

Discursive Battles and Ideological Hegemony: A CDA of U.S. Media Headlines on Operation Epic Fury

Samuel¹, Resti Amalia²

^{1,2}Universitas Bangka Belitung, Indonesia

e-mail: Samuel20041117@gmail.com, resti@ubb.ac.id

Received 29 May 2026 | Received in revised form 21 June 2026 | Accepted 08 July 2026

APA Citation:

Samuel, S. & Amalia, R. (2026). Discursive Battles and Ideological Hegemony: A CDA of U.S. Media Headlines on Operation Epic Fury. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 11(2), 2026, 237-255.
doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21462/jeltl.v11i2.2005>

Abstract

This study examines how the White House and CNN construct competing discourses of the Iran war through their headline narratives, and how those discourses reproduce or challenge hegemonic structures. Employing Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis, integrating micro-level transitivity and modality analysis drawn from Halliday's (1994) Systemic Functional Linguistics, meso-level discursive practice, and macro-level social practice, alongside Gramsci's (1971) conceptual framework of hegemony as an analytical instrument within the macro dimension, this study conducts a comparative analysis of twenty purposively selected headlines, ten from the White House and ten from CNN, published between March 1 and April 1, 2026, during Operation Epic Fury. The findings reveal that the White House systematically deploys material process, zero modality, nominalization, and intergenerational intertextuality to naturalize military aggression as moral common sense, while CNN progressively dismantles the conditions of that legitimacy through varied process types, verbal agency granted to Iran, and the domestication of conflict into middle-class economic reality, constituting a Gramscian war of position. Notably, this counter-hegemonic resistance is found to be driven not purely by ideological opposition but also by CNN's commercial and institutional self-interest. At the macro level, the discursive battle between these two insider institutions produces the conditions for an organic crisis, substantiated both discursively, through the White House's shift from persuasion to coercive labelling, and materially, through the documented divergence between its victory claims and independently assessed strategic outcomes.

Keywords: *Critical Discourse Analysis, Hegemony, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Organic Crisis, Operation Epic Fury*

1. Introduction

The global geopolitical landscape took a dramatic turn toward a humanitarian crisis on February 28, 2026, when tensions between the United States, Israel, and Iran erupted into a large-scale military operation. The operation was named “Roaring Lion” by Israel and “Epic Fury” by the United States. The operation involved coordinated airstrikes targeting multiple Iranian territories, including Tehran, Isfahan, Qom, Karaj, and Kermanshah (Iranintl, 2026). The media claimed that Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei was killed in the attack, a claim that was later confirmed by Iranian government authorities (Al-jazeera, 2026).

Throughout Operation Epic Fury, the White House, an official government institution, produced a hegemonic discourse that promoted patriotism and the ideology of Americanism, while glorifying the U.S. military as the guardian of world peace, to quell scepticism among its target audience and secure spontaneous public consent (Gramsci, 1971). From the very first day of the operation, CNN, however, positioned itself in opposition to the White House. This journalistic institution carried out its watchdog function by contrasting its narrative against the government's hegemonic discourse: shifting its thematic focus from the glorification of military success toward the economic consequences of the conflict, the cognitive failures of political leadership, and Iran's sovereignty as a political actor (Collinson, 2026). The battle between these two media outlets reached its climax when the White House openly criminalized CNN's narrative by labelling CNN a “liar.” From Gramsci's perspective, this phenomenon is not merely a battle between editorial desks. It can be interpreted as a crisis of state authority (the White House) in producing or regulating the state's hegemonic structure (Gramsci, 1971).

This event, however, is not examined in this study as verified geopolitical facts, but as discursive objects, that is, as claims constructed, contested, and disseminated through media language in relation to the existing political reality (Locoman & Lau, 2024). Representation is never neutral. The mass media, especially journalism, play a crucial role in this “war of narratives,” as they construct reality and can even distort the facts on the ground (Locoman & Lau, 2024). One of the mass media's primary tools for constructing reality for the public is the headline; Headlines, as a concentrated discursive form, are particularly effective at constructing public reality precisely because their brevity conceals the ideological apparatus of their producer (Sarwar & Muhammad, 2025; Sabahat et al., 2025). In the case of Epic Fury, the government's official news outlet (Whitehouse.gov) and investigative journalism organizations like CNN did not merely produce parallel narratives; rather, these two media outlets engaged in a discursive battle, each advancing conflicting ideologies to vie for the ideal definition of, and the readers' approval regarding, this operation.

What distinguishes this discursive battle analytically is that both institutions share the same democratic system, the same national audience, and the same institutional framework, yet adopt structurally opposing roles: the White House as hegemonic producer, CNN as counter-hegemonic agent. Gramsci (1971) interpreted this clash between the state apparatus and the civil journalism institution as an organic crisis; a condition in which external institutions do not attack hegemony but rather has its flow disrupted from within by narratives containing contradictions within the system's own institutional framework.

The discursive construction of war, conflict, and political hegemony has attracted growing scholarly attention across methodological traditions. Studies applying Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to political discourse include Al Rufaye (2026) and Kakar et al. (2025), who examined hegemonic mechanisms in political rhetoric. Similarly, Badarussyamsi et al. (2024) utilized Fairclough's three-dimensional model to decode the manifestation of Islamophobia in

Donald Trump's political monologues, while Ahmad et al. (2025) framed the power dynamics in his military rhetoric. Expanding beyond CDA, Fauzan (2022) demonstrated how Aristotelian rhetoric (ethos, pathos, logos) functions as a tool of political persuasion in parliamentary discourses. In the context of media and global conflict, Latif et al. (2024) and Maryam et al. (2025) highlighted how media and military press conferences construct "Us vs. Them" identities to legitimize violence during international conflicts. Furthermore, Sakti & Basyar (2026) applied the Discourse-Historical Approach to trace how external geopolitical labels, such as "terrorist," are performatively weaponized by Western hegemonies. Jamshaid & Anwar (2025) expanded this to hypothetical conflict scenarios, and Shahzadi et al. (2026) mapped affective polarization within post-truth political news.

In the Indonesian Context, Samsuri et al. (2022) analyzed the ideological underpinnings of COVID-19 terminology in *Bisnis.com*, *Kompas.com*, and *Liputan6.com*. While Sobari et al. (2025) conducted a comparative CDA of *Kompas* and *Tempo* regarding their representation of the KPK. Sobari's work is particularly relevant as it integrates Fairclough's framework with Halliday's transitivity system to uncover institutional biases. Furthermore, Mustafa et al. (2025) provided a longitudinal meta-analysis of CDA trends in Indonesian linguistic journals, confirming that the integration of CDA and SFL remains a dominant and reliable method for uncovering hidden ideologies. Expanding this focus, Khasanah & Siroj (2025) examined how Kompas.com and Detik.com frame the Makan Bergizi Gratis (MBG) program through Van Dijk's CDA, revealing that media bias often manifests via non-explicit linguistic patterns. Complementing this, Setyawan et al. (2025) applied a socio-cognitive approach to investigate disinformation circulating on social media, demonstrating how hoaxes exploit audience cognitive schemas to manipulate public trust in the same program.

Taken together, these studies establish a robust foundation for examining political and media discourse. However, critical gaps remain. First, the vast majority of existing literature, including Badarussyamsi et al. (2024), Maryam et al. (2025) analyzes isolated, single-institution discourses, such as presidential speeches or exclusive government communications, without examining how two structurally opposed insider institutions simultaneously produce and contest hegemonic narratives during a live military crisis. Second, while previous research frequently examines the discursive misrepresentation of subjects in external or inter-system conflicts (e.g., Latif et al., 2024; Sakti & Basyar, 2026), they fail to situate this analysis within a direct government-press confrontation in the domestic sphere. Third, no existing study integrates Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA with Gramsci's organic crisis framework to analyze how an intra-national ideological antagonism, a "War of Position" launched by the press against its own state apparatus, produces hegemonic instability at the micro-linguistic level. This study addresses these gaps by conducting a comparative CDA of ten White House and ten CNN headlines published during Operation Epic Fury, examining how two U.S. insider institutions construct opposing hegemonic discourses and how their confrontation produces the discursive conditions of an organic crisis.

Based on the background and the discursive conflict between the state and the media, this study formulates the following research questions (RQ): (1) RQ 1: How do the two news headlines construct the discourse of the Iran war? (2) RQ 2: How do these discourses reproduce/challenge hegemonic narratives?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis is a framework that analyzes the relationship between language and social authority. Language is never neutral; as both Fowler (1991) and Fairclough (1995) argue,

discourse does not merely represent reality but actively constructs, maintains, and transforms it in alignment with the interests of ruling institutions. Based on these statements, it is possible to systematically identify dominant groups capable of producing discourse, whether in the form of texts or the interaction between texts and their audiences, to establish hegemony while simultaneously marginalizing alternative narratives (Van Dijk, 2008).

Fairclough (1995) identifies three dimensions of discourse, each with distinct characteristics. The first dimension, the micro level or linguistic description, focuses on word choice (metaphors, hyperbole, and labelling), the use of modality, and transitivity. The second dimension, the meso level, or discursive practice, examines elements of intertextuality, the purpose of production, or the implications when discourse enters the public sphere. The third dimension, the macro level, or what is termed “social practice,” places discourse and the two preceding dimensions within a broader ideological context: the socio-cultural values embraced by the subject or agent, who benefits, who is disadvantaged, and what forms of nominalization institutions employ to maintain hegemony. In the context of the media, Fauzan (2018) asserts that the selection of every rhetorical discourse in the media does not occur spontaneously; rhetoric serves as an ideal vehicle for embedding ideological content. In response to this phenomenon, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an indispensable and irreplaceable approach for uncovering the hidden constructions of power and hegemony within news media.

2.2 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

This study integrates Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as outlined by Halliday (1994) as the primary tool for micro-level linguistic description within the CDA framework. In his book, Halliday (1994) defines language in terms of three metafunctions: ideational (how language represents the world), interpersonal (how language mediates social relations), and textual (how language organizes discourse). In this study, SFL will be limited to focusing solely on ideational transitivity and ideational modality. Within the ideational metafunction, there is a system of transitivity divided into various types of processes: Material, Mental, Verbal, Relational, Behavioral, and Existential; in each of these types of processes, there is an agent among the actor, target, recipient, and follower in the clause. The concept of transitivity is used in CDA analysis to reveal discursive positions: who is constructed as the active agent and who is the recipient of the active agent’s actions (the passive subject), thereby making ideological strata visible through word choices that appear neutral at first glance (Halliday, 1994). While transitivity is used to reveal active/passive agents, modality, which also falls within SFL’s interpersonal metafunction, is used to dissect the levels of probability and commitment constructed within a discourse.

2.3 Hegemony and Mass Media

A hegemonic approach is needed to dissect hegemony in a macro-level analysis of the Epic Fury discourse, so that the analysis is more systematic and precise. Hegemony is a concept developed by Antonio Gramsci and outlined in his book *Prison Notebooks* (1971). Gramsci defines hegemony as a form of domination that is subtly imposed through the moral or intellectual leadership of the dominant class, which is recognized and has gained spontaneous consent (common sense) from the lower classes. In Gramsci’s view, coercive domination provokes resistance; hegemony, operating through subtlety, is structurally more effective at securing consent (Gramsci, 1971). For Gramsci, the mass media are one of the civil institutions that play a crucial role in building and maintaining the ruling class’s hegemony, as the mass media can shape a reality in which the interests of the dominant group are presented as common sense, seeming natural and inevitable.

However, hegemony is neither absolute nor static. Gramsci asserts that hegemony can be dismantled when subordinate groups living within the same system systematically create narratives that challenge the hegemony of the dominant class. When these internal alternative narratives erode the dominant class's capacity for moral and intellectual leadership, the dominant class's hegemony faces internal contradictions, contradictions that Gramsci identified as an "organic crisis": the moment when old forms of legitimacy no longer guarantee consent, yet new forms of legitimacy have not yet taken root. In the context of Operation Epic Fury, these concepts provide an analytical framework for interpreting the White House's hegemonic production and CNN's counter-hegemonic resistance as structural phenomena, rather than merely causeless decisions made at the editorial desk.

2.4 CDA in Competing Media Headlines

Headlines reflect ideology in specific situations (Damanhoury et al., 2025). When two media institutions produce contradictory narratives on the same issue, they create a discursive battleground. CDA views this competition not merely as differing editorial stances, but as a struggle for dominance in shaping "common sense" (Gramsci, 1971).

2.5 Operation Epic Fury through the media

In the world of media, no narrative is truly neutral, especially narratives surrounding escalating geopolitical conflicts such as Operation Epic Fury, a military operation reportedly carried out by the United States and Israel against Iran beginning on February 28, 2026. The operation is claimed to have targeted Iran's military infrastructure, naval forces, and nuclear program capabilities. In response to this conflict, the CDA framework, using Fairclough's approach, was employed to examine how journalists at official government institutions construct narratives to elicit spontaneous approval from their ideal readers, thereby supporting the operation. At the same time, watchdog journalists, by contrast, countered the government's narratives with their own by emphasizing the economic costs, diplomatic failures, and the humanitarian plight of those affected (Delouya, 2026). The clash between these two media positions formed a discursive battlefield whose ideological significance far exceeded the specific events of the conflict itself.

Decades of U.S. media coverage have consistently framed Iran through Orientalist lenses; as irrational, threatening, and religiously extreme, a pattern that long predates Operation Epic Fury (Jahedi et al., 2014; Ismail et al., 2026). Thus, the lexical chains "Terror Regime" and "Terrorism Decade" are not new discourses; rather, the state apparatus seeks to revive long-established Orientalist and ideological labels so that these discourses and framings are more accessible and easier to understand for the ideal reader. However, what distinguishes Operation Epic Fury from the historical cases discussed above lies not in the production of state ideology, but in the emergence of a domestic counter-discourse stemming from the same ecosystem and ideology.

3. Research Methods

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative-interpretive design. This approach was chosen because it aligns with the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which views discourse as a social practice rather than merely a transparent, neutral medium of information (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). A Qualitative-interpretive design is appropriate here, as the focus is on meaning and power relations embedded in language rather than their quantitative distribution (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The primary analytical framework is Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which integrates textual analysis at the micro level, discourse practices at the meso level, and social practices at the macro level. This study also adopts

Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL), limited to ideational transitivity and ideational modality, and Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemony as the primary tools at the macro level.

3.2 Data and Data Source

The data used in this study consists of twenty news headlines: ten sourced from the official White House website (whitehouse.gov) and ten from CNN (cnn.com), published between March 1 and April 1, 2026. This period captures the full arc of the operation, from the White House's opening statements to its victory claims and CNN's sustained counter-narrative. The two sources represent, respectively, the official state apparatus and the institutional watchdog function of a free press (Gramsci, 1971).

Purposive sampling was used when selecting news headlines from these two media outlets, prioritizing those that were highly relevant to the theory and made a significant discursive contribution, in accordance with the principle of theoretical saturation in qualitative research (Emmel, 2013). The corpus was not collected on a quantitative-numerical basis; this dataset consists of a sample that meets the criteria and has been theoretically curated so that the research results can capture ideological and discursive patterns during the study period (Patton, 2002).

Headlines were included if they met five criteria: (1) publication between March 1 and April 1, 2026; (2) direct sourcing from official White House press releases (whitehouse.gov) or CNN's primary news platform (cnn.com); (3) explicit reference to Operation Epic Fury, the Iran war, or its documented consequences; (4) the presence of high-salience keywords such as "Epic Fury," "Iran," "Strait of Hormuz," "Operation," or "War"; and (5) a identifiable ideologically significant discursive position, that is, headlines performing a hegemonic or counter-hegemonic function in relation to the other institution's discourse. Conversely, headlines were excluded if they consisted of unpublished social media posts outside official institutional platforms, opinion columns not attributable to the White House's official communications office, news tickers or live-update snippets without an accessible full article (necessary for meso-level contextual analysis), substantial duplicates covering the same event with minimal lexical variation, or content not directly addressing Operation Epic Fury or its consequences.

Data validation was conducted through three procedures: First, findings in each dimension (micro, meso, macro) were analyzed using three theories: Fairclough's CDA, Halliday's SFL, and Gramsci's theory. The application of these three theories to the data was used to ensure that interpretive claims did not rely on a single theoretical framework but were consistently supported by all three (Denzin, 2017). Second, all intertextual claims were verified by comparing primary sources with accessible related sources. Third, the coding of twenty news headlines was applied consistently based on the type of process, modality, rhetorical devices used, context of production, and macro-level hegemonic functions before the analysis was written.

3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis follows Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model, operationalized as follows: First, micro-level analysis (linguistic description) was used to answer RQ1. In this dimension, the study focused on examining the linguistic elements of twenty headlines. Within the micro dimension, Halliday's (1994) system of transitivity in SFL is also integrated to identify types of processes (Material, Mental, Verbal, Relational, Behavioural) and to analyse the positioning of the active agent and the recipient of the action. Modality analysis is also used to identify the presence and types of modal words used, to determine the certainty or uncertainty of the diction in the headlines. Furthermore, linguistic elements such as negative labelling, hyperbole, metaphor,

nominalization, overlexicalization, and intertextual references are also integrated into this dimension.

Second, meso-level analysis (discursive practice) is integrated following the micro-level dimension. The meso-level dimension bridges linguistic elements and the broader discursive context through an analysis of the production, distribution, and consumption of each headline. In the context of Operation Epic Fury, meso-level analysis examines how the White House and CNN respond to, adopt, or reframe each other's textual productions. Interdiscursive analysis examines how discourse from other social domains, military, economic, and cultural, is incorporated into and alters the ideological function of each news headline (Fairclough, 1995).

Third, macro-level Analysis (Social Practice) was implemented to address RQ2. This stage integrates the findings from the micro and meso dimensions within a broader social context, such as ideology, sociocultural factors, and who benefits and who is disadvantaged within the discourse surrounding the Epic Fury operation. The macro dimension also draws on Gramsci's (1971) concepts of hegemony, counter-hegemony, the Historical Block, and organic crisis to produce interpretive tools. Furthermore, Gramsci's concept of hegemony is used to analyze the discursive patterns examined in the previous dimensions to produce or challenge existing power structures, as well as how the confrontation between the two generates discursive conditions consistent with an organic crisis within the US hegemonic formation (Fairclough, 1995; Gramsci, 1971).

4. Results

In the findings section, the study focuses on answering the research question based solely on linguistic elements, such as the rhetorical patterns used, types of transitivity, actors and actions, and modality, using twenty White House and CNN headlines in the form of summaries. The analysis of the findings focuses on linguistic and lexical patterns without first interpreting the sociopolitical context.

4.1 Distribution of SFL Features

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the distribution of transitivity processes and modality markers across the twenty headlines."

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of Transitivity

Name of Media Outlet/ Institution	Types of Transitivity Processes							Total
	Material	Mental	Verbal	Behavioral	Relational	Existential	Zero- Active Process	
White House	5 (50%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (30%)	10 (100%)
CNN	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (100%)
Total	7 (35%)	4 (20%)	3 (15%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)	3 (15%)	20 (100%)

The data summary in Table 1 shows contrasting patterns between White House and CNN. In terms of transitivity types, the White House dominates with 50% of the material involving active processes, followed by 30% involving zero-active processes. Mental processes were the most frequently used type of process by CNN, accounting for 30%, followed by verbal processes at 20% and relational processes at 20%.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage of Modality

Name of Media Outlet/Institution	Types of Modality				Total
	Zero Modals	High Modals	Medium Modals	Low Modals	
White House	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (100%)
CNN	5 (50%)	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	10 (100%)
Total	15 (75%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	20 (100%)

Table 2, which shows the percentage of modality in both headlines, reveals a similarity in dominance between the White House and CNN. The White House consistently dominated all of its headlines with zero modality (100%), without including any other modality levels in any of its headlines. CNN was also dominated by zero modality, but at 50%, followed by high modality at 20% and medium modality at 10%.

4.2 Transitivity Configurations: Agency and Action

This section identifies the dominant transitivity configurations across both corpora, focusing on the process types that produce the greatest ideological contrast.

4.2.1 White House Agency and Action

In Table 1 regarding types of transitivity processes, 5 out of 10 White House headlines were dominated by process-related terms, such as “Crush,” “Launches,” and “Drive.” The dominance of these terms in White House headlines positions the U.S. military as the primary actor carrying out physical activities in headlines WH-02 (“Operation Epic Fury: Decisive American Power to Crush Iran’s Terror Regime”) and WH-06 (“America’s Warriors Are Obliterating the Iranian Terror Regime with Unrelenting Force”), as well as Trump as the active actor who initiated Operation Epic Fury in WH-01 (“Peace Through Strength: President Trump Launches Operation Epic Fury to Crush the Iranian Regime, End the Nuclear Threat”).

4.2.2 CNN Agency and Action

The types of transitive processes used by CNN are more diverse than those of the White House, where the majority of activities are physical. In Table 1, CNN is dominated by mental processes (30%) such as “Disapprove,” “Understated,” and “Baffled.” CNN employs mental processes by using consensus data or experts as actors; one example is the CNN-02 headline (“CNN Poll: 59% of Americans Disapprove of Iran Strikes and Most Think a Long-Term Conflict Is Likely”), which identifies ‘59% of Americans’ as Sensor and ‘Disapprove’ as the mental process.

Furthermore, material, verbal, and relational processes are balanced at 20% in CNN’s headlines. An example of these three types of processes is CNN-04 (“Exclusive: Iran Is Ready for a Long War with the U.S., and Only Economic Pain Will End It, Senior Official Tells CNN”), which uses “tells” as a verbal process and positions the “Senior Official” as an actor with access to exclusive information. CNN’s varied transitivity profile thus positions it structurally as an observer and mediator rather than an active agent, a direct contrast to the White House’s actor-dominated construction.

4.3 Modality Distribution and Epistemic Positioning

This section analyzes the use of modality based on Table 2, which contains the frequency of modalities in 20 headlines. According to Halliday (1994), modality functions as an indicator of the probability of truth in a discourse and as a measure of the degree of certainty.

4.3.1 White House Modality and Truth-Claims

The official state apparatus, the White House, presents its headlines without using any modality at all. Ten White House headlines are constructed with 100% zero modality. The absence of modal verbs across all ten White House headlines results in declarative constructions without epistemic qualification. This is further reinforced by the White House's exclusive use of the past and present tenses; the White House's use of past and present tense is consistent across all ten headlines. One of the most striking examples of Zero Modality usage is WH-08 ("Americans Agree that Operation Epic Fury Is an Overwhelming Success"), which contains no modal verbs and employs a present-tense declarative structure.

4.3.2 CNN Modality and Truth-Claim

Although CNN is a watchdog journalism institution, it is also dominated by zero modality, accounting for 50% of its content. However, CNN's use of zero modality differs from that of the White House. In the data points CNN-06 ("Stocks, Bonds, and Gold Slump While Iran War Rages") and CNN-08 ("War with Iran Drives U.S. Mortgage Rates Higher..."), the absence of modality directly establishes the economic situation as an absolute fact, not merely a prediction. Conversely, modality is used by CNN when headlines involve military narratives and geopolitical dynamics. This is evident in the CNN-02 data, which uses the modal adjective "is likely," and the CNN-10 data ("...and It Could Bring in Billions"), which uses the low-epistemic modal verb "could."

4.4 Meso-Level Findings: Intertextuality and Production Context

This section presents findings on the meso dimension (discursive practice) in 20 headlines from CNN and the White House, specifically regarding intertextuality and the purpose or context of production.

4.4.1 White House: Intertextuality Pattern and Production Context

The White House employs intertextuality with three distinct doctrines both explicitly and implicitly in its headlines. The White House opens its WH-01 headline ("Peace Through Strength: President Trump Launches...") directly with Reagan's "Peace Through Strength" slogan, which dates back to the Cold War era. Next, WH-02 ("Operation Epic Fury: Decisive American Power to Crush Iran's Terror Regime") refers to the Powell doctrine and Bush's "Axis of Evil" slogan following the 9/11 attacks. The headline for WH-03 ("The Iranian Regime's Decades of Terrorism...") refers to the history of U.S.-Iran relations (the bombing of the Marine barracks and the attack on the USS Cole). WH-09 ("President Trump's Clear and Unchanging Objectives Drive Decisive Success Against the Iranian Regime") is drawn from quotes by Trump administration officials such as Rubio, Hegseth, and Vance, which form an institutional voice packaged into a single headline.

In addition to intertextuality, White House also adopts (interdiscursivity) vocabulary from various genres. For example, the headline for WH-05 ("America's Unstoppable Momentum in Operation Epic Fury") borrows the word "Unstoppable" from the vocabulary of the action/superhero film genre. Then, WH-06 ("America's Warriors Are Obliterating Iranian...") uses "American Warriors" and "Obliterating," terms derived from Hollywood films and first-person shooter (FPS) video games. Furthermore, one of the White House headlines also draws on a CNN headline by deconstructing and reconstructing the narrative of CNN-02 ("CNN Poll: 59% of Americans Disapprove of Iran Strikes...") into the headline WH-08 ("Americans Agree that Operation Epic Fury Is an Overwhelming Success").

The chronological distribution of the ten White House statements reveals two distinct observable patterns within its production context. First, the data is consistently generated in clustered intervals rather than through a sporadic timeline. This clustering is evident from the initial press release on March 1 (WH-01), followed immediately by simultaneous dual publications on March 2 (WH-02 and WH-03), subsequent sequential releases between March 3 and March 5 (WH-04 and WH-05), and further synchronized dual publications on March 13 (WH-06 and WH-07) and April 1 (WH-09 and WH-10), the latter marking exactly one month since the initiation of the operation. Second, the timeline indicates a specific sequential relationship with the media, where particular White House statements chronologically follow the publication of specific CNN headlines. Specifically, the dual release of WH-07 ('CNN Is Lying to Undermine Operation Epic Fury's Crushing Success') on March 13 occurs after the publication of CNN-05 ('Trump Administration Underestimated Iran War's Impact on Strait of Hormuz'), while the independent release of WH-08 on March 19 takes place following the distribution of CNN-02 and CNN-03.

4.4.2 CNN: Intertextuality Pattern and Production Context

CNN employs intertextuality and interdiscursivity in various contexts. One example of contrasting intertextuality is when CNN uses and deconstructs a Trump tweet (Social Truth, March 26) as the basis for the CNN-07 headline ("Trump Is Baffled that Iran Won't End the War He Started"). In the context of interdiscursivity, one example is the CNN-03 headline (Word of the Week: What Makes the Trump Administration's Operation Epic Fury So 'Epic'?), which contrasts Operation Epic Fury with a quote from Churchill and links the operation's name to references to frat boys, Mountain Dew, Logan Paul, and video game genres.

A prominent intertextual pattern within the CNN corpus is the consistent mapping of the military conflict onto various economic domains across the timeline. This cluster consists of five distinct headlines that systematically connect the war to progressively specific economic registers. The trajectory begins with the inclusion of public sentiment data in CNN-02 ('59% of Americans Disapprove of Iran Strikes'), which is then juxtaposed with external diplomatic discourse from an Iranian official regarding 'economic pain' in CNN-04. The data subsequently moves into macroeconomic market indicators in CNN-06 ('Stocks, Bonds and Gold Slump'), before narrowing down to the domestic household level in CNN-08 through the tracking of 'US Mortgage Rates'. Finally, CNN-10 links these economic variables back to a broader geopolitical-economic scale ('Bring in Billions'). Across the chronological data, these five headlines demonstrate an intertextual pattern where the military operation is consistently recontextualized through the lenses of public sentiment, financial markets, household expenses, and geopolitics.

5. Discussion

In this section, the analysis integrates the findings from the micro-meso dimensions by interpreting them within a broader context, namely, the macro dimension (Social Practice) through the lens of ideology, the sociopolitical strategies of both institutions, sociocultural factors, interpretations of the meso dimension, and elements of Gramsci's concept of hegemony. This section will address and answer the two research questions in a coherent manner and compare the findings with relevant research.

5.1 Discursive Construction of the Iran War

Iran's narrative war, as viewed from the perspective of the state apparatus and the White House, is dominated by headlines featuring 50% Material, positioning the state as an actor in its discourse. In general, the strategy of state dominance and the positioning of the state as a dominant, active actor is commonly employed, as noted in the research by Sarwar & Muhammad (2025), as

well as in the research Houston (2020) It also reveals the same outcomes and objectives: to enable the state producing the discourse to strengthen its political legitimacy, authority, and dominance over the military; to obscure the root causes of the problem; and to portray the state as a savior. In the context of “Epic Fury,” all headlines containing material that narrates military dominance, the U.S. as a peacekeeper, and negative labelling of Iran without explanation, one contrasting example is headline WH-02 (“Operation Epic Fury: Decisive American Power to Crush Iran’s Terror Regime”) fulfill the purpose of using such material and positioning the state as the dominant actor. In the domestic context of Indonesia, Sobari et al. (2025) also identified a similar phenomenon, demonstrating that this strategy is common and frequently employed by the state apparatus.

However, the hegemony of discourse constructed by the White House through airstrikes and U.S. military dominance is fragile from within its own system. The journalistic institution CNN, which also helped produce the coverage, hijacked and shifted the focus of the White House’s narrative with an approach that resonated more with the ideal U.S. audience. CNN hijacks the White House’s glorifying narrative by shifting the focus to the financial realities faced by American civilians as the operation unfolds (rising interest rates, inflation); this is contrasted in CNN-06 (“Stocks, Bonds, and Gold Slump While Iran War Rages”) and CNN-08 (“War with Iran Drives U.S. Mortgage Rates Higher for Fourth Straight Week”), which cover the same events. Although Haimed (2024) findings state that U.S. media strictly and rigidly follow a political agenda without any deviations, This study argues the opposite: in the context of Operation Epic Fury, the White House and CNN, which are mainstream U.S. media outlets actually demonstrate a struggle over the use of transitivity; not merely regarding subject-object relationships, but rather a struggle for consensus on the discourse of war; the state sells war, while the media sells the economic crisis.

In terms of modality, subtheme 4.3.1 states that the White House headline “100% Zero Modality” is combined with the lexical chain “Crush/Terror/Regime.” The omission of modality and this lexical chain, which labels Iran as a negative subject, constitutes a strategy by the state apparatus to validate an absolute narrative and irrefutable facts. Thus, this finding aligns with the research by Kakar et al. (2025) and Samsuri et al. (2022), which states that “absolute” and unambiguous discourse (without “may,” “could,” or “should”) is deliberately used by the state to naturalize its decisions. Furthermore, the use of zero modals and lexical chains serves to nominalize the military actions in Operation Epic Fury, making them common sense for the ideal reader and fostering spontaneous consent.

On the other hand, when the “zero common sense” modality and lexical chain that the White House has attached to Iran are pitted against Iran’s sociocultural reality, Iranian culture, which stems from the Persian people, a civilization that has existed for more than 5,000 years and was once the center of civilization in the world, comes into play. The Persian people have produced many renowned philosophers, such as Zoroaster, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), and many others (Safavi, 2024). In the contemporary era, Iran’s literacy rate in 2023 stood at 92.76% of the population aged 15 and older, exceeding the global average of 90.91% in 2024 (Statbase, 2026). In a cultural context, Iran has adopted the Persian tradition of “Ta’arof” rituals of courtesy, humility, and social harmony toward fellow citizens and guests. Thus, the White House’s socio-cultural labelling of Iran is highly incoherent, as the White House’s “zero modality” constitutes a form of epistemological assassination and a diversion of the issue through militaristic narratives. This aligns with Safavi (2024) view, which states that the crisis of Western materialist epistemology has given rise to destructive socio-political thought in the form of imperialism and militaristic warfare that disregards spiritual values and the depth of Eastern traditions of thought.

In addition to the White House, CNN also produced “zero-modality” headlines with a different objective than the White House. Fifty percent of CNN’s “zero-modality” headlines were

produced to deconstruct the White House's hegemonic discourse regarding Operation Epic Fury. Two out of five headlines targeted the economic crisis faced by the ideal U.S. middle-class audience. One example is CNN-08 ("War with Iran Drives U.S. Mortgage Rates Higher for Fourth Straight Week"), which instils the narrative that economic hardship for the middle class is an absolute certainty if the operation continues. This finding is consistent with the findings of Chendey (2025), who found that the media tends to use certain patterns to shape the audience's understanding of a crisis. Thus, "zero modality" in the White House and CNN narratives regarding Operation Epic Fury not only functions as a tool for "state hegemony production" but can also serve as a "weapon of counter-hegemonic narrative."

Interestingly, this finding does not align with Ozyumenko (2021) assertion that media discourse tends to avoid modal voids and relies on modality to create ambiguity and evade narrative responsibility. In this study, CNN headlines (1 March - 1 April) were actually dominated by 50% "zero modality," which contained alternative narratives regarding the state and the economic crisis facts that cannot be avoided. Thus, zero modality can be used not only by the apparatus of power but also adopted by journalistic media to shape counter-hegemonic narratives.

In the realm of intertextuality, the White House did not construct new discourse but deliberately reconstructed outdated rhetoric from the Cold War and Gulf War eras. This reconstruction was not incidental, as Ristevska & Prezelj (2025) observe, during geopolitical crises, leaders rely heavily on historical analogies and framing devices to construct existential threats and secure immediate public support. By embedding patriotic intertextual references, the White House activated the collective memory of the ideal reader, positioning the operation as the nation's moral obligation rather than a political choice. Beyond intertextuality, the White House also deployed interdiscursivity, the strategic borrowing of generic resources from other discursive fields (Fairclough, 1992), most evidently in WH-06 and WH-07, where military lexis converged with the hypermasculine register of FPS gaming ("Obliterating," "Unstoppable") and action cinema aesthetics. Linguistic triggers such as these function as interdiscursive nodes that actively shape the ontological and ethical model of war, redirecting the ideal reader's attention from the human complexity of conflict toward a spectacle of absolute American dominance. A further and arguably most calculated interdiscursive move occurs in WH-08, where the White House decontextualized CNN-02's polling data, selectively extracting figures that supported a claim of public consensus while omitting the 59% disapproval statistic and recontextualizing it as evidence of operational success. As Wodak & Fairclough (2010) note, decontextualization and recontextualization allow powerful actors to appropriate rival discourses and reconstruct them in alignment with their own ideological objectives.

Consistent with its counter-hegemonic stance, CNN employs critical intertextuality with an approach that resonates more closely with its ideal audience, particularly the middle class, by deconstructing the Trump administration's policies and the military actions in Operation Epic Fury as narrated by the White House. CNN directly adopts and recontextualizes its opponent's narrative in CNN-07 and employs chained intertextuality in the headlines of CNN-02, CNN-04, CNN-06, and CNN-08, which target the domestic economy. In an interdiscursive move, CNN-03 ("Word of the Week: What Makes the Trump Administration's Operation Epic Fury So 'Epic'?") deconstructs the operation's name using references highly familiar to young people (Gen Z/Millennials) such as frat boys, Mountain Dew, Logan Paul, and entertainment-driven video game genres to create the perception that the government is not taking the operation seriously. This strategy reflects how legacy media adapts to generational media trends to influence political engagement (Morimoto & Wicks, 2024). Ultimately, CNN's strategy of intertextuality and interdiscursivity aims to deconstruct the hegemony of White House discourse that glorifies the U.S.

military and the Trump administration's use of language that is easily understood by its ideal audience to disrupt the national consensus.

5.2 Hegemonic Reproduction, Counter-Hegemony, and Organic Crisis

Gramsci viewed the mass media as one of the most ideal mediums for producing hegemony and generating consensus through the common sense of the ideal reader (Gramsci, 1971). One of the media's strategies for producing and building hegemony is through lexical repetition in news narratives. In the context of contemporary media, research by Locoman & Lau (2024) has demonstrated how lexical repetition in propaganda regarding the Russia-Ukraine conflict can build consensus to persuade the public to approve of military aggression. In the context of this study, the White House consistently and repetitively uses aggressive lexical chains such as "Regime," "Terror," and "Obliterate." If these lexical chains are interpreted through a conventional lens, this strategy can easily be categorized as an attempt to manufacture consent for Operation Epic Fury.

However, Locoman & Lau's (2024) concept of the lexical chain cannot be equated with or contrasted against the case of the Epic Fury narrative war. While the study by Locoman & Lau (2024) interprets the lexical chain as a short-term strategy due to the superficial nature of the intertextuality employed, this study finds that the White House's lexical chain pattern is far more systematic and sustainable, as it incorporates intertextuality that has emerged from scratch. The lexical chain employed by the White House is rooted in a cross-generational ideology spanning from Reagan, through the Gulf War, to the Powell Doctrine, by weaving it into the U.S. military narrative for this operation. The White House's tactic is certainly more sustainable because it taps into the collective memory of its ideal audience, one that has been ingrained across generations among American civilians, functioning as an ideological boomerang rather than a disposable rhetorical device.

On the other hand, behind the White House narrative, which employs lexical chains and material processes to build consensus among the ideal audience, lies an omission of certain parties hidden within the material structure of the White House headlines. During Operation Epic Fury, Lockheed Martin (the Pentagon's largest contractor) saw its stock rise by 40% in the weeks following the operation's launch, while Northrop Grumman saw a 6% surge in a single day that added billions to its market capitalization (Martill & Chrysosgelos, 2025), and the Trump administration simultaneously submitted a \$1.5 trillion defence budget request to Congress (Boolchandani, 2026). During the operation and data collection period (March 1–April 1), not a single beneficiary appeared explicitly in White House headlines or lead stories; they appeared only through the moral lexicon of "Peacekeeper" in WH-01 and "American Warrior" in WH-04 and WH-06, which not only created a mere consensus but also made the military-industrial complex's profits structurally invisible.

Counter-hegemony, according to Gramsci (1971) is a strategy employed by the subordinated classes or organic intellectuals to dismantle the ruling class's hegemony through alternative discourses. In line with Gramsci (1971), Van Dijk (2008) identifies that resistance texts operate through subtle reframing that destabilises discursive dominance without confrontation. This pattern is systematically traceable across CNN's corpus: CNN-04 dismantles the "Terror Regime" label by granting Iran a sovereign verbal agency; CNN-05 attacks the administration's intellectual leadership through a mental process that positions Trump as cognitively inadequate; and CNN-08 domesticates geopolitical abstraction into household economic reality.

However, CNN's "war of position" is not built solely on a subordinate ideology; CNN is also driven by bias and capital. Trump's relationship with CNN has indeed been strained. Since 2016, Trump has labelled CNN as "fake news." Furthermore, research shows that 93% of CNN's news

coverage of Trump is negative, while only 7% is positive or neutral. This indicates that there is bias behind CNN's narratives. Aside from bias, CNN also capitalizes on "The Trump Bump"; a phenomenon where Trump's controversial remarks or speeches drive a massive surge in engagement and ratings. Historically, whenever CNN has criticized Trump, its ratings have soared. However, when Trump's popularity wanes, CNN's ratings plummet sharply.

The CNN-05 headline, which contained an attack on the Trump administration, was designed to provoke a response from the government. As a result, the White House released the WH-07 headline ("CNN is lying"), which can be identified as a "criminalization descent." However, within the logic of "The Trump Bump," WH-07 was a "jackpot" for CNN because, in this context, the ruling regime's criminalization of its own press triggered a viral news cycle with high engagement, which became a source of advertising revenue for CNN. Thus, CNN's "war of position" did not stem from subordinate voices or purely watchdog institutions; rather, it was more closely aligned with CNN's commercial interests.

Furthermore, in the context of U.S. politics, CNN, which aligns with the liberal, left-leaning Democratic camp but is not part of the Democratic Party, has taken a counter-hegemonic stance with the aim of preparing Democrats for the 2026 midterm elections. Democrats hope to retake the House of Representatives amid growing dissatisfaction with the cost of living and Trump himself, whose approval ratings continue to plummet. In this context, CNN-08 ('coverage of mortgage rates and their economic impact') is not the product of a subordinate class seeking emancipation, as Gramsci (1971) theorized, nor the neutral watchdog journalism of democratic tradition; it is a commercially incentivized, politically timed discursive intervention that happens to align with counter-hegemonic outcomes. CNN did not dismantle the White House's hegemony out of ideological conviction; it dismantled it because doing so was profitable.

Unlike the study by Wang et al. (2024), which argues that the liberal Western press has a duty to legitimize the values of democratic sovereignty and views the commercialization of the press as not the primary goal of the mass media, and the study by Munandar et al. (2025), which rigidly distinguishes between the ruling apparatus as a hegemonic actor and independent communities as agents of emancipation. This study offers a new perspective on the discourse of counter-hegemony in the mass media; it demonstrates that a "war of position" does not always stem from ideological thought, organic intellectualism, or the media's pure watchdog function; such conflicts can arise from opportunistic discourses that are easily commercialized and exert significant influence on political momentum. Thus, this study also deconstructs Gramscian assumptions; narratives of resistance do not only emerge from subordinate ideology or pure intellectual organicism but can be generated and produced by elite actors whose goal is not emancipation but rather a strategy for profitable capital accumulation.

Organic crisis and intergrium constitute the final analysis in this study. According to the research by Martill & Chrysogeloss (2025), organic crises or divisions are more likely to be triggered by domestic polarization and internal ideological fragmentation. In this literature, a crisis of authority is defined as the inability of those in power to maintain domestic unity while formulating international policy. However, there is a structural difference when compared to the discursive operations of "Epic Fury." In this case, the organic crisis did not arise or was triggered by external influences; the Iranian state apparatus lacked the capacity and direct access to disrupt the White House's hegemonic consensus from the outside. Instead, the conflict between the U.S. and Iran stems from internal factors, specifically the CNN news media, which is a structural product of the very same democratic social formation that gave rise to that administration.

The White House's victory claims through the headlines WH-07 ("Crushing Success"), WH-08 ("Overwhelming Success"), and WH-09 ("Decisive Success") are independent victory claims originating from the Trump administration itself and a recontextualization of narratives from other media outlets, one of which is the CNN-02 headline that was cherry-picked in WH-08 as a victory claim. However, outside of this discourse, post-operation reports indicate that approximately fifty percent of Iran's ballistic missile launchers remained intact until the end of the attack. Although CSIS, the CFR, and the Soufan Center stated that the U.S. operation succeeded in inflicting tactical damage, the U.S. strike did not reach the deepest core of Iran's infrastructure, did not halt the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, or produce the political outcomes desired by the Trump administration (Khan, 2026). Furthermore, the assassination of Khamenei, which the media claimed could topple the Iranian regime, actually exacerbated the situation: the regime survived its decapitation not through collapse but through a hard-line IRGC successor leadership widely assessed as structurally less amenable to negotiated outcomes than its predecessor (Khan, 2026). Thus, the claims of dominance in the White House narrative ("Crushing," "Overwhelming," "Decisive") and the claims of unilateral verification indicate that the White House's hegemonic discourse framework serves not only to convince its ideal domestic audience but also to construct a reality that diverges from the material conditions on the ground a divergence that, once exposed, further erodes the very common sense that this discourse seeks to establish.

The climax of this internal friction manifests empirically in WH-05 ("CNN Is Lying to Undermine Operation Epic Fury's Crushing Success"). This headline serves as irrefutable evidence of a systemic breakdown: having failed to sustain spontaneous consent through its persuasive ideological apparatus, the state is forced to overtly criminalize its own institutional press. This transition represents far more than a conventional defensive shift; the state is actively eating its own civil society to preserve its hegemony.

This is where the novelty of this study lies. Although Martill & Chrysogelos (2025) identified domestic polarization as a disruptive force in foreign policy and framed this internal polarization as stemming from conflicts between competing political factions, The "Epic Fury" narrative between the White House and CNN, however, reveals a far more severe organic crisis: the rift occurs not only between political parties but also between the state's executive branch and the civilian media itself CNN which constructs a counter-narrative to deconstruct the White House. By expanding the criteria and triggers identified in the research by Martill & Chrysogelos (2025), this study demonstrates that the organic crisis of the historical bloc reaches its peak not only when consensus is fractured by the ruling apparatus itself; rather, the organic crisis reaches its peak when the state sacrifices its own civil service to quell internal institutional criticism.

6. Conclusion

This study examines how the White House and CNN discursively construct competing narratives of the Iran war to reproduce or challenge existing hegemonic structures. In response to RQ1, the White House manufactures a hegemonic discourse through dominant material processes, absolute zero modality, sustained lexical chains, and intertextuality rooted in legacy military doctrine, working jointly to secure the ideal reader's spontaneous consent and normalize military action. Conversely, CNN mounts a counter-hegemonic narrative via a diversified linguistic repertoire: mental processes interrogate administration competence, verbal processes shield journalistic accountability, and material processes highlight domestic economic ruin. Driven by zero modality in half its headlines to assert state failure as fact, CNN's discourse relies on an appropriative intertextuality, hijacking Trump's tweets, and an interdiscursivity that adopts youth-oriented, grassroots registers to target a specific audience demographic.

Regarding RQ2, the White House reproduces hegemony by leveraging cross-generational intertextuality for internal legitimacy, paired with a polarizing lexical chain that valorizes the U.S. military while vilifying Iran to consolidate audience consensus. This hegemonic production initially bypassed CNN until the press challenged the administration's intellect with the "underestimated" label, triggering the state to brand CNN a liar in WH-07, a tactical shift from persuasion to coercive confrontation. CNN's counter-hegemony, however, is not a purely normative watchdog effort; its critique is incentivized by commercial engagement via the "Trump Bump" and a domestic economic focus that indirectly bolsters the Democratic Party ahead of the 2026 midterm elections. Consequently, the resulting organic crisis emerges from the stark divergence between the state's unilateral victory claims and material reality, reaching its climax when the hegemonic apparatus turns to criminalizing its own domestic press. This study also has limitations. First, the analysis is limited to a purposive sample of twenty headlines, focusing on the construction and discourse warfare of the U.S. media during Operation Epic Fury. The study only utilised two internal sources, White House and CNN, which operate within the same media ecosystem; it did not consider the use of non-Western or Iranian media, which, if included, could have revealed different structures of hegemony and counter-hegemony than those identified in this study. However, these limitations give rise to two possible directions for future research. First, future research could expand this corpus until Operation Epic Fury concludes on May 5, 2026, which is likely to result in a more climactic and intense organic crisis. Second, future research could conduct a comparative CDA analysis between Western media outlets such as CNN or Fox News and Iranian or Eastern media outlets such as Al Jazeera. Through this future study, the findings will expand beyond internal conflicts to encompass external ideological battles between Western and Eastern media.

References

- Ahmad, Y., Nazim, M., & Nijabat, A. (2025). Framing Power And Conflict: A Critical Discourse Analysis Of Donald Trump's Posts On The Iran-Israel War. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and TESOL*, 8(3), 1256–1264. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.63878/jalt1105>
- Al-jazeera. (2026, February 28). Iran confirms Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei dead after US-Israeli attacks. *Al-Jazeera*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/2/28/irans-supreme-leader-ali-khamenei-killed-in-us-israeli-attacks-reports>
- Al Rufaye, A. A. Z. H. (2026). *The Concept of Hegemony in the Speech of Netanyahu on the 7 October actions : Critical Discourse Analysis*. 05(02), 23–26. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.54660/IJSSER.2026.5.2.23-26>
- Badarussyamsi, Syam, N., Ermawati, & As'ad. (2024). Hegemony of Trump : Manifestation of Islamophobia in an inaugural speech. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 14(1), 93–103. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v14i1.70355>
- Boolchandani, S. (2026). *Who Made Money From The Iran War?* Vested Finance. <https://vestedfinance.com/blog/us-stocks/who-made-money-from-the-iran-war/>
- Chendey, N. V. (2025). Authorial Stance In English Migration Newspaper Discourse. *Мова*, 44(100), 43–48. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.18524/2307-4558.2025.44.343840>
- Collinson, S. (2026, March 26). Trump is baffled that Iran won't end the war he started. *CNN*. <https://edition.cnn.com/2026/03/26/politics/trump-iran-peace-talks-us-troops-analysis>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. SAGE Publications. [tps://books.google.co.id/books?id=gX1ZDwAAQBAJ](https://books.google.co.id/books?id=gX1ZDwAAQBAJ)
- Damanhoury, K. El, Saleh, F., & Lebovic, M. (2025). Covering the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Al Jazeera English and BBC's Online Reporting on the 2023

- Gaza War. *Journalism and Media*. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia6010009>
- Delouya, S. (2026, March 26). War with Iran drives US mortgage rates higher for fourth-straight week. *CNN*. <https://edition.cnn.com/2026/03/26/economy/mortgage-rates-us-housing-market-iran-war>
- Denzin, N. K. (2017). *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*. Routledge. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=UjcpxFE0T4cC>
- Emmel, N. (2013). *Sampling and Choosing Cases in Qualitative Research: A Realist Approach*. SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473913882>
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Longman Publishing.
- Fauzan, U. (2018). Ideology and Rhetoric: Framing Metrotv News in The Lapindo Mudflow Tragedy. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 9(4), 364–381.
- Fauzan, U. (2022). Discourse Analysis in the speeches of Indonesian Parliamentarians about Handling COVID-19. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistic*, 8(2), 56–65.
- Fauzan, U., Subroto, H., & Poedjosoedarmo, S. (2014). A CDA of the Ideology of Indonesian Metrotv News Report. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 6, 71. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v6i4.6147>
- Fowler, R. (1991). *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press* (First). Routledge.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Prison Notebooks*. International Publishers.
- Haimed, S. (2024). A critical analysis of the representation of America ' s withdrawal and the Taliban ' s takeover in world powers ' newspaper headlines. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2024.2435595>
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. Hodder Arnold. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=a88lnQEACAAJ>
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2014). *Edition Introduction To Halliday ' S Introduction To Functional*.
- Houston, K. (2020). Pseudo Neutrality in Intra-State Conflict Myanmar ' s Official Discourse on Rakhine. *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies*, 14(2), 25–52. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.51870/CEJISS.A140202>
- Iranintl. (2026, February 28). Explosions reported across Persian Gulf as Iran retaliates US, Israeli attacks. *Iran International*. <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202602285934>
- Ismail, K. B. K., Ammar, H. M., Baloch, H. A., Khan, F. U., & Ullah, H. (2026). Language Framing of the US-Israel-Iran Conflict in International News Headlines: A Critical Discourse Analysis. *The Critical Review of Social Sciences Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.59075/xm4pg460>
- Jahedi, M., Abdullah, S. F., & Mukundan, J. (2014). Review of Studies on Media Portrayal of Islam , Muslims and Iran. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 2(12), 297–308.
- Jamshaid, S., & Anwar, N. (2025). Imagining Conflict Through Discourse : A Critical Discourse Analysis of Hypothetical Narratives in a Projected Iran - Israel War. *Journal of Arts and Linguistics Studies*, 3(4), 5417–5432.
- Kakar, khan sumbal, Khan, nawaz shah, Gul, A., Hussain, T., & Noor, L. (2025). Exploring Political Discourse Through Fairclough's Lens: A CDA of Donald Trump's Speech. *Social Science Review Archives*, 3(2), 1676–1689.
- Khan, B. (2026). *US-Iran War 2026: Operation Epic Fury and the Hormuz Crisis*. Quwa. <https://quwa.org/iran/military-news-iran/us-iran-war-2026-operation-epic-fury-the-strait-of-hormuz-crisis-and-the-limits-of-american-air-power/>
- Khasanah, N. S., & Siroj, B. M. (2025). Analisis Wacana Kritis atas Keberpikahan Media Kompas.com dan Detik.com pada Pemberitaan Program Makanan Bergizi Gratis (MBG) oleh Prabowo Subianto. *EduInovasi: Journal of Basic Educational Studies*, 5(3), 1594–1606.
- Latif, F., Zaidi, S., Naz, S., Idrees, U., Arslan, M., Yar, S., & Ali, S. (2024). Constructing The

- Other : A Critical Discourse Analysis Of Ukrainian- Russian War In Western Press. *Kurdish Studies*, 4883(April), 193–204. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.53555/ks.v12i3.3024>
- Locoman, E., & Lau, R. R. (2024). Narratives of conflict : Russian media ' s evolving treatment of. *Sage Journal*, 18(13), 325–247. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17506352241257053>
- Martill, B., & Chrysosgelos, A. (2025). You ' re projecting ! Global Britain , European strategic autonomy and the discursive rescue of the internationalised state. *European Security*, 34(3), 345–364. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2024.2425641>
- Maryam, R., Ullah, M., & Ashraf, K. (2025). Militarised Narratives and Retaliatory Rhetoric : A Comparative CDA of the 2025 India-Pakistan War. *Journal of Arts and Linguistics Studies*, 3(2), 3433–3457.
- Morimoto, S., & Wicks, J. (2024). *From Legacy Media to Going Viral: Generational Media Use and Citizen Engagement*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003390206>
- Munandar, A., Muttaqin, F. F., & Susanti, E. (2025). Media Sosial antara Hegemoni dan Emansipasi : Tinjauan Kritis terhadap Peran Edukatif dalam Demokrasi Digital. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Ilmu Pendidikan*, 2(1), 56–70.
- Mustafa, M., Nirwana, L., Husni Nelli, M., Anggreani Emi, & Pitra, E. (2025). Trend of Critical Discourses Analysis Research in Linguistics Journals of Sinta 1 to 4: from CDA model to Research Design. *IDEAS*, 13(2), 4643–4663.
- Ozyumenko, V. (2021). Teaching Epistemic Modality Through A Newspaper Text. *INTCESS*, 8, 412–417.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*. SAGE Publications. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=FjBw2oi8EI4C>
- Ristevska, T. T., & Prezelj, I. (2025). Security and Liberty in Post-9/11 US Counterterrorism: A Comparative Analysis of Presidential Rhetoric. *Politics and Governance*, 13(September 2001), 1–23.
- Sabahat, S., Iqbal, N., Gulzar, M. F., & Arshad, A. A. (2025). Framing and Ideology: A Critical Discourse Analysis of News Media Representation in Political Crises in Pakistan. *The Asian Bulletin of Big Data Management*. <https://doi.org/10.62019/1y8f7j41>
- Safavi, S. S. (2024). The Quiddity of Iranian Philosophy. *International Journal for Comparative Philosophy and Mysticism*, 25(36), 7–32. https://iranianstudies.org/transcendent_philosophy/volume-25- number-36/the-quiddity-of-iranian-philosophy
- Sakti, C. M., & Basyar, M. H. (2026). Critical Geopolitics And The Reconstruction Of Meaning: A Discourse Analysis Of The “Terrorism” Label Applied To Hamas By Western Hegemony. *Journal of Terrorism Studies*, 8(1), 1–28.
- Samsuri, A., Mulawarman, W. G., & Hudiyono, Y. (2022). Ideologi Penggunaan Istilah-Istilah Covid-19 di Berita Online : Analisis Wacana Kritis Model Norman Fairclough. *DIGLOSIA*, 5, 603–618.
- Sarwar, M., & Muhammad, H. (2025). Framing The Israel-Palestine Conflict In Media Headlines: A Comparative Analysis Of Western And Eastern Perspectives Using Appraisal And Transitivity Frameworks. *Journal of Applied Linguistic and Tesol*, 8(3), 1919–1931.
- Setyawan, E., Rianto, Wardana, K., Sugihartanto, Pratama, A. R., & Ibrahim, M. (2025). Analisis Wacana Berita Hoaks tentang Program Makan Bergizi Gratis (MBG) Menggunakan Pendekatan Socio- Cognitive Teun A . van Dijk. *Jurnal Audiens*, 6(2).
- Shahzadi, R., Nazir, Z., Asjad, H., & Usman, T. (2026). Critical Discourse Analysis Of Political News Discourse In Pakistani Media: A Multi-Dimensional Investigation Into Hegemony And Polarization. *Journal of Applied Linguistic and Tesol*, 9(2), 209–217.
- Sobari, T., Mulyadi, Y., Suryana, S. I., & Syathroh, I. L. (2025). Media Representation of the KPK

- in News Coverage : A Faircloughian Critical Discourse Analysis. *Lingua Cultura*, 19(2), 103-108. <https://doi.org/10.21512/lc.v19i2.12544>
- Statbase. (2026). *Literacy rate: Data by countries from 1970 to 2024*. Statbase. <https://statbase.org/datasets/science-and-education/literacy-rate/>
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2008). *Discourse and Power*. Macmillan Education UK. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=NhILAQAAMAAJ>
- Wang, Y., Sannusi, N. S., & Kadir, A. S. (2024). News Framing of the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian Conflict: A Comparative Analysis of CNN (USA) and CCTV (China) from a War and Peace Journalism Perspective. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 21(4), 347-356.
- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2009). *Methods for Critical Discourse Analysis*. SAGE Publications. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=XwNdBAAAQBAJ>