Examining Israeli Media Targeting Arab and Muslim Audiences: A Content Analysis of the 'Israel Speaks Arabic' Facebook Page

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The study examined Israeli digital diplomacy's strategic use of social media platforms, particularly Facebook, to engage with the Arab public in neighboring countries. The study focused on the 'Israel Speaks Arabic' Facebook page, a project by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Facebook. The study aims to analyze the content themes presented to Arab Face bookers, the different media formats employed, and the Arab countries targeted. The methodology involved qualitative data analysis from three pivotal periods in 2019 and 2020. This process was executed by collecting and examining posts published on the 'Israel Speaks Arabic' page to understand their content and significance. The study's results highlighted the page's use of a human-interest framework to emphasise peace and coexistence themes. The portrayal of Arab Palestinians in the 1948 territories served as an illustration of a peaceful society. Additionally, the page underscored its positive ties with Egypt, a neighboring country, demonstrating the potential for harmonious relationships with the rest of the Arab world. This strategic approach emphasizes the significance of digital diplomacy in fostering better international relationships .

Keywords: social media, facebook, Palestinian-Israeli conflict, news framing.

Media plays a significant role in shaping public discourse and awareness, significantly establishing and developing international relationships among countries. By providing extensive coverage and disseminating critical information, media platforms can influence public perception and promote understanding among nations. Thus, media is a powerful tool in facilitating diplomatic relations and fostering collaborations, such as the educational partnership between Pakistan and China (Rehman et al., 2022). As such, the role of media cannot be underestimated in building and enhancing connections among nations.

The rise of social media platforms and their influence on younger generations have altered our communication methods and created a new trend that individuals and governments are beginning to adopt (Soukup, 2018). Facebook is one of these social media platforms that contributed to the Arab Spring revolutions in the Arab world (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012). Thus, Israel paid attention to the social media phenomenon and created official pages to represent the state's official narrative and ideologies in the most straightforward manner that social media permits.

One of these pages is titled 'Israel Speaks Arabic' and was created on Facebook to provide Arabic-language content to the Arab-speaking population in Palestine and the surrounding Arab

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countries. Israel, the occupation state that occupied Arab Palestine, is aware that it stands alone in the Middle East, surrounded by Arab countries. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict has been the central factor that has made Israel the antagonist of Arab nations. Social media can achieve Israel's goal of softly penetrating the Arab public to establish channels for acceptance due to the Arab public's attitude. By analysing the content of the Facebook page 'Israel Speaks Arabic,' this study examines how Israel achieves its goal of reaching out to the Arab people. It is important to note that this paper is part of a larger project entitled: 'The Israeli Media and Social Media Diplomy' whereby four official Israeli Facebook pages were analysed: 'Israel Speaks Arabic', 'The Coordinator', 'Avichay Adrae', and 'Ofer Gendlman' Pages. This study presents the results for one page; i, e, 'Israel Speaks Arabic' FB Page. The study seeks to address the following issues:

1. What are the most prominent themes highlighted in the FB posts of 'Israel Speaks Arabic'?
2. What media frames are used by the 'Israel Speaks Arabic' FB Page concerning the Arab-Palestinian issues?
3. Which Arab countries does Israel's content aim to target?

The perception of the Israeli State of Occupation, established in 1948 on Palestinian territory, as the enemy remains prevalent among Arabs, including Palestinians. Since its inception, Israel has maintained this stance, which has hindered the prospects of normalization with the Arab world. To address this challenge and promote a shift in perspective, leveraging the media as a form of soft power becomes crucial. This article examines the transformative journey of Israeli media targeting Arabic-speaking countries, transitioning from traditional media to contemporary social media platforms. By embracing these innovative communication channels, the Israeli media has revolutionized, enabling new avenues for engagement and interaction. This discussion highlights the significance of utilizing these cutting-edge platforms in reshaping media narratives and fostering dialogue towards building understanding and potential normalization between Israel and the Arab world.

The Emergence of Arabic-language Media in Israel, its Objectives, and its Functions

As a result of the Zionist mission, Israeli media existed before the formation of the state. The first two Israeli newspapers, Halifanon and Haftsilt, were established in 1863. However, during the British mandate period, several newspapers expressed partisan tendencies within the Zionist entity after its revival appeared. The most prominent were 'Haaretz,' 'Yediot Aharonot,' 'Maariv,' and 'Defar Shi'; the latter was published in 1922 and adopted a purely partisan direction following the declaration of the occupation state (Qasim, 2010).

After the establishment of the occupation state, media interest generally increased. It relates to the Hebrew-speaking Israeli media and the Arabic-speaking Israeli media. At the time, Israeli radio allocated daily time slots for Arabic broadcasts. In the process of nation-building, the Israeli media adhered to specific objectives rooted in the concept of the Jewish State and promoted social cohesion within Israeli society. According to Awad (2016) (Ahmed, 2016), these tracks were: first, promoting the idea of Jewish nationalism by emphasizing Hebrew as a language and creating a unified Jewish heritage; and second, consolidating the concept of the Jewish entity as a distinct and independent entity unique to all Jews of the globe. Thirdly, it sought assimilation with Western societies and confirmation that Israel is a part of the Christian West. Fourth, it attempted to unite Jewish forces' diverse forms and locations.

Moreover, Zaboun (2017) emphasises the significance of media to the architects of the occupation state. Before the establishment of Israel, they dealt with it as one of the fundamental

tools for state formation. Before 1948, the Zionist movement established a Jewish radio station and published 14 periodicals, including four Arabic-language publications. Today, at least two of these periodicals, namely Haaretz and Yedioth Ahronoth, serve as global resources for news about Israel. Haaretz was first published in 1919, followed by Yediot Aharonoth in 1939 and Maariv in 1948.

Regarding the Arab public, Kabaha (2001) argued that the Israeli media was keen on reinforcing two trends in its discourse: first, weakening the Palestinian Arab's connection to his homeland by challenging and questioning the Palestinian narrative about the history in favour of emphasising the Jewish narrative and relying on the fact that 'the land is for those who cultivate it, not those who leave it. Second, it attempted to persuade the Arab public of the benevolence of the State of Israel, the necessity of a national homeland for the Jews, and the possibility of peaceful coexistence with the Jews within a developed Israeli Jewish entity comparable to the West. Thirdly, it attempted to isolate Palestinian Arabs from their Arab and Islamic surroundings by making them ashamed of the decline in values and modernity, the weakness of services, and the low living standards in Arab and Islamic nations compared to the development in the occupation state.

Abu Tabak (2007) proposes that Israeli media operates along two trajectories: one internal and the other external, with the latter directed towards Western, Arab, and Palestinian societies. Therefore, the media discourse strategies for these demographics are distinctly different. Abu Tabak (2007) further delineated the principal subdivisions within the external media:

- The Media Department is preparing research on Israeli concerns. In addition, it distributes the annual, publishes a colour magazine in multiple languages (Israel), participates in exhibitions and symposia, and maintains close ties with international television networks.

- The Department of Cultural Relations is dedicated to ensuring that Israeli cultural treaties with foreign nations include provisions for teaching Hebrew, radio exchange, creative teams, and establishing Israeli cultural treaties with foreign countries.

- The Department of International Cooperation is responsible for sending Israeli specialists abroad, admitting students to study in Israel, and organising seminars and conferences within Israel.

- The mission of the Ministry of Exterior's press office is to provide daily news to the local press and foreign correspondents, to arrange interviews for journalists with officials of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, and to send a daily summary of the Israeli press to Israeli diplomatic missions abroad.

According to Jamal, Israel's excessive interest in foreign media is a result of the ideology of the Zionist movement, which founded the nation Jamal (2005). In addition to being a national movement, this is also an educational one. It uses media as a means and a goal to transform the ongoing conflict on the ground into a discourse battle and establishes criteria for evaluating reality. Since 1925, according to Jamal (2005), the Zionist establishment and then Israel has contributed to developing newspapers and the media. The most prominent example is the 'Davar' newspaper, which established Arabic-language newspapers to reach Arabs and Palestinians and infiltrate Arab media to convey the Zionist perspective to Arab readers.

Concern for Palestinian and Arab viewers prompted the occupation state to establish several Arabic television station channels, particularly to lessen the impact of Syrian, Egyptian, and Iraqi televisions on Arab and Palestinian audiences. It adopted the same editorial policy for Arabic-language radio stations and newspaper broadcasts. It emphasised, for instance, portraying

the State of Israel as solid and unconquerable and that Arab resistance would result in disaster. It also symbolises Israel as a developed Middle Eastern nation whose citizens experience a high standard of living (The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, 2014).

Through its targeted programming, Arabic-speaking Israeli radio also held a prominent position in the collective memory of the Arab and Palestinian public. It competed with Arab radio stations primarily because the occupation state intended to disrupt Arab radio waves and enhance its broadcasts to control what the Arab and Palestinian public heard. This radio station was managed by the Prime Minister's office with a security intelligence policy until the mid-1960s of the 20th century. It used targeted programs and counter-propaganda to respond to Arab propaganda (Jamal, 2005). In general, Israeli policy based its media management on the content of Herzl's speech in the editorial of the first issue of the Zionist movement weekly 'Die Welt' on March 6, 1897, in which he stated that this newspaper should be a shield for the Jewish people and a weapon against its enemies.

There is an Arabic-language radio station on the current Arabic-language media level. In addition, an official Israeli satellite channel devoted hours to Arabic programming and a second satellite channel called 'I 24' was founded years ago (Jamal, 2005). In addition, there is the Al-Masdar website, which specialises in promoting Israeli issues not discussed by other media channels, and the 'Arab Times of Israel website, which broadcasts in-depth reports and has a solid pro-Israel bias (Al-Budairi, 2005). In addition to the social media profiles of Israeli officials, all Arabic-speaking Israeli media outlets exist.

Article 3 of the Radio and Television Law, which the Israeli Knesset approved in March 1965, identifies the Israeli media's most essential functions and responsibilities as follows: highlighting the Jewish entity, its struggle, creativity, and achievements; and strengthening the connection to Jewish traditions and thirdly, highlighting the way of life and culture of Jewish communities around the globe. According to the state's primary goals, Arabic-language broadcasts serve the Arabic-speaking audience in preparation for future cooperation with neighbouring nations.

According to (Al-Naami, 2017), Israeli Arabic-language media existed before the establishment of the occupation state. The Zionist movement utilised Arabic-speaking media to urge Palestinians to abandon their towns and villages, as the 'Haganah' and 'Lehi' Zionist gangs allotted a portion of their radio broadcasts to the Arabic language. The Israeli government employed psychological warfare techniques in these messages. The announcers were referring to the crimes their organisations committed against Arabs to instil fear in the hearts of Palestinians and compel them to abandon their lands and homes.

Al-Naami (2017) added that the first prime minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, established an Arabic-language private radio station called "Voice of Israel" based in Jerusalem and broadcast daily for brief periods. Then, in 1949, it was relocated to Tel Aviv; in 1954, it was returned to Jerusalem. After the tripartite invasion of Egypt in 1956, Arab radio broadcasting became popular and began to air seven hours daily. After the war of 1967, daily broadcast time was prolonged to 14 hours. From 6:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m., radio stations now broadcast in Arabic for over 18 hours daily.

The Concealed Ideology of Israeli Media
Since the country's founding, absolute security and military control from the interior to the periphery have dominated Israeli thought. Consequently, everything that results from this belief

serves and reinforces this concept. According to Rofou'o (2004), the Zionist ideology governed the Israeli state through its various political parties and the associated media discourse. Therefore, it was natural for party leaders and members to switch parties without affecting the public discourse that nurtured the concept of Zionism. This concept holds that Israel is the national home of Jews around the globe. This concept prioritises Israeli security and preservation, the dissemination and deepening of the Jewish heritage, and the fortification of the Hebrew language relative to the other languages spoken by Jewish immigrants.

Regarding the ideology of the Israeli media regarding the Palestinians, Abu-Amer (2018) made several observations regarding the performance of this media, particularly concerning its orientation toward Palestinian issues and events. First, it is a security guard regarding its objectives and principles, directed, controlled, and monitored by the military security circles. Second, it complements foreign policy by supporting its efforts to promote Israeli propaganda and opposing any counter-propaganda or global campaign against it.

Abu-Amer (2018) added that Israeli media could penetrate societies and accomplish diversity by luring foreign media celebrities, signing contracts with advertising firms, and attempting to sway public opinion. Abu Amer specifies the Zionist ideological trends serviced by Israeli media, arguing that these trends or media specifications have not changed regardless of events or developments concerning the Palestinian issue. First, it believes that all Jews are part of a single Jewish nation, so bringing them together in Palestine is necessary to establish a Jewish state. Second, it maintains Israel's security and survival as a priority, albeit through varying mechanisms. Thirdly, it recalls the Holocaust and its continued use as an excuse for the oppression and displacement of the Palestinians and the suppression of the Western world's voice demanding justice. The fourth trend emphasizes the historicity and legitimacy of Jewish existence in Palestine while ignoring Palestinian history, marginalization, and denial. Fifth, it undermines the Palestinian national identity and its relationship to the Arab identity. Sixth, it disregards the Palestinians' right to form a nation or exercise self-determination, regarding them as an indeterminate human group. Seventh, it considers Israel an oasis of Western democracy in a primitive and autocratic Arab world.

In this regard, Al-Gharabli (2018) asserted that the Israeli-Arabic speaking media employs two media theories: the first is the 'Agenda-Setting Theory,' which categorises published topics based on their significance to the target audience, Palestinians. This theory posits that this strategy directly influences Palestinian public opinion and compels it to consider within the framework of published media materials. The second media theory is the 'Gatekeeping' of the media portal, which holds that all data disseminated in the media is filtered and monitored by multiple outlets before publication.

The target audience of the Arabic-language media in Israel, according to Alassas (2019) is divided into five categories: the first is Palestinian Arabs residing within the 1948 borders of the occupied territories. The second group consists of Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza. The third category consists of citizens of the Arab nations that have explicitly signed peace accords with the occupying power, namely Egypt and Jordan. The fourth group comprises citizens of Arab countries that are not at peace with Israel or have not yet executed a public peace accord. Everyone who speaks Arabic is intrigued to learn more about the occupation state and follows its various media outlets, constituting the fifth category.

Based on the following, researchers classified the most notable media techniques used by the Israeli Arabic-speaking media to influence the Palestinian and Arab public as follows (Abu-Amer, 2018; Abu Arqoub, 2019) :

- First, the Jews' distinct human touch, emphasis on their emotional and psychological aspects, and consideration of innocent victims within a peaceful society and cohesive families set them apart.

- Second is the use of sophisticated open rhetorical inquiries that the Arab guest cannot answer or evade.

- Third accentuates Israel's scientific, social, and cultural superiority over its Arab and Islamic neighbours and its proximity to the West and presence in a single trench.

- Fourth is using the passive voice, such as referring to the killing of Palestinians with the verb "killed" to avoid blame for the occupation forces.

- Fifth, it questions the official and popular Palestinian narratives and views them as contradictory to undermine the recipient's trust in the Palestinian information source.

- Sixth violates the fundamentals of Palestinian life by accusing Palestinian ambulances of transporting resistance fighters, by accusing Palestinian educational institutions, schools, and universities of inciting terrorism and using them as platforms for protecting resistance fighters, and by depicting Palestinian children as human shields and terrorist seeds in the hands of Palestinian resistance fighters. This propaganda justifies the occupying force's targeting of schools, ambulances, children, and unarmed civilians.

Israeli journalists do not conceal their biased coverage of Palestinian issues or their attempts to portray Palestinians in a ruthless, inhuman, and barbaric manner. The Israeli journalist and general manager of Israel News, Shlonsky, stated that he does not seek objectivity in his coverage of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In contrast, he adopts the stance of his cause. He adds that the excessive attachment of the Israeli media to information sources, namely the military spokesman, is the primary reason for the media's failure to investigate the facts of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Sen, 2015).

The Digital Diplomacy of Israel

Digital diplomacy, also referred to as e-diplomacy, is a contemporary iteration of public diplomacy that utilises the internet, novel information and communication technologies (ICTs), and social media platforms as mechanisms to bolster diplomatic relations (Adesina, 2017; Bjola & Holmes, 2015). It is distinguished from traditional public diplomacy by its broader access to information, increased interaction among individuals and organisations, and enhanced transparency. The changing technological landscape has driven this evolution in diplomacy practices, encompassing various activities such as foreign public engagement, international situation monitoring, crisis management, and promoting a country's image and foreign policy objectives.

The standardisation of websites by foreign ministries, embassies, and international organisation delegations is a testament to this evolution, with these platforms serving to elucidate national foreign policies and counter unwelcome actions or claims by other states (Barston, 2013). Social media platforms have emerged as influential tools in this new diplomacy landscape,

fostering a level of openness and transparency previously unexperienced. Platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Periscope, and Snapchat provide a space for unhindered communication and have become powerful tools for communicators. Through these digital means, diplomatic practices aim to shape public opinion favourably towards the policies being pursued.

Digital diplomacy can serve many purposes. Abdelal (2018) enumerated seven of the most prominent ones. First, digital diplomacy achieves the state interest and grows the country's soft power. Second, digital diplomacy interacts with civil society, specifically opinion leaders in other countries. Third, digital diplomacy influences the countries' external dimensions and periphery and conveys messages to them. Within this context, Abdelal (2018) reported that Israeli digital diplomacy moved from eighth in the world in 2016 to fourth in 2018 in the use of social media. It recognised that military tools had proven ineffective in resolving the conflict with the Arabs and that hope lay in utilising soft power.

According to Aouragh (2016), Israel's digital media strategy is comprehensive and multidimensional, leveraging various technological tools and media platforms. Its primary objective is to amplify pro-Israeli narratives and sentiments worldwide. This strategy encompasses establishing connections with Arab societies through non-traditional frameworks, facilitating uninterrupted relationship growth, and potentially paving the way for a new normalisation framework. In 2011, Israel institutionalised these efforts by setting up a dedicated department for digital diplomacy. This department focuses on crafting and disseminating messages via social media to broaden its audience reach and enhance communication. Within this division, an Arabic section exists, directly reporting to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and managed by Yonatan Gonen, with Hasan Kaaba as a prominent spokesperson.

Hasbara and Digital dipolocay
Hasbara is a Hebrew term that means "explanation" or "public relations" in English. It refers to Israel's official efforts to communicate and promote its position, policies, and actions to the international community, particularly concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and other regional issues (Aouragh, 2016). Hasbara is a strategic communication approach to shaping public opinion and countering negative narratives about Israel.

Hasbara is frequently associated with Israel's efforts to present its point of view in the media, online platforms, and diplomatic circles. It includes press releases, social media campaigns, educational programs, and cultural exchanges to portray Israel positively and defend its policies (Jędrzejewska, 2020). Hasbara aims to highlight Israel's accomplishments, democratic values, and contributions to various fields, such as technology, innovation, and humanitarian aid.

Hasbara critics argue that it can sometimes oversimplify complex issues and minimize the Palestinian perspective. They argue that it may involve the manipulation of information to create a favorable image, which can stifle genuine dialogue and understanding between the various parties involved in the conflict.

On the other hand, proponents of hasbara assert that it is a necessary tool for Israel to counter misinformation and bias in the media and to provide a more accurate portrayal of its actions and intentions (Gilboa, 2008). Thus, while it aims to present Israel's perspective and counter negative narratives, it is a concept that sparks debates about transparency, propaganda, and the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Israeli Facebook Users

With the decline of radio and television in favour of social media, Facebook has become one of the preferred channels for Israeli digital diplomacy to expand the horizon of communication with its audience beyond geographical and physical borders.

In agreement with Israel, according to Al-Safadi (2018), the Facebook administration has been combating Palestinian pages that publish Palestinian narratives about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Furthermore, according to the Israeli Ministry of Justice, Facebook complied with 85% of Israeli requests to remove and prohibit Palestinian content (Abu-Amer, 2018; Aljazeera, 2018).

Israel's Official Facebook Page 'Israel Speaks Arabic'

'Israel Speaks Arabic' is the official Facebook page of Israel, with 3.2 million followers up to this date. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched it to disseminate information on social media about Israel (Khalifa, 2017). The page focuses on building a relationship between Israel and the Arab world; thus, it attempts to enhance Israel's image among the Arab-speaking public (Matoug, 2015).

Most of the one million likes came from Egypt, Iraq, and Jordan. However, such preferences and interactions do not reflect genuine positive interaction. Still, rather the comments of Arab surfers indicate that they do not take these publications seriously. One of the most interesting observations is that Cairo is one of the most popular cities on the page, with interaction from youth aged 18 to 24 (Al-Hussini, 2019).

Method

This descriptive-analytical study analyses all subject matters on the Arabic-language Facebook page 'Israel Speaks Arabic', targeting Palestinians. The study employs content analysis as its primary method, considered the most suitable for descriptive studies. This practical and systematic approach aims to gather comprehensive data and insights about the subject matter by studying the subject and the form of topics disseminated on these Facebook pages.

Through content analysis, the study aims to assess the quantity and quality of the posts on these pages to answer the research questions. For data collection, a purposive sampling approach is employed, with the study timeframe spanning eleven months, from May 2019 to March 2020. 643 Facebook Posts were collected from the page, with different variations of media used, including; short videos, live broadcasts, interviews, caricatures and cartoons, quotes for famous people, infographics, pictures for cities and sites, etc. The goal is to collect all materials related to the most significant events and occasions during this period.

The study focused on certain weeks that coincided with significant events in the region. Two weeks in May 2019 were devoted to discussions around the Nakba, coinciding with Israel's Independence Day and the transfer of the American embassy to Jerusalem and a week in January 2020 aligned with the Deal of the Century declaration. Additionally, a week in March 2020 focused on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic in the occupied territories.

Theoretical Framework

Goffman (1974), the father of Framing Theory, defines media frames as a specific structure of perspectives that media uses to make people more aware of social situations at some

point. Therefore, it is a targeted practice by communicators when reorganising the message to fall into people's awareness and persuasive influences.

The frame may be achieved by selecting precise settings and terminology to label the event, whether by intimidation or underestimation. Furthermore, it may (Auerbach & Bloch-Elkon, 2005) be added, deleted, distorted, or allowed to comment on specific details but not others; this denotes a point of view that what information is received is what the journalist desires, not necessarily what occurred in reality. As a result, it may influence the public's understanding and judgment of this incident may (Auerbach & Bloch-Elkon, 2005; Mark, 1997).

News Frames Types

Even though journalists vary in their news writing styles, news frames are still prevalent. Furthermore, a large amount of research has identified these formats of news frames. Based on these frames, Semetko, and Valkenburg (2000) examined five national newspapers and television news stories during the 1997 meeting of European heads of State in Amsterdam. They identified five dominant news frames: attribution of responsibility, conflict, economics, human interest, and morality.

The 'human interest frame' bears a human face or sensitive side to demonstrate an event, issue, or problem. In a crisis, the frame arouses the psychological pulsation of people, causing them to develop a negative attitude toward it.

According to Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), the 'conflict frame' signifies conflict and divergence among individuals, groups, or organisations. It is newspapers' second most frequently employed frame to establish their credibility.

The 'morality frame' positions the event, problem, or issue within the context of morals, social norms, and religious doctrines.

The 'economic consequences frame' describes an event, problem, or issue that financially affects individuals, groups, organisations, or countries. The economic influence is regarded as essential news and is frequently accounted for in reporting (Graber, 1993).

The 'attribution of responsibility frame' is "a method of assigning responsibility for a problem or solution to the government or to an individual or group." (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

Results

The data were analysed and answered following the proposed framework. It is important to note that the numbers in the tables below were calculated based on the total number of posts used for each question category rather than the number of contents, as multiple contents are sometimes included in a single post.
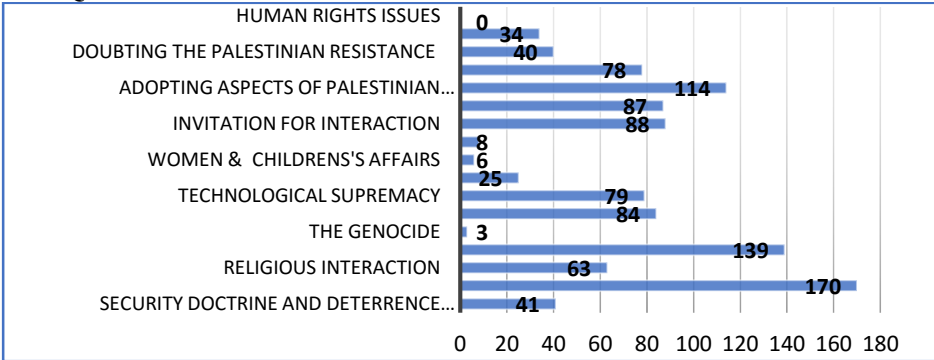
First Question:

Figure 1: Media themes of the 'Israel Speak Arabic' Facebook page.

The media content of the 'Israel Speaks Arabic' FB page contains various themes and issues, as depicted in Figure (1). The trend of posting topics indicates that there is content with more high postings with more than (100) posts, medium postings within (70-90) posts, and low postings with (40) posts or less. Such a trend reveals the topics that Israel emphasises while attempting to avoid others.

The highest numbers of posts were about 'Peace and coexistence,' which ranked first with (170) posts; 'Cultural interaction' ranked second with (193) posts, and 'Adopting Palestinian heritage as Israeli' ranked third with (114) posts. Israeli diplomacy attempted to create a positive image of Israel as a peace-seeking state in the region. Such results highlighting cultural events agree with Rotem (2018), who indicated how Israeli diplomacy focuses on culturally engaging with the Arab audience. Although Israel is considered a military country that focuses on building its military institution, it attempts to call for peace on its official pages. In addition, it attempts to exhibit that it is a civilised state by highlighting the positive cultural aspects to serve the peaceful image. Nevertheless, since Israel was established by Jewish migrants from all over the world, there is no unifying culture unique to Israel similar to the Arab culture. Thus, Israel employs Palestinian themes and adopts them as Israeli to be closer to the Arab world to show similarity and closeness rather than differences and distance.

The second trend of medium posting content varied between (70-90) posts, successively focusing on 'invitation to interaction' (88), 'documenting daily life in Israel' (87), 'political diplomacy' (84), 'technological supremacy' (79), and 'critiquing the politics of specific countries in the region' (79). These themes attempt to demonstrate the various aspects of Israel as a State to be viewed as a normal country similar to the neighbour

During the phase marked by a reduced frequency of content posting, several themes like 'security doctrine and deterrence force' (41), 'questioning the credibility of the Palestinian Resistance' (40), 'the history of Israeli Presence in Palestine' (34), and 'military supremacy' (25)

were recurrent. However, the page strategically minimised the usage of these themes to maintain balance and effectiveness.
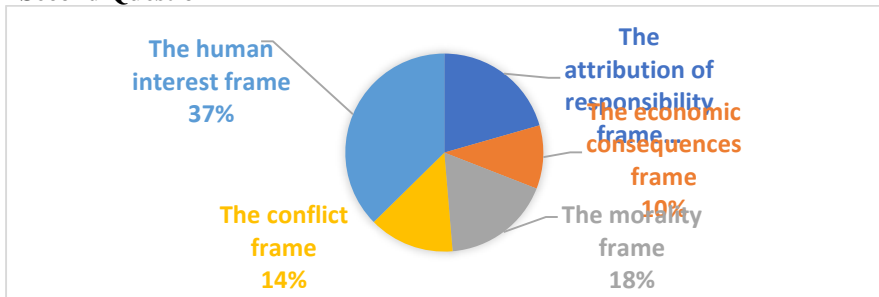
Second Question

Figure 2. Media Frames Used by the Facebook Page' Israel Speaks Arabic'

The Data in the first question indicate the types of frames that the 'Israel Speaks Arabic' Facebook page attempts to use when communicating with Facebook Arab users. As shown in Figure (2), Israeli diplomacy focused heavily on the 'human interest news frame' with (37%), which would contribute to shaping a sharp, pleasant image of Israel that would lead to a positive attitude among Arabs towards Israel.

With the 'attribution of responsibility frame' (21%), the page attempts to demonstrate that Israel is responsible for its citizens, including Muslims and Christian Arab Palestinians residing within its borders. Such responsibility is also intended to persuade Arabs to make peace with Israel, as it is the only means of coexistence in the region. The 'morality frame' (18%) of the posts contributes to the image that Israeli wishes to maintain as an ideal state in the Middle East region. The least prevalent frames are the 'conflict frame' (14%) and the 'economic consequence frame' (10%).
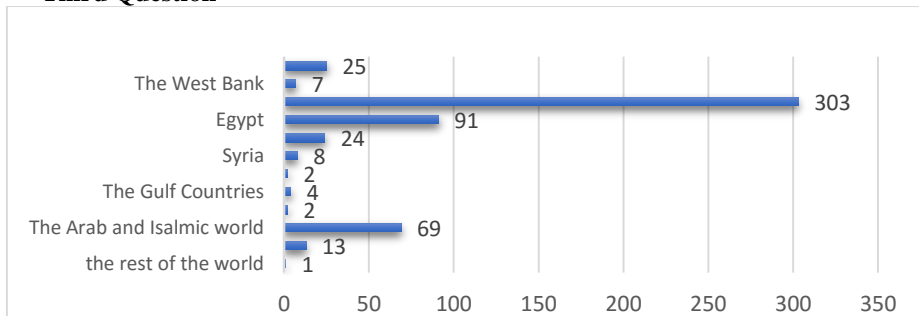
Third Question

Figure 3: The location of media content on the Facebook page for "Israel Speaks Arabic"

As shown in Figure 4, the Israeli Facebook content was heavily directed with content to the Arab countries with either direct borders or relationships like Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria. The highest result was shown to be directed to the Palestinian Arabs residing in the Palestine 1948 territories, with 303 published posts. Other Palestinians residing in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank received less attention in the page's posts. The second highest number of posts was directed to the with 91 posts, and the Arab and Muslim world with 69 posts. These findings are consistent with Alassas's (2019) conclusion that the Israeli Arabic-speaking media targets 1948 Palestinians.

The second-highest percentage of posts on the page are from and about Egypt. The page creates content with the stories of Jewish Egyptians. The third-highest posts in the study target the Arab and Muslim world, while Lebanon was in the fourth rank after Egypt.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Israeli digital diplomacy strategically used Facebook as a primary medium to engage with Arab users, including Palestinians within the 1948 territories and Arab nationals surrounding Israel. It harnessed this soft power to shift its image from an adversarial occupier to a civilised and developed regional state with cultural and linguistic ties to the Arab world.

This article is part of a larger project entitled: 'The Israeli Media and Social Media Diplomy', which examines Israeli Arabic-language social media. This paper focused exclusively on the 'Israel Speaks Arabic' Facebook Page as one project goal. Using Framing Theory as a conceptual framework, it analysed the page's content across critical periods in 2019 and 2020. The findings suggest that Israel's digital diplomacy seeks to portray a peaceful, coexistent, culturally rich, and technologically advanced image to foster normalised relations and economic growth.

Despite this, the page subtly addresses Israel's military dominance and critiques Arab political entities still perceiving Israel as a threat. This understated approach suggests an intention to downplay adversarial elements for a larger objective - promoting peace. This digital diplomacy approach seeks to recast Israel's regional narrative towards a more harmonious and beneficial relationship with Arab neighbours.

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