Palestinian and Israeli Voices in Five Years
of U.S. Newspaper Discourse

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This article describes a comprehensive discourse analysis of U.S. newspaper coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over a five-year period, 2002 through 2006. Critical discourse analysis has been combined with corpus linguistics to produce integrated qualitative and quantitative analyses of six dimensions of the discourse: (1) direct quotes, (2) indirect quotes (3) terms denoting violence, (4) terms denoting negative emotions, (5) terms denoting conflict, and (6) positive discourse. These dimensions of discourse with respect to Israeli and Palestinian authorities and civilians led to a number of conclusions that, in general, the discourse is characterized by terms denoting violence, conflict, and negative emotion.

This article describes a comprehensive qualitative and quantitative discourse analysis of U.S. newspaper coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over a five-year period of 2002 to 2006. For the analysis, 50 news articles representative of coverage for the months of April through July were collected for each of the five years, giving a total sample of 250 articles. A discourse analysis was conducted on the linguistic structures, textual properties, and stylistic devices of the stories in the sample. Much of the analysis is based on coding generated by the software program ATLAS.ti, which was used to search for words, phrases, and linguistic markers constructed for the research. Six dimensions of this discourse are described and analyzed in this article: (1) direct quotes, (2) indirect quotes or paraphrases, (3) terms denoting violence, (4) terms denoting negative emotions, (5) terms denoting conflict, and (6) positive discourse, or terms that have positive meanings, such as *hope* and *peace*. The changes in frequency of use of these types of discourse over the five-year period of the study were of particular interest. These six dimensions shed light on how the U.S. news media frame important actors and events in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The major conclusions of this study are: (1) U.S. news writers cite Palestinian and Israeli civilians in a very different manner than they cite Palestinian and Israeli authorities; (2) it is apparent that U.S. news writers found the Palestinian civilian experience more newsworthy than the Israeli civilian experience

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Date submitted: 2010–08–22

throughout most of the five years; (3) writers relied heavily on the Israeli government for information about events and persons; (4) the expression of negative emotion is a prominent feature of the news discourse; (5) the language of the news coverage is characterized by the extensive use of words denoting violence and bloodshed, indicating the construction of a discourse of violence; and (6) a discourse of continual conflict has been constructed by news writers, so events and persons are described with a focus on conflict.

Critical Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics

In this research, critical discourse analysis has been combined with corpus linguistics to accomplish both qualitative and quantitative research. According to Fairclough (2001, p. 230), critical discourse analysis has two aims: It "seeks to discern connections between language and other elements in social life which are often opaque," and it is "committed to progressive social change." Thus, critical discourse analysis focuses on social problems and "especially on the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination" (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 96). Several scholars have used critical discourse analysis to examine the reproduction of power relations in news discourse. For example, Van Dijk's approach stresses theories of the interface between "mind, discursive interaction, and society," an approach often labeled "sociocognitive" (Van Dijk, 2009, p. 65). To that end, he advocates analyzing global meanings, topics, or themes, which result in analyses of semantic macrostructures, or macropropositions. An early example of this approach can be seen in Van Dijk (1988), where, using the linguistic concepts of schema and semantic proposition, the author showed how newspaper coverage of the Palestinians was almost formulaic in its presentation of repetitive schemas. Van Dijk's work is characterized by extensive use of linguistic terms, linguistic theory, and linguistic maps of the sociocognitive world constructed by discourse.

In a somewhat different methodological approach, Wodak et al. (1999) constructed a list of *topoi* (topical themes) that could be used to categorize the rise of discriminatory discourse in newspaper and television coverage of the 1992–1993 Austrian political campaign. Reisigi and Wodak adopt a "discourse-historical approach" in which the discourse analyst analyzes the major themes of different types of discourse (2009, p. 91). In the underpinnings of Reisigi and Wodak's approach, theories of "intertextuality" and "interdiscursivity" play major roles as empirical data that show how texts in one domain are related to empirical data about texts in another domain (2009, p. 90). Reisigi and Wodak perform three main types of analysis in their approach: identification of the major themes, investigation of the discursive strategies used, and examination of the types of linguistic realizations in the discourse (2009, p. 93).

In yet another approach to critical discourse analysis, Fairclough created a "dialectical-relational approach" to analyze power relations as shown through discourse (2009, p. 162). The dialectical-relational approach addresses the general question of the "particular significance of semiosis, and of dialectical relations between semiosis and other social elements" (p. 166). Fairclough's methodology has four stages: (1) the analyst identifies a social wrong in its semiotic aspect, (2) the analyst "identifies obstacles to addressing the social wrong," (3) the analyst considers whether the social wrong is necessary to the social

order, and (4) the analyst "identifies ways past the obstacles" (p. 167). Fairclough's (2001) analysis of political publications on welfare reform in Great Britain is an example of his approach.

Although critical discourse analysts occasionally use quantitative methodologies, most of the discourse analyses performed by Van Dijk, Wodak, and Fairclough are qualitative in nature and in this respect differ considerably from the approach used by corpus linguistics. Corpus linguistics is a methodology that uses computer support to analyze large volumes of textual data. A corpus, in this case, refers to a "collection of *machine-readable authentic* texts. . . which are *sampled* to be *representative* of a particular language or language variety" (McEnery et al., 2006, p. 5, original italics). Recent critical discourse analysis work using corpus linguistics includes Baker (2006), Cotterill (2001), Caldas-Coulthard and Moon (2010), Fairclough (2000), Hamilton (2007), Mautner (2007), and Orpin (2005). Mautner (2009, p. 123) states that corpus linguistics contributes to critical discourse analysis in three ways: The analyst can work with much larger data sets; researcher bias can be reduced because of the broader empirical base; and both quantitative and qualitative perspectives can be used on textual data.

Caldas-Coulthard and Moon (2010) analyzed the nature of labeling genders in two types of newspapers in Britain and concluded that the media categorize people through specific points of view not always available to the reader. Fairclough (2000) analyzed keywords in the discourse of New Labour to determine whether changes in keywords occurred over time. Hamilton (2007) analyzed very large corpora to ascertain whether the meaning of the word *risk* is stable and consistent across a variety of social categories. Mautner (2007) analyzed the discourse of ageism and found that the use of the word *elderly* often occurred along with words indicating disability, and Baker (2006) analyzed words and phrases associated with the use of the word *refugee*. Finally, Cotterill (2001) analyzed the courtroom discourse of the O. J. Simpson trial and concluded that prosecuting attorneys and defending attorneys differed in their use of terms denoting violence.

The research described in this article is informed by theories of critical discourse analysis as articulated by Van Dijk, Wodak, and Fairclough, but has also used corpus linguistics to "contribute to CDA" (Mautner, 2009, p. 122). Some aspects of this study are similar to Van Dijk's coding of semantic propositions, such as the coding of quoted and paraphrased content by different sources. Some aspects of the study look for common themes in the discourse, as in Wodak's analysis; other aspects of the study look at keywords used in quotes by different speakers, as in Fairclough's research; finally, computerized counts of sets of words that denote different thematic categories are used, as in corpus analysis.

The critical discourse elements of this research inform the general research question: How does the discourse used in U.S. newspapers construct certain images and ideas about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for the reader? The theory that discourses construct our versions of reality is central to critical discourse analysis and is in opposition to the positivist notion that language is a neutral medium for transmitting reality. Thus, this analysis shows that patterns in the discourse function to create a distorted view of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Several counts of key words were performed to buttress the identification of patterns in the discourse. In this way, the techniques of corpus linguistics were combined with the discourse analysis to make the conclusions more empirical. The use of corpus linguistics does not lessen the critical quality of the discourse analysis.

The Discourse Sample and Methodology

The discourse sample consists of 50 news articles for each of the years of 2002–2006, selected collectively from six or seven newspapers, depending on the year. For 2002–2003, the six newspapers used were *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Miami Herald*, and the *Boston Globe*. For 2004–2006, the *Miami Herald* was dropped from the sample, and the *Houston Chronicle* and *Philadelphia Inquirer* were added. These changes were made to see if major newspapers from various U.S. states would provide different coverage of the conflict, but no region-based differences in the coverage were found. For each year in the sample, 50 stories were selected from April through July to sample comparable periods of each year. Each sample contained approximately 3 stories per week. Stories were selected at random by date and newspaper so all newspapers had an equal chance of being selected. The selection of 3 stories a week was intended to produce a sample representative of the news coverage of that week. Efforts were further taken to ensure duplicate stories were not used. An anonymous reviewer of this article noted that the April through July sample is particularly representative of Middle East journalism because "hot summer" framing is routine in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as violence tends to increase in the summer months.

The sets of news stories from each year were analyzed on six dimensions: patterns of direct quoting, patterns of indirect quoting, the use of words denoting violence, the presence of words and phrases indicating negative emotions, the use of words denoting conflict, and the use of positive words. Using the ATLAS.ti program, the stories were coded according to the categories of words and phrases being analyzed. Because of ambiguities in the lexicon, parts of the coding had to be reviewed and edited by hand. This coding led to counts of individual term occurrences from each of the categories. Statistical tests were performed on the frequency counts to determine significance. Finally, efforts were made not only to describe characteristics of the discourse, but to explain why certain discourse structures appeared in the text in terms of their variety and frequency.

Patterns of Direct and Indirect Quoting

Direct and indirect quotes and their sources were counted. Direct quotes are the exact words of a speaker and are enclosed in quotation marks. Indirect quotes are paraphrases of a speaker's words. Both direct and indirect quotes have various functions, but are often used to persuade or to lead the reader to identify with the speaker. The ATLAS.ti software could not be programmed to accurately count quotes, so this part of the coding was done by hand.

Direct Quotes

Table 1 presents the numbers and percentages of the sources of direct quotes for each of the five years of the study.

Table 1. Sources of Direct Quotes 2002–2006.

	2002		2003		2004		2005		2006		Total	
Source	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Israeli Authorities	124	17.2	116	20.9	237	24.6	233	31.2	170	16.7	880	22
Israeli Civilians	204	28.3	85	15.3	219	22.7	178	23.8	169	16.6	855	21.3
Palestinian Authorities	90	12.5	172	31.0	185	19.2	155	20.7	206	20.2	808	20.2
Palestinian Civilians	251	34.9	124	22.4	275	28.5	111	14.8	439	43	1,200	30
U.S. & International Authorities	27	3.7	57	10.3	43	4.4	46	6.2	37	3.6	210	5.2
U.S. & International Civilians	24	3.3	0	0	5	0.5	25	3.3	0	0	54	1.3
Total	720	100	554	100	964	100	748	100	1,021	100	4,007	100

As Table 1 shows, four categories of directly quoted speakers dominate the coverage: Israeli authorities, Israeli civilians, Palestinian authorities, and Palestinian civilians. Government officials, army officers, and policemen make up the Israeli and Palestinian authorities. Other experts such as doctors, professors, and social workers were coded as civilians. Therefore, Israeli and Palestinian civilians are all those individuals not serving in the government, army, or police. In this article, *Palestine* means Gaza and the West Bank. However, the term *Palestinian* refers to members of that specific ethnic group, wherever they may live. Speakers from the United States or other countries play a small role in the sample, the highest percentage being 10.3% for U.S. and international authorities in 2003. Over the five years studied, civilians were directly quoted more often than government authorities, 51.3% of quotes were from civilians and 42.2% from authorities, but differences appeared in the percentages of civilian and government quotes from year to year. Palestinian and Israeli civilians together accounted for the majority of direct quotes in 2002, 2004, and 2006. Israeli civilians accounted for only 15.3% of direct quotes in 2003, and Palestinian civilians accounted for only 14.8% of direct quotes in 2005. These low percentages explain why civilian quotes overall played a smaller role than quotes by government authorities in the coverage of 2003 and 2005.

In 2002, the number of suicide bombings reached a peak. Also in that year, the percentage of direct quotes for Israeli civilians reached 28.3%, the highest percentage for Israeli civilians in the sample, and the percentage for Palestinian civilians reached 34.9%, the second highest for Palestinian civilians cited. The percentage of direct quotes from Israeli civilians was low every year after 2002, except for 2005. Many stories in the sample concerned Palestinians dying as a result of Israeli army incursions, and several were about Palestinian civilian protests. News writers often interviewed the families of injured or

slain Palestinians or interviewed Palestinian protesters. On the other hand, Israeli civilians were rarely interviewed in stories about Israeli army actions. Percentages for the years 2003 (22.4%) and 2004 (28.5%) for Palestinian civilians are lower than for 2002, but are still higher than the percentages for Israeli civilians (15.3% and 22.7%, respectively). The high percentage in 2006 for Palestinian civilians (43%) followed this pattern, as U.S. news reporters interviewed a great many Palestinians who suffered hardships as a result of Israeli army actions, but, as in earlier years, they did not interview Israeli civilians (16.6%). In contrast, many stories covered Israeli settler protests and demonstrations in 2005, as the Gaza settlements were evacuated in this year, so the percentage of Israeli civilians directly quoted (23.8%) is high. Palestinian civilians were not cited much in stories about Israeli settlers, so in 2005, Palestinian civilians had their lowest percentage (14.8%). Chi-square tests performed on the counts for Israeli and Palestinian civilians were statistically significant at p = .001 (χ^2=98.78).

In 2002, the many suicide bombings accounted for almost half the stories in the sample. The 2003 sample saw far fewer suicide bombings, and no suicide bombings were reported in the samples for 2004 and 2005, and only one was reported in 2006. Coverage of suicide bombings frequently focused on the suicide bomber, with interviews of family and friends and sometimes lengthy narratives about that person's life. The families and friends of Israeli victims of the bombings were infrequently interviewed and were usually quoted only in a statement or two about their reactions to the violence. Therefore, throughout most of this coverage, Palestinian civilians were quoted more frequently than Israeli civilians. This picture changed in 2005, when Israeli settlers mounted a series of demonstrations against Prime Minister Sharon's decision to evacuate Gaza. In that year, many stories were about Israeli settlers and fewer stories were about Palestinian civilians.

Overall, Palestinian civilians were quoted far more often than Israeli civilians, with Palestinian civilians contributing 30.0%, as compared with 21.3% for Israelis, of the direct quotes. The differences are even more noticeable in the counts of indirect quotes (discussed below) for both groups.

Israeli and Palestinian authorities were directly quoted roughly equally over the five years: 22.0% for Israeli Authorities and 20.2% for Palestinian Authorities. Israeli authorities were quoted much more often in 2005 because reporters sought their responses to the Israeli settler protests. Conversely, Palestinian authorities were rarely quoted in the numerous stories about Israeli settler demonstrations. Similarly, Palestinian authorities were directly quoted much more often in 2003 than in any other year because in 2003, Mahmoud Abbas became the first Prime Minister for the Palestinian Authority other than Yasser Arafat. The United States viewed Prime Minister Abbas' new status as a major change in diplomatic relations, and the press followed suit, conducting interviews with many members of the Palestinian Authority. Chi-square tests performed on the counts for Israeli and Palestinian authorities were statistically significant at p = .001 (χ^2=38.83).

Indirect Quotes

Table 2 presents the numbers and percentages of the sources of indirect quotes for each of the five years of the study.

Table 2. Sources of Indirect Quotes 2002–2006.

Source	2002		2003		2004		2005		2006		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Israeli Authorities	213	36.5	268	41.9	253	35.9	223	44.0	218	26.7	1175	36.2
Israeli Civilians	49	8.4	45	7	82	11.7	89	17.6	78	17.6	343	10.5
Palestinian Authorities	65	11.1	203	31.8	185	26.3	122	24.1	184	9.6	759	23.4
Palestinian Civilians	217	37.2	90	15.4	143	20.3	54	10.6	237	22.6	741	22.8
U.S. & International Authorities	31	5.2	33	5.2	41	5.8	17	3.3	98	12.0	220	6.8
U.S. & International Civilians	9	1.5	0	0	0	0	2	0.4	0	0	11	0.3
Total	584	100	639	100	704	100	507	100	815	100	3,249	100

In total over all five years of the sample, news writers indirectly quoted government authorities 59.6% of the time and civilians 33.3% of the time. Thus, government authorities were indirectly quoted almost twice as often as civilians. What accounts for these statistics? Indirect quotes tend to be used to informally describe an event, person, or place; to provide background information such as the causes of an event; and to predict the consequences of an action or event. Generally speaking, indirect quotes imply expertise or knowledge on the part of the speaker. Therefore, news writers select government authorities more often than civilians for indirect quotes.

Palestinian civilians were more often indirectly quoted than Israeli civilians in every year except 2005; in 2002, Palestinian civilians were cited even more often than Palestinian authorities. Palestinian civilians had 22.8% of the total indirect quotes, whereas Israeli civilians had only 10.5%, the smallest percentage of the four major groups. One explanation for the higher percentages for Palestinian civilians considers the topics of the articles. If the topic of an article is a suicide bombing or an Israeli incursion into a Palestinian village, then residents of the village or relatives of the bomber have expertise on the topic. Also, Palestinian civilians are often needed to describe events in detail when the Israeli army gives only cursory overviews. Chi-square tests performed on the counts for Israeli and Palestinian civilians were very statistically significant, at $p = .001$ ($x^2=92.85$).

Israeli authorities were indirectly quoted far more often than Palestinian authorities for every year of the sample. Overall, Israeli authorities had 36.2% of the indirect quotes, in contrast with 23.4% for Palestinian authorities. This statistic points to the U.S. press's heavy reliance on the Israeli government, army, and police for information about events and persons in the conflict. Heavy reliance on the Israeli government also points to the press's tendency to interview the primary actors in an event. If a reporter is

writing an article about an Israeli army occupation of a Gaza village, for example, the reporter would ask an Israeli army commander to describe the military objectives, number of troops, and other details of the operation. In 2006, Palestinian authorities were quoted at a rate similar to that of Israeli authorities because both groups had become primary actors in the feud between Hamas and Fatah. Chi-square tests performed on the counts for Israeli and Palestinian authorities were statistically significant, at $p = .001$ ($\chi^2=43.28$).

A Violent, Bloody, and Warlike Discourse

One of the most striking qualities of the coverage of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict is the violent nature of the description of events. This study distinguished three categories of violence: casualties, weapons, and violent action. These three categories are described here with illustrations from the sample.

Casualties

Casualties include all descriptions of injuries to persons, including wounding, mutilation, and death. Examples of descriptions of casualties (with the words coded by the ATLAS.ti program underlined) are:

> Muhammed <u>killed</u> five students at a military school for religious Jews and <u>wounded</u> 23 other settlers at Gush Katif before he was <u>gunned</u> down (Williams, 2002).

> Gunmen displayed for reporters what appeared to be brain matter and bits of <u>flesh</u> on a <u>blood</u>-soaked sheet of brown paper (Bennet, 2004).

The list of terms programmed into ATLAS.ti to search for descriptions of casualties is given here:

die*| death*| dead*| body| bodies| wound*| injur*| maim*| casualt*| unconscious| pain*| kidnap*| coma| ambulance*| funeral*| murder*| hurt*| execut*| suicid*| kill| kills| killing| killed| victim*| flesh| blood*| carnage| assassin*| bandag*| mutilat*| slain| slay*| bruis*| grisly| homicid*| gunn*|

In these pattern lists, the individual terms are separated by a vertical line "|," and the asterisks are wildcard characters that match arbitrary strings of characters. The purpose of the asterisks is simply to make the pattern lists more compact so that, for example, *die** matches the words *die*, *dies*, and *died*. This use of the asterick wildcard character also means that terms in the pattern lists sometimes appear to be misspelled, as in *injur**, which matches the words *injured, injures, injuring, injury* and *injuries*. It should also be noted that the search process is not case-sensitive.

Weapons

This category includes all references to weapons, such as machine guns and missiles, and to the fighters themselves. However, this category does not include terms describing the use of weapons or the

results of their use. Examples from the sample containing words denoting weapons or fighters (with words coded by ATLAS.ti underlined) are:

They heard the explosions of <u>tank</u> <u>cannons</u> and heavy-caliber <u>machine-gun</u> fire, announcing the Israelis' arrival (Wilkinson & Miller, 2002).

The boys under his supervision are trained to shoot, throw <u>grenades</u>, assemble <u>rifles</u>, and plant <u>explosives</u> (Radin, 2004).

The list of words programmed into ATLAS.ti to search for descriptions of weapons and fighters is given here:

bomb*| soldier*| sniper*| rocket*| troop*| arms| armed| shrapnel| explosive*| projectile*| shell*| gunmen| gunman| grenade*| weapon*| gunship*| bullet*| tank*| stone*| gun*| armor*| mortar*| molotov| detonator*| launcher*| aircraft| barbed wire| missile*| rifle*| brigade*| cannon*| machine-gun*| gas*| army| militant*| brigade| military| fighter*| terrorist*|

Violent Actions

This category includes all references to violence that do not describe injury to persons or weapons. This category includes terms denoting violent actions such as *explode* and references to destruction of property, such as *razing* houses and *demolishing* buildings. Examples from the sample that include words denoting violent actions (with words coded by the ATLAS.ti program underlined) are:

. . . more than 375 acres of olive and citrus groves and crops in Beit Hanoun were <u>flattened</u> by Israeli troops, 31 houses were <u>razed</u>, four bridges were <u>collapsed</u>, and eight irrigation wells were <u>destroyed</u> (Anderson, 2003).

The <u>attacks</u> were the first by the groups since the peace summit in Aqaba, Jordan, last Wednesday at which Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas pledged to President Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to end all <u>violence</u> against Israelis. (Frankel, 2003).

The list of the words programmed into the ATLAS.ti program to search for descriptions of violence is given here:

lawless*| trigger*| destroy*| destruct*| captur*| fight| fights| flatten*| attack*| fighting| fought| surround*| sabotag*| steal*| smuggl*| crash*| damage*| fire*| burn*| shot*| chao*| surrend*| crim*| evacuat*| surrender*| upheaval*| violen*| force*| raid*| scorch*| detonating| deploy*| redeploy*| clash*| alert| blast*| launched| launching| skirmish*| cordon*| demolition| violat*| uprising| intifada| disaster| ravage*| flame*| explod*| alarm*| rubble| teardown| disabl*| combat| assault*| strike*| struck| warfare| raze*| expulsion*| foe| collapse*| blaze| blown| blew| gunfire|

battle*| ambush*| invasion*| invad*| shoot*| offensive| hostilities| strike| gunfight*|
war| wars| retaliat*| storm*| batter*| siege| incursion*| demolish*| airstrike*|

Analysis of Expressions of Violence

Counts of the words used in these three categories over the five years of the study reveal both the strikingly violent nature of the writing about the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and some important differences in the discourse of violence from year to year. Table 3 shows the counts for the categories of violent discourse in the sample:

Table 3. Counts of Terms Denoting Violence and Bloodshed 2002–2006.

Category	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Violence	1,061	1,054	1,002	839	1,013
Casualties	811	501	524	322	508
Weapons	1,261	1,131	1,041	847	1,124
Total	3,133	2,686	2,567	2,008	2,645

As Table 3 shows, the year 2002 had by far the highest number of terms denoting violence and bloodshed, at 3,133. The biggest decrease over the next years was in the casualty category, although the greatest decline in all categories appeared in 2005. The use of terms of violence dramatically increased again in 2006 with the launching of Qassam rockets from Lebanon and Gaza and the Israeli army's action against Gaza to recover Israeli hostages. Looking over the main stories for the sample for each year, an extremely large number of suicide bombings characterized 2002, with almost half the stories in the sample being about these events. The number of stories in the 2003 sample that reported suicide bombings was greatly reduced, while in 2004 and 2005, no suicide bombings were reported, and in 2006, only one suicide bombing was reported. Nevertheless, the violence category remained fairly stable over the first 3 years of the sample, dropped in 2005, and then increased in 2006 to the same level as in 2003. Chi-square tests on the yearly totals for each of the categories of violence were all statistically significant, at $p = .001$. The chi-square value for violence was 32.74; for casualties, extremely significant at 231.68; and for weapons, 86.14.

What accounts for the very violent nature of the discourse used to cover the conflict? Two types of stories that dominated the coverage are stories about actions by the Israeli army, such as shelling Palestinian militant hideouts and killing militants and civilians, occupying Palestinian towns and villages, and conducting raids and police actions; and stories about the actions of Palestinian militants, such as launching rockets at Israeli settlements, engaging in gun battles with the Israeli army, and shooting down Israeli settlers. These two types of stories received heavy coverage in 2003, 2004, and 2006. In 2005, the Israeli army was primarily engaged in preparing for the Gaza pullout and handling settlers' nonviolent protests. There were relatively few stories about Israeli army actions and Palestinian militancy in 2005.

Nevertheless, despite that far fewer deaths and injuries were reported, the violent nature of the news discourse was still apparent in 2005.

Expressions of Negative Emotion: Sorrow, Fear, Anger, and Revenge

The expression of negative emotions characterized material from many individuals in the sample. The study distinguished four categories of negative emotions that accounted for most of this discourse: sorrow, fear, anger, and hate. A discussion of each category of negative emotion and presentation of examples from the sample that illustrate the coding follow.

Sorrow

Israeli and Palestinian civilians frequently express sorrowful emotions, such as grief, sadness, mourning, hopelessness, or despair, in the sample stories. Khalil Takafka expresses his grief over losing his daughter, a suicide bomber, by saying, "Sometimes she looked so <u>sad</u>, it made me want to <u>cry</u>," (Lamb, 2002). A news writer describes the sorrow of Palestinian women in this fashion:

> A small group of veiled women fled on foot, the <u>tears</u> of one streaming from beneath the
> black covering that swathed most of her face. "How can we continue like this?" she said,
> her breath ragged with <u>sobs</u> (King, 2006, May 23).

A final example of sorrow is in a headline for a story about Israeli settlers leaving their settlement: "Some West Bank Settlers Leave Quietly, if <u>Tearfully</u>" (Myre, 2005).

The list of words constructed to code sorrow is given here:

> anguish*| crie*| cry*| despair*| hopeless*| mourn*| piti*| pity| regret*| resign*| sad|
> sadden*| sadly| sadness| sorrow*| tear*| wail*| redeyed| condolence*| weep*| suffer*|
> funeral*| tragi*| sniffl*| grief| guilt*| funeral| tragic| glum| gloom*| futil*| ob*| grave|
> weep*| wept| melanchol*| distraught| emotional| compassion| sympath*| humbl*|
> fatigu*| weary| tired*| faint*| weak*| remorse*| ache| aching| ached|

Fear

Fear was often expressed by both Israelis and Palestinians, most frequently when recounting violent events that they had witnessed. Shlomi Colderon, an Israeli truck driver, describes a bus bombing in these words:

> There was silence for a minute, everyone was in <u>shock</u>, then people started <u>screaming</u>,
> "Help me, help me!" I couldn't pull people out of the bus. The sights near my feet were
> so <u>horrific</u>, I had to stop and calm down. (Kifner & Greenberg, 2002)

Eid, a Palestinian dentist, describes his impressions when the Israeli army shelled his town as follows:

People lay on the ground like slaughtered sheep. I saw a little girl, no more than 5, who was terribly wounded. My little nephew vomited in <u>fear</u> at the sight (King, 2003).

As a last example, the Abu Libdeh family recounts surviving an Israeli raid on their neighborhood:

Wednesday night brought a constant chorus of gunfire, family members recalled, and they clung together, weeping, <u>terrified</u>, and wide awake (Shulman, 2004).

The list of words constructed to code fear is:

afraid| anxiet*| dread*| fear*| horr*| panic*| doubt*| concern*| confus*| frighten*| worr*| tense*| terror| terrified| terrify*| scream*| shock| suspect*| suspicion*| scream*| bewilder*| hide*| hiding| scare*| scaring| scary| turmoil| hysteria| *danger*| trap*| gruesome| uncertain*| unnerve*| scurry*| escape| dubious| dismay| tension|

Anger

Words denoting anger are often used to describe the behavior of Israelis and Palestinians. In this example, the news writer characterizes the behavior of Israeli settlers attending the funeral of an Israeli woman and five children who were killed by Palestinian militants.

The mourners, maybe 3,000 of them, were <u>angry</u>. (Fisher, 2002)

The anger and frustration felt by Palestinian youth is described by a news writer in this manner:

From the streets of a refugee camp coated with the thick dust of poverty and seething with the <u>frustration</u> of an earlier Palestinian uprising, the boys were chosen for the theater by a brassy, outspoken Israeli Jew, Arna Mer Khamis. (Moore, 2004, July 19)

The list of terms constructed to denote anger is:

anger*| angry| ire| rage*| wrath*| defian*| striden*| defie*| defy| volatile| vehemen*| frustrat*|

Hate and Revenge

The hate category includes terms denoting emotions of revenge, contempt, and murderous intention. As an example, Miriam Farahat, a Palestinian activist, describes her son's hatred by saying, "He was filled with <u>hate</u> for the Jews" (Williams, 2002). Settlers grieving for a settler woman and her children killed by Palestinian activists express their desire for revenge in this example:

"We want revenge!" one settler from a neighboring community bellowed in the midst of funeral speeches. "You're listening to the rabbi and we should be taking revenge" (Moore, 2002).

The list of words used to code hatred and revenge is:

despis*| detest*| hate*| loath*| spite*| anathema| enrag*| fume*| brutal*| hatred| revil*| animosit*| curs*| bitter*| inhuman| cruel*| evil*| ugl*| revenge| aveng*| venge*|

Analysis of Expressions of Negative Emotions

The counts for the categories of expressions of negative emotions appear in Table 4.

Table 4. Counts of Terms of Negative Emotions 2002–2006.

Category	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Sorrow	132	85	120	44	88
Fear	178	101	132	86	111
Anger	43	36	32	29	24
Hate	35	22	39	21	16
Total	388	244	323	180	239

As shown in Table 4, the years 2002 and 2004 had the largest number of words denoting negative emotions. As described earlier, these 2 years also saw relatively high percentages of direct and indirect quotes from civilians. Civilians account for the great majority of expressions of negative emotion in news accounts. When government authorities are quoted, their discourse is very informational or factual, often explaining procedures, describing principles, or predicting the future. Civilians, on the other hand, are usually more expressive, and the emotions they expressed heighten the drama of the news stories. Additionally, the emotions expressed by civilians help the reader to identify with the experiences of the Palestinian and Israeli people.

The year 2005 saw particularly dramatic drops in the categories sorrow and fear for two reasons: fewer stories reported death and injury, and Palestinian civilians, the source of much of the emotional discourse, were cited far less often than in the other years. The first year in which Palestinian civilians were cited less than both Israeli civilians and Palestinian authorities is 2005, by far the least emotional year in the sample. In 2006, Palestinian civilians were cited far more often, and as Table 4 shows, the number of emotional expressions also increased. The chi-square values for sorrow ($\chi^2 = 50.50$) and fear ($\chi^2 = 41.88$) were both statistically significant, at $p = .001$. The chi-square value for anger was not statistically significant, whereas the chi square value for hate ($\chi^2 = 14.63$) was statistically significant, at $p = .01$.

Expressions of Conflict

A list of terms was constructed to characterize discourse that shows conflict, a less bloody form of war. This extensive list of conflict terms also includes verbs of saying such as *accuse*, *threaten*, and *demand* and is given below:

threat*| provoke*| provocat*| side*| accus*| divi*| demand*| volatil*| grudg*| insist*| reject*| dispute*| condemn*| protest*| denounc*| barrier*| defen*| trap*| conflict*| militancy| attack*| oppos*| lie*| occupi*| occupy| reoccupy| object*| demonstrat*| clash*| decepti*| deceiv*| rightwing| reoccupi*| strident| hardliner*| hawk| lying| liar*| slam*| rall*| problem*| tension| betray*| critic*| far-right| ultra-national*| refugee*| radical| impose*| impatient| curfew| aggressi*| resist*| patrol*| occupy*| occupation| roadblock*| guard*| warn*| harrass*| block*| barricad*| bann*| ban| bans| heckl*| scuffl*| skepti*| stressful| checkpoint*| restrict*| detain*| forbid*| fail*| entangle*| confront*| adversar*| resign*| obstacle*| traitor*| snag*| block*| curs*| betray*| barred| incit*| stall*| denounc*| occup*| complain*| impossibl*| stalemat*| refus*| harsh*| assail*|

In the following example, a news writer uses a verb of saying, *accuse*, to describe conflict between Israel and Palestine:

In a news conference on Friday night in Gaza, Mr. Abbas <u>accused</u> Israel "not only of trying to collapse the Hamas government but bring down the Palestinian Authority wholesale" by destroying schools, a power plant, bridges, roads and government buildings. (Erlanger, 2006)

A newswriter described the conflicts within the Abbas government in this manner:

Abbas also has asked lawmakers to <u>impose</u> a law that would allow commanders to serve in the same position for no more than four years, but the proposal has yet to be voted on by the legislature and is <u>opposed</u> by senior security officials (Moore & Anderson, 2005).

The list of words denoting conflict is large and shows the variety of ways conflict has been portrayed. A comparison of the frequency with which conflict discourse appeared in the sample is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Frequency of Use of Terms Denoting Conflict 2002–2006.

2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
842	1024	970	960	731

The counts show that conflict discourse *decreases* when the number of casualties *increases*. Both 2002 and 2006 had a large number of stories reporting deaths and injuries, yet these two years have the lowest number of uses of conflict terms. The most peaceful year, 2005, had 229 more uses than 2006, one of the bloodiest years. Chi-square tests performed on the yearly totals were statistically significant, at $p = .001$, $\chi^2 = 61.47$. What can account for these findings? One possibility is that the U.S. news frames the Israeli–Palestinian conflict as primarily a conflict, not a war, and that this perception influences news writers' selections of descriptive themes and words. I conclude that news discourse at this time about Israel and Palestine is characterized by conflict and that the use of conflict terms tends to increase when there is less actual violence to report.

Expressions of Hope and Other Positive Emotions

The last stage of this research involved the creation of a list of terms that have positive meanings. Terms denoting positivity include *peace*, *hope*, *please*, *freedom*, *empower*, and *accomplishment*. The list of positive words constructed for the research is given here:

empower*| relie*| free*| liberat*| reciproc*| discuss*| truce| pleas*| persuasion| improve*| agree*| peace*| forward| ceasefire| secure*| withdraw*| salvag*| relief| reliev*| calm*| satisf*| conced*| concession*| easy| confiden*| adoring| lull| quiet| disarm*| negotiat*| happy| happi*| glad*| jubilation| trust*| pride| luck*| congratulat*| prais*| normality| protect*| volunteer*| good| boost*| independen*| compromis*| surviv*| recover*| pullout| restor*| pullout*| adore*| breakthrough*| surviv*| recover*| success*| diplomacy| allow*| celebrat*| heal*| sanctuar*| innocen*| meeting*| pledge*| backing| progress| safe| safety| reform*| offer*| willing*| endorse*| ceasefire| faith| dialogue| initiative| optimis*| proud*| reclaim*| summit| accomplish*| voluntary| resolve*| resolution| persuade*| success*| succeed*| achievement*| good| hope| hopes| hoped| hoping| hopeful*| friend*| kiss*| hug|hugg*| hugs| lov*| smil*| embrac*| comfort*| share*| sharing|

An example from the sample that describes a positive note in military action is the following headline:

Residents of Gaza reclaim streets; Israeli pullout continues (Anderson, July 3, 2003).

Another example described by the Nonprofit Association for Volunteering and Assisting the Hurt tells how Israeli survivors are recovering with the help of NAVAH:

It was survivors such as Moshe whom NAVAH organizers recruited to join the Passover celebration in hopes of helping them re-engage their lives (Moore, April 9, 2004).

Table 6. Counts of Positive Terms 2002–2006.

2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
445	1026	675	672	468

As shown in Table 6, positive discourse increased dramatically after 2002. Although it could seem that the number of positive terms would continue to increase into 2004 and 2005 as reports of violence and death substantially decreased, but instead the use of positive terms decreased after 2003, remaining about the same in 2004 and 2005. The use of positive terms then decreases substantially in 2006, after Hamas beat Fatah in the elections and plunged Palestinian society and the economy into chaos. Chi-square tests performed on the yearly totals were very statistically significant, at $p = .001$, $\chi^2 = 330.76$. Counterintuitively, the most peaceful years, 2004 and 2005, are not the most positive in terms of description.

Conclusions

U.S. news coverage of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is characterized by expressions of violence, conflict, and negative emotion. There is relatively little positivity in the many descriptions of persons and events in the coverage. Based on this five-year sample, I have reached seven specific conclusions:

(1)   News writers cite Palestinian and Israeli civilians for different reasons than they cite Palestinian and Israeli authorities. Palestinian and Israeli civilians are rarely quoted when the news writer seeks information, explanation, or analysis. For these, government authorities in Palestine and Israel are quoted most often.

(2)   Palestinian civilians are quoted much more often than are Israeli civilians. Thus, Palestinians are quoted in stories about suicide bombings rather than the Israeli victims of the bombings. Palestinian civilians, instead of Israeli civilians, are also directly and indirectly quoted about Israeli army actions. It is apparent that U.S. news writers found the Palestinian civilian experience more newsworthy throughout most of the five years of the sample.

(3)   There is a difference in the way that news writers quote Israeli authorities and Palestinian authorities. Although government authorities in Palestine and Israel are directly quoted a similar amount, the Israeli government is indirectly quoted far more often than the Palestinian Authority, indicating a heavy reliance on the Israeli government by the U.S. press for information about events and persons.

(4)   Counts of terms denoting violence indicate that U.S. news discourse about the conflict is a violent, bloody, and warlike discourse. The use of violent discourse steadily decreased from 2002 to 2005 in all categories. This decrease reflects the fact that each year brought fewer stories about suicide bombings, and that Israeli army action and Palestinian militancy decreased in news reports as the Gaza evacuation drew nearer. Nevertheless, the use of terms denoting violent action did not decrease as much as would be expected, leading to the conclusion that the news coverage has become a discourse of violence regardless of the number of stories reporting actual casualties or injuries. Finally, the violence index increased in 2006 back to 2003 levels.

(5)   News coverage was also characterized by the expression of negative emotions, such as sorrow, fear, anger, and hate. The expression of negative emotion is a prominent feature of civilian discourse cited by news writers. In years when government authorities are cited much more than civilians, the expression of negative emotions is greatly reduced. Palestinian civilians are the most frequent source of negative emotions.

(6)   In a similar way that the discourse of violence characterizes the language of news coverage, news writers have constructed a discourse of conflict, that is, nonviolent strife, and news events and persons are described with a focus on conflict.

(7)   It was expected that positive discourse, reflecting peace, cooperation, and achievement, would increase during the years of cease-fires and the evacuation of Gaza. Although there was a dramatic increase in the use of positive terms from 2002 to 2003, the use of positive terms declined thereafter. This result appears to be counterintuitive and requires further research to explain it.

It is hoped that more research on news discourse will be done that combines the benefits of both critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics, as was done in this study. In this approach, patterns in news discourse are analyzed using critical discourse analysis methods and are further empiricized by using computer counts on large corpora of relevant discourse. A wide variety of discourse patterns—linguistic, semantic, and syntactic—can be empiricized in this fashion and should attract the attention of those whose theories tend to be critical but who require empiricism in their methodology.

A limitation in the present study is that it stops the analysis in 2006, so some of the conclusions may no longer be true of the present state of U.S. journalism about the Middle East. These results should be updated by future studies. Finally, I hope that future research on similar types of international news stories will benefit from the use of the categories developed for this research. These categories are general and should be productive for the analysis of news discourse on other regions of conflict.

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