



Roman Jakobson's Semiotic Lens: Deciphering Caricatures of Israel's Aggression in Palestine

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ABSTRACT

In the digital era, Instagram has emerged as a platform for freedom of speech, including criticism of the military aggression of Israel in Palestine. @osamahajjaj and @hajjaj_cartoons are the accounts that address issues in the Middle East, which will be the focus of this research. The study delves into six cartoons from the Instagram accounts @osamahajjaj and @hajjaj_cartoons, focusing on cartoons related to the social phenomenon of Israeli aggression in Palestine after October 7, 2023, and using the semiotic approach of Roman Jakobson to reveal the teleological meaning and profound messages in the visualisation of these caricatures. This research explains why caricaturists create and upload their caricatures. The researcher starts by observing and documenting the data, then thematically grouped. This data analysis research involves data collection, reduction, and presentation. The examination of these six caricatures manifests criticism of the bias of the U.S. and Western media, violations of human rights, lies used to legitimise Israel's military aggression in Palestine, and international efforts to halt such aggression.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the current era, online platforms have become forums for expressing opinions freely and actively. As of October 2023, as reported by We Are Social and Hootsuite, 61.4% of the world's population, approximately 4.95 billion people, are using social media (Rizaty, 2023). Instagram ranks as the fourth-largest platform globally in terms of monthly users, following Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp, according to Statista data for October 2023 (Statista, 2023). Not limited to the younger generation, such as Gen Z or millennials, even the older generation tends to use Instagram to access information, engage in social actions, express opinions, voice criticisms on events, and more, providing a space for freedom of expression (Sikumbang et al., 2024).

Various methods convey criticism through social media, including words, photos, videos, and images or caricatures. Critiques have proliferated on Instagram, utilising the freedom of expression, with images serving as a medium of expression (Hardina & Kurniawan, 2021). Generally, images containing elements of criticism or sarcasm refer to events that have occurred, including one of the incidents of Israeli aggression in Palestine. Public interpretations of images tend to be varied, and to grasp the true meaning of an image, a more in-depth analysis is necessary to avoid the emergence of diverse perspectives. The primary goal behind depicting these images becomes crucial, allowing the public to comprehend the message conveyed through the visual medium created by an artist.

In the escalating Israel-Palestine conflict that reignited on October 7, 2023, there has been a surge of criticism towards Israel's actions against Palestine, drawing global condemnation. This outcry stems from Israel's actions, justified in response to sudden attacks by Hamas. Hamas' surprise attack, named the Al-Aqsa Storm Operation, marked the largest assault by Palestine on Israel in history. In response, Israel disseminated extensive negative propaganda about Hamas to justify their actions. Israel has been accused of violating human rights and the United Nations rules of war in a variety of ways (Siddiqui et al., 2024), including brutal bombings and genocide, restricting access to food, electricity, and fuel, demolishing medical services, educational centres, and communication facilities in Gaza City, targeting women and children, and killing reporters.

Palestinian supporters have intensively undertaken various forms of criticism, aiming to expose Israel's alleged crimes to garner broader support and amplify the boycott movement against products supporting Israel. These efforts seek to attract international attention and prompt the United Nations (U.N.) to impose sanctions on Israel as a consequence of its controversial actions. Criticisms of Israel, in particular, are conveyed through various online platforms, with Instagram playing a significant role in disseminating messages and mobilising global public opinion. This strategy aims to create intense international pressure to hold Israel accountable for its actions, as exemplified by caricatures posted on the Instagram accounts @osamahajjaj and @hajjaj_cartoons.

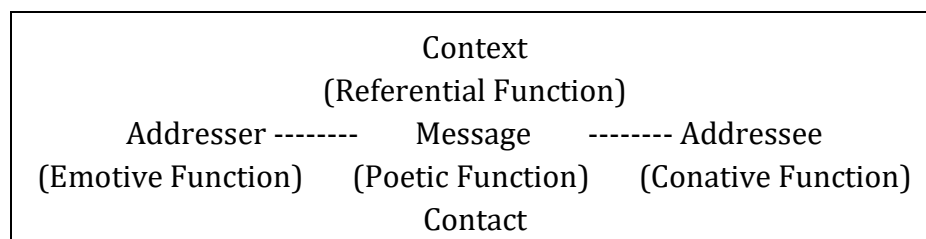
Caricatures have been known since the 18th century as print used to criticise social or political situations. To this day, caricatures remain highly effective images for criticising social

and political conditions, as their humorous appeal can captivate public attention. Using caricatures for criticism is also considered a safe method, as the critique is not delivered directly (Wuryanto, 2020). Caricatures are products of field observations made by a caricaturist of society or the government, reflecting existing realities or facts. Caricatures are also seen as a form of opinion, as some contain the caricaturist's arguments about an event or incident (Supriadi et al., 2019). Caricatures can be interpreted as nonverbal communication to reinforce verbal messages or discourse. Visual representation in drawings can convey ideas and messages about something.

This research examines several caricature posts from the Instagram accounts of @osamahajjaj and @hajjaj_cartoons. The Instagram account @osamahajjaj belongs to Jordanian caricaturist Osama Hajjaj, while Palestinian-Jordanian caricaturist Emad Hajjaj owns @hajjaj_cartoons. The two brothers actively share their works on Instagram, mainly focusing on events in the Middle East, particularly humanitarian and political conflicts. The success of these siblings lies in their bold and daring critique through caricatures, sometimes stirring controversy. Specifically, their caricatures depicting Israel's attacks on Palestine are rooted in the reality of the events, delivering a critical message against Israel's military aggression in Palestine.

Teleologism is a concept or approach in philosophy related to the idea that everything has a purpose, intention, or specific direction. Teleology teaches that every action leads to a goal (Napel, 2006). According to this approach, the moral quality of action can be positive or negative, determined by the purpose or outcome of the deed (Maiwan, 2018; Putawa, 2022). This research concentrates on the visual elements, such as colour, composition, and form, in caricatures used to achieve the desired goal or end in conveying the message about Israeli aggression in Palestine. To explore the teleological aspects contained in the caricatures posts on Instagram @osamahajjaj and @hajjaj_cartoons, the researcher utilises the theoretical approach of semiotics from the perspective advocated by Roman Jakobson.

In semiotics, Roman Jakobson extensively and comprehensively discusses the signs present in both verbal and non-verbal communication in comparison to other semiotic theories, aligning with his endorsement of the study of signs or semiotics for the understanding of verbal and non-verbal communication (Nugraha, 2022; Taufiq, 2016). Roman Jakobson's semiotics is the approach he employs to comprehend and analyse signs in communication (Jia, 2019). According to (Jakobson, 1960), six main factors interact and contribute to the communication and understanding of messages. These six elements are the (1) addresser, (2) context, (3) contact, (4) code, (5) message, and (6) addressee (Jambak et al., 2024).



(Phatic function) Code (Metalingual function)

Table 1. Schema of six elements and communicative functions according to Jakobson (Feshchenko, 2023)

The addresser and addressee maintain psychological and physical relationships between communication participants, allowing them to enter and sustain communication (Zuckerman, 2020). The message is the addresser's intended meaning to the addressee (Nugraha, 2022). Meanwhile, the code is a system of rules used to generate and understand messages (Khoer, 2019). In non-verbal communication, the code takes the form of symbols, conventions, or norms used to convey specific meanings. Contact, on the other hand, is the medium that connects the addresser and addressee in communication (Sobur, 2006), and lastly, context refers to the situation or environment in which communication occurs.

Dive into the teleological analysis of Instagram posts by @osamahajjaj and @hajjaj_cartoons regarding the Israeli aggression in Palestine. Utilising Roman Jakobson's semiotic perspective, the researcher uncovered several prior studies. First, "A Semiotic Translation of Memes: Trump's Visit to Saudi Arabia as a Case Study" (Mahasneh & Bashayreh, 2021). Second, "A Semiotic Analysis on FIFA World Cup 2022 Qatar Memes" (Panjaitan & Pasaribu, 2023). Third, "Tanfidh Khttt Altateim Alsaediati Min Mulsaqat Fi Twitar (Dirasat Simiyayiat 'Amberto 'Iiku Eco Umberto)" (Mardiyah, 2022). Fourth, "Peirce's Semiotics Analysis Towards Covid-19 Pandemic Impacts on 9GAG Memes in September 2021" (Pangestu & Kustanti, 2023). Fifth, "Muqawamat Alfilastiniyn Lihajamat 'Iisrayiyl Fi Karikatir 'Instagram "@Rahma_Toons" (Dirasat Simiyayiat Roman Jakobson)" (Nurdinsyah, 2023).

The researcher identified commonalities in the studied image objects, such as posters, caricatures, and memes, across all the prior studies. Furthermore, a similarity was found in the fifth study, where the examination focused on Instagram caricature posts using Roman Jakobson's semiotics. However, differences were observed in the theories used to analyse the objects. The first study employed Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotics; the second studies utilised Roland Barthes' semiotics; the third adopted Umberto Eco's semiotics; and the fourth applied Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics. These differences and similarities with previous studies are expected to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of diverse semiotic approaches in image analysis and visual communication.

Given the rapid dissemination of content on social media like Instagram, there is an urgency to interpret visual messages to foster informed discussions and critical thinking. This research complements previous studies that explored teleological aspects by applying Roman Jakobson's semiotic theory to caricature analysis. While caricature analysis is not a new field, the application of Roman Jakobson's semiotic theory to understand caricatures' intended teleological meaning and purpose is relatively novel. Thus, based on the information, the

objective of this research is to elucidate the intended meaning and describe the fundamental messages encoded in the visual elements of caricatures by @osamahajjaj and @hajjaj_cartoons using Roman Jakobson's semiotics with a teleological approach.

2. METHODS

This qualitative study uses the content analysis method based on descriptive data (Rusandi & Muhammad Rusli, 2021). The researcher employs a qualitative approach involving primary data sources, namely the caricature posts on the Instagram accounts @osamahajjaj and @hajjaj_cartoons, and supporting data such as articles, journals, books, news, and literature on Roman Jakobson's semiotics. This study employs a teleological method to understand the aim and communication meanings included in the caricatures. Roman Jakobson's semiotic method is also used as a research technique, using six semiotic elements. Critical semiotics is also used to evaluate the semiotic aspects of caricatures from an ideological standpoint to determine their creation's aim. The researcher begins by observing and noting data, then thematically categorised (Rijali, 2019; Sari & Asmendri, 2018).

This research analyses data from six caricatures posted on Instagram accounts @osamahajjaj and @hajjaj_cartoons following the “طوفان الأقصى” or “Al-Aqsa Storm Operation” on October 7, 2023. The researcher collects data from these caricatures through visual characteristics such as colour, composition, and picture shape, which serve as code and contact elements. The data-gathering procedure involves screenshotting the caricatures under examination and then identifying their semiotic features. At this step, data is collected in the form of the addresser, addressee, code, and contact components, which are then examined further by connecting the circumstances of the caricature's development to their purpose. The last level interprets message elements based on prior semiotic element readings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Code and Message in Caricatures from Instagram Accounts @Osamahajjaj and @Hajjaj_cartoons



Figure 1. Instagram @Osamahajjaj, October 17, 2023 (Hajjaj, 2023b)





Symbol	Element	Statement
i 	Context	Hamas Situation
	Message	Satire and criticism
	Addresser	Osama Hajjaj
	Addressee	Western Mass Media
	Contact	Platform Instagram
	Code	A missile with the inscription “حماس” or “Hamas” illuminated by the headlamp.
ii 	Context	The situation of Western mass media
	Message	Satire and criticism
	Addresser	Osama Hajjaj
	Addressee	Western Mass Media
	Contact	Platform Instagram
	Code	A red-skinned man with an open mouth and a long nose is holding a microphone and shining a headlamp on something.
iii 	Context	Gaza Situation
	Message	Satire and criticism
	Addresser	Osama Hajjaj
	Addressee	Western Mass Media
	Contact	Platform Instagram
	Code	A building destroyed by an explosion with the inscription “غزة” or “Gaza.”
iv 	Context	Gaza and Israeli Military Aggression Situation
	Message	Satire and criticism
	Addresser	Osama Hajjaj
	Addressee	IDF (Israel Defense Forces) and Western Mass Media
	Contact	Platform Instagram
	Code	Numerous missiles with the Israeli flag.

Table 2. Explanation of the caricature of Osamahajjaj using the six elements of Roman Jakobson semiotics

Analysis of the First Caricature

The first caricature, depicts a red-skinned man with an open mouth and a long nose, holding a microphone and highlighting a rocket labelled "حماس" (Hamas) among numerous rockets with Israeli flags around it, bombing a city labelled "غزة" (Gaza), illuminated by a bright light in the background. The caricature's post has the captions "الإعلام الغربي" and "Western media."

- a) Code: The red-skinned man highlighting a rocket labelled "حماس" among numerous rockets with Israeli flags, hitting a city labelled "غزة" focuses on "حماس" and "غزة" representing specific entities and locations related to Palestine.
- b) Message: The caricature criticises the red-skinned man, symbolising Western mass media, for emphasising only one Hamas rocket by spreading false information and overlooking the numerous rockets that have fallen in Gaza.
- c) Instagram caption: "الإعلام الغربي...Western media..."

Interpretation




The caricature posted on Instagram by @Osamahajaj on October 7, 2023, critiques the Western media's focus solely on the events of October 7, 2023. Hamas's surprise attack on Israel on October 7, 2023 is referred to as the Al-Aqsa Storm Operation, marking the largest Palestinian assault to date. The attack resulted in 1,200 deaths and 6,900 injuries. According to Hamas spokesperson Khaled Qadomi, it was a response to Israel's actions in Jerusalem and the West Bank. In 2023, there were 700 incidents of Israeli settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank, including evictions and seizures of Palestinian homes. Jewish ultra-nationalist groups also provocatively entered the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex (Amaliyah, 2023).

The caricature criticises the Western media's exclusive focus on one Hamas action while ignoring the IDF's actions in Gaza. Since October 7, 2023, after Hamas launched a surprise attack, Israel has engaged in bombings or genocidal acts in Gaza. These bombings targeted various places, including hospitals, educational centres, civilian settlements, bread factories, water supply centres, places of worship, homes, and more. Israel even committed massacres against civilians without apparent justification. According to the Gaza Ministry of Health, on April 23, 2024, Israel's aggression killed at least 34,183 people and injured 77,084 (Siddiqui, 2024).

The caricature highlights the long nose of a red-skinned reporter, symbolising how every piece of news from Western media is portrayed as a lie. Al Jazeera investigated how The Daily Beast, a Western media outlet, meticulously framed its news, demonstrating their willingness to lie for Israel (Mitrovica, 2023). Specifically, Israel propagated a false claim about Hamas decapitating 40 Israeli babies on October 7. The Daily Mail, The Sun, The Times, and The Daily Telegraph circulated this false news without verification (Maharani, 2023). This news was first published by i24NewsIsrael on October 10, 2023, in an interview with Israel David Ben Zion conducted by reporter Nicole Zedeck (124NEWS English, 2023).



Figure 2. Instagram Osamahajjaj, October 19, 2023 (Hajjaj, 2023d)

Symbol	Element	Statement
i 	Context	Political Situation
	Message	Satire and criticism
	Addresser	Osama Hajjaj
	Addressee	Benjamin Netanyahu and Joe Biden
	Contact	Platform Instagram
	Code	Two middle-aged men in blue suits and red ties hugging and kissing
ii 	Context	Situation in Gaza
	Message	Satire and criticism
	Addresser	Osama Hajjaj
	Addressee	Benjamin Netanyahu and Joe Biden
	Contact	Platform Instagram
iii 	Context	The situation in Gaza and military aggression
	Message	Satire and criticism
	Addresser	Osama Hajjaj
	Addressee	Benjamin Netanyahu and Joe Biden
	Contact	Platform Instagram

Code	Destroyed buildings and smoke from phosphorus bomb explosions
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Table 2. Explanation of the caricature of Osamahajjaj, October 19, 2023, using the six elements of Roman Jacobson semiotics

Analysis of the Second Caricature

In the second caricature, two middle-aged men dressed in formal suits, dark blue jackets, white shirts, and red ties are shown hugging and kissing intimately. This affectionate scene is juxtaposed with the backdrop of smoke and the rubble of buildings, which are falling on children and women.

- a) Code: Two men sharing an intimate moment amid the chaos surrounding them. The two white-haired men represent the entities of "Benjamin Netanyahu" and "Joe Biden."
- b) Message: The caricature critiques the bilateral meeting between the United States, represented by Joe Biden, and Israel, represented by Benjamin Netanyahu, on October 18, 2023.
- c) Instagram caption: "قبلة الموت... Kiss of Death..."

Interpretation

This caricature references a photo of Benjamin Netanyahu and Joe Biden embracing during a bilateral meeting between Israel and the United States in Tel Aviv on October 18, 2023.



Image 1. Benjamin Netanyahu on the right and Joe Biden on the left (Judd, 2023)



Osama Hajjaj criticizes Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. President Joe Biden for mutually supporting each other's actions during Biden's visit, which occurred after the bombing of the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza. Biden claimed that the bombing was not carried out by the IDF but by Hamas. He asserted that the bombs were failed rocket launches by the Palestinian armed jihadist group (Hutzler et al., 2023). IDF, in a Twitter post, stated that the Islamic Jihad terrorist organization was responsible for the failed rocket attack on the hospital (*Israel* ישראל, 2023). Regarding the claims, Al Jazeera conducted observations and gathered information to verify the actual events (Al-Jazeera, 2023). Al Jazeera uploaded a video on its Al Jazeera English Twitter account, revealing that Al Jazeera's digital investigation

found no truth to the claim (Aljazeera English, 2023).

The romantic atmosphere between the two prominent figures in the caricature symbolises their amicable relationship. It is suggested that Joe Biden, as President of the United States, supports all actions taken by Israel (Jambak et al., 2024). The caricature also depicts collapsed buildings and smoke, representing the IDF's actions in the Gaza region, where bombings occurred indiscriminately throughout the area. According to Human Rights Watch, the IDF has fired white phosphorus in densely populated areas of Gaza and Lebanon. The use of white phosphorus violates international law based on the United Nations Convention on Conventional Weapons (Aljazeera, 2023a). Although international conventions do not explicitly prohibit white phosphorus, its use is prohibited against civilian populations (Aljazeera, 2023c).



Figure 3. Instagram Osamahajjaj, Januari 8, 2024 (Hajjaj, 2024a)

Symbol	Element	Statement
i 	Context	Journalist's Situation
	Message	Criticism and Satire
	Addresser	Osama Hajjaj
	Addressee	IDF (Israel Defense Forces)
	Contact	Platform Instagram
	Code	A reporter with hands in his eyes
ii 	Context	Journalist's Situation
	Message	Criticism and Satire
	Addresser	Osama Hajjaj
	Addressee	IDF (Israel Defense Forces)
	Contact	Platform Instagram
	Code	Corpse with the word "Press"


iii		Context	Situation in Gaza
		Message	Criticism and Satire
		Addresser	Osama Hajjaj
		Addressee	IDF (Israel Defense Forces)
		Contact	Platform Instagram
		Code	Blood forming the shape of Gaza with the inscription "Live."

Table 3. Explanation of the caricature of Osamahajjaj, January 8, 2024, using the six elements of Roman Jakobson semiotics

Analysis of the Third Caricature

In the third caricature, a reporter is depicted looking sorrowful. In front of him lies a corpse wrapped in a burial shroud with the word "Press" written on it, and behind him, blood forms the shape of Gaza City with the word "Live."

- a) Code: A reporter strengthening his resilience amid the shadow of death and bloody coverage. The journalist's attire resembles that of Wael Al-Dahdouh, a journalist and head of the Al Jazeera media bureau in Palestine.
- b) Message: This caricature criticises the Israeli military aggression that resulted in the deaths of journalists in Gaza. The criticism is also conveyed by the Al Jazeera news outlet, which strongly condemns Israel's actions regarding the targeted killing of Wael Al-Dahdouh and his family.
- c) Instagram Caption: دمعة جبل غزة...The Giant of Gaza - a tear

Interpretation

In the caricature posted on the Instagram account @Osamahajjaj on January 8, 2024, criticism is directed towards war crimes involving the targeting and killing of journalists by Israel in Gaza. Israel has violated International Humanitarian Law (IHL), considering the Geneva Conventions Additional Protocol of June 8, 1977, particularly Article 79 of Additional Protocol I regarding the protection of journalists, which condemns "deliberate attacks against journalists, media professionals, and associated personnel in situations of armed conflict....". The caricature refers to a photo posted on the Instagram story of @hamza_w_dahdooh.



Image 2. Al Jazeera journalist Wael Al-Dahdouh

Wael Al-Dahdouh is a journalist and the head of the Al Jazeera media bureau in Palestine. He is the face of Al Jazeera's coverage and a symbol of strength and resilience in the Gaza community (Quamila, 2024). Wael Al-Dahdouh lost his siblings in the bombing on October 25, 2023, by Israel in the Nuseirat refugee camp, where his family sought refuge. Then, on January 7, 2024, Al Jazeera reported that Hamza Dahdouh, Wael Al-Dahdouh's son and a cameraman for Al Jazeera, was killed in an Israeli missile attack in the western part of Khan Younis, Gaza, along with his colleague Mustafa Thuraya, a freelance videographer for AFP (Ponsford & Tobitt, 2024). They both died after their vehicle was targeted in an Israeli airstrike (Adler & Harb, 2024). This led Al Jazeera to strongly condemn Israel's actions targeting journalist Wael Al-Dahdouh, resulting in the deaths of his family (Aljazeera, 2024a).

As of April 29, 2024, the CPJ's early investigations revealed at least 97 journalists dead since October 7, 2023 (CJP, 2024). According to international humanitarian law, targeting and killing journalists constitute war crimes. Journalists should be granted freedom and protection to carry out their work. Due to Israel's violations, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has issued a call, signed by 80 journalist groups, urging the Israeli government to take full responsibility for protecting journalists covering the conflict (Aljazeera, 2024b).

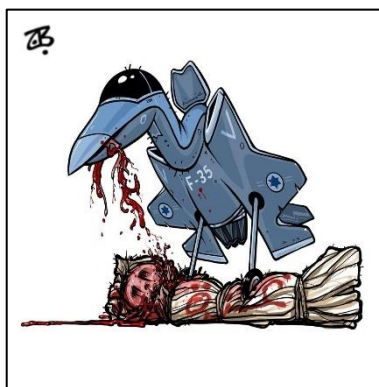


Figure 4. Instagram Hajjaj_cartoons, November 12, 2023 (Hajjaj, 2023c)

Symbol	Element	Statement
i	Context	The situation in the Gaza



Message	Satire and criticism
Addresser	Emad Hajjaj
Addressee	IDF (Israel Defense Forces)
Contact	Platform Instagram
Code	Jet aircraft with the number F-35

ii



Context	The situation in the Gaza
Message	Satire and criticism
Addresser	Emad Hajjaj
Addressee	IDF (Israel Defense Forces)
Contact	Platform Instagram
Code	Jet resembling a vulture-eating flesh

iii



Context	The situation in the Gaza
Message	Satire and criticism
Addresser	Emad Hajjaj
Addressee	IDF (Israel Defense Forces)
Contact	Platform Instagram
Code	A corpse crushed by a jet with the inscription "غزة" (Gaza)

Table 4. Explanation of the caricature of Hajjaj_cartoons, November 12, 2023, using the six elements of Roman Jakobson semiotics

Analysis of the Fourth Caricature

In the fourth cartoon, an F-35 jet is depicted as an aggressive bird of prey trampling on a corpse with the inscription "غزة."

- a) Code: The F-35 jet with the inscription is crushing a corpse.
- b) Message: Critique of the IDF's treatment of the corpses of victims of Israeli aggression in Gaza.
- c) Instagram caption: جرائم الطيران الحربي الاسرائيلي في غزة. Israeli Air Force's crimes in Gaza.

Interpretation


The caricature was uploaded on the Instagram account @Hajjaj_cartoons on November 12, 2023. Emad Hajjaj criticises the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) for committing war crimes by crushing bodies with jets or military vehicle. Crushing bodies can be considered a violation of

international humanitarian law (IHL) and the principles of honour in war, which involve the protection of war victims, including the respectful treatment of bodies. One relevant reference in this case is Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, Article 34, which states that bodies must be respected and treated with dignity. Parties involved in armed conflicts must take steps to identify and bury bodies with respect, by religious customs or the wishes of the family, as discussed in Article 130, under the victim's religion or the family's preferences (*Int. Humanit. Law Databases*, 1958).

The IDF has destroyed the bodies of dead Palestinian militants in Tulkarem, West Bank (Suhartono, 2024), and the IDF said it was unintentionally hit by Israeli military vehicles while the IDF was assisting local police during counter-terrorism operations (Pradana, 2024). Furthermore, it was reported through the New York Times that Israeli tanks crushed the Al-Faluja cemetery on December 13, 2023. The laws of armed conflict evaluate that intentionally damaging religious sites without necessary military reasons could potentially constitute war crimes (Koettl & Triebert, 2023). In the Al-Faluja, Jabalia, northern Gaza cemetery environment, one of at least six cemeteries identified by The New York Times as being destroyed after the land was crushed by tanks Israeli militants resulted in disarrayed tombstones and visible bodies (Laksono, 2023).



Figure 5. Instagram Hajjaj_cartoons, November 16, 2023 (Hajjaj, 2023a)

Symbol	Element	Statement
	Context	Politics
	Message	Satire
	Addresser	Emad Hajjaj
	Addressee	Daniel Hagari
	Contact	Platform Instagram
	Code	Pinocchio's hat
ii	Context	Propaganda
	Message	Satire and criticism



Addresser	Emad Hajjaj
Addressee	Daniel Hagari
Contact	Platform Instagram
Code	“مركز قيادة حماس تحت مستشفى الشفاء” or “Hamas Command Center under Al-Shifa Hospital”

iii



Context	Propaganda
Message	Satire
Addresser	Emad Hajjaj
Addressee	Daniel Hagari
Contact	Platform Instagram
Code	A middle-aged man with white hair and large ears

iv



Context	Propaganda
Message	Satir
Addresser	Emad Hajjaj
Addressee	Daniel Hagari
Contact	Platform Instagram
Code	A young boy on a pulpit with the inscription "بينوكيو" or Pinocchio

v



Context	Politics
Message	Satire and criticism
Addresser	Emad Hajjaj
Addressee	Daniel Hagari
Contact	Platform Instagram
Code	Pulpit with the inscription “هاغاري” or “Hagari”

vi

Context	Israeli Army Uniform
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Message	Satire and criticism
Addresser	Emad Hajjaj
Addressee	Daniel Hagari
Contact	Platform Instagram
Code	Green military uniform with the flag of Israel

Tabel 5. Explanation of the caricature of Hajjaj_cartoons, November 16, 2023, using the six elements of Roman Jakobson semiotics

Analysis of the Fifth Caricature

In the fifth caricature, two figures named "هاغاري", or Hagari and "بينوكيو", or Pinocchio, are depicted. Pinocchio's character has an elongated nose, while Hagari's character has enlarged ears. Figure Hagari is seen explaining something on a whiteboard with the inscription "مركز قيادة حماس تحت مستشفى الشفاء" or " Hamas Command Center under Al-Shifa Hospital."

- Code: An Israeli officer with characteristics similar to Pinocchio is explaining a text on a whiteboard with the inscription "مركز قيادة حماس تحت مستشفى الشفاء". Judging by the characteristics of the male figure on the right, reinforced by the writing "هاغاري", it reveals the presence of the character Daniel Hagari, an Israeli officer.
- Message: This caricature conveys a satirical message. Emad Hajjaj likens Hagari, whose ears are enlarged, to Pinocchio, whose nose elongates when lying. This is a mockery of Daniel Hagari and his claim that Al-Shifa Hospital is a Hamas command centre.
- Instagram caption: "أكذوبة دانيال هاغاري المفضوحة" translates to "Exposed falsehood of Daniel Hagari."

Interpretation



The caricature uploaded on the Instagram account @Hajjaj_cartoons on November 16, 2023, carries a satirical message. Emad Hajjaj criticises Israeli military officer Daniel Hagari for claiming that Al-Shifa Hospital is the headquarters, command centre, and militant base of Hamas. Hagari also alleges the presence of weapon supplies beneath the hospital. IDF disseminated a search video of Al-Shifa Hospital on Wednesday, November 15, 2023 (Carey, 2023; Hancock, 2023). The IDF uploaded an "intelligence-base" video illustration that supposedly proves Israel's claim that Hamas operates centrally from a bunker beneath Al-Shifa Hospital (Carey, 2023). The White House and the Pentagon supported the raid on Al-Shifa Hospital based on these false claims. Hamas denied the allegations, calling them unfounded lies (Salman, 2023).

The reference to Pinocchio, whose nose grows longer when he lies, is used to symbolise Daniel Hagari lying about the writing on the whiteboard: "مركز قيادة حماس تحت مستشفى الشفاء" or

“ Hamas Command Center under Al-Shifa Hospital”. This false claim is part of Israel's propaganda to gain international approval and understanding for their attack on Al-Shifa Hospital and to secure U.N. approval for the raid on Al-Shifa Hospital. The General Director of the hospital in Gaza, Dr Munir al-Bursh, told Al-Jazeera that the IDF exploded warehouses of medicines and medical equipment, searched and entered surgical and emergency rooms, and captured around 30 young men who were then stripped, blindfolded, and interrogated (Aljazeera, 2023b). Consequently, Hamas asserts that the IDF and Joe Biden have violated international law outlined in the Fourth Geneva Convention.



Figure 6. Instagram Osamahajjaj, Januari 9, 2024 (Hajjaj, 2024b)

Symbol	Element	Statement
i 	Context	Diplomacy and the International world
	Message	Human Rights Advocate
	Addresser	Osama Hajjaj
	Addressee	South Africa
	Contact	Platform Instagram
	Code	South African flag
	ii 	Context
Message		Satire and criticism
Addresser		Osama Hajjaj
Addressee		Benjamin Netanyahu
Contact		Platform Instagram
	Code	Bloody feet with urban elements forming a city with the inscription "Gaza."
iii	Context	Military Aggression



Message	Satire and criticism
Addresser	Osama Hajjaj
Addressee	Benjamin Netanyahu
Contact	Platform Instagram
Code	A middle-aged man looking confused, wearing a blood-stained apron and holding a meat cleaver

iv



Context	Military Aggression
Message	Satire and criticism
Addresser	Osama Hajjaj
Addressee	Benjamin Netanyahu
Contact	Platform Instagram
Code	Blood-stained meat cleaver restrained by a gavel

v



Context	Diplomacy and International Court
Message	Human Rights
Addresser	Osama Hajjaj
Addressee	South Africa
Contact	Platform Instagram
Code	A black-skinned man wearing a black robe, white shirt, and red tie

Table 6. Explanation of the caricature of Osamahajjaj, January 9, 2024, using the six elements of Roman Jakobson semiotics

Analysis of the Sixth Caricature

The sixth caricature depicts a judge holding a man with a white knife about to chop off his legs with a gavel labelled "Gaza". The gavel held by the black-skinned man in a judge's black robe has a small flag next to the inscription "South Africa."

1. Code: A judge is restraining a white-haired man who wants to cut something using a knife. The middle-aged white-haired man represents the figure "Benjamin Netanyahu".
2. Message: This caricature conveys a satirical message about Israel's military aggression in Gaza. South Africa is suing Israel in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on allegations of committing genocide in Gaza.
3. Instagram caption: جنوب إفريقيا تقاضي إسرائيل...

Interpretation

The caricature, uploaded to the Instagram account @Osamahajjaj on January 9, 2024, depicts a judge restraining Benjamin Netanyahu's actions in Gaza. The International Court proceedings, initiated on January 11, 2024, saw South Africa urge the court to order the suspension of Israel's military operations in Gaza. South Africa requested the court immediately mandate emergency measures in Gaza and suspend Israel's military aggression, suspected of intending to destroy a significant portion of Gaza's population. Netanyahu responded, stating that the IDF's actions were solely to protect the civilian population of Gaza, used by Hamas as a shield (DW, 2024).

South Africa submitted an 84-page document alleging that Israel violated the 1948 Genocide Convention, established after World War II and the Holocaust (Aljazeera, 2023d). Genocide is criminalised by the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (UN, 1951). It defines genocide as acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, religious, or racial group, including mental harm, imposing difficult conditions on the group, preventing births, or forcibly transferring children to another group. This convention provides a legal definition and recognises the severity of violations against specific human groups. Its significance lies in efforts to prevent and punish genocide internationally (Swart, 2019).

Teleological Elements in Caricatures on Instagram Accounts @Osamahajjaj and @Hajjaj_cartoons

Teleological elements in caricatures can be identified through the messages or meanings conveyed by the caricaturist. In the first caricature, Osama Hajjaj blames Western media for disseminating misinformation about Hamas' Al-Aqsa Storm Operation on October 7, 2023, while ignoring Israel's countless attacks on Gaza over the last 70 years. This raises worries about the asymmetry in Western press coverage, showing unequal reporting. Excessive concentration on one side may affect the public's perception of actual events. The first caricature's indictment of Western mass media is supported by the title in the Instagram post, "الإعلام الغربي... Western media..."

In the second caricature, Osama Hajjaj uses the portrayal of intimacy between Joe Biden and Benjamin Netanyahu, as a critique of the controversial bilateral meeting on October 18, 2023. The caption "قبلة الموت... Kiss of Death..." in the first caricature's Instagram post can be translated as 'Kiss of Death.' This caption emphasises that the intimacy between the two figures is considered dangerous and detrimental, referring to the negative impact seen through the smoke and the collapse of buildings around them, symbolising Israel's military aggression in Gaza. The closer the ties between America and Israel, the more detrimental the effects on Gaza or Palestine will be.

In the third caricature, Osama Hajjaj criticises Israel's military aggression, which has killed more than 100 journalists on duty in Gaza. The killing and targeting of journalists

performing their duties on the battlefield are considered war crimes under International Humanitarian Law (IHL). This critique strongly condemns the IDF after the killing of Hamza Dahdouh, the son of Wael Al-Dahdouh, both of whom were camera operators and journalists in Gaza on October 7, 2023. In the Instagram caption, "دمعة جبل غزة... The Giant of Gaza-a tear" Wael Al-Dahdouh, a journalist in the caricature, is seen sad and trying to hold back tears due to Israel's killing of his family during the Israeli military aggression on October 8, 2023.

In the fourth caricature, Emad Hajjaj criticises the IDF for committing war crimes in their treatment of deceased victims during their aggression. Emad Hajjaj criticises how the IDF crushes bodies using military vehicles. This criticism aligns with Israel's actions that damage cemeteries in Gaza, leaving many graves destroyed and revealing bodies within them. Israel, in its aggression, has committed numerous war crimes and violated International Humanitarian Law, including Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, Articles 34 and 130.

In the fifth caricature, Emad Hajjaj criticises Daniel Hagari for falsely claiming that Al-Shifa Hospital served as the headquarters and command centre for Hamas during the Al-Aqsa Storm Operation. Daniel Hagari made this accusation to garner support for raiding the hospital, a move that violates the rules of war. Emad Hajjaj conveys this criticism due to Daniel Hagari's deception, which led to the IDF entering Al-Shifa Hospital, detonating warehouses of medicines and medical equipment, searching and entering surgical and emergency rooms, and arresting around 30 young individuals who were later stripped, blindfolded, and interrogated.

Finally, in the sixth caricature, Osama Hajjaj commends South Africa for suing Israel in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on charges of committing genocide in Gaza. On January 11, 2024, South Africa ordered the suspension of Israel's military operations in Gaza, citing Israel's commission of genocide. Israel faced genocide charges due to the brutal bombings in Gaza. The significant loss of life and war crimes committed by Israel in Gaza leads to the conclusion that Israel is engaged in genocide, involving the killing or persecution of members of a national, ethnic, religious, or racial group with the intent to destroy the group wholly or partially.

4. CONCLUSION

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that the first and second caricatures are criticisms of U.S. support and Western media for Israel's aggression in Palestine. The third and fourth caricatures criticise Israel for violating international humanitarian law (IHL) against journalists and victims. In the fifth caricature, the caricaturist criticises Daniel Hagari for falsely alleging that Al-Shifa Hospital is a Hamas headquarters in an attempt to justify Israel's attacks on Palestine, and the sixth caricature depicts a worldwide effort to stop Israel's military assault on Palestine. The teleological elements identified through these caricatures convey critical messages on various issues, such as imbalances in Western media coverage, controversies in bilateral meetings, war crimes targeting journalists and deceased victims, and South Africa and the world's efforts to stop aggression by bringing the Israeli genocide case in Palestine to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

The discussion's practical and empirical implications centre on a deeper understanding of the teleological meaning and its application to interpreting caricature using Roman Jakobson's semiotic lens. Practically, the conclusions of this discussion give a framework for investigating caricatures in the socio-political context of the Middle East, shedding insight into the underlying concepts conveyed through visual representations. This understanding can help affect public discourse and policy on the Israeli military aggression in Palestine. Empirically, the discussion contributes to the field of semiotics by demonstrating the applicability of Jakobson's framework for teleological meaning in caricature, enriching readers' understanding of visual communication and its role in shaping perceptions and narratives. Furthermore, it is proposed that future researchers undertake more thorough studies by broadening the scope of the study to include more Instagram profiles to gather more data. Other theories should also be used to analyse the same caricatures.

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