Lea Mandelzis

Representations of Peace in News Discourse: Viewpoint and Opportunity for Peace Journalism

Kurzfassung: Der vorliegende Artikel berichtet anhand einer exemplarischen Diskursanalyse über eine Situation, in welcher die ideologisch dominierten Nachrichtendiskurse über Konflikt und Gewalt in der israelischen Öffentlichkeit friedliche Perspektiven und die Hoffnung auf Frieden angeregt haben.
Durch die Analyse der Diskurse in den israelischen Printmedien im Anschluss an die Unterzeichnung des Oslo -Abkommens am 13.09.1993 wurden drei Diskurstypen mit unterschiedlichen Profilen extrahiert. In der Stimmung und Ausdrucksweise innerhalb der israelischen Medien hatte sich zu jener Zeit bereits eine interessante Wendung vollzogen: die gewohnten Kriegsdiskurse waren plötzlich durch friedens-bezogene Darstellungen und Bilder ersetzt worden.
Die Autorin zeigt, dass der Begriff Frieden durch seine Verbreitung in Zeiten eines revolutionären Umschwunges in der israelischen Politik überstrapaziert wurde und so nicht nur die Friedensperspektiven wieder in weitere Ferne rücken ließen, sondern auch zu einer Rückkehr der Nachrichtendiskurse in einen kriegsorientierten Bezugsrahmen führte.
Ziel der vorliegenden Studie war es auf der einen Seite, Rahmensysteme zu identifizieren, mit denen friedensbezogene Themen in den Nachrichtendiskursen kommuniziert werden und auf der anderen Seite die negativen Auswirkungen mangelnder Passung von Diskurstyp und aktueller politischer Situation deutlich zu machen. Die Ergebnisse weisen darauf hin, dass die Begriffe Krieg und Frieden durch die impliziten Botschaften eines Textes häufig mit ungewollten Bedeutungen aufgeladen werden.
Es wird deutlich, dass bestimmte Diskurstypen in der Berichterstattung über Konflikte, Kriege und Friedensverhandlungen besonders geeignet sind, um einen angemessenen Bezug zur Bedeutsamkeit des Friedens herzustellen. Dagegen bergen ungemessene Diskursformen die Gefahr, dass die Chancen auf eine Entwicklung vertrauensvollerer Beziehungen zwischen den Konfliktparteien reduziert werden.

Abstract: This study presents a news discourse analysis of a case in which the dominant political and ideological discourse of conflict and violence gave way to optimism and hopes for peace in Israel. It offers a profile of three types of discourse used by Israeli print news media in the context of 'peace' and 'war' in the immediate aftermath of the Oslo Accords signed on September 13, 1993. By this time, the Israeli media had already demonstrated a dramatic change in attitude and terminology: The familiar war discourse was rapidly being replaced by peace representations and peace images. The assumption of the study is that overuse of the term 'peace' at a time of revolutionary change in Israeli socio-political practice not only detracted from Israeli peace perspectives and beliefs, but also caused news discourses to deteriorate into war discourses. The purpose of the study was to uncover the role of the contextual system developed to communicate specific topics relating to 'peace' representations in news discourse and the negative socio-political consequences of the incompatibility of discourse types with actual political conditions at a given time.
The findings suggest that inter-textual representations of 'war' and 'peace' led to a discourse type which imposed unwanted meanings upon itself. It also suggests that certain types of news discourse, such as reconciliation, peace and war reporting, may be important in establishing the proper relations between discourse, language, media and the meaning of peace because of the essential role that the mass media play, not only in war coverage, but, no less important, also in peace reporting. Ultimately, inappropriate discourse at a given time may lessen the chances of building trust among peoples and nations.

1.   Introduction

The mass media play a critical role in the reproduction of socio-political and ideological discourse by framing different issues, especially the news, with a strong bias in favor of conflict and violence. The complex and sensitive nature of conflict and reconciliation situations exposes journalists to difficulties when reporting on wars in objective and value-free terms. Galtung (2002) claims that journalists are unable to think outside the dualism of "we are good, the other side is evil", and when covering a conflict they take sides with one of the parties and justify its violence and condemn that of the other. He suggests 'Peace Journalism' as an alternative coverage method that focuses on the actual interests in conflict, including those of *all* parties, not merely those of any two, and preferably discussing possible alternative solutions.

Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) maintain that the 'Peace Journalism' approach offers a roadmap for journalists' awareness of non-violent discourse in everyday reporting. Their theory is that media discourse is integral to shaping the images and representations of events in war and peace. 'Peace Journalism' may direct journalists and editors toward an alternative discourse which could help to build responsible peace communication and more accurate media coverage. As Shinar (2004, 2006) describes it, "peace and war critical media coverage".

Under some circumstances, the implementation of such alternative media discourse can play a significant role in changing the attitudes of both journalists and audiences, especially during transitions from war to reconciliation or to a peace climate. This was evident in the immediate aftermath of the Oslo accords (1993), the case on which I focus this news discourse analysis of media 'peace' presentations.

This study compares three types of discourse used by Israeli print news media in the context of 'peace' and 'war'. In essence, the aim was to identify the negative social consequences of the incompatibility of discourse types with actual political conditions at a given time. Weaving together inter-textual representations of 'war' and 'peace' led to a discourse type that imposed unwanted meanings upon itself. Inappropriate discourse in a given time period may reduce the chances of building trust between peoples and nations.

In searching for scholarly studies of 'peace discourse', I found that most actually deal only with 'war discourse' framed in a 'conflict-escalation oriented way' (Kempf, 2003). Kempf discusses the various meanings of peace: (1) as the absence of war, (2) as a specific (constructive) mode of dealing with conflict, and (3) as a state of harmony. The latter, he states, is unrealistic in the immediate aftermath of war, but may show how peace is understood in everyday discourse. He suggests a two-step model for deconstructing war discourse. First, there must be "de-escalation-oriented conflict reporting" which deconstructs antagonisms and the polarization of the parties to the conflict by remaining neutral, distanced from all parties, open to a peaceful settlement, searching for information on war and questioning military values. Second, there must be "solution-oriented conflict reporting" which is people-oriented, focuses on common rights and peace initiatives, humanizes all sides and redirects anger against war instead of against the enemy. Both steps have a win-win orientation that is mainly functional when an armistice or peace treaty is already in place.

The linkage between Peace and War

Studies of media peace discourse *per se* are exceedingly rare, and peace itself is not strongly emphasized in the media or elsewhere. Consequently, since the beginning of the 21st century, much attention has been paid by academics and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to 'peace' studies, 'peace' theories, 'peace' discourse, 'peace' research and to the development of 'peace' culture. Groff and Smoker (2002) explain that in the last few years the term 'culture of peace' has become increasingly popular among the leadership of UNESCO – but at present no clear consensus exists as to how the terms 'peace' or 'peace culture' should be interpreted. Although the word 'peace' is much used, peace is never fully achieved, but can only be approached (Barash, 2000). In his great historical novel *War and Peace*, Tolstoy writes of 'war' and 'peace' as the two most timeless and moving themes in the history of mankind. Perhaps it is the lack of perspectives on 'peace', among other things, that also explains the scarcity of literature on the relationships among the mass media, communication and the culture of 'peace'. When they reviewed papers published in 1991 in *Peace Research Journal*, Bruck and Roach (1993) found that not even one article dealt with the media and peace research. Following their lead, I examined several volumes of the same journal for the years 2000 and 2001 and found that the word 'peace' was used only in the context of war, conflict and/or conflict resolution. Indeed, my own search through numerous dictionaries, encyclopedias, book titles and Internet websites yielded the same results (Mandelzis, 2002).

War, disarmament and peace are always linked, even though they are separate fields in which different discourses compete. Sreberny-Mohammadi (1997) proposes as the best example of this the fact that the antagonistic East and West blocs were superseded in the last decade of the 20th century by the emergence of international markets, technologies and the development of the media, while at the same time nationalistic, tribal, and ethnic struggles broke out globally. The world has witnessed the re-emergence of ethnic, nationalistic and territorial competitions that often culminate in violent conflicts.

Of the 120 violent conflicts waged worldwide in 1993, 72% were ethnic wars (Tehranian, 1993). Shinar (2003) explains that contemporary violent conflicts involving political forces and social stress take place on the foundation of cultural, religious and ideological differences. Unfortunately, this results in a contradictory view of the world in which people are unable to co-exist without war, despite mankind's expressed desire for peace. When people encounter a range of incompatible cultural perspectives differing from their own personal perceptions and beliefs, they often turn to the media for guidance. They rely on media information and media discourse as the most effective channels for acquiring information to use in making decisions about political goals. However, Shinar (2003, 2004) claims that the mass media have not yet provided audiences with symbols of security and peace. In the end, 'peace' continues to seem an unachievable goal. Given this situation, Tehranian (1993) suggests that new cultural forces, including responsible mass media, peace discourse and peace journalism, are essential for achieving a transition to a peace culture.

2. Conceptualizing Peace & News Discourse

The notion of 'peace' has still not been adequately conceptualized. The traditional concept that dominated Western political and media discourses for centuries was, and still is, that peace is the absence of war. Consequently, this notion of peace discourse can only be understood in relation to conflicts and violence linked to a 'zero-sum' orientation. Not surprisingly, through this approach media peace discourse may sometimes even contribute to the distortion of peace perspectives.

Our 'reality' is structured by language and experienced through various types of discourse used in everyday interactions in social, economic and political relations. According to the common conception, Galtung (1968) states, peace entails a 'fatal connection' with war, since it can only be perceived negatively as the 'absence of war', or as a 'negative peace', a process of violence reduction, in contrast to 'positive peace', which is a process of life enhancement. Galtung believes that these definitions could be used in research on the political, military, economic and cultural dimensions of peace. These 'negative' and 'positive' peace classifications suggest options for other peace discourse possibilities that can transmit a better understanding of 'peace' messages. Ultimately, peace processes and perspectives require an effective public communication strategy that may be supported by developing the 'Peace Journalism' approach. Shinar (2006) thinks that developing a new approach requires changes in mental attitudes towards war and peace. Historically, and especially in war-torn societies, attitude change has not been achieved just by signing peace treaties (Azar et al., 1978). Attitude change can only be brought about by social actors working with tools such as education, language, socio-political practice and the media (Bar-Tal and Antebi, 1992). Indeed, Blumer and Gurevitch (1997) argue that post-modern writers tend to see linkages between media change and social change. Moreover, it has become almost an article of faith that the mass media play a crucial role in the construction, articulation and reflection of reality, especially under conditions of uncertainty, where public opinion tends to become more media dependent (De Fleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1989). In other words, dependence on media messages and discourse increases when the social environment is ambiguous, threatening, and/or rapidly changing, as evidenced in periods of war and/or transition to a peace process. This supports the idea that journalists' reporting and media discourse have a strong impact on framing stories and shaping images and representations of nations, actors and events through war and peace reporting which interprets the world for journalists and media audiences alike.

It is not easy for journalists to cover conflict in a neutral manner without expressing their own personal opinions. Wolfsfeld (1997) maintains that all news media employ a particular cultural and political perspective that has a major impact on the tone of news coverage. Hanitzsch (2004: 187) offers a good example of this: Neil Cavuto, a Fox News correspondent, was accused of not being as impartial in reporting on the Iraq war in 2003 as a journalist should be. His reply was that he considered himself to be an "American first, a journalist second". Amnon Dankner, editor of the popular Israeli daily *Maariv*, was once criticized by *Keshev*, The Center for the Protection of Democracy in Israel, for not giving front page coverage to a story about how the Israeli military killed seven members of a Palestinian family on a beach at Beit Lahia in the Gaza Strip (11 June 2006). Dankner's defense (12 June 2006) was that for his readers a story about death threats against a kidnapped Jewish student was more interesting and important as a front-page story than one about the deaths of Palestinians in Gaza. In his letter to *Keshev*, he argued that, "'we', our 'own' people, take precedence over 'others'". These examples reflect the debate on the differences among advocacy or partisan journalism, nationalistic journalism, and what Martin Bell (1997) defines as the "journalism of attachment": journalism that "cares as well as knows, will not stand neutrally between good and evil, right or wrong, the victim and the oppressor". Peace journalism could develop theories and strategies to help create an awareness of higher news values and responsibilities, in both the local and the global spheres.

Discourse and Ideology

Discourse can be defined as the "institutionalized use of language and as a social practice" (Fairclough, 1995: 7). Bruck (1989) argues that discourse shapes and structures language, beliefs and social practice. It functions as a context for text production (Fiske, 1992) and has the power of transmitting to the public an interpretation of events that makes sense of them. In this context, Van Dijk (1988) suggests that the cognitive processing of news discourse by audiences (and repre-

sentatives of the media) essentially depends upon news structure – the emphasis given to a story. News discourse is socially shaped and provides a frame for public debate. In short, media representations reflect the policies of political institutions, contribute to the creation of public opinion and reinforce the ideologies that form the basis for public opinion and understanding. Ideologies reflect the basic components of social identity and define the interests of groups, in the form of an organized set of attitudes in which meaning is expressed through news discourse (Fairclough, 1989; Van Dijk, 1988). News discourse frames legitimate or illegitimate ideas and opinions by means of information selection and dissemination to mass audiences. It offers a broad picture of social reality as a structured ideology and promotes social solidarity by reinforcing national identity and shared beliefs through language use.

3.   Context and Purpose of the Case Study

This study analyzes the news discourse that appeared in print immediately following the Oslo Accords signed by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian Chairman Yasser Arafat under the auspices of President Bill Clinton on the White House lawn in Washington on September 13, 1993. By this time, the media had already demonstrated a dramatic change in attitudes and terminology regarding the historic 'ultimate enemies': Arafat and the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization). The familiar media war discourse was immediately replaced by peace representations and peace images.

The definition and significance of Oslo as a peace process was articulated by the government and adopted in media news discourse, thereby creating a new public agenda that conformed to both governmental and journalists' expectations. News 'selection' and 'transformation' by both journalists and editors were guided both by references to cultural ideas and personal beliefs (Fowler, 1991: 2) and by euphoric wishful thinking regarding Yasser Arafat, the "new partner for peace". They believed that the new image of Arafat could replace the old one of the "ultimate enemy". The speed with which this took place is an example of what Van Dijk (1988a) referred to as a "press panic" accompanied by unrealistic peace images in media news discourse. News discourse loaded with the term 'peace' in various contexts made up a large share of all news in the post-Oslo era. This study presents a news discourse analysis in which the dominant political and ideological discourse of war and militarism gave way to optimism and expectations of peace in Israel. The purpose of the study was to uncover the contextual representational system that developed to communicate specific topics relating to 'peace' representations and their negative socio-political consequences. The research method used was to analyze the contents of news texts published on the front pages of two of the best-known and most highly regarded Israeli newspapers, *Yedioth Aharonot* and *Ha'aretz*.

Method

This study compares three types of news discourse used by two Israeli newspapers in the context of 'peace' and 'war' reporting. The research questions analyzed the key inter-textual representations of 'war' and 'peace' discourse types. I hypothesized that overuse of the term 'peace' in news discourse at the time of a revolutionary upheaval in Israeli socio-political practice not only negatively influenced Israeli peace perspectives and beliefs, but also caused the news discourse to deteriorate into war discourse. The aim was to combine the 'who' with the 'what' and the 'how' in order to interpret the meaning of the peace messages disseminated to the public by the media in the immediate aftermath of the Oslo Treaty.

To achieve the aims of the study, two methods were employed: During the first phase of the study a news discourse analysis was performed on 455 front-page articles in both newspapers: 180 articles in *Yedioth Aharonot*, the most popular newspaper in Israel, and 275 articles in *Ha'aretz*, a high-quality newspaper "for thinking people". Both newspapers devoted the largest proportion of their news articles to peace during the 14 months beginning with the letters of recognition exchanged by the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority in late August 1993 and ending with the signing of the peace agreement between Israel and Jordan on 26 October 1994. The newspapers were randomly sampled on one day of every week throughout the entire period.

The second phase of the study included in-depth personal interviews conducted individually with three political policymakers who were actually involved in the Oslo process from the beginning of the secret talks: Shimon Peres, the Israeli Foreign Minister (1992-1996), who was awarded the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize together with Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat; Yossi Beilin, Israeli Labour Party Member of Parliament and deputy Foreign Minister, who advocated dialogue with the PLO and initiated the secret Oslo channels which led to the Oslo Accords; and Ron Pundak, one of two left-wing intellectuals who went to Oslo and secretly carried on talks with the PLO through which mutual barriers were broken down and confidence was established.

The interviews used the convergent interview method proposed by Dick (1998). This method involves asking a single broad 'content free' question and only later adding specific questions/clarifications based on the findings of a news discourse analysis of the 455 articles in both newspapers. Dick (1998) believes that this method combines some key advantages of both unstructured and structured interviews and achieves its results by leaving much of the content to be determined by the interviewee. The interview process is, however, structured, as it allows for systematic analysis of information.

Micro-analysis of the discourse of peace

To interpret the meaning of the news discourse, in this study I adopted Kempf's (2003) distinction between two different types of discourse, which he defines in terms of the main questions dealt with by the discourse: While *war discourse* asks, "Who is the aggressor?" and "How can he be stopped?", *peace discourse* asks, "What is the problem?" and "How can it be solved?" A third type might be called *reconciliation discourse* and can be defined by the questions "Who is the other?" and "How can we come together?"

A fourth type of discourse was defined by Shinar (2003, 2004), who explains that the use of inappropriate types of discourse can have negative consequences. He holds that the very form of discourse used immediately after the Oslo agreements implied that peace and reconciliation were already present. Using this type of discourse, which we might call a *discourse of harmony*, the media promoted unrealistic hopes and expectations, which ultimately produced a sense of frustration when they were not realized.

In the discourse of harmony the question "Who is the other?" was neglected, and ironically the question "How can we come together?" seemed irrelevant, because although there was still no peace treaty, the media acted as if peace and reconciliation were already established facts. Expressions such as 'peace has begun', 'for peace', 'with friendship', 'warm peace', etc. completely ignored problems that had still not been solved, were based emotionally on wishful thinking and were completely unrealistic. Consequently, instead of asking: "How can we come together?" the claim was made: "We have become friends".

Next, the findings show that when Peace Discourse was employed by the media, it was reduced to answering only one question: "How can peace be secured?" The answers were: 'being ready to withdraw in return for peace', 'land for peace', 'territories for peace', 'there is a need to learn to live together and to defeat the opponents of peace', 'only a strong and secure Israel can make peace', 'peace reinforces peace', 'every step towards democracy is a step towards peace', etc. The conflict was not defined in news discourse as the main problem at this point in the political process. Moreover, peace was represented as though it were no longer in doubt, despite widespread unrealistic hopes and expectations. As a result, what seemed to be a peace discourse was already biased towards a War Discourse asking: "How can peace be secured?"

When unrealistic hopes and expectations were frustrated, the War Discourse returned to traditional war images by asking: "Who is the aggressor?" and identifying a new enemy: 'Hamas wants to kill peace', 'Hamas and the right wing extremists have become partners … [they] celebrate the blood of terror victims', "The burning fire of Islam is a threat to peace', etc.

The three different forms of discourse relating to peace, i.e., Peace Discourse, War Discourse and the Discourse of Harmony, are illustrated in Table 1, which shows the use of peace notions in Israeli media discourse after the conclusion of the Oslo Agreement. Surprisingly, during the entire period analyzed the quotations published by both Israeli newspapers had similar texts with similar phrasing (Mandelzis, 2002).

Analyzing newspaper articles after Oslo revealed that the notion of peace replaced the former discourse of war and security for only a very short period. Wolfsfeld (1997) states that when the Oslo story broke in August 1993, the power of the Israeli government press office over media news could be compared to that exercised by public officials during wartime. The news discourse after Oslo emphasized and dramatized, positively and negatively, the peace symbols, narratives, and cultural codes of Israeli society. Every topic in the news was linked to the notion of peace. However, in contrast to 'solution-oriented conflict reporting' (Kempf, 2003), the news discourse gradually developed confusing and conflicting messages which soon deteriorated into 'escalation-oriented conflict reporting' (Kempf, 2003). The findings show that post-Oslo news coverage began with a deceptive discourse of harmony, which two months after Oslo changed into a misleading and limited peace discourse and, four months later, sharply deteriorated into a war discourse (Kempf, 2003 and Shinar, 2003). This three-stage process of deterioration is shown in Table 1, as follows:

1. Discourse of Harmony	2. Reduced Peace Discourse	3. War Discourse
Peace has broken out! We have become friends!	Peace is the problem How can it be secured?	Who is the aggressor? How can he be stopped?
• *peace* has begun and it is irreversible… • *Peace* and friendship… • mandate for *peace* • *peace* for *peace*… • The *peace* era began and the war era ended… • this *peace agreement* will bring happiness to millions of Israelis and Palestinians… • this is the *peace* of the brave for our children and future generations… • breakthrough in the *peace process*… • *peace* is worthwhile… • real *peace*… • *peace* of the brave… • warm *peace*… • the young trust *peace*… • valley of *peace*… • *peace* for the mothers and babies – peace for the next generation… • hello to you, Jewish mother, the *peace* that was born today brings hope that your son will not know war… • the *peace* dove… • Normal *peace* relations… • sustainable *peace*… • *peace* of honor… • a new era of *peace*…	• only a strong Israel, secure and protected, can make *peace*… • comprehensive *peace* will reinforce *peace*… • Sweeping victory for *peace* supporters… • every step towards democracy is a step towards *peace*… • in *peace*, as in war, there is a need to understand the other side's mentality… • there is a need to learn to live together and to overpower the extremists who are the opponents of *peace*… • land for *peace*… • ready to withdraw in return for *peace* • territories for *peace*… • just *peace* and full *peace* should be followed by security arrangements… • to strive for *peace* and fight terror… • he who wants *peace* should be prepared for war… • the soldier of *peace*…	• murder instead of *peace*… • Hamas wants to kill *peace*… • *peace* refusals… • *peace* opponents…We will fight the enemies of *peace*… • the blow was the gift of Hamas to the false *peace*… • The murdered Bedouin pursued *peace* and was murdered by enemies of *peace* … on the way to *peace* there are victims… • terror aims to kill Jews and to kill the chances of *peace*… • losing hope in *peace*… • tried to kill *peace*… • the burning fire in Islam is a threat to *peace*… • victim on the altar of *peace*… • We do not want victims of *peace*, but healthy soldiers for a healthy *peace*… • goodbye to the *peace* process… • the window of opportunity for *peace* is closing… • no bullet, no Molotov cocktail and no stone will change our obligation to *peace* • the *peace* murderer … the plot of *peace*… • Hamas and the right-wing extremists have become partners: they lie and celebrate the blood of terror victims… • Israel is well aware of the enemies of *peace*… • Hamas wants to kill *peace*… • a severe blow to the *peace process*…

All quotations were taken from front-page news items that appeared in *Ha'aretz* and *Yedioth Achronot* between 9 September 1993 and 26 October 1994.
Table 1: Reconciliation discourse, peace discourse and war discourse

The mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO created a new phase in the relationship between the Palestinians and the Israeli media. Whereas before Oslo the news media ignored or demonized the Palestinian leadership, suddenly this leadership was legitimized, and the media related to its members as political leaders and, most importantly, not only as partners for peace but also as true friends (Mandelzis, 2003). Consequently, the 'peace' notion began to dominate media and political discourse.

Before the Oslo era, the Israeli media were totally captive to the idea of antagonism. Every attempt to talk with Arafat and/ or the PLO was rejected by the Israeli government. Therefore, peace was on neither the public agenda nor the news agenda. After Oslo, the Israeli media were totally captive to the government's policy for peace. Peace seemed to be there, dominating the public and the media agendas (Mandelzis, 2002).

The findings of this study show that two months after Oslo, the misleading discourse of harmony began its march toward a likewise misleading reduced peace discourse. This was followed by messages that began to question the peace, but suggested solutions like, "There is a need to understand the other side's mentality"; "There is a need to learn to live together and to overcome the extremists who are the opponents of peace"; "A just peace and full peace should be followed by security arrangements", etc. Four months later, following Hamas's terror attacks in Israel, peace and war became paired nouns, and the semantics of peace were conditioned by the semantics of violence and war, which led to the third phase, that of war discourse.

We can follow the journalistic regression from peace in which, although using the word peace, the news discourse gradually developed towards an emphasis on violence and war. This discourse framed Israeli victims as "victims of peace", followed by expressions of demoralization and despair, which Kempf (2003) views as war discourse. Some examples are: "Hamas wants to kill peace", "peace refusals", "peace opponents", "the blow was the gift of Hamas to the false peace", "the murdered Bedouin pursued peace and was murdered by the enemies of peace". This finally deteriorated into disillusionment and a conflict emphasis: "we will fight the enemies of peace", "on the way to peace there are victims", "losing confidence in peace", etc.

The image of peace was transformed from a discourse of harmony using phrases like "real peace", "warm peace" and "peace for peace" into phrases associated with peace discourse, but making use of war-related and military semantics, including "peace of the brave", "the victory of peace", "soldier of peace" and "peace combatants". In the third phase, reporters moved on to a war discourse, expressed in phrases like "killers of peace", "victims of peace", "enemies of peace", "the plot of peace", "a severe blow to the peace process", etc.

From then on, the notion of 'peace' was consistently associated with terror, violence, fear and security concerns. Hope and despair were inseparable and conveyed not peace messages, but rather militant ones. In the end, the axiom that in Israeli reality there is never any hope of peace was reconfirmed by PM Ehud Barak on his return from the Middle East Peace Summit at Camp David in July 2000. Barak explained that his attempt to negotiate a "final status settlement" of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was unsuccessful, because "we do not have a partner for peace" (*Ha'aretz*, 27 July 2000).

The three phases of news discourse in the media began with the transformation from a pre-Oslo war discourse into an illusory discourse of harmony at the end of August 1993, went through a brief period of limited peace discourse, and rapidly reverted to war discourse after early 1994, when Hamas threats to Israel began.

Thus, the initial transformation from conflict and violence to a peace process between Israelis and Palestinians aroused unrealistic hopes and expectations for peace. It ended with a second cycle of conflict transformation and returned to antagonism and violence, which finally ended in frustration.

Having obtained empirical evidence on post-Oslo news discourse, I began the second stage of my study by interviewing three policymakers who were actually involved in the Oslo process, with questions based on my study findings.

The first interview was held with Ron Pundak on 12 May 2002. Pundak expressed the view that in the first few months after Oslo the news media were blinded by a "euphoria syndrome". He explained that the use in news discourse of phrases like "peace process" and "peace agreements" created an unrealistic discourse, because:

We did not sign any peace agreement. The DOP [Declaration of Principles] was no more than the threshold into which the political negotiations were channeled. The Israeli public discourse was full of "peace with the Palestinians" because of the media discourse. It could not be peace when the occupation did not end and siege and oppression continued. The subsequent dissonance was due to the gap between the high expectations created by the media. Although the media alone cannot be blamed, because the government created these euphoric hopes and expectations, the media inflamed these emotions and exaggerated without analyzing the procedures themselves. The media created euphoria, on one hand, and misunderstanding of a security horizon in a political agreement, on the other hand.

A minor example of this euphoria was the report in *Yedioth Aharonot* (15 October 1993) that "at least 150 Jewish babies born during the month since the signing of the peace agreement were named 'Shalom'" (the Hebrew word for peace).

It should be stressed that, in fact, no peace agreement was signed; Oslo only produced a *Declaration of Principles*. However, the Israeli government and the media embraced the DOP and rationalized it through ideological beliefs that were presented in the news via popular and emotionally charged rhetoric as if it actually were a peace agreement.

Goren (1995) wrote that the cumulative impact of such reporting was expressed by audience attitudes toward peace *prospects*, not toward the process itself. The reporters' overuse of the notion of 'peace' gave a deceptive impression of peace as already present and thereby encouraged unrealistic expectations. Furthermore, the unrealistic expectations encouraged by the flood of peace messages ultimately turned hopes for peace into outrage at the enemy.

One of the political reporters interviewed by Wolfsfeld (1997a: 22) in 1995 stated:

One thing is true about the coverage of the peace process. It's not objective. The peace process is not some anonymous process that you leave up to the reader to decide whether it's optimistic or pessimistic. In principle, when the media relates to the peace process it is primarily relating to the word 'peace' … the attitude then, is optimistic or even celebratory … just like it is completely clear that if there is a terrorist attack the attitude is negative. When the media comes to cover the ceremony, or the historic handshake at Oslo, they relate to the word peace, and if there are complaints about that [the biased coverage], then maybe they are justified.

The media clearly embarked on an interventionist mode of advocacy journalism that actively promoted peace as a typical characteristic of government public relations discourse (Hanitzsch, 2004) and accepted the information disseminated to reporters without questioning or investigating the political establishment and the accord signed. This was supported by the second interviewee, Yossi Beilin, on 15 May 2002. Beilin was of the opinion that:

After the Oslo Accord was signed, the media … completely ignored the fact that it was not a peace agreement and presented it as such. Admittedly, government policy legitimization was one of its advantages. On the other hand, it was perceived as a peace treaty that raised unrealistically high expectations and led to misunderstanding and despair when the terror continued. The public asked what kind of peace is this? Why are they [the Palestinians] violating the peace agreement?

Pundak accused reporters of being superficial and characterized them as "ethno-euphoric". He also felt that the media had not changed its 'diskette' [stored information] from the conflict era to the process of building a peace era.

Each of the policymakers interviewed for this study emphasized that the media had missed an opportunity to contribute to peace: Peres argued that "the media neither contributed to peace nor to an understanding of the peace process" (Shimon Peres, 3 May 2002). Beilin noted that, "by focusing on peace agreements, the media misled the public" (Yossi Beilin, 15 May 2002). As Pundak explained, "The media did not try to counter Israeli misperceptions of the Palestinians" (Ron Pundak, 12 May 2002).

My interpretation is that the media provided excellent examples of advocacy journalism that violates the basic professional ethical principles of journalism, such as objectivity, neutrality and impartiality. It can even be defined as 'involvement journalism', similar to that engaged in after 9/11 (Thumber and Prentoulis, 2003: 28), when reporters shifted from objectivity to subjectivity. We should note here that journalism is a professional field whose aim is to facilitate a shared, socially binding viewpoint by providing information unbiased by personal attitudes and beliefs.

4. Conclusions

My findings in regard to the three categories of discourse shown in Table 1 indicate that the media reproduced the dominant policy of the political elite by using the discursive practice of peace semantics, phrases, frames, inconsistencies and contradictions. This provides a way of understanding how power is structured in media discourse. The dramatic political change that occurred in relations between Israelis and Palestinians was followed by extensive use of the term 'peace' in news discourse and accompanied by semantic confusion about terms relating to 'war' in post-Oslo media news discourse.

The similarities among the terms used by the two newspapers may not be surprising, because the most important filter through which news is constructed is "the cultural air we breathe and the whole ideological atmosphere of our society" (Hoggart, cited in Schudson, 1997: 154). Schudson proposes that elite institutions create a "cultural air" in relation to the ideology of a given society.

In my view, peace is not uninteresting, as Shinar, 2003 and Wolfsfeld, 1997 imagine. Although peace does not provide the same kinds of images and actions as conflict and war, it still makes a valuable contribution and even offers interesting news events for reporters and audiences. Indeed, global media peace events (Dayan and Katz, 1992), such as the historic Oslo handshake on the White House lawn in September 1993, are often fascinating ceremonies. Other examples are the Oslo ceremony of 13 September 1993, the ceremony marking the peace agreement between Israel and Jordan (27 October 1994), Elton John's peace concert in Belfast (May 1998) celebrating the peace agreement in Northern Ireland, and the Nobel peace prizes which were extensively reported on in the frame of reconciliation discourse. These events increased media interest and raised hopes for peace, but they were covered by the media only for short periods, during which the media presented unrealistic images.

Beyond the ceremonies, however, in Israel the word 'peace' was always associated with unrealistic and euphoric wishful thinking, for example, expecting the 'end of all wars'. After Oslo, this led to severe public disappointment, followed by a devastating wave of frustration. The political and ideological setback also encouraged blaming the media, expressed in public by denunciations of "hostile journalism".

This study might lead us to the understanding that all three kinds of news discourse, harmony, reduced peace and war reporting, may be important in establishing proper relations among discourse, language, media and the meaning of peace because of the essential role that the mass media play, not only in war coverage, but, no less important, also in peace reporting.

Scholars have found a casual relationship between semantic structure and cognition. It is clear that language influences thought in the sense that it structures and channels the psychological experience of the world. By definition, 'Peace Journalism' is related to alternative patterns of covering news events. Differences in expression convey ideological distinctions, and thus differences in representation (Fowler, 1991). "Violence of any kind breeds violence of any kind"; "Peace of any kind breeds peace of any kind" (Galtung, 1998: 32). Unfortunately, the dramatic 'peace' upheaval that occurred between the Israelis and Palestinians in September 1993 reinforced Azar and Cohen's (1979) definition of peace in the Middle East: "Peace as crisis and war as status quo".

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On the author: Lea Mandelzis is a senior lecturer at the School of Communication, Sapir Academic College in Israel. Her fields of research focuses on conflicts, war and peace discourse in the news media, media representations and images, socio-political communication and international communication. She has presented and published a number of articles on peace discourse and peace Journalism. Her work contributes to Keshev, The Organization for the Protection of Democracy in Israel and media monitoring, and involved in developing a university peace journalism curriculum. She is a council member of the International Peace Research Association (IPRA) and chairperson of Peace Journalism Commission. She is a former professional journalist in Israel and a member of the Peace Journalism Group at Toda Institute of Global Peace and Policy Research.

Address: School of Communication, Sapir Academic College, D.N. Hof Ashkelon 79165, Israel.
eMail: Mandelzis@mail.sapir.ac.il