Dissecting the Initial One-Week Narratives of Al Jazeera and BBC Media on Covering Israel-Palestine Tension After 7 October 2023

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Abstract

Israel's military aggression in the Gaza Strip following Hamas's surprise attack on October 7th, 2023, continued to escalate until the end of the year, which became one of the deadliest military operations in the last three decades, with a total death toll of more than 10 thousand people. The coverage of the escalated tensions in Israel-Palestine has also become a hot issue to cover by various international media outlets. This article delved into the news narrative of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Al Jazeera, examining their overall agenda-setting, framing of events, and, specifically, language selection. The choice of BBC and Al Jazeera as the subjects of this research is to compare the representation of Western and non-Western media. Through the utilization of comparative methods and text analysis facilitated by Voyant tools, this study revealed that background differences between the observed media impact the news content disparities for international audiences in accordance with each interest.

INTRODUCTION

At dawn on October 7th, 2023, the Palestinian military faction Hamas launched a surprise attack on Israeli cities up to a radius of twenty-four kilometers around the Gaza Strip, coinciding with the Jewish holiday, Simchat Torah. The attack was the first surprise attack against Israel in fifty years, dating back to the last Egyptian-Syrian attack that sparked the Yom Kippur War in 1973 (CRS, 2023; Federman & Adwan, 2023). Mohammed Deif, Head of the Qassam Brigades — one of Hamas's military wings — later proclaimed that the initial strike aimed at enemy positions, airports, and military strongholds and involved over 5,000 missiles and shells. However, this proclamation was later dismissed by Israeli officials, who stated that only half of them, or around 2,500 missiles, were fired by Hamas that day (Al Jazeera, 2023; Foray, 2023). Nevertheless, that attack resulted in at least 250 Israel civilians killed and more abducted at the Supernova Festival location, one of the

first main targets of the Hamas attack (Al Jazeera, 2023; Hurst & Karp, 2023; Seddon et al., 2023)

In response to this attack, Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, declared war, which he called "Operation Iron Swords" against Hamas and the Islamic Jihadists in the Gaza Strip (Matthews, 2023). In less than a day after the war declaration, at least 232 civilians, especially women and children in Palestine, were killed by Israeli air strikes. Moreover, food, fuel, electricity, and medicine supplies have been cut off from entering Gaza (Debre, 2023; Al Jazeera, 2023). Then, in less than a week from Saturday, October 7th to Thursday, October 12th, Israel dropped 6,000 bombs on densely populated areas. This figure matches the number of air strikes carried out by Israel against Gaza throughout 2014, a period that lasted for 50 days (Pettersson & Matthews, 2023). By the end of October, Israeli military retaliatory aggression had resulted in the deaths of 8,309 Palestinians, including children, as reported by Gaza's Minister of Health, Medhat Abbas (Kessler, 2023).

The latent feud that occurred in the region can be traced back to at least a century ago, dating back to the mass migration of Holocaust survivors from Europe to Palestinian land from 1920 to 1948 (Ofer, 1992; Ofer, 1996; Reich & Chen, 2022). However, the rapid escalation of military aggression in the Gaza Strip after October 7th has generated tremendous attention from both mass media and political leaders around the world. In addition, there is significant polarisation voiced by both mass media and world leaders, knowing each nation's historical complexity, national interest, and regional geopolitics consequences in this issue.

Three days after the first Hamas attack, United States President Joe Biden, via a release on the White House's official website, expressed his condolences for the "human tragedy" that occurred in Israel and declared his full support for Israel's responsive action in defending their country and citizens, a stance reinforced by his empathetic statement. Potus also said that if the United States were faced with this situation, the United States would respond swiftly, firmly, and "extraordinarily" to the terrorist attack launched by Hamas (White House, 2023). Meanwhile, at a joint press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, similar sentiments were also expressed in a response by British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. He said that he and the UK felt 'proud' to support Israel's efforts in the protracted war against what he calls 'criminals' — Hamas (Seddon, 2023; Helm, 2023).

These attitudes stand in stark contrast to the positions taken by several non-Western countries, including Algeria and Indonesia, which show strong support for Palestine. In a speech delivered to the UN Security Council on 24 October, the Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Retno Marsudi, urged the UN Security Council (UNSC) to enforce a ceasefire, facilitate access to humanitarian aid, and end the occupation executed by Israel. (Indonesia MOFA, 2023). The Algerian delegations to the UNSC showed their stance on this issue by leaving the meeting room during the speech delivered by the Israeli representative at the UN Security Council (Hussein, 2023). Nevertheless,

empathetic reactions toward Palestine for Israel's retaliatory aggression also came from one European country, namely Spain, especially from left-wing politicians such as the Minister of Social Rights, Ione Belarra, who actively criticised the Israeli occupation and encouraged the Spanish government to bring Netanyahu to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for war crimes (Keeley, 2023).

These polarised responses from various world leaders do not only occur at the state level. In newsrooms, various international media also display polarisation through the use and framing of narratives, word choices, and agendas that are the focus of reporting on this issue. This activity is what McCombs and Shaw (1972) described as "agenda setting," which explains that before a news or a publication is presented to the general public, there is always a group of people—which consists of an editor, journalist, broadcasters, and others that play a critical role in determining the point of view of the news, reportage, or stories they want the public to see and hear. Through this agenda-setting activity, the mass media plays a significant role in drawing public attention to specific topics and shaping overall perceptions of particular issues by continuously presenting objects that imply what the public should think, know, and feel (Lang & Lang, 1966; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Primarily, issues that involve conflict between two parties almost always generate two-sided points of view or perspectives, resulting in determining the issues and sides that a media agenda will cover as basically a political process (Cobb & Elder, 1972; Lang & Lang, 1981; Dearing & Rogers, 1996). Hence, in determining which agenda will be introduced, the media, stakeholders, or the public audience are the main factors for the media in determining the agenda position on an issue that will be raised.

Similar research found that international media coverage has an agenda-setting effect on public opinion (McNelly & Izcaray, 1986; Salwen & Matera, 1992; Zhang & Meadows, 2012). The power of international mass media to set goals and assumptions can result in a comparison of news credibility. However, recent studies prove that the effects of a media's reporting limitations can still increase public skepticism about media influence on individual or personal actions (Baran & Davis, 2006; Howes & Sallot, 2014).

The international media chosen as samples in this study are the BBC as a representation of Western mass media and Al Jazeera as a representation of non-Western mass media. The BBC is a British public service broadcasting institution established as a quasi-autonomous (partly controlled by the government, but not directly) company established by the Royal Charter in 1927 to provide unbiased public broadcasting services (BBC, n.d.; OGL, n.d.). Despite its quasi-autonomous position and independent funding (to ensure BBC reporting remains free and independent from shareholders and political interests) (BBC, n.d.), in reality, in the coverage of the Palestine-Israel issue, the BBC still receives many complaints from the audience, because it is suspected of still very much following the interests and narratives of the British government (Metro.co, 2023; The Guardian, 2023).

The attempt to frame narratives by the media is explained by Erving Goffman (1974) in his theory as "media framing". This concept revolves around using a strategic framework

designed beforehand to limit ideas, context, and topics in the coverage of an issue so that a media can ultimately frame and influence how its audience interprets an issue. In practice, not only is the BBC suspected of engaging in this activity, but Al Jazeera is also not exempt from this practice. Al Jazeera itself is an independent media network inaugurated by the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, in 1996 with a mission to deliver news free from propaganda yet still providing representation for the Arab perspective to be recognized by the international community (Hashmi, 2012).

Western and non-Western media are known for having their own biases and standards when covering several topics. Iraq war, Arab Spring, and Israel-Palestine are examples to show the public how to contrast their stances towards the issue. According to Wojcieszak (2007), she concludes that every frame put on the news was made and conceptualized by the domestic elites of the media framing process. She adds that the frames are forms of domination, reinforce the actor's position, and maintain the existing political order. Another study by Shahzad (2023) also mentions that Western and non-Western media have their contrast, especially regarding news coverage of Israel-Palestine conflicts (ranging between July 2019 and July 2022). It concludes that 74 per cent of BBC's news is pro-Israel slant and BBC focused on covering the conflict between Israel and Palestine. In contrast to the BBC, Al-Jazeera has 48 per cent of the news detected as pro-Palestine slant and 46 per cent of the news detected as neutral. Al-Jazeera's primary focus on news coverage is responsibilities and the human interest's frame.

There is a particular study that examines Al-Jazeera and BBC in broadcast and media coverage framing, and the author mainly examines the broadcast coverage by using comparative analysis. Al Nahed (2015) researched "Framing Analysis of Al Jazeera and BBC Coverage of the 2011 Libyan Uprising and NATO Intervention" and concluded that both media-framed news aligned with their agendas. National policy, foreign policy, and the interests of their home country are the main drivers that set the media coverage goals. According to Moe (1988), a company's ownership structure can influence an organization's objectives and operations. Meanwhile, Grossman and Hart (Grossman & Hart, 1988 cited from Djankov et al., 2002) said that the ownership of mass media controls the information provided to the audience. Bovitz et al. (2002, cited from Lupia, 2001) proved that single ownership of mass media in a limited competition can control the ideological direction of media coverage. Another example taken from (Karyotakis et al., 2017) examines how BBC and Al-Jazeera covered the news back then in 2011, known as the 'Arab Spring'. Al-Jazeera focused and insisted on covering the news in the Civil Unrest frame, but BBC chose the Public Affairs frame as the main focus of the news coverage.

Therefore, when a program is targeted at a specific demographic group, the news content varies to attract attention according to the target audience's preferences (Hamilton, 2003; Hamilton, 2004; Kaniss, 1991). Media ownership can also affect the amount, depth, and diversity of information available to the public regarding international issues (Baum & Zhukov, 2018). Ownership in media tends to lead to homogeneity in reporting, resulting in audiences being unfamiliar with news that is not their preference (DiMaggio, 2009;

Zaller, 1999; Shinar, 2003; Baum & Zhukov, 2018). Homogeneity in reporting also risks producing less policy-oriented news and less diversity in monitoring activities or conveying aspirations to the authorities (Jenkins, 2004; Hamilton, 2004; Baker, 2007; Baum & Zhukov, 2018).

Reflecting the ownership backgrounds of certain international media outlets, polarization in the narratives presented in reporting on the Palestine-Israel conflict is not difficult to discern. To illustrate this polarization, the research will be focused on examining the news agendas and coverage released by two international media outlets, namely the BBC and Al Jazeera, in the first week following the October 7 Hamas attack in Israel. The choice of two international media as subjects in this research is based on the premise that these two news channels can illustrate two ends of the spectrum of polarization of agendas, viewpoints, and interests in reporting on the issue of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in this case, Western and non-Western media.

Exploring the differences in the use of diction, narrative, and viewpoint in the coverage of the Palestine-Israel conflict in the Gaza Strip in the week after October 7, this research aims to illustrate the evolution of discourse polarity in reporting on the conflict by the BBC and Al Jazeera to seek the position these two media outlets as representing contrasting points on the reporting spectrum regarding this issue. This research collects articles and publication data from both channels between October 7 and October 14, utilizing text analysis methods with Voyant-Tools software, a web-based tool for digital text analysis. The results of the analysis text will then be processed and studied based on the comparative method.

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to understand and compare variables in international mass media reporting through existing available data. Therefore, this study adopts a qualitative research method based on Creswell's (2018) basic guidelines, which describe qualitative methods as similar to quantitative methods. Qualitative methodology is closely associated with data in the form of text and images. In addition, qualitative research also uses sampling, open-ended data, figures, and tables, as well as personal interpretation of new findings. By doing this analysis, the structure and the foundation of the researcher's opinions and perspectives on theories and new findings that result from this analysis are deep enough to be concluded. These are the basis of Creswell's statement that qualitative research is synonymous with "interpretive research." Previously, Newman and Ridenour (1998) also argued that qualitative methods could be used to observe and interpret actual aims to obtain precise answers in the context of ongoing research.

The primary data of this study are 63 articles published by the BBC and 63 articles published by Al Jazeera from October 7-14, 2023. The news is collected by filtering and limiting the search engine (Google) and matching the exact keyword related to the issue. The filters limit the time frame between 7 and 14 October 2023, and the keywords that are used are "Israel", "Gaza", and "Palestine" to match the related news. To do the data mining and processing, using Voyant Tools is one way to detect sentiments in the news. A

previous study (Mahboob et al., 2019) using Voyant Tools to analyse sentiment in RSS News Feed proves it can detect positive, negative, and neutral collocations. All these articles were then examined and compared using a comparative research method. This comparative method results in qualitative outcomes that address several essential issues using text analysis. According to Ragin (2017), there are four primary outcomes of Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), including analyzing connections between events based on conditions and context, exploring explicit and implicit similarities and differences, clarifying theories and evidence presented, and holistically reconstructing events based on the conditions and causes present in the case study.

All articles that were collected were published by BBC and Al Jazeera and processed through Voyant Tools. Voyant Tools is a web-based text reading and examination domain that is made to help digital humanities research in the context of reading and interpretive activities. Through Voyant Tools, the content of articles collected is processed to generate a number of word frequencies, collocations, and word clouds, which are then used by the researcher to understand the pattern and common themes that are used by both media in reporting the Israel-Palestine conflict. However, since Voyant Tools is an automated text analysis tool, it might also detect or generate a number of irrelevant terms, especially with web-based news articles; some of the media's website advertisements might also be included in the word cloud or term frequency calculation. Moreover, in research aimed at analyzing a word's sentiment or semantic connotations, Voyant Tools exhibits limitations in sentiment detection, potentially leading to inaccuracies where words may be misclassified regarding their positive or negative sentiment.

There are two types of data collection techniques in this research, namely primary data collection and secondary data collection. Primary data collection used in the study is data collected directly by the researcher. Primary data collection is aimed at the suitable and needed population in the research. Meanwhile, secondary data collection is the collection of data on a study or work that already exists and has been done previously, published or unpublished (Rabianski, 2003). This study collects secondary data by gathering news articles related to the research focus from BBC and Al-Jazeera portals daily from October 7-14, 2023. The study also includes several photographic visuals as evidence to strengthen the theories and results of the analysis. With various data available, the researchers hope that the analysis and opinions presented in this study can be understood and reliable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In analyzing media coverage related to the Israel-Palestine conflict, much of the existing literature is grounded in media theories such as agenda setting and framing. Agenda setting and framing have become two common techniques in current research on mass media coverage. An example of the application of framing theory can be found in the study by Jungblut and Zakareviciute (2018), which discusses the effects of framing through the use of specific words and images in reporting the Israel-Gaza conflict in 2014. Another study by Doufesh and Briel (2021) examines the use of framing by The Times of

Israel and Al Jazeera in reporting on demonstrations by Palestinian residents at the Gaza border, finding a tendency towards ethnocentrism in their reporting.

As for examples of using agenda-setting theory in previous research on Israel-Palestine, one can be found in an article by Shahzad, Qazi, and Shehzad (2023), which attempts to analyze not only framing but also the presence of agenda-setting in the coverage of the Israel-Palestine issue by Al Jazeera, BBC, CNN, and Russia Today. Another research example is by Maharani (2024), which discusses the role of social media in distributing information related to the conditions in Palestine to the public. In addition to using public dialogue theory, her research employs agenda-setting theory.

The "agenda-setting" theory was first introduced by Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw in 1972. Shaw emphasizes the significant role of individuals responsible for mass media in determining what news or phenomena they want the public to see. Meanwhile, based on further literature written by McCombs et al. (2014), the "agenda-setting" theory illustrates that the media tends to prioritize coverage of an issue they consider more important than others, intending to shape the audience's perspective. It is not just about perspective, as the "agenda-setting" approach in media coverage is also believed to influence public attitudes and affect how the public responds to an issue. In addition to the basic approach of "agenda-setting," McCombs and Shaw also include other forms of the "agenda-setting" theory, such as attribute agenda-setting (the second level of agenda-setting) and network agenda-setting (the third level of agenda-setting).

Next is the "framing" theory, which is no less known than the agenda-setting theory. Bateson (2000), in his literature, describes "framing" as spatial and temporal boundary information presented to a specific group of people. Bateson developed this concept of framing, which was previously developed by sociologist Erving Goffman. According to Goffman (1974), framing theory can be defined as the process of introducing an idea to a group of people to influence the public perspective on an issue or information by emphasizing the public's attention only on certain aspects of the news object. Also, according to Goffman, framing can be used as an instrument to make something more meaningful than its original form. Goffman's view is then contradicted by Entman (1993) in his literature, explaining that framing can be done by taking some aspects of reality and developing them into something more interesting and meaningful to influence the public. Through the framing approach, a framework will be used to limit the ideas, context, and topics of an issue to be covered (Goffman, 1974). This is also the basis for Weaver's (2007) argument that framing is part of the second level in agenda-setting. Agenda-setting shapes the audience's thinking, while framing aims to shape and develop the audience's understanding of an issue.

Dissecting the BBC and Al Jazeera Narratives
Based on the results of collecting Al Jazeera and BBC news articles covering the Israel-Palestine issue from 7 to 13 October 2023. Here are several words or terms detected in Al Jazeera's reporting during the week following the escalation of the Israel-Palestine issue with the highest frequency (see Figure 1). However, Voyant Tools is an automated text

analysis tool, so it is possible that some irrelevant terms may also be detected, similar to a collection of BBC news articles (see Figure 2).

Figure 1. Word cloud displays the words most frequently found in Al Jazeera publications regarding the Israel-Palestine issue from October 7 to 13. Source from Voyant-tools.org

Figure 2. Word cloud displays the words most frequently found in BBC publications from October 7 to 13 regarding the Israel-Palestine issue. Source from Voyant-tools.org

In this case, the words 'al' and 'Jazeera' are ignored, even though they occupy the two highest positions in the image, because they are not relevant to the core of this research. If 'al' and 'Jazeera' are excluded, several other terms also tend to be larger than the rest. If explored further, the Voyant Tools tool can also automatically count the frequency of collocations—or other words that are most frequently associated with these five words-along with sentiment categorization—both negative and positive.

Apart from the five words listed in the Al Jazeera report results table below (see Table 1), another word is crucial to discuss due to its relevance to this research: 'Palestinian'. This word was mentioned 353 times in Al Jazeera reporting. It was identified as closely collocating with words: 'attack' and 'attacks'. However, despite its prominence, the frequency is much lower than other words, such as 'Israel'. The collocation of the word 'Palestinian' with 'attack' or 'attacks' amounts to only 109 occurrences. Additionally, this word collocates with 'killed' 54 times. Moreover, the word 'Palestinian' exhibits unique collocations unlike previous words, such as 'support' 23 times and 'right' 21 times.

Term	Count	Positive Collocates	Count	Negative Collocates	Count
Israel	907	right	46	conflict	309
		support	38	attack/s	364
		protect	27	refusing	168
		solidarity	26	killed	129
		safe	26	crisis	128
Gaza	893	safe	53	conflict	181
		work	24	attack/s	265
		right	18	killed	136
		gallant	16	crisis	83
		support	14	refusing	62
Israeli	550	right	25	killed	129
		safe	19	attack/s	214
		gallant	13	conflict	59
		free	12	assault	34
		ready	11	death	32
Hamas	403	right	17	attack/s	194
		support	13	killed	85

		unequivocally	10	conflict	75
		safe	10	assault	32
		gallant	10	death	27
war	379	right	11	conflict	183
		safe	10	crisis	129
		support	7	refusing	55
		ready	7	attack/s	51
		eager	6	killed	25

Table 1. Calculation of the highest frequency of words and collocations in Al Jazeera publications from 7 - 13 October regarding the Israel-Palestine issue. Source from Voyant-tools.org

Overall, the collocations of words automatically categorized as negative by Voyant Tools in the BBC news are not significantly different from the collocations of the top words in the Al Jazeera news, such as the Israeli collocations, which are dominated by the words 'attack' and 'attacks', followed by 'conflict' and 'killed'. However, in contrast to Al Jazeera, among the top five words that appeared, there were several unfamiliar collocations, namely 'hypocrisy,' 'guilty,' and 'condemns' (see Table 2).

Term	Count	Positive Collocates	Count	Negative Collocates	Count
Israel	975	top	21	attack/s	483
		support	16	killed	188
		right	8	conflict	150
		work	6	hypocrisy	148
		trump	5	guilty	144
Gaza	896	top	103	attack/s	339
		innovation	70	killed	147

		like	65	conflict	133
		peace	38	guilty	64
		sustainable	33	hypocrisy	48
Hamas	574	top	61	attack/s	324
		free	37	killed	140
		peace	34	hypocrisy	56
		sustainable	29	guilty	55
		support	29	died	45
Israeli	503	top	77	killed	140
		peace	71	attack/s	119
		free	65	condemns	109
		innovation	36	reckless	56
		consistent	33	hypocrisy	42
war	365	innovation	118	conflict	127
		like	16	attack	71
		top	12	destruction	29
		support	8	kills/killed	42
		clear	6	hypocrisy	12

Table 2. Calculation of the highest frequency of words and collocations in BBC publications from 7 - 13 October regarding the Israel-Palestine issue. Source from Voyant-tools.org

In addition, although not automatically marked as negative collocations by Voyant Tools, in the collocation of the word 'Israel' in BBC's coverage, the word 'hostages' also appears up to 181 times. Similarly, in the collocation of the word 'Israeli,' the words 'hostage' and

'hostages' become the highest-frequency collocations after the phrase 'killed' and 'attacks.' The use of these words indicates the BBC's effort to focus its reporting on Israeli citizens and individuals of other nationalities who are held hostage by Hamas. The high frequency of collocations such as 'hostage' or 'hostages,' 'taken,' 'detained,' and 'missing' when covering stories from the Israeli perspective suggests an agenda-setting by the BBC, aiming to draw its audience's attention to Israeli citizens and individuals of other nationalities held hostage by Hamas. In line with the majority narrative of Western governments emphasizing the release of hostages, as expressed by UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on November 24, "… to end the terrible ordeal of hostages held by Hamas … We will not stop until all hostages are safely returned" (Sunak, 2023), on his X account, responding to the news released by the BBC about the humanitarian pause in Gaza.

Until October 16, BBC had received more than 1,500 complaints regarding its coverage of the conflict, which was considered biased towards both sides (Davies & Topping, 2023). In response, the BBC stated that in its reporting, it had examined and considered the complexity of the history and dynamics of the region in presenting "the atrocities committed by Hamas and the suffering in Gaza." The term 'terrorist' in its coverage was explained as following the BBC Editorial Guidelines, which require such attribution as mandated by the UK government (BBC, 2023). A report mentioned that an anonymous BBC journalist wrote for Jacobin magazine, stating that pressure from conservative political elites had led to BBC coverage downplaying Israel's actions and the humanitarian impact on the Palestinian population (Jacobin, 2023).

In that publication, it is mentioned that the principle of "presenting facts" held by most BBC journalists — though principled, must be followed with accurate presentation. Through the use of the term 'killed' for victims from the Israeli side and 'died' for casualties from the Palestinian side, along with specific attributions such as the 'Hamas-managed Health Ministry' regarding the report on Palestinian death tolls and the lack of mention of the historical context and the timeframe of Israel's occupation in the coverage, BBC cannot be said to be solely responsible for "presenting facts" as a broadcasting service but has framed its coverage to imply who and what should be supported or condemned in this issue (Harb, 2023; Jacobin, 2023).

In contrast to Al Jazeera, where the high frequency of discussions about Israel and its correlation with destructive verbs gives the impression that Israel is basically the problem in this issue. Although Al Jazeera also reviews the losses faced by the Israeli side, in fact, the frequency is not higher than that of the Palestinians. On the other hand, Al Jazeera, when discussing the views of Palestinians, tends to emphasize points such as support, rights, protection, and freedom.

Thus, in this context, there is indeed an agenda that Al Jazeera wants to instil in the public. By continuously bringing up and collocating Israel with destructive verbs, this can then also shape the public's perspective into this - namely, that Israel is synonymous with violence or crime. This argument is strengthened through research by Aguiar (2009) on Al Jazeera's reporting regarding the Israel-Palestine issue from December 2008 to January

2009. It was found that Al Jazeera had a more humanist approach to the situation occurring in Palestine and even Hamas.

Amid the onslaught of American media using footage of Israeli attacks on Hamas headquarters, which were deemed to be on target, Al Jazeera only used footage of this scene as a form of irony because these Israeli attacks tend not to be on target. They are even known to have claimed the lives of harmless residents. Not only that, Al Jazeera also had a humanist approach even when reporting on the death of the Hamas leader at that time. In contrast to CNN, which reported on this phenomenon without providing detailed information, Al Jazeera frankly stated that it also revealed the wife and children of the Hamas leader.

Al Jazeera's and the BBC's framing can also be reaffirmed with Entman's (1993) framing theory, which briefly explains how the media make certain aspects of reality more interesting. In the case of these two media outlets, Entman's theory can be evidenced by how both media capture and present images to the public. An image can only represent a fraction of a second of the entire reality. Therefore, the images taken by both media outlets must have gone through a selection process. Rather than choosing it randomly, the chosen images must be meaningful enough to support the narratives and, at the same time, boost the salience of the news. The more salient the news is, the higher the probability that readers will perceive and understand the information and, furthermore, memorize it.

Take, for example, the photo used by Al Jazeera in its article dated October 10 (see Figure 5). The photo, showing Palestinians looking at the ruins of their homes after air raids, is attached to an article titled "Dozens killed while fleeing Gaza homes as Israel conducts ground raids". Before the ground raids – which is the main focus of the article – air raids had already devastated Palestine first. Right after, Palestinians started to flee, but many were unfortunately killed on the way during the ground raids. The photo chosen by Al Jazeera for this article may be seen as their effort to show the readers how devastating the condition in Gaza is, making fleeing away reasonable. With the help of the photo, readers may perceive the message more easily. Instead of relying on only words or statistics, the devastation of Palestinians can be felt through the picture. The photo, which only shows one aspect of the event, already increases the article's appeal as it offers a different picture of the tragedy compared to other news outlets. It not only engages readers but may also elicit their sympathy.

The text can be researched in analyzing a news text, and the images or visuals presented can also be used as the research focus. Research on media frames as independent variables examines the influence of framing devices on individual audience frames (Entman, 1993). Entman also argued that applying these visual representations (photos, illustrations, etc.) makes a salient idea easier to understand and remember (Entman, 1991). According to the previous study, the media depicting conflict in the Gulf War focused on America's military power and shaped the audiences' perspective (Griffin & Lee, 1995). In the following study, Griffin also emphasizes that the media representatives

in the US were using repetitive images to overshadow any fuller or more complex range of depiction (Griffin, 2004). It reaffirms that the published visual representation of the mainstream news portal does not provide the actual views that occurred.

Through the 63 articles collected, it can be seen that there is a pattern of visual use in reporting on related issues by Al Jazeera media (see Figure 3-8). On the first day of the incident, when Hamas first launched a sudden attack on Israel, Al Jazeera appeared dominant in using photos showing the chaos in Israel due to the Hamas attack. However, progressively approaching one week after the incident, Al Jazeera seems to be increasingly using photos showing the situation that befell Palestinians. These photos are themed around the sadness and hardships that Palestinians face due to Israeli attacks.

Figure 3-4. Two photos attached by Al Jazeera in a news article related to the Israel-Palestine issue on October 7 2023, show the losses suffered by Israel due to Hamas attacks. Source: AlJazeera.com

Figure 5-6. Two photos attached by Al Jazeera in a news article related to the Israel-Palestine issue on October 10 2023, depict a grim situation in Gaza. Source: AlJazeera.com

Trucks carrying aid are seen near the Rafah border in Gaza where an NGO said they were blocked from entering [Sinai for Human Rights/Handout via Reuters]

People rally to protest against the Israeli air strikes on the Gaza Strip, in Sanaa, Yemen [Khaled Abdullah/Reuters]

Figure 7-8. Two photos attached by Al Jazeera in a news article related to the Israel-Palestine issue on October 13 2023, show the impact of the conflict on Palestine and global solidarity with Palestine. Source: AlJazeera.com

On the other hand, the alignment of BBC's agenda with the UK government to emphasize hostage release—unlike Al Jazeera, which emphasizes the losses on the Palestinian side—is also visualized in the selection of photos or images and videos displayed in its publications. In several news articles, BBC displays blurry photos taken from social media platforms such as Telegram and Twitter (X), which are mentioned in BBC's publication (see Figures 9-10). Among all the images used, specific patterns emerge in the selection of images. The use of images featuring a mother and her children, family pictures, and images of civilians in casual clothing without weapons and belongings (see Figures 9-12 and 14-15) precisely captures a dramatic and sorrowful impression to garner sympathy from the audience that women and children often become the primary victims in warfare and the helplessness of innocent civilians under the control of Hamas forces.

Shiri and her two young children being taken away by Hamas militants

Israelis under the control of Hamas militants in Kibbutz Be'eri

Figure 9-10. BBC attached two photos in a news article related to the hostage-taking process by Hamas on October 8 and 10, 2023—source from BBC.com.

Figure 11-12. The BBC attached two photos of hostages and their families to a news article related to the Hamas hostages on October 10 and 11, 2023. Source from BBC.com.

Figure 13. Photo of a Hamas military member attached by the BBC in a news article regarding Hamas hostages on 11 October 2023. Source from BBC.com

Figure 14-15. Two photos of Israeli families seeking refuge from Hamas attacks in Tel Aviv on news related to Hamas attacks on October 7 2023. Source from BBC.com

| Watch: Video appears to show Palestinian gunmen in Sderot

Figure 16. Photo of an armed group from Palestine in a residential area in the Kibbutz Nir Oz area on news related to the Hamas attack on 7 October 2023. Source from BBC.com

The photo placement and the selection of images by BBC, depicting the helplessness of Israeli civilians and the cruelty of Hamas, include a photo showing an Arab man—assumed to be a Hamas member—with a military attack, aiming his rifle at the camera, guarding the entrance of a tunnel behind him (see Figure 13). This is used to illustrate the presumed location for the hostage-taking of Israeli citizens and the dangers faced by hostages under Hamas control. Additionally, to emphasize the narrative that Hamas is inherently a 'dangerous' and 'chaotic' terrorist militant group—or unpredictable, an image of a militant group from Palestine appearing in the area of Kibbutz Nir Oz, south of Tel Aviv and closer to Gaza. At the same time, civilian populations seek shelter as a Hamas group (see Figure 16) enters their residential area. Thus, based on the visual selection and the words and collocations used in BBC's reporting, it can be concluded that in presenting the news on Israel's military aggression in the Gaza Strip from October 7 to October 13, BBC has an approach that is almost opposite to Al Jazeera, which tends to cover it with a more humane approach.

The Israel-Palestine issue has long captured the world's attention. When the Israel-Palestine issue escalated again after the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, the media, both mass media and social media, were immediately filled with coverage of the issue. All media were competing to cover and present it to the public. Although the press covered and reported on this issue similarly, each media outlet presented the coverage in different styles. In fact, some media outlets have complained about being considered too biased towards one side. Whether these complaints are real or just assumptions must be proven with data. Thus, this research was conducted to determine whether the media has taken sides on this issue and what reasons underlie that decision.

This research has also provided detailed data that can prove the media's bias towards the Israel-Palestine issue. This study chose two media outlets: Al Jazeera and BBC. A total of 126 news articles were collected from both media outlets from October 7, 2023, to October 13, 2023, to gain a deeper understanding of the perspectives these two media outlets took in reporting this issue. The collected data was then processed through Voyant Tools to make the research results more detailed and accurate. Based on

observations of the analysis results by Voyant Tools, the researcher found a significant difference in the reporting of the two media outlets regarding the Israel-Palestine issue.

In Al Jazeera's reporting, it was found that the coverage focused more on Israel, both Israel as a country and Israel from the perspective of its citizens. However, this coverage related to Israel tends to be very tied to destructive actions, one of which is the attacks. On the other hand, in discussing Palestine, Al Jazeera does not seem to be too dominant. In discussing Palestine, Al Jazeera emphasizes the perspective of Palestinian citizens more. In contrast to the coverage of Israel, Al Jazeera appears more humane in discussing events affecting Palestinian citizens. At last, Al Jazeera's pro-Palestinian reporting is influenced by the founder's vision to present media that can provide a different perspective from other major media, especially those from the West.

When compared to the BBC, although it does not generalize Palestinians as criminals or dangerous armed groups, the reporting tends to be structured to depict Hamas as a cruel and dangerous armed group through collocations of words like 'dangerous' and 'messy' that dominate the word 'Hamas' and visualizations of photos of Arab men in full militant uniform with weapons. In contrast to the coverage of Israeli citizens visualized as innocent civilians who become hostages through the use of images that can evoke sympathy from the audience, such as a photo of a hostage smiling with his family. Words or collocations of 'Palestine' and 'Palestinian' are also rarely used, indicating a lack of exposure given to the perspective of the Palestinian side.

CONCLUSION

This research holds significant value for its contributions to understanding media biases and agenda-setting in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict. By examining the news agendas and coverage of the BBC and Al Jazeera, the study provides a clear and comparative analysis of Western and non-Western media narratives. This comparison is crucial as it sheds light on how geopolitical interests and cultural perspectives influence the framing and reporting of international conflicts. The insight into agenda-setting and framing mechanisms used by these influential media outlets is particularly valuable for media scholars and professionals, as it helps in recognizing the inherent biases and influences that shape news reporting.

Moreover, the study makes a notable methodological contribution by utilizing text analysis facilitated by Voyant tools. This approach enhances the accuracy and detail of content analysis, offering a replicable and refined method for future research on media content. The impact of media narratives on public perception is another significant aspect highlighted by this research. By demonstrating the differences in coverage, the study underscores how media can shape public opinion and understanding of the Israel-Palestine conflict. This, in turn, encourages media consumers to develop critical media literacy and be aware of potential biases in the information they consume.

Additionally, the findings have important policy and ethical implications. They can inform policymakers, media regulators, and ethical bodies about the biases in international

media coverage, leading to discussions on media standards and the need for balanced reporting, especially in conflict zones. Overall, this research provides valuable insights that contribute to the academic field, inform public discourse, and guide media practices and policies.

Despite its contributions, the research has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. The study focuses on news articles published within a single week, from October 7 to October 13, 2023. This limited time frame may not capture the full spectrum of media coverage and the evolving narratives over a more extended period. As a result, the findings might not reflect longer-term trends or shifts in reporting styles and agendas. Furthermore, the research examines only two media outlets, the BBC and Al Jazeera. While this choice provides a clear comparison between Western and non-Western media, including a broader range of media sources from different regions and perspectives could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the international media landscape.

Another limitation lies in the scope of the analysis, which primarily focuses on text analysis and language selection. Additionally, despite using digital tools for analysis, the interpretation of results may still carry subjective biases from the researchers. Ensuring inter-coder reliability and triangulating findings with other qualitative methods could mitigate this risk and enhance the robustness of the conclusions.

Lastly, the findings of this research are specific to the BBC and Al Jazeera's coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict. While they offer valuable insights into these particular media outlets, the results may not be generalizable to other media or conflicts without further comparative studies. Extending the research to include various media outlets and different conflict scenarios would provide a more comprehensive and generalizable understanding of international media biases and agenda-setting practices.

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