

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

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## Paper Information

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

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## 1 AI Reviewer 1 - Comprehensive Review

\\ **Peer Review Report**

\\\ **Step 1. Summary of the Paper**

This manuscript analyzes political rhetoric by senior Israeli officials during October-December 2023, employing mixed methods to examine how linguistic patterns construct authority and normalize civilian harm. The authors claim to document systematic co-occurrence of rhetorical themes (collective punishment, civilian harm, genocidal intent, dehumanization) and identify specific linguistic strategies through discourse analysis. The paper positions itself as contributing to early-warning frameworks for dangerous speech and accountability mechanisms in conflict settings.

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\\\ **Step 2. Evaluation Criteria**

\\\\ **1. Originality / Novelty** **Score: 4/10**

The application of mixed methods to political rhetoric is methodologically sound but not novel. The conceptual framework draws heavily from established scholarship on dangerous speech (Benesch, Fairclough) and genocide studies without substantial theoretical innovation. While the specific

context (2023 Gaza conflict) is contemporary, the analytical approach largely replicates existing discourse analysis methodologies. The paper represents an application rather than an advancement of existing frameworks.

\\\\ \*\*2. Scientific Rigor / Methodology\*\* \*\*Score: 3/10\*\*

**Critical flaws undermine methodological validity:** - The database source ("Law for Palestine") represents an advocacy organization with explicit political positioning, introducing profound selection bias - Pre-assigned tags (e.g., "genocidal intent," "collective punishment") presuppose analytical conclusions rather than emerging from data - No inter-coder reliability measures for qualitative analysis - Sample size (n=22 statements) is insufficient for meaningful quantitative analysis - No validation of translation accuracy from Hebrew originals - Circular reasoning: using pre-tagged data to "discover" the very themes the tags presuppose

\\\\ \*\*3. Clarity \ Presentation\*\* \*\*Score: 7/10\*\*

The writing is generally clear and well-structured, with logical flow between sections. However, the abstract and conclusions overstate findings given methodological limitations. Figures/tables are absent where they would be beneficial (e.g., visualization of co-occurrence patterns). The repetitive description of findings across Results and Discussion sections could be consolidated.

\\\\ \*\*4. Reproducibility \ Transparency\*\* \*\*Score: 2/10\*\*

The manuscript fails basic reproducibility standards: - No access to raw data or database provided - Inadequate description of qualitative coding procedures - No documentation of how "representative quotations" were selected - Critical methodological details (analytical integration procedures, trustworthiness measures) described vaguely - Complete dependence on unavailable curated database

\\\\ \*\*5. Significance \ Impact\*\* \*\*Score: 5/10\*\*

The topic addresses important questions about political rhetoric in conflict. However, methodological flaws severely limit potential impact. The findings would be more compelling with rigorous, unbiased methodology. The paper's advocacy-oriented framing may limit its scholarly influence beyond specific ideological circles.

\\\\ \*\*6. Ethics \ Integrity\*\* \*\*Score: 3/10\*\*

**Substantial ethical concerns:** - Failure to adequately address profound conflict of interest in data source selection - No discussion of researcher positionality despite highly politicized context - Legal conclusions ("genocidal intent") presented as scholarly findings without appropriate caveats - Inadequate consideration of how pre-determined tagging by advocacy organization shapes analysis

\\\\ \*\* Step 3. Specific Suggestions for Improvement\*\*

\\\\ **Major Flaws Requiring Addressing:** 1. **Data Source Validity:** Must either use neutral data sources or extensively address selection bias and incorporate counterbalancing perspectives 2. **Methodological Circularity:** Remove dependence on pre-tagged data; develop coding scheme through rigorous, transparent process 3. **Sample Adequacy:** Substantially increase sample size or reframe as pilot study with appropriate limitations 4. **Translation Verification:** Include verification of Hebrew-English translation accuracy by independent linguists 5. **Positionality**

Statement\*\*: Add comprehensive researcher positionality and reflexivity statement

\\\\ \*\*Minor Flaws:\*\* - Consolidate repetitive findings between Results and Discussion - Correct incomplete references (Timmermann missing year, page numbers) - Add visualizations of co-occurrence patterns - Strengthen limitations section to adequately address methodological constraints

\\\\ \*\*Additional Analyses Needed:\*\* - Comparative analysis with rhetoric from other conflict parties - Inter-coder reliability measures for qualitative coding - Validation of analytical framework against established dangerous speech taxonomies - Temporal analysis with statistical significance testing

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\\ \*\* Step 4. Final Decision \ Justification\*\*

\\\\ \*\*Overall Score: 3/10\*\*

\\\\ \*\*Recommendation: REJECT\*\*

\\\\ \*\*Justification:\*\*

This manuscript cannot be accepted in its current form due to fundamental methodological flaws that invalidate its findings. The dependence on advocacy-curated data with pre-assigned inflammatory tags represents fatal selection bias and circular reasoning. The authors use a database designed to prove specific conclusions to then "discover" those same conclusions, rendering the analysis scientifically invalid.

While the topic is important and the mixed-methods approach potentially valuable, the execution fails basic standards of scholarly rigor. The paper would require complete methodological overhaul—including neutral data collection, transparent coding development, and adequate sample size—to produce credible findings.

The ethical concerns regarding conflict of interest and presentation of legal conclusions as scholarly findings further undermine the manuscript's suitability for publication in a high-impact scientific journal. The advocacy orientation overwhelms the scholarly analysis, limiting its contribution to objective scientific discourse.

\*\*This rejection reflects the fatal methodological flaws rather than the political content. A rigorously conducted study on this important topic would be welcome, but this manuscript does not meet that standard.\*\*

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\*\*Reviewer Confidence: High\*\* \*I have expertise in discourse analysis methodologies and conflict studies.\*

## 2 AI Reviewer 2 - Critical Review

**\*\*Overall Assessment: Weak Reject (2/5)\*\***

### \\ 1. Overall Impression

**\*\*Immediate Reaction:\*\*** This manuscript presents a methodologically concerning analysis of highly sensitive political rhetoric that fails to meet the burden of proof required for such consequential claims. The study appears ideologically motivated rather than scientifically rigorous, with fundamental flaws in sampling, methodology, and analytical objectivity.

**\*\*Characterization:\*\*** Overhyped weak study masquerading as rigorous mixed-methods research. The paper attempts to leverage the credibility of quantitative methods to support what is essentially a predetermined qualitative conclusion.

**\*\*First Impression Strengths:\*\*** - Addresses a timely and important topic regarding political rhetoric in conflict - Clear writing structure and logical organization - Attempts methodological triangulation

**\*\*First Impression Concerns:\*\*** - Fatally compromised data source with explicit advocacy agenda - Complete absence of methodological controls or validation - Overstated claims unsupported by the evidence presented - Serious ethical concerns regarding objectivity and bias

### \\ 2. Technical \ Scientific Assessment

**\*\*A. Problem Definition: 2/5\*\*** The research question is clearly motivated but fails to establish scholarly neutrality. The authors do not adequately justify why this specific dataset and timeframe were chosen over more comprehensive alternatives, nor do they acknowledge the highly partisan nature of their primary source.

**\*\*B. Methodological Soundness: 1/5\*\*** **\*\*Fatal flaws:\*\*** The study relies entirely on a curated database compiled by an advocacy organization (Law for Palestine) with an explicit political agenda. The database itself includes an editorial disclaimer that undermines the authors' analytical claims. No validation of translations, no intercoder reliability measures, no control for selection bias. The "mixed methods" approach essentially quantifies predetermined qualitative categories without independent verification.

**\*\*C. Results \ Evidence: 1/5\*\*** The evidence is fundamentally compromised by the biased data source. Claims about "genocidal intent" and "dehumanization" are based on pre-assigned tags from an advocacy organization rather than independent analysis. No comparison with rhetoric from other conflict contexts, no baseline of "normal" political speech during warfare, no statistical testing beyond simple frequency counts.

**\*\*D. Contribution to the Field: 2/5\*\*** While the topic is important, the methodological flaws undermine any potential contribution. The paper would likely be cited primarily by advocates rather than scholars due to its lack of scientific rigor.

**\*\*E. Writing \ Presentation: 4/5\*\*** Well-organized and clearly written, though this clarity ironically highlights the methodological deficiencies.

**\*\*F. Ethical \ Transparency Standards: 1/5\*\*** **\*\*Critical ethical failure:\*\*** The authors present

analysis of a highly contentious political dataset as objective scholarship without adequate disclosure of the source's advocacy nature or the profound limitations this imposes. No data/code availability mentioned. The study risks being weaponized in political discourse while lacking the scientific integrity to support its claims.

### \\ 3. Strengths

- Clear articulation of methodological approach - Systematic documentation of analytical procedures
- Engagement with relevant theoretical frameworks - Timely subject matter with potential policy relevance

### \\ 4. Weaknesses

**Major Flaws:** - **Source bias:** Complete dependence on advocacy-curated data with pre-determined conclusions - **Methodological bankruptcy:** No validation of coding, translations, or sample representativeness - **Circular analysis:** Quantifying categories created by advocacy organization then presenting as independent findings - **Overstated claims:** Using terms like "genocidal intent" without legal or methodological rigor - **Absence of controls:** No comparison groups, no baseline data, no statistical significance testing

**Minor Flaws:** - Incomplete references (Timmermann Year?) - Repetitive presentation of findings across sections - Overuse of academic jargon obscuring methodological limitations

### \\ 5. Recommendations for Improvement

**Required for Any Future Consideration:**

1. **Independent data collection:** Collect original statements from comprehensive sources rather than pre-curated advocacy databases
2. **Methodological validation:** Establish intercoder reliability, validate translations, demonstrate coding consistency
3. **Comparative framework:** Include control samples (other conflicts, other time periods, opposing rhetoric)
4. **Statistical rigor:** Apply proper statistical tests beyond simple frequency counts
5. **Source transparency:** Fully disclose advocacy nature of data sources and implications for analysis
6. **Legal precision:** Either substantiate legal terms like "genocidal intent" with proper legal analysis or use less loaded terminology

**What Would Make This Acceptable:** A complete redesign using primary sources, validated methodology, comparative analysis, and proper statistical treatment. The current manuscript is irredeemable in its present form due to fundamental source bias.

### \\ 6. Verdict

**Weak Reject (2/5)**

**Justification:** This paper cannot be published in its current form due to fatal methodological flaws that fundamentally compromise its scientific validity. The complete dependence on an advocacy-curated dataset with predetermined analytical categories makes the "findings" essentially circular. The authors use the appearance of quantitative rigor to lend credibility to what is essentially a qualitative argument built on biased foundations.

While the topic is important and worthy of scholarly attention, this study fails to meet basic standards of scientific objectivity required for publication in a tier-1 venue. The ethical concerns

are particularly serious given the highly charged political context and the potential for the study's flawed methodology to be weaponized in political discourse.

The paper should be rejected, and the authors should undertake a complete methodological redesign using primary sources and validated analytical procedures if they wish to contribute meaningfully to this important research area.

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**\*\*Reviewer 2 Style Compliance:\*\*** I have applied strict skepticism regarding methodological claims, demanded strong justification for analytical choices, and highlighted fundamental flaws in novelty, rigor, and ethical standards. The burden of proof for such consequential claims about political rhetoric is high, and this manuscript fails to meet it.

### **3 Human Reviewer**

No human review submitted

## 4 Aggregate Report

No aggregate report available - waiting for all reviews to be completed.