



From Holocaust Memory to Holocaust Logic: Linguistic Constructions of Legitimized Violence in Israeli Political Rhetoric

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Presentation Agenda

Overview of research structure and key sections

Research Agenda

- ◆ Introduction and Background
- ◆ Methodology and Data Collection
- ◆ Quantitative Analysis of Rhetorical Themes
- ◆ Qualitative Discourse Analysis
- ◆ Discussion and Conclusion

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Research Context & Background

Problem domain, current state, and research gap

Current Research Landscape

- ◆ Political discourse in conflict zones remains understudied from linguistic perspective
- ◆ Existing research focuses primarily on legal frameworks rather than rhetorical patterns
- ◆ Limited mixed-methods approaches combining quantitative and qualitative analysis
- ◆ Gap in understanding how historical memory informs contemporary political speech

Research Gap & Challenge

Existing Limitations

- ◆ Predominantly legal rather than linguistic analysis
- ◆ Limited systematic examination of rhetorical patterns
- ◆ Few studies on authority construction in wartime speech
- ◆ Insufficient attention to historical memory's role

Our Research Focus

- ◆ Linguistic patterns in political rhetoric during armed conflict
- ◆ Systematic analysis of authority construction mechanisms
- ◆ Mixed-methods approach to discourse analysis
- ◆ Examination of Holocaust memory's influence on contemporary discourse

Motivation & Objectives

1

Research Importance

Understanding how language legitimizes violence during conflict contributes to accountability mechanisms and dangerous speech frameworks

2

Key Objectives

Document rhetorical associations in Israeli political statements from Oct-Dec 2023 and analyze linguistic patterns of authority construction

3

Expected Impact

Contribute to scholarly conversation on political discourse in conflict through systematic mixed-methods analysis

Research Questions

- ◆ How does wartime political speech construct authority and normalize civilian harm?
- ◆ What rhetorical patterns emerge in relation to international humanitarian law frameworks?
- ◆ How do institutional and cultural frames influence discourse reception?
- ◆ What specific linguistic strategies are employed to legitimize exceptional measures?

Related Work & Literature Review

- ◆ **Saslow (2016):** Public element in incitement and dangerous speech frameworks
- ◆ **Timermann:** Counteracting hate speech through legal and social mechanisms
- ◆ **Moses (2021):** Genocide studies and Holocaust memory intersections
- ◆ **Segal (2024):** Settler colonialism and antisemitism in political discourse
- ◆ **Jansen (2014):** Free speech limitations in genocide denial contexts

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Methodology Overview

Research design, data collection, and analytical framework

Research Approach



Data Collection Details

Data Source	Time Period	Number of Statements	Speakers Included
Public statements by senior Israeli officials	October - December 2023	22 statements	4 key political figures
Official government communications	3-month conflict period	Curated database	Multiple institutional contexts
Media transcripts and official releases	Specific conflict escalation	Systematically tagged	Cross-verification with multiple sources

Methodological Framework

Quantitative Component

- ◆ Frequency analysis of rhetorical themes
- ◆ Cross-tabulation by speaker
- ◆ Co-occurrence analysis of multiple tags
- ◆ Statistical pattern identification

Qualitative Component

- ◆ Discourse analysis of linguistic strategies
- ◆ Interpretation of performative declarations
- ◆ Contextual understanding of historical references
- ◆ Framing analysis of institutional constraints

Analytical Categories

- ◆ **Collective punishment:** Rhetoric suggesting group responsibility
- ◆ **Civilian harm:** Language normalizing or justifying civilian casualties
- ◆ **Unrestrained force:** References to unlimited military action
- ◆ **Dehumanization:** Language stripping humanity from targets
- ◆ **Forced displacement:** Rhetoric supporting population transfer
- ◆ **Destruction:** Language advocating comprehensive destruction

Constraints & Assumptions

1

Scope Limitations

Analysis limited to specific curated dataset of 22 statements from Oct-Dec 2023

2

Analytical Boundaries

Study does not provide definitive legal conclusions or causal explanations

3

Contextual Complexity

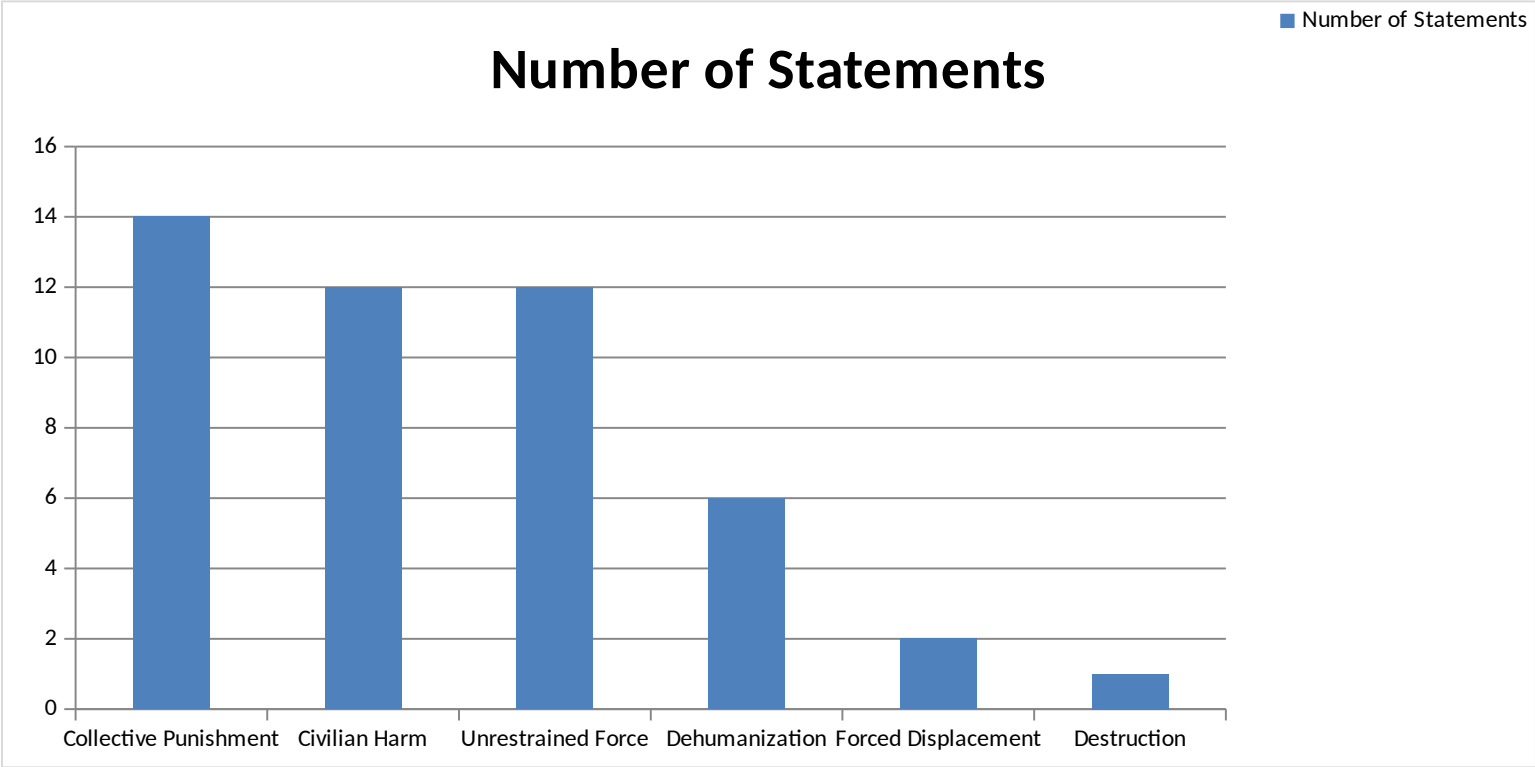
Analysis acknowledges intersecting historical narratives, social trauma, and institutional constraints

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Quantitative Analysis Results

Statistical patterns and frequency distributions

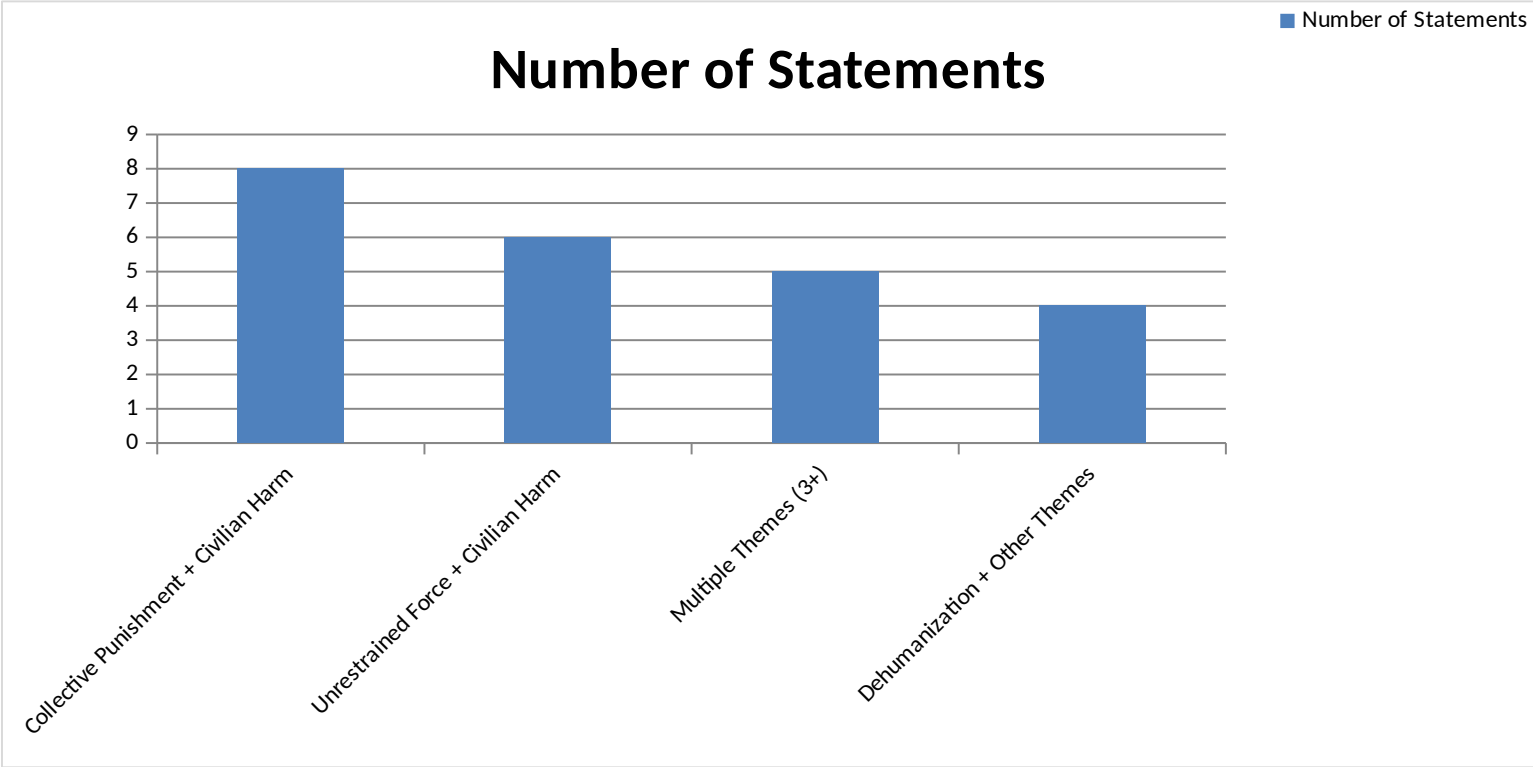
Theme Frequency Distribution



Speaker-Specific Patterns

Speaker	Statements Analyzed	Most Frequent Themes	Unique Patterns
Yoav Gallant	9 statements	Civilian harm (6), Collective punishment (6)	Strong emphasis on exceptional measures
Benjamin Netanyahu	9 statements	Unrestrained force (high), Civilian harm	Authority construction through historical references
Isaac Herzog	3 statements	Collective punishment (consistent)	Institutional framing of responsibility
Benny Gantz	1 statement	Multiple themes combined	Integrated rhetorical approach

Theme Co-occurrence Analysis



Temporal Patterns

- ◆ Increased frequency of collective punishment rhetoric in early October statements
- ◆ Escalation of unrestrained force references during November
- ◆ Dehumanization language peaks in December statements
- ◆ Civilian harm rhetoric remains consistently high throughout period
- ◆ Forced displacement and destruction themes appear in specific contextual moments

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Qualitative Discourse Analysis

Linguistic strategies and rhetorical mechanisms

Key Linguistic Strategies

1

Performative Declarations

Speech acts establishing authority through phrases like 'I have removed all restraints' and 'complete siege'

2

Collective Responsibility

Rhetoric constructing entire populations as legitimate targets through group attribution

3

Historical Analogies

Strategic references to Holocaust memory creating moral authority and exceptional circumstances

Authority Construction Mechanisms

- ◆ Performative speech acts establishing new realities through declaration
- ◆ Institutional authority leveraged through official positions and titles
- ◆ Historical memory invoked to create moral legitimacy for actions
- ◆ Emergency framing establishing exceptional circumstances requiring exceptional measures
- ◆ Binary opposition construction between 'civilized' and 'barbaric' actors

Case Study Examples

Linguistic Example

- ◆ 'I have removed all restraints on the IDF'
- ◆ 'We are fighting human animals'
- ◆ 'Gaza will never return to what it was'
- ◆ 'Complete siege - no electricity, no food, no fuel'

Analytical Interpretation

- ◆ Performative declaration of unlimited force
- ◆ Dehumanization through animal metaphors
- ◆ Declaration of permanent transformation
- ◆ Establishment of comprehensive collective punishment

Historical Memory Integration

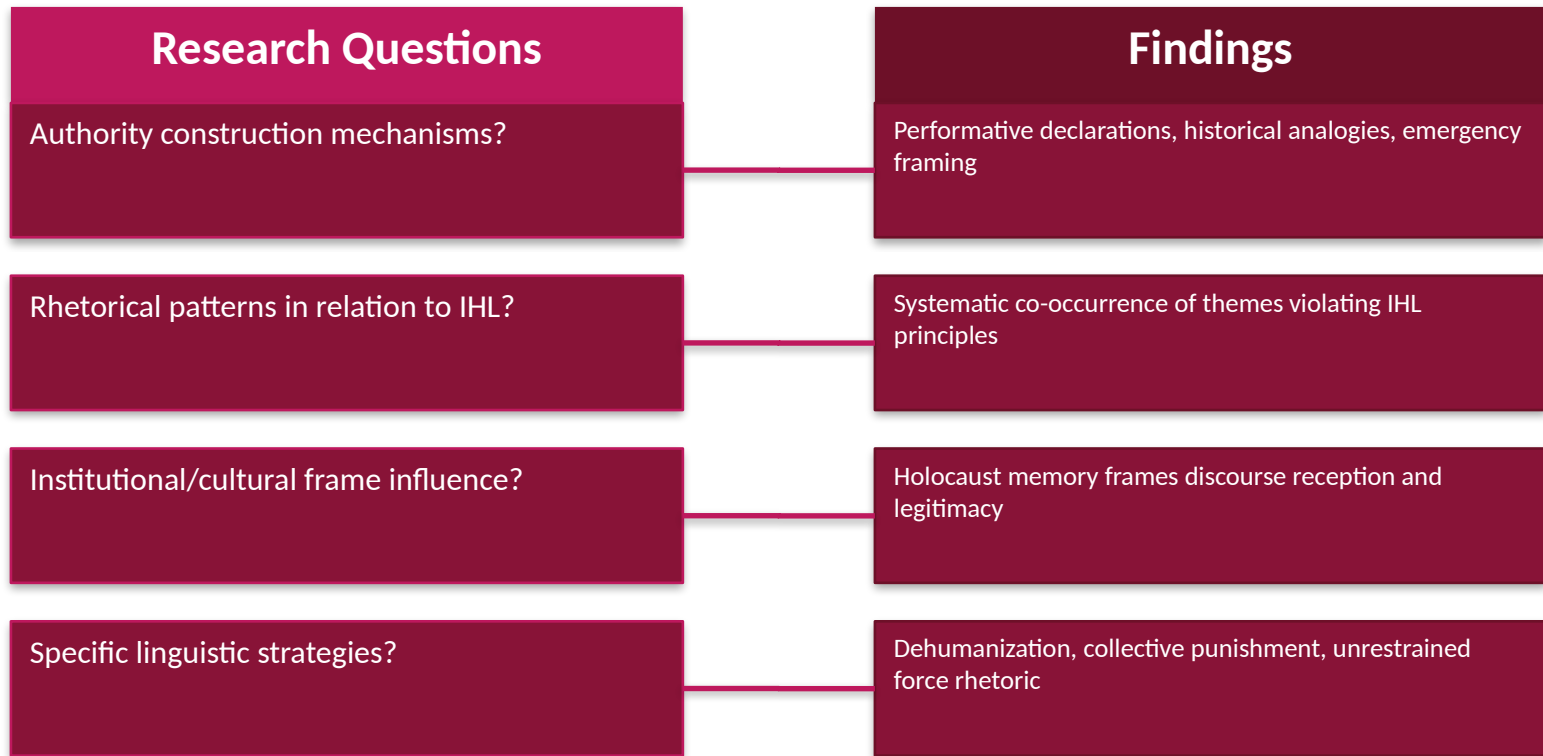
- ◆ Holocaust references used to establish moral high ground and victim status
- ◆ Historical analogies creating sense of existential threat requiring extreme response
- ◆ Memory of persecution leveraged to justify preemptive and disproportionate actions
- ◆ Selective historical recall emphasizing Jewish victimhood while minimizing Palestinian experience
- ◆ Temporal compression merging past trauma with present conflict

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Discussion & Implications

Interpretation of findings and broader significance

Key Findings Summary



Broader Implications

- ◆ Contributes to understanding how language normalizes violence in conflict settings
- ◆ Provides methodological framework for analyzing dangerous political speech
- ◆ Highlights need for accountability mechanisms addressing rhetorical violence
- ◆ Demonstrates importance of historical memory in contemporary political discourse
- ◆ Offers insights for conflict resolution through discourse analysis

Key Contributions

- ◆ Documents and analyzes rhetorical associations in defined corpus of Israeli political statements
- ◆ Reveals systematic co-occurrence of rhetorical themes normalizing civilian harm
- ◆ Identifies specific linguistic strategies constructing authority through performative declarations
- ◆ Contributes to scholarly conversation through innovative mixed-methods analysis
- ◆ Provides insights into historical memory's interaction with contemporary political rhetoric

Thank You!

research@academy-renaissance.edu | Questions & Discussion