multimodal features i.e. images, videos, links etc. This fast-paced nature of microblogging is best utilized for sharing real-time updates like breaking news.

2.3.3 Twitter or X

Twitter is among the most well-known microblogging sites which enjoy extreme popularity in academic research in recent years. It enables shorter messaging updates (up to 280 characters per post) for faster dissemination as well as directed-following, hashtags, and reposting for better user interactions. (Kwak et al., 2010) as quoted by Gong and Yang (2020).

Twitter is the largest microblogging platform where users generate posts, repost, and like postings. The use of hashtags and Twitter handles increases the engagement of the account holders. It allows photo and video sharing services that make the platform attractive for education and live streaming of meetings (Zimba and Gasparyan, 2020).

For the same reasons, Twitter, currently known as X, has been selected as the primary source of data collection. It is widely used by diplomats and public alike, that is the targeted sample of the study.

2.3.4 Relevant Studies

The literature on media discourse concerning the Gaza war can be categorized, although not exclusively, into three analytical sections to identify the role of language in building the Gaza narrative. The first pattern observed in the related literature is the biased role of media in the representation of the Israel-Palestine war. The study by [Qawariq \(2022\)](#) analysis 12 articles collected from multiple sources and studies their clause level discursive features, focusing on the internal wars within the Palestinian and Israeli societies to unveil latent political and ideological wars. It shows that some news agencies (PIC) use fixed ideological beliefs of the society, while others (WAFA) challenge these macro-narratives by highlighting the humanitarian crisis resulting from the Gaza war. It shows how media has the power to form different realities and build different discourses working within institutional constraints, political economies, and professional norms that privilege certain perspectives while marginalizing others.

Similarly, [Taha and Al-Khanji \(2020\)](#) uses Fairclough's' Intertextuality framework (2003) to study the journalistic features applied in four different news websites; New York times the guardian, the Jordan times and Hertz Global. Analyzing 8 editorials and 32 news articles, he finds producer bias in the language of news reporting. For instance, the word length allocated to Israeli quotations was much more as compared to the Palestinian remarks. Only JT differs in its broadcast.

In parallel, a study by [Almustafa \(2024\)](#) showed the positive self and negative other representation via selected linguistic properties used by 25 news articles published by 10 different media outlets including some websites. He conducted sentence level critical discourse analysis to study the linguistic features of the news media. His analysis showed that language plays a major role in shaping ideologies and challenging attitudes and perceptions of societies.

Likewise, using Van Dijk's ideological square as theoretical framework, [Mohammed \(2023\)](#) inspects the biases in news reporting. His inquiry includes headlines from two Newspapers; New York Times and Middle East. He concludes that the headlines, each representative of either party involved in the Gaza war, favor one group

over the other using language. However, these studies have an inherent limitation that it identifies but does not question the systematic bias demonstrated by the media outlets.

Another pattern observed in the analysis of the literature is the polarized narrative built by the media discourse on the Gaza war. For instance, [Abas \(2024\)](#) compares two opinion articles, Jerusalem Post and Palestine Chronicles. In analyzing the semantic macrostructure of the language used in the selected articles applying Van Dijk's ideological square (1998), he showed that language is manipulated in such a way that it creates a narrative of Israelis as innocent and Palestinians as terrorists.

In the same study, [Abas \(2024\)](#) to further support his analysis with a different contextual perspective. The analysis of lexical choices in 50 news reports by Al-Jazeera English 2021 showed positive connotations used for Palestine while negative attributes linked to Israelis using different linguistic elements.

The same approach is utilized by [Alnwihe and Al-Abbas \(2023\)](#) to analyze the official remarks of spokespersons during the Gaza war 2021. He noticed that an us versus them dichotomy is created in these statements through deliberate use of language in a certain way. Several themes can be observed supporting the narrative of the party they represent.

Lastly but most importantly, moving beyond the bias and polarity of narratives, the previous studies on the media discourse relating to the Gaza war highlight the role of language not merely as a tool to uncover reality but a way to actively build reality. [Sharaf Eldin \(2019\)](#) takes headlines from four websites; two Arab and two Western, to examine the lexical choices and vocabulary pattern to examine the role of language in building ideologies. He applies Fairclough's' 2003 framework and Van Leeuwen 2008 model on the language of selected headlines. He analyzes differences in the use of linguistic categories like Nouns and Verbs to describe the same scenario in news. He also noticed the use of emotive language to secure sympathy for their respective narratives. It shows that the media's truth varies according to the ideology created through language.

Similarly, [Cherkaoui \(2024\)](#) detects passive use of language in the US media to report the Gaza war. These news agencies rely heavily on Israeli sources and show structural biases in language achieved through decontextualization of the events of war.

Another relatively former research by [Parveen et al. \(2025\)](#) studies 30 headlines from different newspapers to study the lexical choices, metaphors and framing devices using Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model. It focuses on the difference between Arab and Western interpretation of the Gaza war. It justifies how language plays a significant role in framing this interpretation and thus impacting the account in the minds of readers.

2.4 The Gaza War on X

X is a rich as well as challenging source of discourse for critically analyzing language. It is a platform having its own constraints and possibilities. The Twitter-specific features like trends, hashtags, repost, mentions, anonymity, real-time nature, multimodality etc. gave researches a new way to look at discourse, in this case, relating to the Gaza war.

[Ghazal et al. \(2025\)](#) analyzed the language of Pweets particularly lexicon to uncover different ideologies behind the Gaza discourse. The findings of the study point out the unusual support of Israel from the Western political leaders on X. On the other hand, the posts from international organizations focus more on peace and dialogue.

[Alashqar \(2024\)](#) inspects the keywords related to Gaza war and their frequency in the Posts posted by two US and two UK based news agencies. He uses Critical discourse analysis framework and examines how language used in particular intentional sense shapes different ideologies.

[e Nayab et al. \(2025\)](#) gathers 90 posts from different social media platforms including Twitter to investigate the trends in Hashtags related to the Israel Palestine

issue. The common theme in the selected posts depicted Israel as a terrorist entity and Palestinians as victims. It shows that social media is used as a public platform that contradicts the conventional narratives and raises awareness among the public.

A new perspective on the Gaza discourse can be found in [Suhandoko et al. \(2025\)](#) study, where he studies gendered language in Posts related to the Gaza war. Using Corpus assisted discourse studies (CADS), he analyzes gendered discourse in related to ideology building. The findings show that the war can be seen from a sociocultural lens along with the political ideologies.

[Amer \(2024\)](#) uses Critical Multimodal discourse analysis to examine the photos published by # Hamas and @ShehabAgency on Twitter. The results showed that 'occupation' was the most common theme among the posted content.

There are, however, some critiques in the present literature that need to be addressed when utilizing data from X. This study confronts these gaps by keeping in view the issues of transparency, ethical considerations, algorithmic mediation, and contextual instability.

2.5 Research Gap

A lot of research has been done in the field of CDA, specifically on the trending issues. As described throughout the literature review, researches have covered various aspects of the Gaza war regarding the use of language to build ideologies and shape public narratives. However, the role of Muslim viewpoint on the war has not been sufficiently explored. Although, several Arab news agencies have been under the radar of researchers, only a small number specifically focus on Muslim political leaders, as per my knowledge. There is a need to look into the perspective of Muslim political figures to examine how the Muslim diplomatic world wants to portray their side of the story for the public. Additionally, the disparity within the Muslim leaders on the issue needs to be addressed.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The following chapter outlines the methodology that guides this research. As outlined in chapter I, this research aims to analyze language as a social practice to reproduce or resist ideologies, by looking at the specific linguistic features as well as the use of Twitter/X as a platform for discursive practices.

Consistent with these objectives, this research uses Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its primary theoretical framework. The 3D model of [Fairclough \(2010\)](#) analyzes language at three levels i.e. micro (textual analysis), meso (discursive practices), and macro (social analysis). However, this model is designed for and limited to traditional media. Since the data source of this study is a digital platform i.e. X (previously known as Twitter), KhosraviNik's Social Media Critical Discourse Studies (SM-CDS) is applied as a supplement theory, keeping in view the platform-specific requirements of X i.e. multimodality, hashtags, reposts, trends, mentioning, etc.

Given the topic, a critical approach is required for this research to investigate the relationship between language and power. As the study focuses on the discursive strategies used by Muslim leaders to build a certain ideology, a critical model accommodates reading 'against' the texts and resist naturalization. Additionally,

Political discourse is at the center of CDA as it acts as an advocate for socially discriminated people and mediate to resolve wars.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

Critical discourse analysis is a field of linguistics that explores the relationship between discourse and power. It uncovers the hidden meanings within language and how it drives social change. It is a problem-oriented approach to investigate the relationship between language and power. Linguists prefer CDA when dealing with social problems like power abuse and domination exercised via language. According to [Weiss and Wodak \(2003, p. 7\)](#), it is an interdisciplinary approach with “social, economic, and political motives”.

As the term Critical suggests enlightenment or awareness, a critical model therefore engages with and questions the textual orientation of discourse. As compared to the traditional linguistic theories which only focused on understanding and explanation, CDA is a social theory which explores the discursive practices to uncover the hidden ideologies in text. It suggests that CDA is not only interested in linguistic elements merely but the social practices behind it, where context holds crucial position. According to Rogers (2004:3), as quoted by [Amoussou and Alagbé \(2018, p. 12\)](#), CDA is “not only a description and interpretation of discourse in context, but also offers an explanation of why and how discourse works.”

Language is an important tool that is used to reproduce or resist power. Linguists argue that ideology is controlled by the powerful groups of society. Likewise, the focus of CDA is to interpret the functioning of ideology. It uncovers the myths created to provide filtered narrative which hides the power abuse of the dominant groups.

3.2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis to the Current Research

Given the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza war, the Muslim political leaders are expressing their concerns for the people of Palestine using X. As CDA supplicates

advocacy for socially discriminated people in society, it is justifiable to look at the language of these leaders from a critical lens.

Critical discourse analysts relate the socio-political discourse with transformation and change in society. This research uses CDA to analyze the ideology behind the language used by Muslim political figures to look at their struggle over representation of the Palestinian side.

Moreover, the data of this research revolves around political discourse which is one of the major interests of CDA. It makes CDA as an appropriate theoretical approach for this research.

CDA does not consist of a unitary theory or framework. There are a number of existing methods developed by multiple linguists that contribute to CDA. However, there are three prominent scholars whose theories are often implemented in critical discourse studies. These are: Fairclough's Dialectical-Relational approach, Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive approach, Wodak's Discourse-Historical approach, and Van Leeuwen's Social Actor approach. For the current research, the researcher has adopted Fairclough's Dialectical-Relational approach keeping in view nature of the research questions.

3.2.2 Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of CDA

Norman Fairclough is a British linguist with an expertise in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). He has explicitly divided his journey into three phases: 1) Socio-cultural approach (1980s), where he describes language as a social practice and introduces the three-dimensional model of discourse analysis. 2) Dialectical-relational approach (1990s), [Fairclough \(1992\)](#) argues that language is not only shaped by society but it also drives social change and ideology. 3) Crisis and argumentation (2010s), in his latest work, [Fairclough \(2010\)](#) views language as a source of creating reality by argumentation. He points out that language doesn't only describe reality but actively builds it with the help of different discursive strategies. All the three phases of his research are interdependent and not replacement

of the older versions. In short, Fairclough's model of CDA explores language in a two-way relationship, that is, language and society as interdependent variables.

Fairclough endorses Saussure's idea of language as Parole or Performance, however rejects the aspect of individuality in language. Rather, he considers language as a social practice. It means that language not only represents the world but constructs and signifies it. In his book, Fairclough (1992) *Discourse and social change* (1992), he views discourse as both traditional and creative in a way that it reproduces and transforms society through ideology. Therefore, the purpose of his 3D model is to demystify texts to reveal the ideology behind by finding patterns of discursive events.

As stated above, Fairclough's theory is ideologically driven. He uses it to analyze hegemony in political discourse. For this purpose, he moves beyond linguistic structures like nouns and sentences. It advances critical discourse analysis from what to how and why.

Based on the idea of Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (1961), Fairclough conceives discourse as having "three inter-related processes of analysis" (Janks, 1997, p. 329), otherwise known as three dimensions of CDA. The three dimensions of Fairclough (2010) model are; a) text analysis, b) processing analysis, c) social analysis, as shown in the model figure.

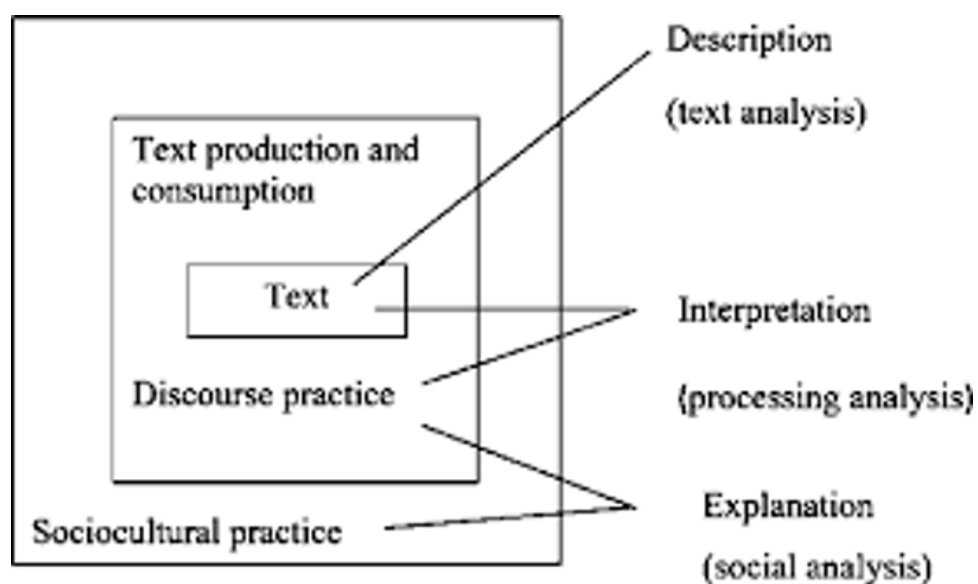


FIGURE 3.1: Fairclough's 3D Model of Critical Discourse Analysis

3.2.2.1 Dimension One: Description

The first dimension of Fairclough's model looks at text as an object i.e. word, image, symbol, etc. It means that description deals with semiotics; both verbal and visual elements of discourse. It analyzes the formal features of text to explore the role of discourse as a social practice. [Wodak and Meyer \(2009\)](#), in his work, calls it "structural analysis", that is, analyzing the structure of language in terms of different linguistic elements. Since Fairclough based his model on Halliday's SFG, following ([Janks, 1997](#), p. 335) features can be analyzed to understand text.

Lexicalization

Patterns of transitivity

The use of active and passive voice

The use of nominalization

The choices of mood

The choices of modality or polarity

The thematic structure of the text

The information focus

The cohesion devices

There are of course a number of other linguistic features that can be analyzed to get to the underlying meaning of a discourse.

3.2.2.2 Dimension Two: Interpretation

This dimension of the 3D model particularly deals with the process of production, distribution, and consumption of a text. It asks questions like who produces the text? In which context? How does it circulate? Which channels or mediums does it require? Who are the audience and how is it interpreted? As Fairclough considers text as an object in the first dimension, here he analyzes the processes by which the object is produced and received.

Interpretation can be divided into two stages in terms of analysis. First, Situational context that considers the participants, purpose, time and place where a

text is produced, and Intertextual context where one analyzes how a text relates to or relies on other texts.

Some linguists know this dimension as Processing analysis or Interactional analysis. Fairclough himself relates it to Halliday's relational function, and uses interpretation to analyze how actions are enacted and negotiated in social settings via discourse. It acts as a bridge between description and explanation.

3.2.2.3 Dimension Three: Explanation

The last dimension of Fairclough's 3D model takes us to broader socio-cultural practices that govern the processes of discourse. It aims to expose the ideologies, historical contexts, power relations, and hidden agendas behind discourse. This dimension interrogates questions like; what kind of discourse is treated as natural or common sense in a society? Who benefits from the naturalization? Whose interests are served? Who is being discriminated? Which historical context is accepted or repressed? Explanation helps linguists to analyze how discourse signifies the world.

The three dimension of [Fairclough \(2010\)](#) 3D model of CDA are inter-linked and dialectically related in such a way that discourse cannot be ideally analyzed if any dimension stands alone. It works as a systematic framework that provides deep structure analysis at micro, meso, and macro levels and bridges the gap in the previous social and critical theories. This theory particularly suits this research as it is explicitly political and has been widely used by various linguists to analyze political speeches, documents, chat shows etc. to reveal the social injustices around the world.

3.2.3 KhosraviNik's Social Media Critical Discourse Studies

The second theory used by the researcher is [KhosraviNik \(2017\)](#) KhosraviNik's Social Media Critical Discourse Studies (SM-CDS). He has worked on CDA from a social media lens. He looks at the vertical context (includes both text/discourse

and medium) by linking textual or micro features to socio-political context of social media users. According to KhosraviNik, social media is a mass and interpersonal communication paradigm that involves many-to-many participation and interaction. It allows an offline, fluid, and non-static discursive practice mediated by electronic devices. In relation to critical discourse analysis, social media provides a complex locus of power. It has allowed a decentralized and democratized engagement of users with politics.

SM-CDS is a communicative practice-based approach. However, it is not a media theory, rather the object of focus in his work is discourse. It explores how media shapes social and political discourses. According to KhosraviNik's, discourse is independent of medium, although it is influenced by it. He draws an intertextual and interdiscursive relation between the online and offline worlds. Previously, text was considered primary mode of discourse in CDA, all other signs like images, links, etc. were labelled as multimodality of discourse. Social media has introduced new meaning bearing forms like tagging, sharing, hyperlinks, etc. Talking about X in particular, new discursive features like reposts, trends, hashtags algorithms etc. have emerged in discourse. It means media practices require wider socio-political context for a critical study. Hence, the need of KhosraviNik's theory in CDS.

Fairclough's idea of discursive practices i.e. production, distribution, and consumption, have been blurred due to social media. According to KhosraviNik, discursive practices in social media are not processes but concrete actions people perform to play a social role. To incorporate this idea in CDA, he integrates both social and digital contexts in his model. For this purpose, he introduced Techno-discursive design which allows critical discourse analysts to expose how technology shapes discourse.

3.3 Conceptual Framework

This section operationalizes the theoretical frameworks i.e. Fairclough's 3D model and KhosraviNik's SM-CDS model into practical application for this research. Following table provides an overview of the conceptual framework of this study.

TABLE 3.1: Conceptual Framework

Theoretical concept	Data Analysis technique	Anal- Tech-	Source	Application to this research
Textual Analysis	Lexical Analysis	Choice	Fairclough (2010)	Coding actor labels, action labels, and modifiers
Techno-Discursive Design	Platform Affordance Analysis		KhosraviNik (2017)	Analyzing reposts, hashtags, visuals, hyperlinks, algorithmic curation
Discursive Strategies	Intertextuality		Fairclough (2010)	Identifying references to other texts
Social Practices	Naturalization Markers		Fairclough (2010)	Analyze language to represent an idea as common sense, inevitable, universal, and part of the "natural order" of things.
Social Practices	Crisis Markers		Fairclough (2010)	Analyze the linguistic elements that construct an event as critical or urgent
Social Practices	Collective Identity Markers		Fairclough (2010)	Analyze the discursive features to build, reinforce, or challenge identity

[Janks \(1997\)](#) illustrates the three-dimensional model figure of Fairclough as three boxes embedded interdependently into one another. He then records each finding into the relevant box. It helps to analyze the three dimensions of Fairclough's model simultaneously, rather than sequentially.

This research uses a similar approach to conduct detailed qualitative analysis of the posts by Muslim political leaders on the Gaza war.

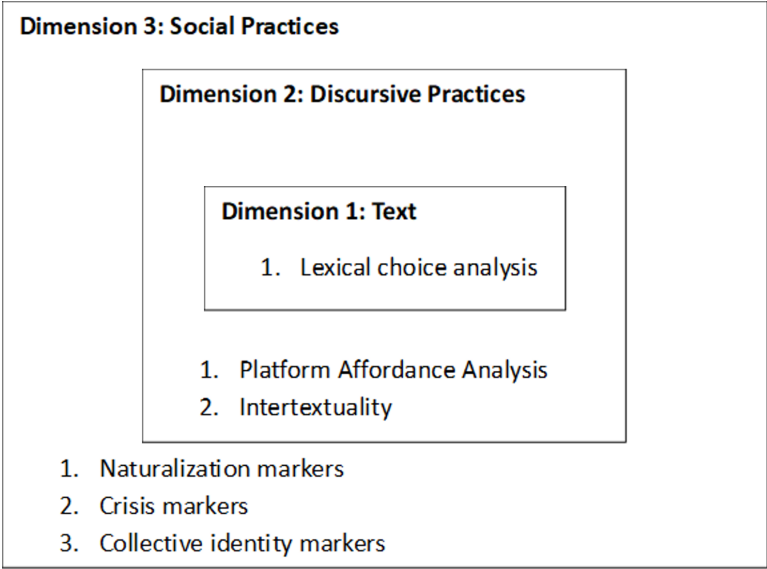


FIGURE 3.2: Conceptual Framework

3.4 Research Design

This study takes on a critical research philosophy. It aligns with CDA’s foundational principal that discourse is ideological and actively builds reality. The purpose of this research is to critically investigate the hidden meanings in the Posts of the Muslim leaders regarding the Gaza war and how they shape the discourse of public using a digital platform i.e. X.

Since it is critical discourse study, this research follows a qualitative research methodology which goes beyond the statistical data and allows for deep understanding of linguistic choices by answering the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of human discourse based on socio-political context.

This research analyzes the discourse surrounding a specific case, that is, the Gaza war which has been going on since 2014. What makes this research longitudinal is the two yearlong (since 2023) and still ongoing waves of the Gaza war.

TABLE 3.2: Research Design

Research Design Component	Selected
Philosophy	Critical Study
Research Methodology	Qualitative

Table 3.2 continued from previous page

Research Design Component	Selected
Research Strategy	Corpus based Discourse Analysis
Time Period	October 7 th 2023 – December 31 st 2025

3.5 Sampling Strategy

For this research, Purposive sampling technique is used to collect the data. It allows the researcher to deliberately select data relevant to study.

The sample of this research include the public X accounts of Muslim world leaders who used X as a social networking platform to express their political views on the Gaza war.

Muslim politicians from different countries across the globe have been selected for this study. The following table shows the country-wise distribution of politicians represented in the data.

TABLE 3.3: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Countries Represented in the Dataset

S#	Country	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	USA	145	29
2.	Saudi Arabia	57	11.4
3.	Turkey	54	10.8
4.	Malaysia	48	9.6
5.	Pakistan	46	9.2
6.	Qatar	36	7.2
7.	Palestine	34	6.8
8.	Egypt	26	5.2
9.	UK	23	4.6
10.	Jordan	17	3.4
11.	Zimbabwe	14	2.8
	Total	500	100

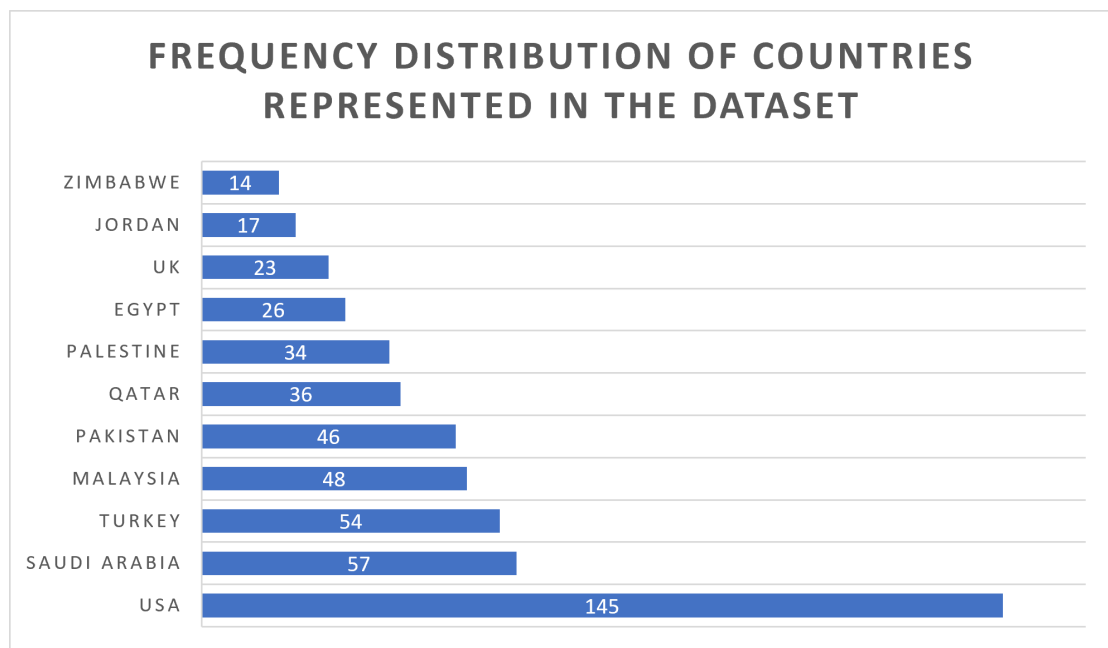


FIGURE 3.3: Frequency Distribution of Countries Represented in the Dataset

Table 3.3 and Figure 3.3 present the distribution of countries represented in the dataset. The United States was the most frequently represented country, accounting for 29.0% ($n = 145$) of the tweets. Saudi Arabia (11.4%, $n = 57$) and Malaysia (10.8%, $n = 54$) were the next most represented countries, followed by Turkey (9.6%, $n = 48$) and Pakistan (9.2%, $n = 46$).

Qatar (7.2%, $n = 36$), Palestine (6.8%, $n = 34$), and Egypt (5.2%, $n = 26$) showed moderate representation. The United Kingdom (4.6%, $n = 23$), Jordan (3.4%, $n = 17$), and Zimbabwe (2.8%, $n = 14$) were the least represented countries.

These findings indicate that the discourse was dominated by Muslim political leaders from the United States, while substantial contributions were also observed from political leaders in the Middle East and other regions.

Purposive sampling is the most appropriate choice for this research as a critical discourse study. Rather than data volume, it puts emphasis on rich, in-depth and contextualized data. This study does not require generalization but ideologically driven discourse that can be analyzed from a critical lens.

3.6 Data Collection Method

The research uses secondary data collected through the already existing database available on X. A list of keywords e.g., "Palestine", "Gaza", "genocide", "resistance", "occupation", etc. was created to find the Posts relevant to the study.

Kaggle was utilized to collect multiple datasets related to posts on the Gaza war. It is a software that offers centralized repositories for open data collected from different sources. From those datasets, specific data was compiled comprising only of the tweets from Muslim political leaders posting about the Gaza war. The selection was restricted to posts published by verified or officially recognized X accounts. The study includes posts in various languages, which were subsequently translated into English for the purpose of analysis. A total of 500 posts has been selected. The time period for this study covers posts from October 7th, 2023 (i.e. initial attacks) till December 31st, 2025. This sample size is consistent with published CDA studies of social media discourse (e.g., ([Qawariq, 2022](#); [KhosraviNik and Sarkhoh, 2017](#))).

TABLE 3.4: Data Collection method

Criteria for data collection	Selected
Actor-oriented	Muslim world political leaders
Discursive event	The Gaza war
Time period	7/10/2023 - 31/12/2025
Platform	X
Position/stance	Pro-Palestinian
Modality	Unimodal (linguistic; written)
Language of the Posts	Multilingual; Translated into English for analysis

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

As mentioned above, this research uses Fairclough's three-dimensional model as the primary analytical framework, along with KhosraviNik's Social Media - Critical Discourse Study (SM-CDS) to analyze the data. To operationalize these

frameworks, different analysis techniques have been used to incorporate the three research questions.

Since research question #1 focuses on vocabulary, Lexical choice analysis is used to analyze the Posts of Muslim leaders on topic of the Gaza war.

Lexical choice analysis investigates the specific word choices in discourse. It justifies that language is not neutral, it carries either positive or negative connotations which guide meaningful conversation. This research looks for ideological meanings behind every word choice, so lexical choice analysis becomes a powerful tool to reveal the truth. Lexicalization inspects how different words having the same referent create different realities. For example, a military action can be lexicalized using the following terms; War, operation, self-defense, aggression, intervention, bombing, massacre, genocide. Analyzing lexical word choice reveals the ideology of the speaker.

Question #2 is related to discursive strategies used on Twitter by Muslim politicians, so then this research adopts Platform affordance analysis and intertextuality to analyze the communicative and platform specific tactics used to produce, distribute, and consume the data.

Platform affordance analysis tells us how people interact in online spaces like X. it analyzes the norms and practices of the digital platform. Intertextuality helps understand how one text refers or relates to other texts.

Lastly, question #3 requires social analysis of discourse, so, Naturalization markers, Crisis markers, and Collective identity markers have been used to scrutinize the social practices as a result of discourse. All three data analysis techniques are about the processes, effects, and social conditions of discourse, not the inventory of words available to a speaker.

They analyze the social actions performed via discourse, and the assumptions that make those action possible or necessary. Throughout the study, Frequency distributions and percentage calculations were generated using Voyant Tools, a web-based text analysis suite.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Keeping the digital ethical guidelines in view, the research uses only the publicly available data from verified public accounts on X. Additionally, the data used for analysis displays honest and transparent quoting of Posts taken from the relevant accounts on X. Avoiding reflexivity in analysis on the part of researcher has also been a main concern of the research.

3.9 Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter has systematically detailed the research methodology, covering the theoretical and conceptual frameworks adopted in the study, philosophical underpinnings, research design, sampling strategy, data collection tools, and the ethical protocols observed throughout the study. Each methodological decision was deliberately made to ensure the integrity and credibility of the research process while remaining practically feasible within the available scope and resources. With this methodological grounding established, the upcoming chapter turns to the findings derived from the application of these methods.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter submits results on the basis of the data analysis techniques applied to 500 posts of Muslim political figures concerning the Gaza war. The analysis, as mentioned in chapter 3; methodology, focuses on three levels i.e. textual, discursive, and social practices, of Fairclough's 3D model of CDA, along with KhosraviNik's Socia Media Critical Discourse Study (SM-CDS) framework. Each post was manually analyzed to find out the ideological agenda behind the discourse of the Muslim politicians. All posts were compiled in a single spreadsheet. Each post was assigned a unique identifier (Tweet_id e.g., 60E+17, 12E+17, etc.) and included online data like timestamp, language, user handle, user location, hashtags, etc. Each post was manually coded by highlighting the text directly in the spreadsheet. Following color-coded scheme was applied for the data analysis:

- i. Red for lexical choices (actor labels, action labels, and modifiers)
- ii. Blue for Intertextual references
- iii. Green for naturalization markers
- iv. Yellow for crisis markers
- v. Purple for collective identity markers

After color coding all posts, the highlighted codes were extracted into a separate thematic matrix table, with separate columns for each framework. Using Voyant tools software, frequencies of languages of posts, actor labels, and hashtags were calculated for graphic representations. Similar codes were grouped together into broader themes (details in later sections of Chapter 4) for data analysis.

The results are organized according to the data analysis techniques following the research questions along with the table and examples for qualitative demonstration.

4.2 Textual Analysis: Lexical Choice Analysis

Lexical choices in the posts are categorized into three sub-headings; actors, actions, and modifiers. The key findings of the lexical choices in the posts represent multilingual strategy, including English, Urdu, Turkish, Arabic, French, showcasing global Muslim discourse from diverse geographical contexts.

TABLE 4.1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Languages of Posts Used in the Dataset

S#	Language (lang.)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	English (en)	214	42.8
2.	Arabic (ar)	121	24.2
3.	French (fr)	74	14.8
4.	Urdu (ur)	48	9.6
5.	Turkish (tr)	43	8.6
6.	Total	500	100

Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 present the distribution of languages used in the dataset. English was the most frequently used language, accounting for 42.8% ($n = 214$) of all posts. Arabic was the second most common language, representing 24.2% ($n = 121$) of the dataset. French constituted 14.8% ($n = 74$), followed by Urdu at 9.6% ($n = 48$) and Turkish at 8.6% ($n = 43$). These findings indicate that English served as the dominant language of communication among the selected political

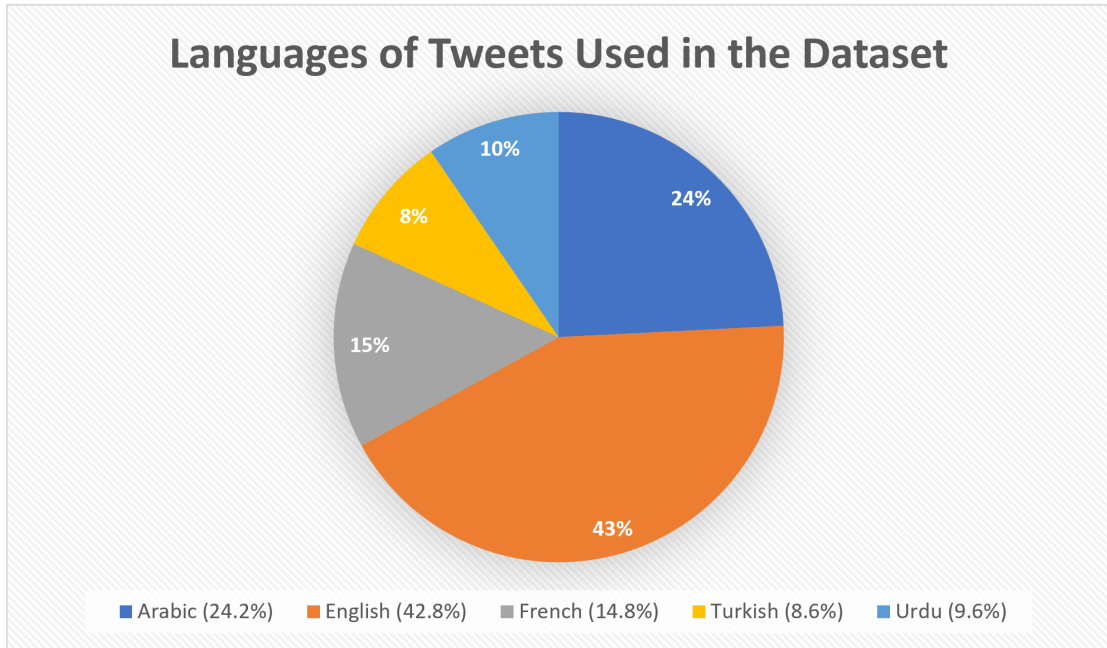


FIGURE 4.1: Distribution of Languages of Posts Used in the Dataset

leaders, while Arabic also occupied a substantial proportion of the discourse. The presence of multiple languages reflects the multilingual and international nature of the discussion surrounding the Palestinian issue.

Another evident feature is the extensive use of framing devices that tend to seek attention from authority as well as public audiences. These framing devices, for example; breaking, urgent, update, important message, statement, depict urgency of the matter and call for action, signaling it as significant political discourse.

The result also shows repetition of similar vocabulary in different posts to build a specific argument. The repetition of hashtags (detail in section 4.3) also shows consistency of theme i.e. the Muslim perspective in the Gaza war.

Textual analysis is categorized into three sections; actors, actions, and modifiers, in order to look at the lexical choices in an organized manner.

4.2.1 Actor Labels

The analysis identified 22 different types of actor labels in the lexicon of the posts. These are as follows:

Palestinians, People of Gaza/West bank, Children of Gaza, Families displaced, Civilians, The oppressed, The occupation / The blockade (abstract actor), Journalists, The international community, Martyrs of Gaza, The UN Security Council, all Muslims, Muslim nations / Muslim-majority countries, Muslim leaders / Global faith leaders/ world leaders, Those who stayed silent, Settlers, History (personified actor), The world, All governments, We, All of humanity.

In order to organize the lexical choices based on their ideological function, these actor labels are further categorized into eight (08) groups, mainly recognized as victims, oppressors, authority figures, religious and sacred entities, etc.

TABLE 4.2: Actor Labels

S#	Actor labels	Sub-category
1.	1. We	Collective identity
	2. Muslim nations	
	3. Our Palestinian brothers and sisters	
	4. All of humanity	
	5. The world	
	6. The international community	
	7. All governments	
2	1. Palestinian people	Victim-oriented
	2. People of Gaza/West bank	
	3. Innocent civilians	
	4. Families displaced	
	5. Children of Gaza	
	6. The oppressed	
	7. Martyrs	
3	1. Settlers	Oppressor/aggressor
	2. The occupation	
	3. The blockade	
4	1. All Muslims	Religious identity
	2. Muslim leaders	
	3. Global Faith leaders	
5	1. Journalists	Witnesses

Table 4.2 continued from previous page

S#	Actor labels	Sub-category
	2. The world	
	3. History	
	4. Those who stayed silent	
6	1. The international community	Authority figures
	2. The UN Security Council	
	3. All governments	
7	1. Our prayers	Abstract actors
	2. History	
	3. The occupation / The blockade	

The most common type of actor label identified in the results is the collective voice “We” – accounting for 41% of all actor labels (as shown in figure 4.2), representing the pro-Palestine stance of the Muslim political leaders around the world.

Other similar actor labels located in the posts that represent the collective identity are; Muslim nations, Our Palestinian brothers and sisters, All of humanity, The world, The international community, and All governments.

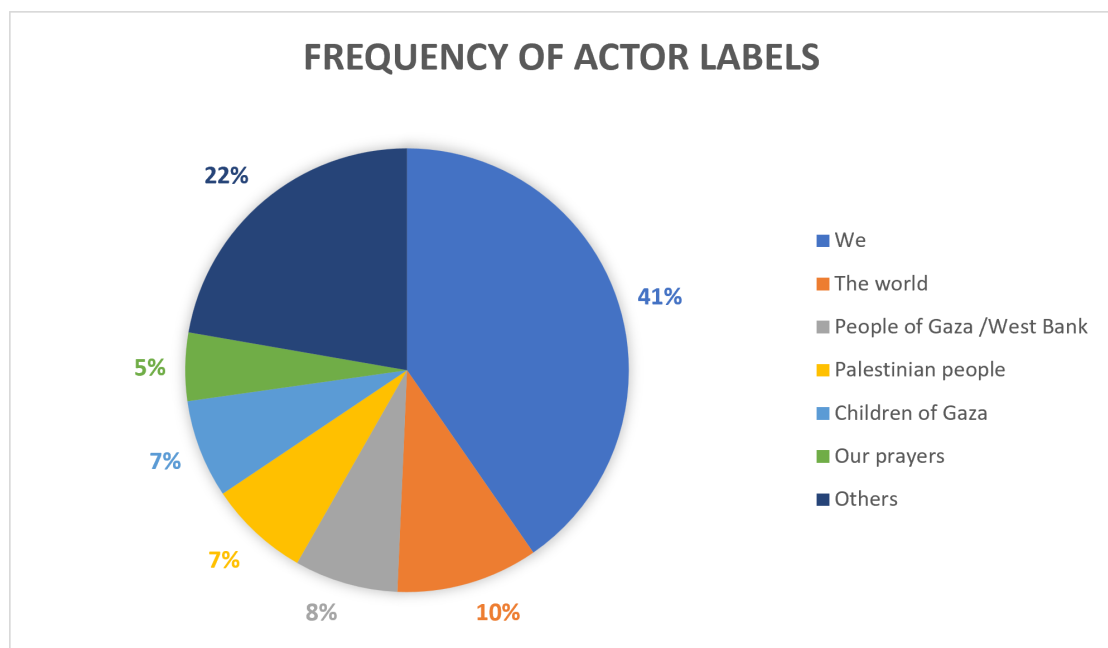


FIGURE 4.2: Frequency of actor Labels in the Dataset

The second most focused actor labels are the victim-oriented approach towards the Palestinians. These are represented as oppressed or sufferers of the Gaza war. For example, Palestinian people, People of Gaza/West bank, Innocent civilians, Families displaced, The oppressed, and Martyrs. The Children of Gaza are specifically mentioned in a lot of posts as the vulnerable affected population that needs protection and support.

Another key group of actor labels is the authority figures who are responsible for taking action against the proprietors. For example, The international community and The UN Security Council, and governments around the globe. These authorities are labeled for having the power to take action against the violence and protect the civilians.

Additionally, religious identity is represented using actor labels such as All Muslims, Muslim leaders, and Global Faith leaders. These actor labels frame the Gaza war as not a socio-political crisis but invokes religious responsibility as well.

The oppressors or opposing side is mentioned indirectly as passive entities. However, some posts use lexical choices (mostly abstract actors rather than naming a specific actor or state) like Settlers, the occupation, and the blockade, to show the role of invaders.

Some actors are also framed as witnesses of the war like the world (public), and History (abstract actor). Specifically, those who stayed silent are framed as actors who are equally accountable for their silence on the oppression. Journalists are also framed as actors who are responsible for spreading awareness and mobilizing the public on the issue.

4.2.2 Action Labels

Different action labels can be identified in the collected posts of the Muslim political leaders concerning the Gaza war. There are verbs in the form of modals, infinitives, relations, etc. however, the focus of this study is the ideological function of the language, so actions (verbs) are only analyzed as labels and not grammar

categories. Looking at the data, following action labels have been identified in the posts.

TABLE 4.3: Action Labels

S#	Action Labels	Prototypical Examples from Posts
1	Political or Legal Demands	1. Call for international community action 2. Call on governments to take action 3. Palestinians deserve freedom, dignity, justice
2	Condemnation	1. Condemn attacks on civilians 2. Reject displacement of people 3. World/history will judge silence
3	Solidarity / Support / Unity / Commitment	1. Solidarity with Palestinian people 2. We will never abandon them 3. We stand with oppressed people 4. Supporting Palestinian brothers and sisters 5. Prayers for martyrs and their families
4	Religious references	1. Faith demands we stand with oppressed 2. Muslim leaders must speak with one voice 3. Entire Muslim nation stands with Palestine
5	Hope	1. Will never stop advocating 2. We will never leave them alone 3. Firmly support Palestinian people
6	Ceasefire / Ending violence	1. Call for permanent ceasefire 2. End the suffering/violence 3. Stop the massacre
7	Advocacy / Awareness	1. Will never stop advocating for Palestinian rights 2. World is watching 3. History will not forgive inaction 4. Stand with journalists reporting truth

Table 4.3 continued from previous page

S#	Action Labels	Prototypical Examples from Posts
8	Emotional / Descriptive	1. Open borders to Gaza refugees 2. Urge countries to accept refugees 3. Reject forced displacement
9	Events	1. Attended emergency summit 2. Released emergency statement 3. Joined global faith leaders signing open letter

Posts were coded into nine action categories based on their primary communicative purpose. These categories included Political or Legal Demands, Condemnation, Solidarity/Support/Unity/Commitment, Religious References, Hope, Cease-fire/Ending Violence, Advocacy/Awareness, Emotional/Descriptive, and Events. The coding scheme enabled a systematic examination of how political leaders framed the Palestinian issue through demands for action, expressions of support, religious discourse, humanitarian concerns, advocacy efforts, and references to diplomatic activities.

4.2.3 Modifiers

Modifiers consisting of adjectives and adverbs are quite helpful in persuasion techniques. The modifiers in the posts reveal a synchronized movement rather than individual messages from the Muslim politicians. ideological control and political agenda can be seen through the use of modifiers like unforgivable crime, humanitarian crisis, moral and religious duty, etc. The following table enlists the modifiers used in posts based on their ideological function in the discourse.

TABLE 4.4: Modifiers

S#	Types of Modifiers	Prototypical Examples from posts
1	Intensifiers	Immediate, urgent, Forced, unequivocally, firmly, never, at all costs, catastrophic, devastating, unbearable, great

Table 4.4 continued from previous page

S#	Types of Modifiers	Prototypical Examples from posts
2	Evaluative / Attitudinal	Undeniable, unforgivable, moral, religious, illegal, inherent, inalienable, indisputable
3	Temporal	Now, today, never, permanent, today
4	Descriptive	Emergency, difficult, steadfast, dignified, innocent, collective, humanitarian, worse
5	Quantifiers	All, every, entire, full, any, no
6	Modality	Must be, cannot, will, deserve, have the right
7	Metaphorical	Red line, sacred trust, heart weep blood, shed in vain, wake up

Table 4.4 presents the types of modifiers identified in the posts and illustrates how political leaders linguistically strengthened, qualified, and framed their messages regarding Gaza.

The findings indicate that modifiers played a significant role in intensifying emotional appeal, expressing evaluation, emphasizing urgency, and legitimizing political positions.

Intensifiers were frequently employed to amplify the severity of the situation and the urgency of required action. Words such as *immediate*, *urgent*, *forced*, *unequivocally*, *firmly*, *never*, and *catastrophic* heightened the emotional and persuasive impact of posts by portraying the crisis as critical and demanding an immediate response.

Evaluative and attitudinal modifiers were used to communicate moral judgments and *ideological* positions. Terms such as *undeniable*, *unforgivable*, *moral*, *illegal*, *inherent*, and *inalienable* framed events and actions in ethical, legal, and humanitarian terms, thereby legitimizing support for Palestinian rights and condemning perceived injustices.

Temporal modifiers, including *now*, *today*, *never*, and *permanent*, emphasized immediacy and continuity. These expressions positioned the crisis as an urgent contemporary issue while also highlighting long-term commitments and desired outcomes, such as a permanent ceasefire.

Descriptive modifiers were used to characterize people, events, and conditions. Words such as *emergency*, *steadfast*, *dignified*, *innocent*, *collective*, and *humanitarian* helped construct particular representations of the conflict, often highlighting suffering, resilience, and humanitarian concerns.

Quantifiers such as *all*, *every*, *entire*, *full*, and *no* expanded the scope of statements and conveyed inclusiveness or universality. Their use enabled political leaders to present issues as affecting entire populations or requiring collective responsibility.

Modal expressions, including *must*, *cannot*, *will*, *deserve*, and *have the right*, reflected varying degrees of obligation, certainty, commitment, and entitlement. These modifiers were particularly important in calls for action, expressions of support, and assertions of Palestinian rights.

Finally, metaphorical modifiers introduced symbolic and emotionally powerful imagery into the discourse. Expressions such as *red line*, *sacred trust*, *heart weeps blood*, and *shed in vain* transformed political statements into morally charged narratives, thereby increasing their persuasive and emotional resonance.

Overall, the distribution of modifiers demonstrates that political leaders relied extensively on evaluative, intensifying, and modal language to construct moral legitimacy, communicate urgency, and mobilize support for their positions on the Palestinian issue.

4.3 Discursive Practices

As the 3D model of Fairclough suggests, the analysis of discursive practices in discourse bridges the gap between the text and its social implications. Discursive practices focus on the production, distribution and consumption of the texts.

Since the research data clarifies that the producers of the text are Muslim political leaders, actively participating in online debate on the Gaza war via X. The focus of this then remains on the distribution and consumption of the data.

4.3.1 Techno - Discursive Design: Platform Affordance Analysis

The distribution of posts definitely relies on affordances of X as a microblogging site. It either enables or limits the public discourse in its own ways. The well-known feature of character limit on X allows visibility, interactivity and shareability, and makes it a platform of public discussions.

On contrary, if users want to narrate in detail, threads allow serialized discourse by connecting multiple posts for argumentation. We can see many posts working as threads in the collected data (for details see Appendix A). For example, ‘*Thread 1/3: We stand with our people in #Palestine during this difficult time. We will never abandon them. #MuslimUmmah*’

The analysis also show that X allows the users to communicate to a wider public (globally) simultaneously, which makes it a practical platform for politicians. Moreover, verification badges of official profiles by X for instance, that of politicians allow credibility and enhances engagement with the public. This way politicians use X to express their public opinion without the threat of deception by media outlets.

Interactivity features for example repost, reply, likes, etc. can also be seen in the collected data (for details see Appendix A). It allows increased visibility and collaboration among users.

Another important feature pioneered by X is the use of Hashtags which allows the users to create discourse communities. Muslim users have used hashtags to build specific identity to represent their stance on the Gaza war. Following are the top 15 hashtags found in the collected data (for details see Appendix A):

The hashtag *#Gaza* was the most frequently used hashtag in the dataset ($n = 234$), followed by *#Gaza* ($n = 85$), *#Palestine* ($n = 66$), and *#FreePalestine* ($n = 61$). The prominence of these hashtags indicates that discourse within the dataset was primarily centered on Gaza and broader Palestinian solidarity themes.

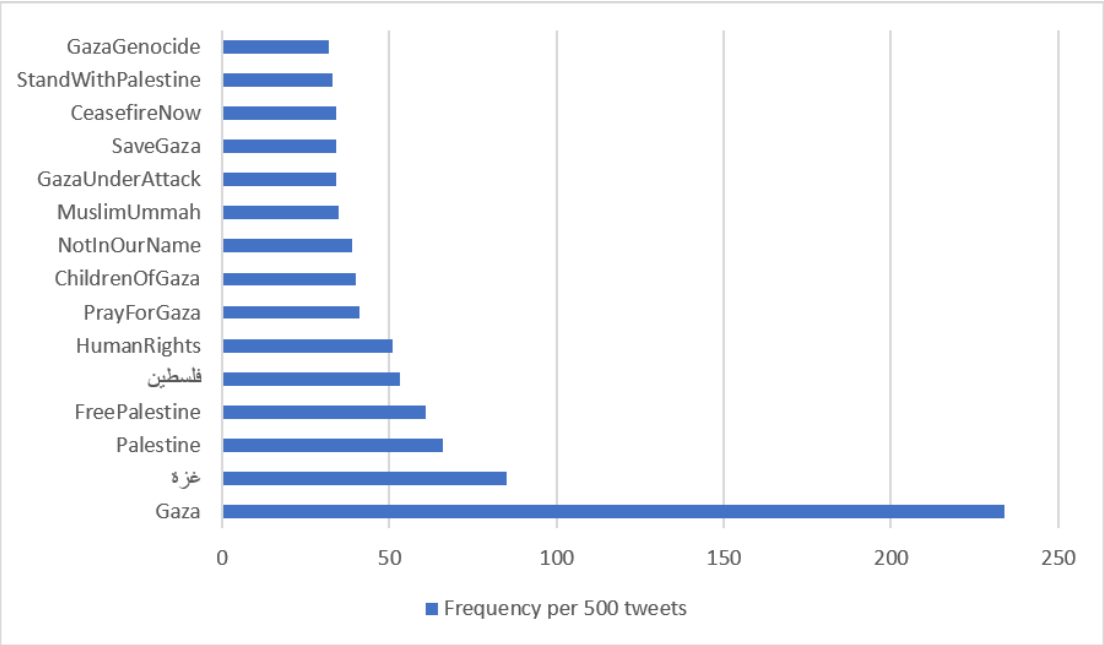


FIGURE 4.3: Frequency Distribution of the Most Common Hashtags in the Dataset

Like any other digital platform, X has its own terms and conditions which run the algorithm in such a way that some posts receive more visibility as compared to others. The data collection revealed that X banned many accounts or remove posts carrying controversial messages that go against the platform policy.

4.3.2 Intertextuality

Intertextuality as a blend of different genres can be explicitly seen in the posts by Muslim leaders in the context of the Gaza war. Analysis of data found traces of different types of discourses in the posts, for instance, legal, religious, political, journalistic, medical, and so on.

TABLE 4.5: Intertextuality

S#	Type of Discourse	Prototypical Examples from Posts (Intertextuality)
1	Legal discourse	The children of #Gaza deserve a safe and dignified life, far from war and destruction. ...never stop advocating for the rights of the Palestinian people

Table 4.5 continued from previous page

S#	Type of Discourse	Prototypical Examples from Posts (Intertextuality)
2	Religious discourse	The children of #Gaza deserve peace, security, and a dignified future. International law is unambiguous: collective punishment of civilians is illegal... Palestinians deserve freedom, dignity, and justice... The Palestinian people's right to self-determination are an indisputable right The siege on #Gaza violates every principle of international humanitarian law.
		Al-Aqsa Mosque must be protected at all costs. It belongs to all Muslims. Our faith demands we stand with the oppressed wherever they may be. Al-Aqsa Mosque is a red line. We will never allow any transgression against it. Solidarity with the people of #Palestine is a moral and religious duty. Al-Aqsa Mosque is a sacred trust for all Muslims. Al-Aqsa is in danger, and we are all responsible for defending it. Our prayers are with the martyrs of Gaza and their families.
3	Political discourse	We call on all Muslim nations... ...The international response must be stronger The UN Security Council must act now to stop the massacre... leaders worldwide must speak with one united voice...

Table 4.5 continued from previous page

S#	Type of Discourse	Prototypical Examples from Posts (Intertextuality)
		...all governments to take immediate action to protect civilians
4	Media discourse	... journalists risking their lives to report the truth. ...The images coming out of #Rafah are devastating.
5	Medical discourse	... emergency aid for families displaced Aid convoys must be allowed...

The table demonstrates that the posts construct the Gaza war through multiple overlapping discourses rather than a single narrative.

Legal discourse legitimizes claims through international law and human rights, religious discourse appeals to shared faith and moral obligation, political discourse demands institutional and governmental action, media discourse relies on reporting and visual documentation to influence public opinion, and humanitarian/medical discourse foregrounds civilian suffering and the urgent need for relief.

The combination of these discourses creates a multidimensional representation of the war, appealing simultaneously to legal authority, religious identity, political responsibility, media credibility, and humanitarian concern.

4.4 Social Practices

This section analyzes data from an ideological lens. It looks at the purpose behind the discourse (posts) and its real-world consequences on the audiences.

Moving from the ‘how’ of discourse i.e. how language and the platform (X) is utilized, to the ‘why’ i.e. the hegemonic struggle to shape the social and political ideology of public on the Gaza war.

4.4.1 Naturalization Markers

Data analysis shows extensive use of naturalization markers that claim the statements i.e. posts, as objective facts rather than possibilities or opinions. The most commonly used naturalization marker in the collected data appears to be “is/are” which is used to mobilize either the authorities or public for action against the Palestinians. Additionally, these are used to present the legal interpretations of political/social breakdown as facts.

TABLE 4.6: Naturalization markers (a) is/are

S#	Prototypical Examples from Posts
1.	... collective punishment of civilians is illegal
2.	Every life lost is a tragedy .
3.	Solidarity ... is a moral and religious duty
4.	Al-Aqsa Mosque is a red line .
5.	Silence is an unforgivable crime

Another commonly used naturalization marker in the posts is the necessity modal verbs i.e. “must,” “cannot,” “will never”. It presents the demands of Muslim political leaders as non-negotiables and builds pressure on both international community and public for action.

TABLE 4.7: Naturalization markers (b) modal verbs

S#	Prototypical Examples from Posts
1.	Al-Aqsa Mosque must be protected .
2.	We will never abandon them
3.	Aid convoys must be allowed
4.	The world cannot stay silent any longer
5.	The international community must act immediately

Universal quantifiers like Every, any, no, all, etc. are also found in the posts of Muslim political leaders to eliminate exceptions and depict the catastrophic situation of Gaza.

TABLE 4.8: Naturalization markers (c) quantifiers

S#	Prototypical Examples from Posts
1.	Every life lost is a tragedy.
2.	We condemn all attacks on civilian populations in #Gaza.
3.	We call on all Muslim nations to unite in solidarity with #Palestine.
4.	No child should ever experience what children in #Gaza are going through today.
5.	We will never abandon them.

Presupposition triggers are also present in the posts that enforce assumptions on the public to invoke empathy for the Palestinian side.

TABLE 4.9: Naturalization markers (d) presupposition triggers

S#	Assumption	Prototypical Examples from Posts
1.	Occupation exists	The occupation must end
2.	Shared faith of Muslims demands unity	Our faith demands we stand with the oppressed.
3.	Palestine is not free	The freedom of Palestine is our demand
4.	War is happening	Solidarity and prayers to every family affected by the ongoing war in #Gaza
5.	There is a single, known truth	Victory will only come for the truth

All these naturalization markers analyze at different instances in the collected data represent the use of discourse to build a specific ideology and bring a social change respectively.

4.4.2 Crisis Markers

Crisis markers invoke urgency and emotional response in the audiences. The posts of Muslim politicians are packed with such markers to mobilize immediate intervention on the Gaza war.

TABLE 4.10: Crisis markers

S#	Crisis Markers	Prototypical Examples from Posts
1.	Temporal	a. The international community must act immediately to protect #Gaza. b. We are calling for action now.
2.	Severity	a. This is a man-made humanitarian disaster of our time. b. The images coming out of #Rafah are devastating . c. The situation is catastrophic and unbearable .
3.	Moral crisis	a. History will not forgive our inaction. b. ...the world is silent about this great tragedy c. Silence on what is happening in #Palestine is an unforgivable crime .
4.	Humanitarian crisis	a. The siege on #Gaza violates every principle of international humanitarian law. b. Children in #Gaza are starving . c. The blockade on #Gaza must end now. People deserve food, water, and medicine.
5.	Violence	a. We demand the international community take immediate action to stop the aggression on #Gaza. b. The UN Security Council must act now to stop the massacre in #Gaza.

Table 4.10 continued from previous page

S#	Crisis Markers	Prototypical Examples from Posts
		c. Standing with the people of #West-Bank as settler violence continues to escalate.

Participants have extensively used crisis markers to signal crisis in order to indicate the consequences of the Gaza war for the audiences. Table 4.11 demonstrates that the posts construct the Gaza war through multiple, interconnected crisis frames.

Temporal markers create urgency by stressing the need for immediate action, while severity markers intensify perceptions of the scale and gravity of the situation. Moral crisis markers assign ethical responsibility to governments, international organizations, and the global public, portraying inaction as morally indefensible. Humanitarian crisis markers foreground civilian suffering and violations of fundamental human rights, whereas violence markers emphasize the ongoing use of force and its consequences for affected populations. Together, these crisis markers reinforce the representation of Gaza not merely as a geopolitical war but as an urgent humanitarian and moral emergency demanding immediate global attention.

4.4.3 Collective Identity

A comparison of in-group and out-group identity is repetitively built in the posts by the Muslim political leaders to represent solidarity of the Muslim nations / governments. It is a linguistic strategy that makes mobilization and collective action possible, often used by political discourse.

TABLE 4.11: Collective identity

S#	Collective identity	Prototypical Examples from Posts
1.	In-group	a. We call on all Muslim nations to unite in solidarity with #Palestine. b. Our prayers are with the innocent civilians suffering in #Gaza right now.

Table 4.11 continued from previous page

S#	Collective identity	Prototypical Examples from Posts
		c. We stand with our Palestinian brothers and sisters .
		d. We are with #Palestine today, tomorrow, and forever.
		e. Muslim leaders worldwide must speak with one united voice on #Palestine.
2.	Out-group	a. History will judge those who stayed silent on #Gaza.
		b. The occupation must end.
		c. We call upon all of humanity who share the pain of the innocent civilians in Gaza.
		d. We demand that the international community take immediate action to stop the aggression on #Gaza.
		e. The world cannot ignore them.

Although the out-group actors are not explicitly mentioned in the posts, we can definitely identity the concealed collective identity of the opposing side.

4.5 Conclusion

The analysis of the collected posts yields some key themes; formation of collective Muslim identity, unnamed perpetrators of oppression, religious and legal mobilization strategies. Each theme is consistently found at all three levels of discourse analysis. These results lay the analytical foundation for the discussion presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Findings and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion and concluding remarks on the data i.e. 500 posts, analyzed using Fairclough's and KhosraviNik's models of CDA and KhosraviNik's SM-CDS framework. The posts concerning the Muslim political leadership's perspective on the Gaza war, depict varying themes, based on the textual, discursive, and social practice analysis using multiple techniques. This chapter is organized based on the research questions and each finding is further explored in relation to its significance in critical discourse studies.

5.2 Findings and Discussion

5.2.1 Textual Analysis

Analysis of lexicon of the posts reveal that the discourse is mostly victim-centered. Muslim politicians have used X as a public microblogging platform to gain sympathy for the people of Palestine. It shows Palestinians as the recipients of suffering. It presents a context where they are unjustly involved in the ongoing military and political unrest in the Gaza region. Most of the vocabulary used in terms of actors (Innocent civilians, Families displaced, the oppressed, Martyrs), actions

(condemn, reject, support), and modifiers (humanitarian, worse, catastrophic, devastating, unbearable) in the lexical choice analysis, portray Palestinians as the victims of the Gaza war.

Another finding is the absence of the preparator in the discourse. Rather, it uses abstract ideas (suffering, massacre, displacement, Settlers, the occupation, the blockade) to represent the other side involved in the war i.e. Israeli military. Analysis of the posts show avoidance of the direct naming of the oppressors.

The lexicon also creates a sense of urgency in the discourse. Action labels like Urge, certain modifiers (intensifiers) and modal verbs (must) also suggest emergency and need of immediate action in the crisis.

An ideological framing technique used in the posts to build a specific discourse by the participants is the presentation of presuppositions as objective facts. For instance, 'Palestinians deserve freedom, dignity, justice' – it claims that Palestinians do not have freedom, 'Reject displacement of people' – people are being replaced from their land, 'Stop the massacre' – there's an ongoing massacre in Gaza. So, instead of arguing for the war, the discourse assumes specific side of war to be true and builds an ideology which engages the public in support of Palestine. It also suggests a campaign style discourse to reinforce and amplify the philosophy of Palestinian context. The discourse is highly repetitive with similar idea presented in different words, for example same hashtags.

The language used in the posts represent the Gaza war in religious as well as moral terms. Muslim leaders have framed the discourse in such a way that it marks the opposition as immoral and criminals. Although, the opposition is not named directly even once in the posts, it uses terms (All Muslims, Muslim leaders, Global Faith leaders, Our Palestinian brothers and sisters, sacred trust) that ignite moral and religious obligation in the audiences. This way Muslim politicians use religion as an ideological power to mobilize the public in favor of Palestine.

Findings suggest that the discourse is created to advocate rather than inform. Lexical choice analysis demonstrates use of terms that persuade and unite the

public to take action. For example, action labels like call for, condemn, judge, reject, urge, stand with, support, etc. depict advocacy rather than journalism.

5.2.2 Discursive Practices Analysis

Findings reveal that the intertextuality in the selected discourse is carefully chosen to build a specific argument that frame the Muslim perspective as the primary context in the Gaza war. The discourse uses several external references serving different strategic functions to support the argument of Muslim politicians in the Gaza war. Participants have referred to Islamic principles (mobilizing religious community), Geneva conventions and UNSC resolutions (demand action), UN charter (assert rights), and open letter to public advocating the civil rights of Palestinians as the victims of the Gaza war. The discourse is purposefully heterogeneous to address desired audience and inspire action.

Although densely present, intertextuality is mostly implicit in the discourse. The posts do not quote the legal articles, conventions, or Islamic references directly, but hints on them without naming the sources. For example, ‘...deserve a safe and dignified life, far from war and destruction’, ‘The UN Security Council must act...’, ‘...journalists risking their lives to report the truth’, ‘Aid convoys must be allowed’, etc. The only explicit references are ‘signing the open letter for immediate peace in # Palestine’ by joining global faith leaders. It not only assumes audience as legally and religiously literate deeming it as common sense for the public, but also avoids citation that may invite potential accuracy threats. Keeping the platform affordances in view, implicit references make it efficient for the users to voice their opinion in limited characters.

The most common example of intertextuality in the discourse is that of legal references. For example, ‘The children of # Gaza deserve a safe and dignified life, far from war and destruction’, ‘...never stop advocating for the rights of the Palestinian people’, ‘The children of # Gaza deserve peace, security, and a dignified future’, ‘International law is unambiguous: collective punishment of civilians is illegal...’, ‘Palestinians deserve freedom, dignity, and justice...’, ‘The

Palestinian people's right to self-determination is an indisputable right', 'The siege on # Gaza violates every principle of international humanitarian law'. It gives legitimization function to the political demands. The laws are obliquely mentioned in the posts to invoke moral sense in the authorities as well as public.

Religious texts are the second most used example of intertextuality in the selected discourse. It not only provokes the sense of obligation in the Muslims to speak out in favor of Palestine but also builds solidarity among the community. Muslim political leaders have portrayed it as a religious duty which, if avoided, would be sinful. For example, 'Al-Aqsa Mosque must be protected at all costs. It belongs to all Muslims', 'Our faith demands we stand with the oppressed wherever they may be', 'Solidarity with the people of # Palestine is a moral and religious duty'. Such religious discourse brings social and emotional perspective to the political agenda. For instance, 'Our prayers are with the martyrs of Gaza and their families'.

Analysis of platform affordances show comprehensive use of hashtags in the posts. They act as a powerful discursive strategy enabled by the platform that index posts into global, searchable conversations. The hashtags used by Muslim politicians help categorize posts and enhances discoverability, making the platform efficient for sensitive topics like the Gaza war, in political discourse. It is an engaging framing technique for collective identity construction, and mobilization.

Integrating digital media features into CDA, SM-CDS demonstrates functions of X that allows for extended arguments in form of reply or threads and rapid mobilization through reposts. These platform affordances amplify the collective voice of Palestinians through co-distribution strategies.

5.2.3 Social Practices Analysis

The last dimension of Fairclough's 3D model of CDA_ Social practices, analyzes the relationship between discourse and society. It uncovers the hidden meanings behind discourse, that is, how language shapes the social structures like institutions, history, power, etc. The analysis of posts of Muslim political leaders on the topic of the Gaza war reveal several themes. The naturalization and crisis

markers used in the discourse analyze the social conditions of discourse. The most common finding apparent from the use of naturalizations i.e. facts, is the idea of moral universal binary – good actors (Us/Muslims/Muslim leaders) versus evil actors (Them/international community). Such discursive strategy hinders all counter-arguments as those taking the other side may be blamed for siding with the oppressors or defending them. It intends to build an ideology of personal responsibility and moral obligation in the religious and international community.

Naturalization markers i.e. modals, are also used in the posts to stimulate the legal authorities to take action. It is because political demands may not be as effective as the international legislation. So, Muslim political leaders have employed language to depict the social and legal chaos enforced on the Palestinians in the Gaza war, resulting in public upheaval in demand of legal action to be taken against the oppressors.

The crisis markers used in the discourse reveal the need of immediate action in form of humanitarian aid. It sets to prevent the counter-argument as the severity of situation (‘unbearable’, ‘devastating’, ‘disaster’) and violence (‘massacre’, ‘aggression’) demands that there is no time to ask questions and check evidence. In this way language is used by the participants to create performative crisis. The only possible solution is as the discourse demands, i.e. ‘end the violence’, ‘stop the massacre’, ‘... must act now’, etc.

Findings also reveal a hegemonic struggle to demonstrate the catastrophic situation of Gaza. Muslim leaders have built discourse not only to describe the tyranny in the Gaza war but to change the way public perceives it. So, presuppositions and quantifiers are used in such a way that the dominant ideology of Gaza ‘war’ or ‘war’ can be changed into the Gaza ‘genocide’. This political power struggle may impact the public as well as international response on the situation of Gaza. For instance, international action in form of sanctions and aid may become possible in the future.

Moreover, the discourse is dense with collective identity markers that construct social actors, as Fairclough claims in his 3D model of CDA. The audience is

reminded of their social and religious identity i.e. Muslims, and is instructed to act accordingly.

5.3 Conclusion

The discourse analysis of the posts of Muslim leaders on the Gaza war reveal how discourse is consciously fabricated to build a certain ideology in society. Here, a specific political agenda was working behind the discourse that requires to shift the dynamic of war into a one-sided oppression, or rather genocide. One surprising finding, however, was the lack of mention of agency in the posts. The findings revealed that the data i.e. posts of Muslim political leaders on X did not mention Israel or USA as the oppressors, rather used passive voice politics as an act of self-preservation. It shows that the Muslim leaders are prioritizing the diplomatic and strategic survival of their own regimes. It not only takes away the Palestinians right to have an identifiable enemy but represents the war as humanitarian crisis rather than a political issue. In this way, social structures are actively shaped by language, impacting the ideologies as well as power structures.

Chapter 6

Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter summarizes the principal findings of this study, reflects on their broader implications, and offers actionable recommendations for practice and future research. This chapter acknowledges the inherent limitations of the current research and proposes concrete directions for future studies, thereby consolidating the study's contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

6.2 Conclusion

This research critically investigated the discourses embedded in the posts of Muslim political leaders, on the topic of the Gaza war starting from October 7th 2023 till December 31st 2025. Using Fairclough's three-dimensional model of critical Discourse analysis (CDA) and KhosraviNik's Social Media Critical Discourse Studies Model (SM-CDS), this study analyzes 500 posts to uncover the hidden socio-political ideology behind the discourse. The analysis of the language used in posts yielded several themes that shape the social structure and power struggle using the digital space. Firstly, the lexical choices in the discourse explicitly

frames Palestinians as the victims of the Gaza war. Although the aggressors were not named in the process, but the presupposition guiding Palestinians as the oppressed left no room for argument. Secondly, the Muslim leaders made sure to incorporate legal as well as religious intertextual references, along with others, to invoke moral responsibility in the public as well as international community. The affordances of X as a social microblogging platform allowed for higher visibility and interactivity of the content. At last, the social practices analysis revealed the impact of discourse created by Muslim political leaders on legal, religious as well as media institutions and community to take action.

These findings contribute to the existing research on political CDA in digital spaces. Methodologically, this research examines how Fairclough's theory of Critical Discourse Studies embeds social media to expose the underlying agenda behind war-related discourse. In theory, this research adds value to understanding hegemonic struggle in creating a new ideology of the Gaza Genocide, instead of war or war in the minds of public and authorities. Moreover, this research also exposes the role of X as an instrument of advocacy and publicity. There are several limitations to be acknowledged in the research. The data was limited to a specific time period which might not be able to capture the reality of on-going war. Some platform affordances like algorithm moderation and ban on certain Muslim political leaders, may also have affected the research findings.

Ultimately, this research aims to analyze how language is used to deliberately mold and guide the public opinion based on a certain ideology and to explore how language serves as a mean to drive social action. In the era of social media, this research can be academically helpful to understand the role of X in curating ideologies using discourse.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the data analysis and findings of the study, following recommendations are suggested for the future research in relevant areas. These suggestions aim to improve the critical study of political discourse. This study was limited by a

sample of 500 posts within a specific time period. Future research could aim to include additional data from a variety of platforms to critically analyze the role of discourse in shaping ideologies.

Moreover, to improve reliability by mitigating platform specific biases, future researches may include diverse sources of data collection and lengthen the timespan window to reconfirm the findings from non-Twitter/X population. As this research faced difficulty in finding and then verifying X handles of population i.e. Muslim political leaders, moving to other platforms might help the future researches.

Beyond improving data collection techniques, researchers may also examine Muslim politicians' discourse on the Gaza war from a historical lens. Another aspect would be to critically contrast framing of the Gaza war by Muslim political figures on mainstream and social media.

These recommendations, if implemented, would address the key limitations identified in this study and strengthen future research in this area.

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Appendix

A. Dataset containing Tweets:

(<https://1drv.ms/x/c/5717befcd93>)

B. Coding of 500 X Posts:

(<https://1drv.ms/w/c/5717befcd93cb429>)