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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Linguistic Framing and Media Discourse in the Sudanese Conflict: The Strategic Function of Lexical Choice

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| ABSTRACT
This study analyzes the systematic weaponization of language in Sudan's ongoing armed conflict between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which began in April 2023. We employed qualitative discourse analysis based on critical discourse analysis and sociolinguistic theory to analyse 1,842 social media postings, 387 transcripts from state media, 92 official documents, and 37 ethnographic interviews collected in the span of April 2023 to June 2025. The analysis classified 87 unique phrases into eight different functional categories: incitement of war; sarcasm; hatred; racism/ethnic incitement; mobilization; delegitimization; dehumanization; and symbolic and/or military language. The findings show that lexical choices are manifestations of performative violence, constantly producing realities of conflict through nominalized and othering and legitimizing language. The RSF supporters demonstrated more linguistic creativity when challenging the institutional legitimacy of the SAF in their postings and comments, though both sides engaged in dehumanizing language as had occurred prior to historically documented instances of ethnic violence in other countries. Social media platforms supported the hastening of semantic invention while more widely producing ideological echo chambers of extreme discourse. Linguistic warfare builds upon historical centre-periphery divides and hierarchies of Arabic language established during the colonial period, and there were notable correlations between patterns of hate language and humanitarian outcomes impacting millions of people. The findings support the theories of performative violence and necro politics and have important implications for peace journalism intervention, content moderation practices, and post-conflict reconciliation.

| KEYWORDS
lexical choice, media discourse, Sudanese conflict, word power

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1. Introduction

In times of armed conflict, both official state media and non-state media agents prominently use specific linguistic repertoires as a form of persuasion, attempting to shape public perceptions, influence the direction of narratives, and affect the discursive constructions associated with the conflict (Locoman & Lau, 2024; Wolfsfeld, 2004). Language conveys not just cognition and emotion but, more importantly, domain-specific control of information flow in crises (Van Dijk, 2006). In this context, discourse is more than communication—it actually constructs and manipulates reality (Fairclough, 2003a). Thus, the strategic selection of specific words or phrases, and the constitutive nature of language, bounds the ways in which individuals make sense of events while also influencing how national actors respond to the same communicative event themselves (Chilton, 2004). The constitutive work of language makes it an essential site of analysis for understanding how narratives of conflict are constructed, challenged, and legitimized in some measure (Steuter & Wills, 2008).

The latest military confrontation in Sudan started on April 15, 2023, when the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), headed by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), led by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti), clashed. The current conflict manifests as more than a simply military struggle; it reflects continuing tensions concerning national identity and political legitimacy in Sudan, tensions which have existed since independence in 1956. Now entering its third year, the conflict is shaped by a complex interaction of social and political factors, including the crucial role of media discourse in stoking hostilities and shaping domestic sentiment and international engagement.

Driven by overlapping ethnic and political tensions, media - whether national or local - has used language strategically to advocate for their tales as the truth. It demonstrates the active role of discourse not only in shaping perceptions of conflict, but as vital to producing and reproducing the constitution of the conflict itself. The war has resulted in a catastrophic humanitarian impact. Millions have been internally displaced or have fled to neighboring countries. It is estimated that 150,000 people have died (Council on Foreign Relations, 2025; UNHCR, 2024). Millions more are facing severe food insecurity (Ibrahim, 2025). In addition to these tragic material impacts, language has been systematically weaponized in the conflict to form enemy identities, justify violence, and sustain cycles of hatred between communities (Mendoza-Denton, 2022). Media narratives--including both traditional media and social media--have become a contested space in which narratives struggle for legitimacy, dehumanize adversaries, and encourage actual violence (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005; Wolfsfeld, 2004). While social media has opened up access to information, it has also created ideological echo chambers that further legitimize extremist discourse and spread hate speech (Cinelli et al., 2021; Sunstein, 2018).

1.1 The statement of the problem

The research demonstrates the gap in conflict studies by examining language as both a contributor to, and a product of armed conflict in Sudan. While some sociolinguistics studies have examined the identity politics in Sudan (Garri & Mugaddam, 2015), few studies have interrogated the discursive practices by which the media perseveres with patterns of conflict escalation and humanitarian disaster. Thus, research draws on an interdisciplinary approach and makes use of critical discourse analysis, sociolinguistic ethnography and corpus linguistics. So, the study mainly aims to

-analyze three systems of linguistic warfare that are invoked in the current conflict in Sudan.

-offer an emphasis on aspects of understanding the strategic intention and material power of lexical choices, in particular.

Therefore, the study highlights questions as follows:

1-How does media discourse contribute and amplify the ideological aspects of war in Sudan?

2- What purpose is the reason behind using lexical choices to frame power words linguistically?

This research holds significance beyond academic inquiry. Its broader importance lies in application to conflict resolution, humanitarian intervention, and post-conflict reconstruction. Understanding how language acts as warfare can enhance future predictions to create linguistic interventions to limit escalation; and supports peacemaking efforts. Additionally, this work contributes to theoretical discussions about the performativity of language in violent conflict and media's role in creating social realities during crisis.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework: Language, Power, and Conflict

Critical Discourse Analysis offers a lens for seeing language as a living social practice, one that actively builds and shapes power relationships (Fairclough, 1995). Looking at it from a historical view, Wodak (2020, 2024) gives us ways to study how choices in language can make exclusion and violence seem acceptable. This is especially important when looking at how Sudanese media tries to make military actions seem like they are reasonable. Expanding on this, Butler's (2021) idea of performative violence shows us that language can itself be a form of violence. It does this by stripping people of their humanity, setting the stage for physical violence. In Sudan, we've seen how using language in this way has come before times of ethnic violence and displacement (Abdelhay et al., 2017; Sharkey, 2012).Building on this, Mbembe and Corcoran's (2019) idea of necropolitics helps us to see how the ways we talk about things can create death worlds, turning certain groups of people into those who can be gotten rid of for political reasons. The way conflict is talked about in Sudan often includes language that takes away people's humanity, making violence seem like it makes sense and is supported by beliefs (Dolan & Ferroggiaro, 2019; Ibrahim, 2025).

2.2 Linguistic Obfuscation Mechanisms & Strategic Discursive Tactics

Governments often use specific ways of talking to hide who is really responsible for things. One way they do this is by turning actions into abstract ideas, which hides who is actually causing problems in human-caused crises (Billig, 2008; Fowler, 1985). Also, they use passive sentences to make it less clear who is doing what, helping them to avoid taking responsibility(Fairclough, 1989; Halliday, 1985). Official statements are sometimes made unclear on purpose; this lets them be interpreted in different ways, which makes it harder for people to challenge what they say (Eisenberg, 1984; Ulmer & Sellnow, 2000).

2.2.1 Othering and Polarizing Nomenclature

The words used in media can change depending on who they are talking to and what their goals are (Locoman & Lau, 2024). By using polarizing words, they create a sense that one group is good while another is bad. This can be done by using loaded terms like separatists and militias (Billig, 2008; Richardson & Barkho, 2009). In Sudan, words like Janjaweed and Kizan create strict boundaries between groups, which can lead to violence (Rothbart & Cooley, 2016; Sharkey, 2008).

2.3 Deflection and Legitimization

Sometimes, people try to avoid blame by saying that outside forces are responsible for what happened (Heinkelmann-Wild et al., 2023). They might also try to make violence seem acceptable by saying it is a reasonable way to defend themselves, rather than admitting it is an act of unnecessary aggression (Reyes, 2011; Van Leeuwen, 2007). They might present violence as something that was unavoidable instead of seeing it as a political choice (Chilton, 2004).

2.4 Media Framing and Nation-Building

The media plays a key role in shaping how people see their country through the words they use and what stories they choose to share (Frahm, 2012; Unesco, 2024). Rules and laws, like South Sudan's Media Authority Act, control the words that can be used and cause people to censor themselves (Cook & Heilmann, 2013; Unesco, 2024). This limits critical reporting and favors what the government wants people to hear (Price & Krug, 2002; Voltmer, 2013).

2.5 Multilingual Dimensions of Power

Because Sudan has so many languages, multilingualism is an important factor in how media messages are created and who can understand them (Miller, 2015; Sharkey, 2008). How different languages are used can strengthen identity politics and discrimination against those who are part of smaller language communities (Milani & Johnson, 2010). Since Arabic is the main language, this creates a language order that can act as a form of symbolic violence, creating power imbalances between Arabic speakers and those who speak other languages (Assal, 2006; Bourdieu, 1991).Sharkey (2008) makes the point that the importance of Arabic shows a bigger pattern of political and cultural control. Abdelhay et al. (2017) discuss how language rights can be used to favor certain races, pointing out that policies that promote Arabic can push non-Arabic speakers to the side and put their languages at risk. Zouhir (2015) shows that efforts to promote Arabic have created a single Arab-Islamic identity, while language policies in education can make it harder for kids who speak other languages to get a good education (Slom, 2025).

2.6 Verbal Aggression and Conflict-Generating Rhetoric

The way people talk in Sudanese media shows an increase in verbal aggression. This is something we also see happening in other countries (Ibrahim, 2025; Ifeanyichukwu & Hoffman, 2025). This includes direct aggression through threats, as well as subtle ways like hints and rhetorical questions in news stories (Culpeper, 2011; Zhang, 2020). These actions make social conflicts worse and allow people to avoid being held responsible (Blom & Hansen, 2015; Bousfield, 2008).

2.7 Media Discourse and Technological Transformation

The fact that there are fewer checks on what is published, combined with the speed at which information can now spread, means that radical ideas can spread quickly. This is very important for understanding how social media is changing the way political violence is talked about in Sudan (Ibrahim, 2025).Using war-related metaphors also makes violence seem more acceptable and creates a sense of distance between people and the victims. Anselmo et al. (2025) look at war-related words in news reports, while Ptaszek et al. (2024) study how war is framed in different cultures. Winter's (2017) idea of war beyond words focuses on the symbolic, visual, and performative parts of conflict, which is useful for studying the different forms that conflict takes in Sudan.

2.8 Lexical Innovation and Computational Analysis

Armed conflict can change the meanings of words and lead to new words being created (Akin, 2016; Aminova, 2023). Technology is making it easier to automatically sort and map out these word choices in real-time (Kumar et al., 2023). For example, the way people talked during the conflict in Ukraine gives us a way to understand how wartime situations can make unusual words seem acceptable, as they are used as symbols of resistance (Del Percio & Flubacher, 2024; Humbert et al., 2023; Kulyk, 2018).

2.9 Sociocultural Consequences

Media actively shapes our understanding of social issues and challenges narratives that diverge from their own, often influencing international opinions and relief strategies. By repeatedly using certain labels, media plays a huge part in manufacturing social perceptions (Reyes, 2011; Wolfsfeld, 2004). Lexical warfare, where language itself is weaponized, leaves long-term scars on communities, affecting how people see themselves, how well communities stick together, and how much people internalize from traumatic events (Mendoza-Denton, 2022). Research across different situations suggests that using discourse strategies as weapons is a common way to create division and reinforce pre-existing conflicts within post-colonial societies (Galtung, 1998; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005).

2.10 Research Gap

Despite extensive prior research on global language-conflict dynamics and Sudan's historical language policies and identity politics, significant gaps remain in the examination of contemporary media discourse during the ongoing 2023–present SAF–RSF armed conflict. Specifically:

1.There is limited systematic analysis of how traditional state media and unregulated digital platforms interact to constitute, escalate, and perpetuate the war.

2.Previous Sudan-focused linguistic studies emphasise macro-policy (e.g. Arabisation) or pre-2023 micro-practices, neglecting the mediating role of real-time media.

3.There is a lack of longitudinal studies on lexical innovation, semantic shifts, and the weaponization of vocabulary in Sudanese Arabic during the current conflict, particularly on digital platforms.

4.No empirical research integrates historical centre–periphery divides, colonial language hierarchies, and modern technology-accelerated hate speech and performative violence in this context. Therefore, the article presents a pioneering empirical sociolinguistic study, first to systematically integrate longitudinal lexical analysis across state, digital media with historical centre-periphery and colonial language frameworks. Successively, bridging these gaps and revealing lexical choices as forms of warfare that both reflect and actively shape conflict realities.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A qualitative, mixed-methods design was implemented, emphasizing inductive reasoning to identify emerging categories within discourse. This manual approach relies on iterative readings, note-taking, and thematic synthesis to detect ideological biases, lexical shifts, and performative violence (Alejandro & Zhao, 2024; Butler, 2021). The design parallels corpus linguistics' analytical richness through frequency counts and collocation mapping, with manual coding conducted by two researchers to ensure transparency and replicability. Data were processed in manageable segments, with inter-rater reliability checks ensuring validity. They were purposively collected from April 2023 to June 2025 across four triangulated sources:

- 1,842 high-engagement social-media posts (X, Facebook, TikTok)
- 387 manually transcribed state-media broadcasts (SAF- and RSF-aligned TV/radio)
- 92 official documents (press releases, ceasefire agreements)
- 37 semi-structured ethnographic interviews (12 journalists, 10 influencers, 15 internally displaced persons)

Ethical measures included informed consent, full anonymization (especially for displaced interviewees), and right of withdrawal. Raw interview data remain confidential for participant safety. This rigorous, human-centred, triangulated approach enabled the identification and classification of 87 unique wartime phrases into eight functional categories, forming the empirical basis for analyzing lexical weaponization and performative violence in the Sudanese conflict.

3.2 Data Collection

Data organisation and analysis relied on physical tools (index cards, annotated printouts, colour-coded timelines, master binder). The research team conducted iterative close reading, manual frequency/collocation counts, thematic coding, and speech-act annotation. A structured coding scheme captured each term's Arabic form, IPA transcription, original and wartime meanings, affiliating faction, rhetorical function, and correlation with violence. Inter-coder reliability was ensured through independent coding of subsets and team discussion.Data were obtained from various media and ethnographic sources during April 2023 to June 2025 to examine temporal conflict dynamics. Data collection followed purposive sampling to include the most relevant data types: official accounts, grassroots accounts, and personal accounts.

Social media posts: 1,842 posts were manually collected from public platforms including X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, and Facebook. Posts were selected based on engagement metrics (likes, shares) and relevance to unfolding conflict events. Extraction involved documenting content from publicly accessible archives with metadata (date, author) recorded in manual logbooks.

State Media Transcripts: 387 transcripts of television and radio broadcasts were generated through careful listening and manual transcription. Transcripts featured official narratives from SAF and RSF state media, focusing on rhetorical conflict framing.

Official Documents: 92 official documents, including ceasefire agreements and press releases from SAF and RSF, were obtained from publicly available sources. These documents featured formalized discursive strategies.

Ethnographic Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 37 individuals including journalists (n=12), social media influencers (n=10), and internally displaced persons (n=15). Interviews lasted 45-90 minutes, with questions focused on pragmatic interpretations of lexical items (e.g., "What does 'Jughm' mean in everyday talk?"). Responses were recorded verbatim or transcribed post-interview, maintaining cultural sensitivity through bilingual facilitators fluent in Sudanese Arabic and English.

Table 1: Data Collection Matrix

Data Type	Number	Source/Platform	Purpose/Focus	Study
Social Media Posts	1,842	X, TikTok, Facebook	High-engagement conflict content	Study2, Study 3
State Media Transcripts	387	Television and radio broadcasts	Official narratives	Study 3
Official Documents	92	SAF and RSF ceasefire agreements, press releases	Official positions and agreements	Study 3
Ethnographic Interviews	37	Journalists, influencers, displaced persons	Validate pragmatic inferences	Study 2

3.3 Data Organisation

Raw data were organized using physical tools for tactile manipulation and pattern recognition. Excerpts were transferred onto index cards or A4 sheets, organized by source and theme (e.g., "dehumanization," "neologisms"). Metadata logs tracked provenance, while all materials were collected in a master binder for cross-referencing and collation.

3.4 Analytical Framework

Analysis occurred in iterative steps, adapting computational practices to manual procedures required for lexical, discursive, and sociolinguistic analysis.

Lexical Analysis:

The research team engaged in close reading to establish keywords and collocations within wider contexts. Brief summaries recorded new words and usage contexts; word frequencies (e.g., "Bal Bas" instances across sources) were manually tallied. The team discussed terms' sociolinguistic implications, clustering them based on usage context aligned with documented violence indicators.

Table 2: Database Structure (Coding Scheme)

Field Name	Description
Arabic Term / Phrase	Word or expression used in Sudanese wartime discourse
IPA Transcription	International Phonetic Alphabet rendering for accurate pronunciation
Original Usage	Cultural or linguistic context before wartime repurposing
Original Meaning	Literal or traditional meaning
Wartime / Political Meaning	Shifted meaning in war, propaganda, or factional rhetoric context
Affiliated Group / Speaker	Who uses the term (SAF, RSF, civilians, media, etc.)
Discourse Type	Rhetorical function (e.g., incitement, satire, martyrdom, tribalism)
Violence Correlation	Degree of association with violent acts, incitement, or hate speech
Real-World Example / Quote	Documented usage from media, social platforms, or speeches
Date of Usage	Time period or event when term gained prominence
Linguistic / Cultural Notes	Phonetic features, etymology, or symbolic significance

3.5 Discourse Analysis

CDA was employed by annotating data sections with codes (e.g., "delegitimating," "ethnic vilification") using colored markers. The team identified speech acts (e.g., incitement), recorded them with contextual notes in coding journals, and linked them to ideological markers. Framing changes over time were traced across social media and mainstream media discourses using large, color-coded physical timeline charts enabling direct source comparison across socio-historical periods.

Sociolinguistic Contextualization:

Interview data triangulated findings to verify pragmatic inferences (e.g., cultural associations of "Hasharat" connotations). Inter-coder reliability was calculated from independently coded data subsets; discrepancies were resolved through discussion.

Validation and Triangulation: Findings were validated across data types (e.g., comparing social media expressions to interview explanations and humanitarian documentation). Member checking involved presenting anonymized themes to selected participants for feedback and confirmation, adding reliability to contextual interpretations.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Due to the sensitivity of conflict-related data, this research followed stringent ethical protocols. Interview participants provided informed consent, with particular care taken to protect the identities of internally displaced persons who could face reprisals for participation. Data including personal identifiers were anonymized, and participants retained the right to withdraw contributions at any point.

3.7 Limitations

The manual analysis method, while labor-intensive and potentially limiting scalability for larger datasets, ensures cultural and contextual respect. Subjectivity in coding was minimized through triangulation and inter-rater reliability measures, though complete objectivity remains challenging in qualitative research. The focus on Arabic-source materials may limit understanding of discourse patterns within non-Arabic speaking communities—an opportunity for future investigation.

4. Discussion & Analysis

The lexical analysis of media discourse in the Sudanese conflict reveals a complex vocabulary system used by various entities, including supporters of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), Rapid Support Forces (RSF), Freedom and Change Coalition (FFC), Islamists, official media, and central media. A total of 87 unique phrases were identified and categorised into eight primary purposes: Incitement to War (12 phrases), Sarcasm (15 phrases), Hatred (11 phrases), Racism/Ethnic Incitement (13 phrases), Mobilisation (11 phrases), Delegitimisation (11 phrases), Dehumanization (7 phrases), and Other (Symbolic, Descriptive, or Military) (17 phrases). These categories highlight the strategic use of language to shape perceptions, mobilise support, and escalate hostilities between conflicting parties, demonstrating that language in this context functions not merely as description but as the active construction of violent realities (Fairclough, 2003b; Van Dijk, 2015).

4.1 Incitement to War

This category includes phrases intended to incite violence and maintain combat momentum through direct calls for aggression or the glorification of military actions. Twelve phrases were identified, with an even distribution between SAF and RSF supporters. RSF-aligned terms such as "طق بلا رحمة" ([tˤaq bla: raħma]) (kill without mercy) and "الطوفان" ([itˤtˤu:fa:n]) (comprehensive attack) emphasise ruthless offensives, while SAF supporters use "بل بس" ([bal bas]) (continuation until victory) and "حرب الشرف" ([ħarb ʃʃaraf]) (war of honour) to portray the conflict as a noble endeavour. Both sides share terms like "فتك" ([fatk]) (killing and humiliating) and "جغم" ([d͡ʒagm]) (to swallow the opponent), indicating mutual adoption of boastful rhetoric in battlefield narratives.

Table 3: Words and Phrases Used for Incitement to War

Phrase	Transliteration	Brief Description or Purpose of Use	Entity Using the Phrase or Word
الجاي المدق بندق	[ild͡ʒa:j ilmad:iq bandiq]	One who comes to the battlefield to be killed (cannon fodder)	Supporters of SAF and RSF
طق بلا رحمة	[tˤaq bla: raħma]	Kill the enemy without mercy	Supporters of RSF
فتك	[fatk]	Killing and humiliating in battle	Both sides, especially in military boasting
جغم	[d͡ʒagm]	To kill, meaning "to swallow the opponent"	Both sides, especially in military boasting
بل بس	[bal bas]	Continuation of the battle until victory	Supporters of SAF
الحل في البل	[ilħal fil bil]	A call for continued military pressure	Supporters of SAF
طقيق	[tˤi:qi:q]	A precise, direct field attack	Supporters of RSF
الطوفان	[itˤtˤu:fa:n]	A comprehensive military attack	Supporters of RSF
القوة المميتة	[ilgo:wa ilmumi:ta]	Deadly weapons	Sudanese Armed Forces
حرب الشرف	[ħarab ʃʃaraf]	Boosting morale and glorifying military operations	Supporters of SAF
حرب الكرامة	[ħarab ilkara:ma]	Boosting morale and glorifying military operations	Supporters of SAF
أعداء الدولة	[ʔaʕda:ʔ idda:wla]	Describing the opponent as traitors, calling for their elimination	Supporters of SAF, official media

The prevalence of incitement phrases highlights a media ecosystem dominated by psychological operations designed to sustain conflict, reflecting Van Dijk's (2006, 2015) observations about the role of language in controlling information flow during crises. The balanced use by both SAF and RSF supporters demonstrates mutual reliance on aggressive rhetoric to mobilise fighters and justify violence. The shared lexicon of boastful militarism – evident in terms such as "فتك" ([fatk]) and "جغم" ([d͡ʒagm])—accords with theories of lexical warfare, in which words construct violent realities rather than merely describe them (Fairclough, 2003b).

RSF's emphasis on ruthless terms like "طق بلا رحمة" ([tˤaq bla: raħma]) contrasts with SAF's morally charged "حرب الشرف" ([ħarb ʃʃaraf]), suggesting differing ideological framings: RSF as unrelenting combatants and SAF as defenders of honour. This discursive strategy exemplifies Chilton's (2004) argument that language shapes how individuals interpret events while influencing actor responses.

4.2 Sarcasm

Sarcasm is the largest category, with 15 phrases, predominantly used by RSF supporters (11 phrases) to mock and undermine SAF leadership and allies. Phrases such as "أب جيقة" ([ʔab d͡ʒi:qa]) (sarcasm directed at SAF generals) and "مشتركة طوط" ([muʃtarka tˤu:tˤ]) (a sarcastic reference to SAF-supporting forces) use humour to belittle opponents, often twisting positive terms into derision. SAF supporters contribute fewer examples, such as "صانعي الكباب العظماء" ([sˤa:niʕi: l-kiba:b il-ʕuðˤma:ʔ]) (great kebab makers, mocking pilots), while both sides use "شفشفة" ([ʃafʃafa]) (a metaphor for looting) in accusatory exchanges.

Table 4: Words and Phrases Used for Sarcasm

Phrase	Transliteration	Brief Meaning	Entity Using the Phrase or Word
عرّد	[ʕar:ad]	Panicked flight	Supporters of RSF
جري دنقاس	[d͡ʒri: dinqa:s]	Humiliating retreat	Supporters of RSF
أب جيقة	[ab d͡ʒi:qa]	Sarcasm towards SAF generals	Supporters of RSF
فلنقاي	[filnqa:j]	Blind loyalty and sarcasm	Supporters of RSF
مشتركة طوط	[muʃtarka tˤu:tˤ]	Forces supporting the army (used sarcastically)	Supporters of RSF
البرهانجية	[ilburha:nd͡ʒijja]	Sarcasm towards al-Burhan's loyalists	Supporters of RSF
الخراؤون	[ilxra:ʔu:n]	Sarcasm towards the "Al-Bara'un" (pro-SAF group)	Supporters of RSF
الهراؤون	[ilhra:ʔu:n]	Sarcasm towards the "Al-Bara'un"	Supporters of RSF
شفشفة	[ʃafʃa:fa]	A metaphor for thefts/looting	Both sides, mutual accusations
أبلدة أم قاش	[ablidat ʔum qa:ʃ]	Sarcasm towards the SAF	Supporters of RSF
العسكر، الكرتة	[ilʕaskar, ilkarta]	Belittling the SAF	Supporters of RSF
كيزان	[ki:za:n]	Sarcasm towards Islamists	Supporters of FFC and RSF
صانعي الكباب العظماء	[sˤa:niʕi ilkiba:b ilʕuẓma:ʔ]	Glorifying SAF pilots (used sarcastically, "Great Kebab Makers")	Supporters of SAF
الفلنجاي	[filand͡ʒa:j]	Sarcasm towards blind loyalty to the government	Supporters of RSF
تجار اللبن	[tid͡ʒa:r illebən]	Belittling Sudan Shield fighters as weak/cowardly	Supporters of RSF

The dominance of sarcasm, with RSF supporters contributing 11 out of 15 phrases, highlights their linguistic creativity in psychological warfare. This may reflect their paramilitary origins and their need to counter the SAF's institutional legitimacy through alternative discursive strategies. Such patterns echo historical trends in asymmetric conflicts, where non-state actors employ humour and derision to undermine hierarchical authority, as seen in insurgent discourse in Iraq and Syria (Fairclough, 2003b; Steuter & Wills, 2008). The use of covertly aggressive strategies through mockery is particularly effective in avoiding direct accountability while achieving antagonistic communicative aims (Bousfield, 2008; Zhang, 2020). Phrases such as "أب جيقة" ([ʔab d͡ʒi:qa]) and "مشتركة طوط" ([muʃtarka tˤu:tˤ]) turn SAF's authority into ridicule, while SAF's "صانعي الكباب العظماء" ([sˤa:niʕi: l-kiba:b il-ʕuðˤma:ʔ]) responds with mockery of RSF's perceived inferiority. This tit-for-tat verbal escalation intensifies societal tensions (Blom & Hansen, 2015; Kapuściński et al., 2024).

4.3 Hatred

Eleven phrases focus on inciting deep-seated animosity through demonisation and accusations of barbarism. SAF and Islamist supporters dominate this category (six phrases), using terms such as "الدعامة حطب القيامة" ([iddaʕa:ma ħatˤab ilqi:ja:ma]) (RSF as fuel for doomsday) and "البعاتي" ([ilba:ʕa:ti:]) (demonising RSF commander Hemeti) to portray opponents as morally irredeemable. RSF and FFC supporters respond with "بُلابسة" ([bula:bsa]) (evil Islamists) and "الدواعش" ([iddawa:ʃ]) (ISIS-like extremists). Shared phrases such as "العصابة الإجرامية" ([ilʕiṣa:ba l-ʔid͡ʒra:miyya]) (criminal gang) and "أكلة الجثث" ([ʔaklat al-d͡ʒuθuθ]) (corpse-eaters) appear in retaliatory contexts.

Table 5: Words and Phrases Used for Hatred

Phrase	Transliteration	Brief Description or Purpose of Use	Entity Using the Phrase or Word
الدعامة حطب القيامة	[idʕa:ma ħab:ab ilqi:a:ma]	Demonizing RSF as criminals deserving afterlife punishment	Supporters of SAF, Islamists

بُلابسة	[buˈlaːbsa]	Demonizing Islamists as symbols of evil	Supporters of RSF, FFC
البعاتي	[ilbaːʕaːtiː]	Demonizing Hemeti (RSF commander) as an unnatural creature	Supporters of SAF, Islamists
الخراؤون	[ilxraːʔuːn]	Belittling Islamists as symbolic filth	Supporters of RSF
جنة كرتي	[d͡ʒannat kirtiː]	Sarcasm towards SAF casualties as worthless victims	Supporters of RSF
الدواعش	[dawaːʃ]	Demonizing Islamists, linking to religious terrorism	Supporters of RSF, FFC
الجنجويد	[al d͡ʒand͡ʒuːwiːd]	Suggesting tribal brutality, dehumanization	Supporters of SAF, official media
العصابة الإجرامية	[ilʕiṣaːba ilid͡ʒraːmijja]	Describing the other side as a gang, delegitimizing them	Both sides, mobilizing discourse
دعامي	[dʕaːmaːwi]	Belittling RSF fighters as barbarians	Supporters of SAF, Islamists
أكلة الجثث	[ʔaklat ild͡ʒuθuθ]	Accusations of barbarism, portraying opponent as corpse-eater	Both sides, retaliatory contexts
حركة الإسلامية	[ħarakat ilʔislaːmijja]	Portraying SAF supporters as terrorists	Supporters of RSF

Hatred phrases exemplify hate speech mechanisms that dehumanise and enable atrocities, drawing direct parallels with Rwandan genocide rhetoric, where terms such as "cockroaches" facilitated ethnic cleansing by creating psychological distance between perpetrators and victims (Thompson, 2007). In the Sudanese context, phrases like "أكلة الجثث" ([ʔaklat al-d͡ʒuθuθ]) and " الدعامة حطب القيامة" ([iddaʕaːma ħatˤab ilqiːjaːma]) foster emotional numbing, particularly through SAF's official media channels, which frame the RSF as existential threats requiring elimination (Mbembe & Corcoran, 2019). This aligns with Butler 's (2021) concept of performative violence, where speech acts create conditions that enable physical violence against target groups. The overlap with dehumanisation categories (e.g., "الجنجويد" [al d͡ʒand͡ʒuːwiːd]) and shared terms such as "العصابة الإجرامية" ([ilʕiṣaːba l-ʔid͡ʒraːmiyya]) illustrate mutual vilification processes that escalate hostility through retaliatory discourse patterns (Culpeper, 2011; Dolan & Ferroggiaro, 2019).

4.4 Racism/Ethnic Incitement

This category comprises 13 phrases that exploit ethnic and regional identities to incite division, with particular emphasis on geographic marginalisation. SAF and central media supporters use terms such as "عرب الشتات" ([ʕarab ʃʃitaːt]) (scattered Arabs, denying belonging) and "غرابة" ([ɣaraːba]) (an ethnic insult for western Sudanese) to target those of Darfur origin. RSF supporters respond with "ديناري" ([diːnaːriː]) (a derogatory term for light-skinned northerners) and "دولة 56" ([dawlat ʕaːm wa sitta]) (accusing central hegemony since the 1956 independence). Contextual phrases such as "دارفوري" ([daːrfuːriː]) (Darfuri) vary in tone– glorifying for RSF, marginalising for SAF.

Table 6: Words and Phrases Used for Racism/Ethnic Incitement

Phrase	**Transliteration**	**Brief Description or Purpose of Use**	**Entity Using the Phrase or Word**
عرب الشتات	[ʕarab ʃʃitaːt]	Targeting Arab origins in Darfur, denying national belonging	Supporters of SAF, central media
ديناري	[diːnaːriː]	Derogatory symbolization for light skin (North/Central)	Supporters of RSF
شيريا	[ʃiːrja]	Derogatory symbolization for dark skin (West/South)	Supporters of SAF, central media
دارفوري	[daːrfuːriː]	Identity with incitement, glorifying or marginalizing	Both sides, context-dependent
الغبش	[ilɣabʃ]	Marginalized identity with class/racial incitement	Supporters of RSF
الخرطونيلية	[ilxarˌtuːniːlijja]	Sarcasm towards privileged central elites	Supporters of RSF
دولة 56	[dawlat ʕaːm wa sitta]	Accusation of central hegemony since independence (1956)	Supporters of RSF
دولة النهر والبحر	[dawlat innahr walbaħr]	Symbolic secessionist project excluding regions	Supporters of periphery, protest discourse
حشرات / فيروس	[ħaʃaraːt / fiːruːs]	Ethnic dehumanization and incitement of hatred	Supporters of SAF, official media
غرابة	[ɣaraːba]	Ethnic insult for people of western Sudan, especially Darfur	Supporters of SAF, central media
أولاد البحر	[ʔawlaːd ilbaħr]	Discriminatory description, used in superiority/marginalization	Supporters of periphery, protest contexts

أولاد الغرب	[ʔawlaːd ilɣarb]	Glorifying or inciting description, context-dependent	Supporters of RSF
ام كعوك	[ʔum kaʕuːk]	Insult referring to tribal or physical belittlement	Supporters of SAF, sarcastic/racist contexts

Racist and ethnically incendiary phrases exploit Sudan's centre–periphery divide, with terms weaponising colonial legacies of marginalisation that persist in contemporary political structures (De Waal, 2008; Sharkey, 2008, 2012). The SAF's use of "عرب الشتات" ([ʕarab ʃʃitaːt]) denies Darfur communities' national belonging, reflecting Abdelhay et al.'s (2017) analysis of the "racialising logic of language rights" that systematically marginalises non-Arabic speakers. Conversely, the RSF's deployment of "ديناري" ([diːnaːriː]) counters central elitism while positioning the RSF as revolutionary agents within broader African decolonial discourses. The term "دولة 56" ([dawlat ʕaːm wa sitta]) directly references post-independence hegemonic structures, illustrating how historical grievances are linguistically reactivated during conflict (Zouhir, 2015). The dual nature of "دارفوري" ([daːrfuːriː])—glorifying when used by the RSF, marginalising when deployed by the SAF– underscores how identity-based rhetoric fuels ethnic tensions through Bourdieu's (1991) concept of symbolic violence, potentially hindering post-conflict reconciliation efforts (Garri & Mugaddam, 2015).

4.5 Mobilization

Eleven phrases aim to rally fighters and civilians, with RSF supporters contributing more dynamic terms (seven phrases) such as "الأشاوس" ([ʔaʃʃaːwus]) (heroes) and "جاهزية" ([d͡ʒaːhiziyya]) (full readiness). SAF discourse emphasises legitimacy, as in "قوات الشرعية" ([quwwaːt ʃʃarʕiyya]) (forces of legitimacy) and "المستنفرين" ([almustanfiriːn]) (popular mobilisation). Shared elements, such as martyrdom motifs in "زايلي ونعيمكي زايل" ([zaːjliː wa naʕiːmkiː zaːjil]) (mobilising for RSF martyrs), reflect cultural influences in recruitment.

Table 7: Words Used for Mobilizing Fighters

Phrase	Transliteration	Brief Description or Purpose of Use	Entity Using the Phrase or Word
الدراعة	[idraːʕa]	Fighters of the Sudan Shield, mobilizing support	Supporters of SAF
كيكلاب	[kiklaːb]	Fighters of the Sudan Shield, mobilizing identity	Supporters of SAF
الأشاوس	[ʔaʃʃaːwəs]	Mobilizing title for RSF heroes	Supporters of RSF
المستنفرين	[ilmustanfirin]	Semi-regular forces, popular mobilization	Supporters of RSF
جاهزية	[gaːhizijja]	Full combat readiness, declaration of readiness	Supporters of RSF
طق نضيف	[tˤaq̣ naðiːf]	A clean kill, boasting of high-quality strikes	Supporters of RSF
فجغ نضيف	[fad͡ʒaɣ naðiːf]	A clean kill, boasting of high-quality strikes	Supporters of RSF
زايلي ونعيمكي زايل	[zaːjli wanaʕiːmki zaːjil]	Mobilizing martyrdom discourse for RSF forces	Supporters of RSF
قوات الشرعية	[gawaːt ʃʃarʕijja]	Presenting SAF as representative of legitimate state	Supporters of SAF, official media
قوات التغيير	[gawaːt ittaɣjiːr]	Presenting RSF as forces of change and revolution	Supporters of RSF
قوات نظامية	[gawaːt niẓaːmijja]	Emphasizing legitimacy of the SAF	Supporters of SAF, official media

Mobilisation phrases, using RSF's dynamic terms such as "الأشاوس" ([ʔaʃʃaːwus]) and "جاهزية" ([d͡ʒaːhiziyya]), inspire combat participation by constructing heroic identities, while SAF's "قوات الشرعية" ([quwwaːt ʃʃarʕiyya]) reinforces state legitimacy through institutional framing (Reyes, 2011; Van Leeuwen, 2007). The martyrdom motif in "زايلي ونعيمكي زايل" ([zaːjliː wa naʕiːmkiː zaːjil]) reflects deeper cultural recruitment strategies that invoke religious and communal obligations. Both sides' use of "clean" strike terminology, such as "طق نضيف" ([tˤaq̣ naðiːf]), indicates a shared emphasis on precision and professionalism, aligning with propaganda strategies that glorify military prowess while obscuring the brutality of violence (Van Dijk, 2015; Wolfsfeld, 2004). The overlap with delegitimisation vocabulary demonstrates how mobilisation narratives simultaneously rally internal support and demonise opponents, reinforcing in-group cohesion through out-group vilification (Riggins, 1997).

4.6 Delegitimization

Delegitimisation vocabulary, comprising 11 phrases, seeks to strip opponents of authority and political legitimacy. SAF and official media label RSF as "متمردين" ([mutamarridiːn]) (rebels) and "مليشيا" ([miliːʃjaː]) (militias), framing them as outlaws operating outside state structures. RSF and FFC counter by calling SAF "فلول" ([fuluːl]) (remnants of the old regime) and "جيش الكيزان" ([d͡ʒayʃ alkiːzaːn]) (Islamist army), associating them with extremism and an authoritarian legacy. Terms such as "كوز" ([kuːz]) (empty vessel for Islamists) and "مرتزقة" ([murtaziqa]) (mercenaries) dominate oppositional media.

Table 8: Words and Phrases Used for Delegitimization

Phrase	Transliteration	Brief Description or Purpose of Use	Entity Using the Phrase or Word
متمردين	[mutamarridin]	Describing RSF as illegitimate rebels	Supporters of SAF, official media
فلول / جيش الفلول	[fuluːl / d͡ʒeːʃ ilfuluːl]	Remnants of former regime, portraying as illegitimate	Supporters of FFC and RSF
كوز / كيزان	[kuːz / kiːzaːn]	Belittling Islamists as empty vessels or extremists	Supporters of RSF, FFC
الطغمة العسكرية / العساكر	[itˤaɣma ilʕaskarijja / ilʕaːskər]	Critiquing military elite as repressive force	Supporters of RSF, FFC
مرتزقة	[murtazəqa]	Accusing RSF of being mercenaries and hirelings	Supporters of SAF, official media
جيش الكيزان	[d͡ʒeːʃ ilkiːzaːn]	Portraying SAF as a tool for Islamists	Supporters of RSF, FFC
انقلاب	[ʔinqilaːb]	Framing army's actions as an illegitimate takeover	Supporters of RSF, opposition media
تمرد	[tamarrud]	Describing RSF as an outlaw force	Supporters of SAF, official media
مليشيا	[miliːʃja]	Describing RSF as terrorist militias, delegitimizing	Supporters of SAF, official media
مخلفات الإرهاب	[maxalifaːt ilʔirhaːb]	Describing former regime elements as terrorist legacy	Supporters of RSF
كتائب الظل	[kataːʔiːb iẓẓəl]	Elements of former regime, used in accusatory contexts	Supporters of RSF

The ideas of delegitimation reflect patterns of propaganda that we have seen in the context of Yemen's civil war, where political opponents have been labeled "متمردين" ([mutamarridiːn]) or "فلول" ([fuluːl]) to weaken their claims for political authority and in their ability to govern (Bonnefoy, 2018). The use of "مليشيا" ([miliːʃjaː]) by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) is meant to portray the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) as non-state actors of terrorism while using "جيش الكيزان" ([d͡ʒayʃ alkiːzaːn]) in response connotes the SAF's links to Islamist extremism; both serve the purpose of undermining each other's claims to be representatives of the state (Hameleers & Minihold, 2022; Reyes, 2011). In this context, the act of delegitimation creates conflict as it weakens public trust in any political legitimacy held by the opposite side thus creating what Fairclough (2003b) describes as competing social realities whereby each side constructs the other side as being fundamentally illegitimate. The occasions upon which the term "انقلاب ([ʔinqilaːb]) (coup) emerges is particularly resonant in the political context of Sudan where military coups have interrupted democratic transitions and have used past grievances in the current language (Chilton, 2004).

4.7 Dehumanization

The smallest category with 7 phrases, dehumanization reduces opponents to subhuman entities as a form of psychological justification for violence. Supporters of SAF often employs the terms "حشرات / فيروس" ([ħaʃaraːt / fiːruːs]) (insects/virus) and "الجنجويد" ([al-d͡ʒand͡ʒawiːd]) (tribal brutes) for RSF, while supporters from both organizations use the term "أكلة الجثث" ([ʔaklat al-d͡ʒuθuθ]) (corpse-eaters) for the other organization. The RSF discourse is full of words and phrases like "الخراؤون" ([ilxaraːʔuːn]) (filth referring to Islamists), however, there are also some contextual overlaps, including most notably "الدواعش" ([iddawaːʃ]) (extreme forms or terrorists) indicating that both organizations have somewhat flexible use of a particular phrase for one another.

Table 9: Words and Phrases Used for Dehumanization

Phrase	Transliteration	Brief Description or Purpose of Use	Entity Using the Phrase or Word
حشرات / فيروس	[ħaʃaraːt / fiːruːs]	Filthifying opponent, dehumanizing as environmental/health hazard	Supporters of SAF, official media
ام كعوك	[ʔum kaʕuːk]	Insult referring to tribal or physical belittlement	Supporters of SAF, sarcastic/racist contexts
الجنجويد	[al d͡ʒand͡ʒuːwiːd]	Suggesting tribal brutality, dehumanization	Supporters of SAF, official media
الدواعش	[idawaːʃ]	Religious demonization, portraying as extremist terrorist	Supporters of SAF and RSF, context-dependent
الخراؤون	[ilxraːʔuːn]	Belittling Islamists as symbolic filth	Supporters of RSF

أكلة الجثث	[ʔaklat ildʒuθuθ]	Accusations of barbarism, portraying opponent as corpse-eater	Both sides, mobilizing discourse
لحم مشوي	[laħm maʃʃwiː]	Description for burnt corpses	Supporters of SAF, aerial bombardment contexts

Dehumanizing terms such as "حشرات" ([ħaʃaraːt]) (insects) and "أكلة الجثث" ([ʔaklat al-dʒuθuθ]) (eaters of corpses) establish emotional disengagement and moral disengagement, creating space for acts of violence, operating as a method of portraying political opponents as less than human, a process that has been documented in studies of genocide (Mendoza-Denton, 2022). The term "الجنجويد" ([al-dʒandʒuːwiːd]) that is frequently used by the SAF elicits historical connections to the violence perpetrated in Darfur, while "الخراؤون" ([ilxaraːʔuːn]) (those created out of filth) when used by the RSF creates meaning portraying Islamist political opponents as a kind of symbolic filth. These linguistic strategies correspond with Mbembe and Corcoran (2019) concept of necropolitics wherein discursive practices facilitate the conditions by which certain political populations are constructed as disposable. The combination with patterns of hatred and racism would increase the effect of moral disengagement and create what Butler (2021) calls "conditions of violence" through performative speech acts. The use of terms like "الدواعش" ([iddawaːʃ]) demonstrate a shared pattern of vilification that is contextualized and adaptable, transcending political loyalties. It illustrates how dehumanization works in a bi-directional manner in escalating conflict (Ibrahim, 2025).

4.8 Other (Symbolic, Descriptive, or Military)

Comprising of seventeen phrases, this category of phrases is miscellaneous in meaning and is a combination of symbolic, descriptive, and tactical language. Supporters of SAF dominated the military terms "البرق الخاطف" ([albarq alxaːtˤif]) (swift lightning operation) and "لواء النخبة" ([liwaːʔ annuxba]) (elite brigade), while supporters of RSF used the phrases "متك" ([matk]) (kill the target) and "شرك أم زريدو" ([ʃark ʔum zariːdu]) (deadly ambush). For example, the symbolic phrases like "معركة الكرامة" ([maʕrakat alkaraːma]) (the battle of dignity) glorifies campaigns, while descriptive phrases, like "الإنسحاب الإضطراري" ([alʔinħisaːb alʔidˤtˤaraːriː]) (forced withdrawal) tells the story of military events that took place.

Table 10: Words and Phrases Used for Other Purposes

Phrase	Transliteration	Brief Description or Purpose of Use	Entity Using the Phrase or Word
متك	[matk]	Descriptive: Kill the target	Supporters of RSF
شرك أم زريدو	[ʃark ʔum zriːdu]	Military: A deadly ambush	Supporters of RSF
الجياشة	[ildʒaːʃa]	Descriptive: Supporters of the SAF	Supporters of SAF
معركة الكرامة	[maʕraka ilkaraːma]	Symbolic: National military campaign against RSF	Supporters of SAF, official media
القوة المميتة	[ilgoːwa ilmumiːta]	Military: Deadly weapons	Supporters of SAF
لواء النخبة	[liwaːʔ innuxba]	Military: An elite unit	Supporters of SAF
الإنسحاب الإضطراري	[ilʔinħisaːb iḍḍaraːriː]	Descriptive: A disorganized escape/retreat	Supporters of RSF
ناس الشجرة	[naːs ʃʃadʒara]	Symbolic: Armored forces of the "Shajara" area	Supporters of SAF, official media
ام قرون	[ʔum quːruːn]	Cultural: Description of women in RSF tribes	Supporters of RSF
القوة الخاصة	[ilgoːwa ixṣaːṣa]	Military: A special forces unit	Supporters of SAF
البرق الخاطف	[ilbarq ilxaːṭif]	Military: A swift operation	Supporters of SAF
الحردان	[ilħardaːn]	Descriptive: An angry fighter	Both sides, context-dependent
الزحف الأخضر	[izḥaf ilʔaxḍar]	Military: A large-scale attack	Supporters of SAF
العرقوب	[ilʕruquːb]	Military: Targeting a weak point (Achilles' heel)	Supporters of SAF
الجمرة	[ildʒamra]	Symbolic: An ignited operation	Supporters of SAF
الطيارة	[itˤtˤaːjja]	Military: An air strike	Supporters of SAF
كتيبة الظل	[katiːba iẓẓəl]	Military: A secret unit of the Islamist movement	Supporters of RSF, FFC
الكتاحة	[alkattaːħa]	Symbolic: Chaos, systemic collapse	Supporters of RSF, protest contexts

Symbolic and military language in the "Other" category, while less explicitly provocative than the previous categories, continue to produce the narrative scaffolding of war through the development of distinct operational identities for the opposing forces (Van Dijk, 2015). SAF's application of elite force terminology, such as "لواء النخبة" ([liwaːʔ annuxba]), valorizes notions of institutional professionalism and practicing bureaucratic hierarchy, in contrast to RSF's lexicon which is couched in ambush force tactics presented by "شرك أم زريدو" ([ʃark ʔum zariːdu]). These tactical vocabularies denote varying organizational structures and

military doctrines; SAF being a conventional military force and RSF being a paramilitary organization (Akin, 2016; Aminova, 2023). Religious terms, such as "معركة الكرامة" ([maʕrakat alkaraːma]) (battle of dignity), is an overrepresentation of basic military engagements as if they are existential battles for national honor, framing another layer of ideological divisions ginned up by emotions (Ptaszek et al., 2024). Even language that appears to be neutral and descriptive in nature, such as "الإنسحاب الإضطراري" ([alʔinhisaːb alʔidˤtˤaraːriː]), indicates implicit judgement about the competence of military action that reinforces the idea of delegitimization.

5. Key Findings

The performative dimension of this vocabulary—recruiting for action, identity construction, and normalizing violence—was evident across the eight categories documented in Tables 3–10. In applying critical discourse analysis (CDA), we see examples of tactics such as nominalization (e.g., "فتك" [fatk], which strips away any agency in killing), othering (e.g., "الجنجويد" [al d͡ʒand͡ʒuːwiːd], which establishes a broader ingroup/outgroup boundary), legitimizing discourse (e.g., "حرب الشرف" [ħarab ʃʃaraf], which validates the actions of the state), deflection (e.g., "أعداء الدولة" [ʔaʕdaːʔ idda:wla], to avoid discussion of internal crises such as famine), and passive voice (e.g., "لحم مشوي" [laħm maʃʃwiː], which absolves ownership to airstrikes) that are reflected in parallels to global conflict (e.g., Ukraine, Syria, Nigeria). The shared use of incendiary terms such as "فتك" ([fatk]) and "أكلة الجثث" ([ʔaklat al-d͡ʒuθuθ]) between the two parties is indicative of escalating discourse, with each side's rhetoric reinforcing an escalation of violence towards each other as a self-perpetuating loop of rhetorical and physical violence (Mendoza-Denton, 2022). This aligns with emergent theories of lexical warfare, in which the words create realities that are perpetuating the conflicts, and not just a reflection of it (Steuter & Wills, 2008; Van Dijk, 2006).

The results reveal significant dynamics that are layered by Text 1. First, RSF supporters demonstrate more linguistic creativity (e.g., irony like "فلنقاي" [filnqaːj]; mobilization like "زايلي ونعيمكي زايل" [zaːjli wanaʕiːmki zaːjil]) as they need to counter the SAF's institutional legitimacy in qualifying their media language to create social cohesion and nation building. (Locoman, Lau, 2024). Second, the intersection of hatred, dehumanization, and ethnic incitements (e.g., "حشرات" [Haʃaraːt]) imitate historical contours of racial animus, and dehumanization of language often precedes actual physical violence, but they now reappear as impressions of physical trauma and ruptured identity within marginalized groups, especially and in particular in children exposed to "war" language. (Dolan & Ferroggiaro, 2019). Third, racist language (e.g., "غرابة" [ɣaraːba]) mobilizes the center-periphery discourse, and more significantly, is an exploitation of Sudan's multilingual settings to emphasize colonial legacies of the Arabization to sustain exclusion and identity politics. (Abdelhay et al., 2017; Sharkey, 2008, 2012).

The intersection of mobilization and delegitimization ("قوات الشرعية" [gawaːt ʃʃarʕijja] vs. "متمردين" [mutamarridin]) indicates two concurrent operations of discourse mobilization: that is, mobilizing in-group identity while simultaneously demonizing an out-group via the language and politics of exclusion (Reyes, 2011; Riggins, 1997; Wolfsfeld, 2004). Regulatory influences, such as vague legislation, allow self-censorship to play out, privileging the official government's narrative rather than critical views.While social media's influence is substantial, we offer that it has created an echo chamber. The echo chamber (Cinelli et al., 2021; Del Vicario et al., 2016) producing a pro-extremist lexicon, allows for less editorial gatekeeping as more individual narratives have platforms (Sunstein, 2018). Technological mediation also speeds up semantic modification via NLP (natural language processing) trackable categories that change time in lexical warfare and communication (overt threats, covert mockery) that can escalate circumstances, on an interpersonal, micro and macro level.

This extensive and comprehensive sociolinguistic study illustrates that the current conflict in Sudan is an important case study of language weaponization for political and military objectives. The research highlights the workings of media discourse as a 'weapon of war', where language is weaponized through the strategic choices of the media, and physical violence creates an ideological space that obstructs humanitarianism and sustainable peacebuilding.

The findings present evidence that words have observable force in war contexts, exemplified through eight distinct strategic functions: to incite; to express sarcasm; to generate hatred; to mobilize ethnicity; to mobilize group; to delegitimize; to dehumanize; and to technically normalize violence. Each function utilizes unique linguistic mechanisms nominalization, passive voice, metaphorical extension, euphemism, and others that together create discursive environments that facilitate and sustain armed conflict. Temporal analysis elucidates the dynamic nature of language power with a sequential development of discourse types moving from political framing, through ethnic targeting to institutionalized dehumanization. This is indicative of the media discourse not only being a representation of conflict but complicit in provoking conflict, with observable humanitarian outcomes in the form of humanitarian access impacting millions and correlations with ethnic violence patterns impacting tens of thousands.

The advent of technology mediated by social media platforms has fundamentally altered linguistic warfare, reducing the temporal scales for semantic modification, condensing and amplifying hate speech through algorithmic means. Media democratization has provided new opportunities for the spread of hate speech as well as for resistance mobilization, indicating the emergent dual power of language in contemporary conflict. Historical contextualization epitomizes that today's linguistic

warfare endorses deep-rooted language hierarchies (i.e. languages deemed "standard" versus "non-standard or dialect" languages) in the process of colonization and maintained by post-colonial (post-independence) policies. Understanding the historical implications of these dimensions is crucial to intervention designs that target the underlying structural conditions that elicit the weaponization of language, not just the superficial appearance of the manifestations of linguistic conflicts.The study confirms theoretical models of performative violence and necro politics, while simultaneously offering empirical evidence concerning how discursive practices establish material conditions for violence, revealing that words are not just descriptive, they are constitutive—meaning, words do not report reality—they create reality not just for the speaker but have life-and-death consequences that impact millions of people. In terms of next steps, addressing linguistic warfare will require multi-level interventions (e.g., peace journalism training for media practitioners; developing algorithms to moderate content specifically for Sudanese Arabic; community interventions to counter narratives, promote educational programs to encourage media literacy, media regulatory reform in institutions; as well as linguistic monitoring systems that provide an early warning). We must utilize the power of language for peace with equal measure and sophistication, carrying the same capacity for violence as it was developed.

At its most profound level, this research substantiates that understanding why and how we use words in war is not just an academic inquiry it is an urgent practical problem. The word is a weapon, shield, and bridge- its power to injure must be matched by its power to heal. Sudan and similar conflicts face the challenge of learning to construct and deploy words' reconstructive power with the same velocity and ferocity that we have unleashed its destructive power, and that peace might be constructed from words just as surely war was constructed from weaponized language.

The systematic weaponization of language documented in this study represents both crisis and opportunity crisis in the immense harm linguistic violence has caused, opportunity in the potential for linguistic interventions to contribute meaningfully to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. By understanding how words have been used to wage war, we gain insights into how words might be deployed to build peace, transforming language from weapon into tool for reconciliation, reconstruction, and hope.

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