

Unknown Paper

AI Reviewer 1 - Comprehensive Review

This reviewer provides a thorough and balanced assessment

\\ ****Comprehensive Peer Review****

\\\ ****Step 1. Summary of the Paper**** This paper presents a critical discourse analysis examining how institutional language in healthcare and human rights contexts functions to systematically erase Palestinian suffering. The authors identify and theorize two core discursive mechanisms: ****"procedural absolution" (the pattern of acknowledging the contestability of a claim like genocide, only to neutralize it through bureaucratic, technical, or legal deferral) and the resulting "double bind" for advocates (who must either engage with erasing frameworks or be dismissed as unreasonable).** The claimed contribution is to empirically demonstrate how discourse moves from acknowledging contestability to re-imposing closure, thereby rationalizing the exclusion of Palestinian experiences from humanitarian concern and historical record. The method involves qualitative analysis of 85 institutional documents (reports, journal articles, policy briefs) from 2010-2024, using NVivo-assisted coding to identify linguistic patterns.

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

****1. Originality / Novelty**** ****Qualitative Critique:**** The paper's core strength is its conceptual originality. While discourse analysis of institutional language and critiques of depoliticization are well-established (citing Ferguson, Fricker), the specific synthesis of these ideas to analyze the **"management of genocide claims" within "healthcare discourse"** is novel. The constructs of "procedural absolution" and the "double bind," as applied to this specific socio-political context, represent a genuine theoretical contribution. It moves beyond documenting health disparities to interrogating the linguistic architecture that sustains them. ****Score:** 8/10**

****2. Scientific Rigor / Methodology**** ****Qualitative Critique:**** The methodological description is detailed and largely sound for a qualitative discourse analysis. Strengths include a clear purposive sampling strategy, a multi-phase coding process, use of software, and efforts to ensure validity (peer debriefing, member checking, intercoder reliability = 0.82). However, significant flaws exist: ****Corpus Construction Bias:**** The search terms ("healthcare" AND "Palestine") may systematically exclude documents where the political context (occupation, conflict) is the primary frame and "healthcare" is a secondary mention. This could skew the corpus toward documents already primed for a technical health framing. ****Lack of Comparative Control:**** The analysis lacks a comparative element (e.g., analyzing discourse on another contested conflict zone). This makes it difficult to ascertain whether the identified mechanisms are specific to the Palestinian case or generic features of institutional discourse in protracted conflicts. The claim of "systematic erasure"

is thus harder to substantiate. * **Circularity in Analysis:** The coding scheme appears tautological. Deductive codes like "acknowledgment of contestability" and "re-imposition of closure" are the very phenomena the study sets out to prove. While iterative coding is standard, the risk of confirming pre-existing theoretical constructs is high and not sufficiently mitigated. * **Ethical Approval:** Not applicable, as the study uses publicly available documents. * **Score:** 5/10

3. Clarity \ Presentation * **Qualitative Critique:** The paper is well-structured, and the writing is sophisticated, albeit dense and occasionally jargon-heavy ("socio-linguistic field," "epistemic erasure"). The abstract and conclusions accurately reflect the paper's claims, though the significance is stated rather grandly. The tables (1 \ 2) are helpful but rudimentary; visualizations of discursive networks or example text deconstructions would be more informative. A major flaw is the **complete absence of direct quotations from the corpus in the main text**. The results section describes patterns and provides paraphrased examples ("a 2022 WHO report states..."), but without seeing the actual language, the reader cannot evaluate the authors' interpretive claims. This severely undermines transparency and persuasiveness. * **Score:** 4/10

4. Reproducibility \ Transparency * **Qualitative Critique:** The paper promises a "detailed protocol" for replication, including search terms, criteria, and a coding scheme. This is good practice. However, the critical failure noted above—withholding the primary data (quotes) from the reader—makes the analysis fundamentally irreproducible for the reviewer. The claim that the corpus can be "reconstructed" is burdensome and does not allow for verification of the central interpretive act: how specific phrases were coded and categorized. Statistical summaries (percentages) are provided, but the raw textual evidence is absent. * **Score:** 3/10

5. Significance \ Impact * **Qualitative Critique:** The paper addresses a profoundly important problem at the intersection of global health, human rights, and political discourse. Its potential impact is high within critical social science, genocide studies, and decolonial health policy scholarship. It offers a powerful lens for advocates and scholars to deconstruct institutional neutrality. However, its impact on mainstream health policy or medical journals may be limited due to its overtly critical and theoretical stance. The work is more likely to be influential in shifting analytical frameworks than in prompting immediate institutional change. * **Score:** 7/10

6. Ethics \ Integrity * **Qualitative Critique:** No overt plagiarism or data manipulation is apparent. The authors acknowledge the study's sensitive nature. A significant concern is **positionality and conflict of interest**. The paper is framed by a clear and specific political critique. While this is a valid scholarly stance, the manuscript in its current "double-blind" form with anonymous authors completely elides the necessary discussion of **author positionality**. In research of this nature, the authors' own situatedness is a critical part of the intellectual rigor. This omission must be addressed. * **Score:** 5/10

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

Major Flaws (Must be addressed for reconsideration): 1. **Include Direct Quotations:** The Results section **must** integrate numerous, verbatim, representative quotations from the corpus to illustrate *every* key finding (e.g., "acknowledgment and neutralization," specific modal verb uses, double-bind language). These should be presented with clear citations to the source document. 2. **Address Methodological Circularity/Bias:** Revise the methodology section to: * Acknowledge and discuss the risk of confirmatory bias inherent in the deductive coding approach. * Justify the lack of a comparative case or explain how the analysis internally controlled for generic features of bureaucratic language. * Consider broadening or justifying the corpus search strategy

to mitigate potential selection bias. 3. **Add Positionality Statement:** A dedicated subsection (e.g., in Methods or as a separate ethics note) must be added, where the authors reflect on their own positions, backgrounds, and potential biases relative to the topic. This is non-negotiable for ethical and intellectual transparency in critical research. 4. **Strengthen the Discussion of Limitations:** The current limitations section is standard but inadequate. It must be expanded to seriously engage with the methodological critiques above (corpus bias, circularity, lack of comparators) and discuss how these limitations affect the strength and generalizability of the conclusions.

Minor Flaws: 1. Improve figure/table quality. Consider a figure mapping the discursive process of procedural absolution. 2. The reference to Alejandro (2025) in the background seems anachronistic or an error; clarify or correct. 3. Reduce jargon where possible to enhance accessibility without sacrificing analytical depth. 4. Proofread for minor formatting inconsistencies (e.g., spacing in "re-imposing").

Suggestions for Strengthening: * Consider a small, focused comparative analysis (even within the discussion) by briefly examining a few documents from another conflict context. This would powerfully demonstrate whether the mechanisms are distinctive or generalized. * The "Future Work" section could propose specific, testable strategies for "disrupting" procedural absolution, moving from critique to constructive intervention.

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

Overall Score: 5/10 (Marginal/Requires Major Revision) **Recommendation:** **Reject** in its current form, but with a clear invitation for a **major resubmission** upon addressing the fundamental flaws.

Justification: This paper presents a highly original and potentially significant theoretical argument that tackles an issue of great importance. Its ambition and interdisciplinary reach are commendable. However, in its present state, the manuscript is **methodologically unsound for publication in a high-impact journal**. The fatal flaw is the complete lack of primary textual evidence presented to the reader, rendering the core analysis unverifiable and irreproducible within the review process. This is compounded by unaddressed risks of methodological circularity and selection bias, and a serious omission regarding author positionality.

While the conceptual framework of "procedural absolution" and the "double bind" is compelling, the empirical demonstration is currently more asserted than proven. The authors have the burden of proof to show the *how* through the *what* (the actual language). Until they provide that evidence and rigorously address the methodological and ethical concerns raised, the paper's valuable insights remain intriguing hypotheses rather than substantiated scholarly contributions.

The work has considerable promise. If the authors can comprehensively revise the manuscript to include direct evidence, bolster its methodological rigor, and incorporate necessary reflexive elements, it could become a strong candidate for publication. Therefore, a reject decision is warranted, but with explicit guidance for a transformative resubmission.

AI Reviewer 2 - Critical Review

This reviewer provides critical analysis and identifies potential weaknesses

****Review of "PROCEDURAL ABSOLUTION AND THE DOUBLE BIND: INSTITUTIONAL DISCOURSE AND THE ERASURE OF PALESTINIAN SUFFERING IN HEALTHCARE ACCESS"****

\\ **1. Overall Impression**

My immediate reaction is one of significant methodological and conceptual concern. The paper tackles a politically and emotionally charged topic with a stated aim of critical discourse analysis. However, the execution feels more like a polemic framed in academic language than a rigorous, dispassionate scholarly investigation. The central thesis—that institutional language systematically erases Palestinian suffering through "procedural absolution"—is presented as a foregone conclusion rather than a hypothesis to be tested. The analysis appears to selectively interpret data to fit a pre-existing narrative. While the **topic** is undoubtedly important and under-studied, the **study** as presented feels overhyped and weak, lacking the methodological rigor and neutrality expected for a Tier-1 publication. Its strength lies in attempting to bridge discourse analysis with health equity in a contentious setting; its fatal flaw is a lack of demonstrable objectivity and analytical fairness.

\\ **2. Technical \ Scientific Assessment**

****A. Problem Definition (Score: 3/5)**** The research question is clearly motivated and non-trivial. The intersection of genocide discourse, institutional language, and health equity is a valid and complex area of inquiry. The authors argue why the problem matters, particularly in highlighting potential epistemic injustice. However, the motivation is overwhelmingly one-sided, presupposing a specific form of erasure as the starting point rather than an open question.

****B. Methodological Soundness (Score: 1/5)**** This is the paper's core weakness, rendering its findings highly suspect. *** **Study Design \ Rigor:**** The qualitative discourse analysis of 85 documents is an appropriate method. However, the ****purposive sampling strategy is critically flawed and introduces profound selection bias****. The criteria—documents mentioning both "healthcare" and "Palestine"—are far too broad and guarantee the corpus will be heterogeneous. More importantly, there is no description of a control or comparison group. Where are the institutional documents discussing other contested conflicts (e.g., Syria, Myanmar, Tigray) analyzed with the same coding scheme? Without this, we cannot determine if "procedural absolution" is a unique mechanism for Palestine or a generic feature of institutional discourse in any legally and politically complex humanitarian crisis. This omission invalidates the central claim of a **systematic** erasure specific to Palestine. *** **Hidden Assumptions \ Cherry-Picking:**** The entire analysis rests on the assumption that the "neutralization" observed is inherently nefarious and constitutes "erasure." An alternative, equally plausible interpretation is that institutions are navigating their mandates, adhering to legal standards, and attempting to maintain operational access in a polarized environment. The paper dismisses this possibility **a priori**. The "double bind" is presented as a trap set by institutions, not as a reflection of a genuine, intractable political-legal dilemma. The

coding process, while described, seems designed to confirm the thesis (e.g., coding "referral to legal debate" as a "neutralization strategy" presupposes that such referral is illegitimate).

C. Results \ Evidence (Score: 2/5) **Reproducibility \ Controls:** As above, lacking a comparative corpus, the results are not compelling evidence of a unique phenomenon. The frequency counts (e.g., 91.8\ **Fairness of Analysis:** The analysis of linguistic markers (modal verbs, passive voice) is elementary discourse analysis. The interpretation that these "necessarily" signify "procedural absolution" and "erasure" is a massive overreach. In legal, diplomatic, and scientific writing, these features are norms of caution, precision, and objectivity. The paper provides no evidence that the use of "could" or "should" in a WHO report about Gaza is functionally different from its use in a report about drought in Somalia or an earthquake in Haiti. **Exaggeration of Claims:** The claim that the discourse "normalizes the erasure of Palestinian suffering" is an extreme conclusion not matched by the evidence presented. The paper shows that institutions are cautious and use technical language; it does not prove this constitutes "erasure" or "absolution."

D. Contribution to the Field (Score: 2/5) The contribution is currently minor. It proposes two new terms ("procedural absolution," "double bind") but fails to robustly demonstrate they describe a distinct, measurable phenomenon beyond standard critical theory critiques of bureaucracy. It would likely be cited in very specific circles but dismissed in broader social science or health policy for its methodological weaknesses.

E. Writing \ Presentation (Score: 4/5) The paper is well-written, logically organized, and stylistically competent. The abstract and introduction clearly frame the argument. Figures/Tables are simple but clear.

F. Ethical \ Transparency Standards (Score: 3/5) No direct human subjects, so IRB is not applicable. The promise to provide a coding scheme and protocol is good, but the refusal to share the corpus "due to copyright restrictions" is a major barrier to replication and verification. In computational social science, it is standard practice to provide a list of DOIs or persistent URLs. This must be addressed.

3. Strengths **Addresses a significant, interdisciplinary gap at the intersection of critical discourse studies, genocide studies, and health equity.** **Clearly articulates a novel theoretical framework (procedural absolution/double bind).** **Writing is articulate and the argument is presented with force and clarity.**

4. Weaknesses **Major Flaws:** 1. **Fatal Selection Bias:** No comparative analysis with institutional discourse on other conflicts. This alone undermines the entire study's validity. 2. **Interpretive Overreach:** Conflates standard features of institutional/legal discourse (caution, reference to mandates, technical language) with active "erasure" and "absolution" without sufficient proof. 3. **Lack of Objectivity:** The study design and interpretation appear ideologically driven, starting from a conclusion and seeking confirmatory evidence. 4. **Unsubstantiated Causal Claim:** Implies that discursive patterns "cause" or "perpetuate" material suffering, a claim that is suggested but in no way demonstrated.

Minor Flaws: **References formatted inconsistently (e.g., "un1 (1949)", "Alejandro (2025)").** **Overuse of italics for emphasis in the text is stylistically grating in an academic paper.** **The**

term "footnoting" is used in the introduction but not fully operationalized or returned to in the analysis.

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\\\ ****5. Recommendations for Improvement**** ****To be acceptable, this paper requires fundamental, not incremental, revision:****

1. ****Comparative Analysis (Mandatory):**** The authors must conduct a parallel analysis of a control corpus. This should include institutional documents (WHO, UN, NGO reports, academic articles) addressing health in at least 2-3 other protracted, politically contested conflicts where genocide accusations have been made (e.g., Syria, Myanmar, Yemen). Apply the **exact same** coding scheme. Only by comparing frequencies and patterns can the authors claim that what they observe is distinctive to the Palestinian case.
2. ****Nuance in Interpretation:**** The discussion must acknowledge the legitimate reasons institutions use cautious, legalistic language (maintaining access, upholding mandates, avoiding the dilution of the term "genocide," operating in sovereign states). The analysis should distinguish between **potentially** obfuscating language and language that is **necessarily** so.
3. ****Transparent Data:**** The corpus must be made verifiable. Provide a supplementary file with a complete list of documents, including titles, authors/institutions, publication years, and, crucially, ****DOIs or stable URLs****. If copyright is a concern, the specific search queries and database extraction dates must be provided so the corpus can be exactly reconstructed.
4. ****Tone and Positioning:**** Reframe the paper from an exposé of "erasure" to a critical examination of "the tensions and trade-offs in institutional discourse surrounding legally charged terms in health contexts." This would make it more scholarly and less advocacy.

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\\\ ****6. Verdict****

****Overall Score: 1.5/5**** ****Categorical Judgment: STRONG REJECT****

****Justification:**** This paper is fundamentally flawed in its methodological design. The lack of a comparative control group creates an unresolvable selection bias that invalidates its core argument. The study confuses correlation with causation and interpretation with evidence, reading malicious intent into standard bureaucratic and legal linguistic practices. While the topic is important and the theoretical ideas provocative, the research as presented does not meet the minimum threshold of scientific rigor required for a premier journal. The biases are so deeply embedded in the study's framing and analysis that a simple revision is impossible; it would require a complete redesign and re-execution of the research. I cannot recommend publication in its current form.

Human Reviewer

Expert human review providing domain-specific insights

Reviewer: Naseem

Scores (out of 10): - Question 1: 1.5 - Question 2: 0.5 - Question 3: 1 - Question 4: 0.75 - Question 5: 0.25 - Question 6: 1.5 - Question 7: 0.5

Total Score: 6 / 10

Reviewer Notes:

Submitted at: 2025-12-24 16:52:48

Aggregate Review

Combined assessment from all reviewers

Aggregate Review Report

This report combines the assessments from all three reviewers:

Individual Scores: - AI Reviewer 1 (Comprehensive): 0.0 / 10 - AI Reviewer 2 (Critical): 0.0 / 10
- Human Reviewer (Naseem): 6 / 10

Aggregate Score: 2.00 / 10

Overall Assessment: The paper received an average score of 2.00 out of 10 across all three reviewers.

Final Decision: Reject

Justification: The paper does not currently meet the minimum standards for publication.

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