Socioemotional Linguistic and Rhetorical Markers of the September 2024 Hostilities in Lebanon: Insights from Academics across Lebanese Universities

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Abstract

Several theoretical frameworks examine the intricate relationship between language and socioemotional dynamics. Drawing upon Fairclough's tripartite framework of critical discourse analysis, this research case study endeavors to show how linguistic expression encapsulates the socioemotional experiences of displacement, trauma, resilience, and solidarity among university faculty impacted by the airstrikes in Lebanon in 2024. This research's main objective is to scrutinize the use of lexical choices and rhetorical strategies to articulate these emotions while reflecting social and ideological constructs in reaction to the prevailing hostilities. Data were collected from the perspectives of sixty-two instructors and staff members across thirteen Lebanese universities through a twenty-item online survey, which served as the foundation for both statistical and descriptive analysis. Furthermore, as a result, twenty-six online narrative reflection logs provided a linguistically nuanced representation of socioemotional linguistic indicators related to displacement, trauma, resilience, and solidarity, while also invoking

rhetorical techniques such as similes, metaphors, hypophoras, epizeuxis, and anaphoras that signified a connection to a collective identity.

Introduction

As of October 2024, the Worldometers analysis of the latest United Nations data shows that Lebanon's population is 5,817,943. In September, the deadliest exchange of fire across the Blue Line in Lebanon and intense bombardment of sites and violence resulted in injuries and destruction of infrastructure across Lebanon. The hostilities prompted displacement of people escaping from the southern governorates of the South and El-Nabatieh, the eastern governorates of Baalbek, El Hermel and Bekaa, as well as from Beirut's southern suburbs to safer areas. National authorities reported that because of the acceleration of hostilities in Lebanon, as of 25 September 2024, almost 600 people had been killed, 1,700 injured, and 90,530 people evacuated. As of October 4, conflict-related fatalities flowed by over 200%, reaching 1,699. The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) rose by 385%, totaling 541,527. According to a flash update on October 14, 2024, casualties continued to rise, reporting 2,309 deaths, 10,782 injuries, 746,584 IDPs, and 188,146 shelter seekers. By October 28, a sharp increase in extensive displacement had been recorded, reporting 834,746 IDPs, and 189,298 shelter seekers in 1,114 collective centers (UNOCHA, 2024a). Figure (1) depicts the impact of the escalation of hostilities in Lebanon.
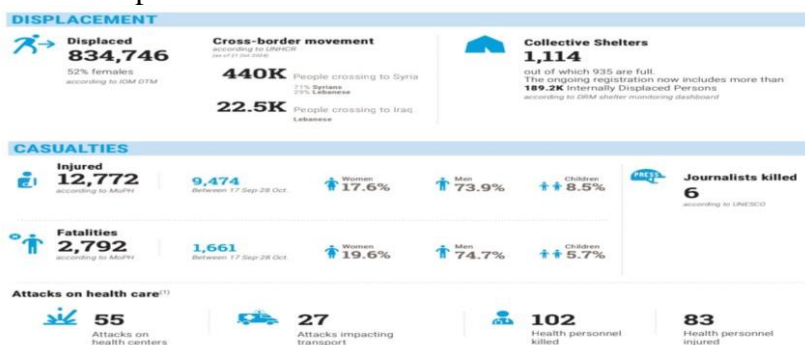

Figure 1: Displacement and causalities in Lebanon as of 28 October 2024

Lebanese people used to be victims of the toughest outcomes of the country's incessant state of instability and misleading notions of what it means to be a peaceful individual (Chehimi & Joudi, 2019). Figure (2) depicts the regions in which the intensity of conflicts has risen since October 2023.
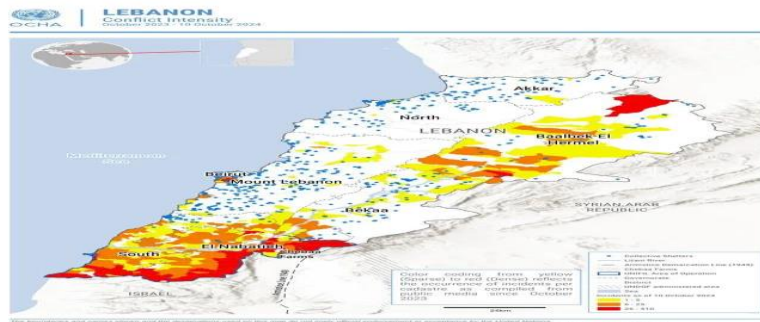
Figure 2: Lebanon: Conflict intensity, October 2023 - October 2024

In any armed conflict, Cosic et al. (2024) necessitated understanding and considering the range and power of negative emotions. This aligns with the fact that continuous exposure to adversity often results in complex trauma and profound emotional response to repeated stress. Schwarzer (2024) explained that despite the overwhelming negative emotions when confronted with forced migration, some civilians may maintain a positive outlook, display self-efficacy and social support, and utilize problem-solving skills. This coping process refers to resilience, an emotional strength and an adaptive strategy that assists in enduring lives and maintaining inner strength. Additionally, in the face of shared hardship, other individuals may exhibit solidarity, a sense of unity, mutual support, and collective action.

Gay (2007) viewed language as a form of social practice that uncovers hidden meanings embeded in texts. He explained the importance of the critical analysis of discourse about war as it describes, interprets, and explains the ways in which discourses construct, maintain, and legitimize social inequalities. Further, Kazak et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of the use of written communication to express emotions and feelings. Moreover, Piotrowski and Walker (2006) asserted that language can be a powerful instrument for fostering understanding. El-Maazawi (2023) added that language affects feelings. It is a tool for building peace, shaping public perception of events, and regulating narratives during times of conflict. Cotterell (2003) explained that narratives can involve the use of euphemisms when referring to something unpleasant, manipulation of facts, and suppression of dissenting voices. It has emotive functions and serves as a personal or private identity. It involves macro interactional functions that are classified by Halliday into seven: emotive, directive, phatic, referential, metalinguistic, poetic, and contextual (Rabiah, 2018). However, researchers did not describe an emotive discourse against war and clashes in Lebanon.

Given the social conditions that shape textual production, this case study research is based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which examines how social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced,

and challenged through language in social contexts, especially with reference to Fairclough's framework.

Fairclough (1995; 2015) contended that texts in discourse analysis are viewed as integral to the broader process of social interaction, and they contribute to social continuity and social change. The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do academics in Lebanese universities linguistically reflect the emotional states of displacement, trauma, resilience, and solidarity as of the September 2024 clashes and airstrikes?
2. What are the linguistic expressions and rhetorical markers used in academics' narrative reflections to signify emotions, social, and ideological structures as of the September 2024 clashes and airstrikes in Lebanon?

Literature Review

Different psycho-social stressors that individuals experience in armed conflicts affect the appraisal of the self, the social world, and the projected future (Slavich et al., 2023). Language is the tool that enables humans to make sense of their experiences, perceptions, and emotions (Lindquist, 2015) which are conveyed in a language that represents a multidisciplinary concept existing at the junction of numerous disciplines (Hutchison & Bleiker, 2017).

Since in the context of war, people employ socio-emotionally charged language in the form of linguistic devices, it is essential to highlight various theories in the field. Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis i.e., Linguistic Relativity Theory (1920) posited that the words and structures of a language used vary according to social contexts, societal needs, and emotional intensity felt by individuals. They determine one's thoughts and perspective of the world (Frothingham, 2023). Further, John Gumperz's Interactional Sociolinguistics Theory (1970s) concentrated on concrete evidence of sociolinguistic methodology in action and suggested that meaning and emotional expressions are context-dependent (Irimiea, 2018); consequently, subtle linguistic cues conveying displacement, trauma, resilience, and solidarity can be constructed in communication through context. Moreover, Penelope Eckert's Communities of Practice theory (1990s) contributed to the understanding of the relationship between language and social dynamics. She emphasized that language emerges in response to the world around the members, and it can both reflect and reinforce social group identities. In various qualitative studies, she studied how individuals and societies function in real-life environments and found that language differences were more closely linked to communities of practice rather than to specific social differences; regardless of someone's background, they were more likely to speak like someone who shared an interest or activity with them than with someone who did not (Eckert, 2006). Consequently, in times of

crisis, individuals could cultivate shared linguistic practices that reflect their emotional responses as they interact.

From a linguistic point of view, the markers of emotion that affect the result of text construction can encompass words denoting basic emotions, quasi-synonyms, terms that belong to the lexical-semantic field of the word emotion, and notions that suggest an emotional focus of a text. Scientists identify four primary emotions, namely: fear, sadness, joy, and hope (Van Dijk, 2017). Volkova et al. (2021) illustrated that emotions in the text can exist as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, phrases, or even sentences. In a study conducted by Absattar et al. (2022) on emotive language and textual information, a list of emotive lexemes that can be used to express a particular feeling (Table 1), and a list of emotive lexemes in the context (Table 2) are enlisted as such:

Table 1: Emotive Lexemes which Express Feelings

Love	Admiration	Trust	Sympathy	Anger	Jealousy	Pain
Jealousy, envy	Adoration	Heartiness	Antipathy	Pity	Disregard	Embarrassment
Hope, prospects	Endearment, bonding	Pleasure, enjoyment	Anguish	Annoyance	Sorrow, grief	Shame
joy	Kindness	Modesty	Hatred	Lust	Surprise	Horror
sadness	Friendship	Satisfaction	Anxiety, concern	Fear	Boredom	Impatience, intolerance

Absattar, Mambetova, and Zhubay (2022)

Table 2: Emotive lexemes in the Context

Noun	Happiness, Sadness, Anger, Fear, Jealousy
Adjective	Happy, Joyful, Unhappy, Miserable, Angry
Verb	(to) love, (to) feel disappointed, (to) rejoice, (to) hope, (to) admire, (to) adore
Adverb	Insanely, Fortunately, Unfortunately
Pronoun	I, We, Mine
Phrase	Angry charges, Shiver with fear

Absattar, Mambetova, and Zhubay (2022)

A recent focused survey conducted by the Lebanese Association for History among twenty-five Lebanese teachers who delved into the myriad challenges of the September war on Lebanon indicated that the prevailing sentiments were those of stress, fear, anxiety, and fatigue. The results reveal a pervasive sense of instability and a shared trauma that transcends individual experiences. Teachers expressed deep concerns about their current circumstances and also contemplated the broader social, psychological, and economic implications of the war (Hamadeh, 2024).

Thus, the assessment of the production of dominant emotions within populations in war-affected societies during and after war is extremely important (Cosic et al., 2012). For example, Milevski (2020) and Cricenti et al. (2022) found that in war-inflicted societies, negative feelings, particularly

those of fear, anger, despair, hatred, resentment, rage, and frustration are pervasive. Similarly, Dixon (2009) showed that in the case of airstrikes or drone attacks, civilians may produce strong negative emotions.

According to Pizarro et al. (2022), individuals often share a common awareness and a common emotional reaction to the same social situation. In line with this, civilians who are displacedand living in a state of constant fear, hopelessness, misery, horror, sadness, and humiliation may reveal common dominant emotions that contribute to the formation and maintenance of political and social identities, as well as to collective behavior (De Rivera et al., 2007). As a result, the assessment of the production of dominant emotions within populations in war-affected societies during and after war is extremely important (Cosic et al., 2012).

Thus, in order to capture the participants' emotions that signify displacement, trauma, resilience, and solidarity in this study, Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework is employed with an emphasis on tracing linguistic markers and rhetorical devices, referring to those found in Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). (Table 3).

Table 3: Useful Rhetorical Devices

Anadiplosis:	Repetition of a prominent and usually the last word in one phrase or clause at the beginning of the next.
Anaphora:	Repetition of a word or expression at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, sentences, or verses, especially for rhetorical or poetic effect.
Antiphrasis:	The ironic or humorous use of words in senses opposite to the generally accepted meanings.
Epistrophe:	Repetition of a word or expression at the end of successive phrases, clauses, sentences, or verses, especially for rhetorical or poetic effect.
Epizeuxis:	Emphatic repetition of a word or phrase.
Hypophora:	The act of posing a question and immediately answering it to strengthen an argument.
Metaphor:	A figure of speech in which a word or phrase denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them.
Pleonasm:	The use of more words than necessary to convey meaning, resulting in redundancy.
Simile:	A figure of speech comparing two unlike things, often introduced by "like" or "as."

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.).

Methodology

As cited in Joudi (2019), case studies have become one of the most common ways to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within a particular context, uncover patterns, determine meanings, and construct rich descriptive conclusions derived from multiple pieces of evidence. This exploratory study used a case study research design that includes a survey, an online narrative reflection log, and a follow-up analysis based on Fairclough's (1995; 2015) three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The model was adopted to explore the complex, interconnected relationships between texts and social conditions during the escalation of hostilities in Lebanon as of September 2024.

Participants

The participants in this case study were selected using a snowball sampling technique. The researchers started by selecting a few participants and then asked them to refer to other academics to reach a wider network across the public and private universities licensed by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education into (8) Governorates: Akkar, Baalbek-El Hermel, Beirut, Bekaa, Mount Lebanon, North Lebanon, Nabatieh, and South Lebanon, during the fall semester of 2024-2025. A total of 62 academics from (13) Lebanese universities across (6) governorates willingly participated in the study (Table 4).

Table 4: Participants

		Name of University	No. of Particpants	Governerate(s)
	1	Lebanese International University (LIU)	23	Bekaa South Lebanon Nabatieh
	2	Lebanese University (LU)	15	South Lebanon Nabatieh Beirut
	3	Beirut Arab University (BAU)	4	Beirut
	4	Lebanese American University (LAU)	4	Beirut
	5	American University of Beirut (AUB)	3	Beirut
	6	Arts, Sciences, and Technology University In Lebanon (AUL)	3	Mount Lebanon
	7	Islamic University of Lebanon (IUL)	2	Mount Lebanon South Lebanon
	8	American University of Science and Technology (AUST)	2	South Lebanon Beirut
	9	Jinan University	2	North Lebanon South Lebanon
	10	Al-Maaref University (MU)	1	Beirut
	11	Université Sainte Famille (USF)	1	North Lebanon
	12	City University (CU)	1	South Lebanon
	13	University Of Sciences And Arts In Lebanon (USAL)	1	Beirut
Total		**13 univeristies**	**62**	**6 governerates**

For ethical considerations, the researchers provided informed consent for the participants, ensuring that they understood the purpose of the study and how their data would be used anonymously.

Data Collection

Initially, a Google Form was used to track the progress of questionnaire data collection and to view the exported responses from 62 participants on the twenty items (Appendix A). Following this, the participants were invited to reflect on their experiences during the escalation of hostilities

in Lebanon as of September 2024 and provide insights on one open-ended narrative question (Appendix B).

Data Analysis

To answer the first research question about how academics in Lebanese universities linguistically reflect the emotional states of displacement, trauma, resilience, and solidarity as of the September 2024 clashes and airstrikes, a questionnaire data collection phase (Appendix A) followed by statistical analysis has been employed based on the analytical description that appears in the form of charts that Google forms instantaneously create according to the respondents' input on the twenty items.

To further investigate and understand quantitative data and answer the second research question, the researchers collected qualitative personal data. To answer the hows and whys instead of how many or how much, they gathered the participants' experiences, perceptions, and behavior from the narrative reflection log (Appendix B). To evaluate the depth of the linguistic and rhetorical expressions expressed in the participant's responses, the researchers applied Fairclough (1995) critical discourse analysis framework (Figure 3) which asserts that the production of discourse is not isolated from the existing social power, but it affects and is affected by it.
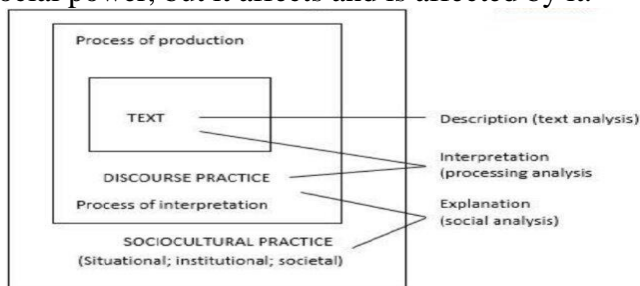
Figure 3: Fairclough's CDA three dimensional model (2015)

Texts produced were interpreted within the specific social contexts, shaped by social practices and constraints. The analysis comprised three stages: description (focused on the formal properties of the text), interpretation (examining the relationship between text and interaction, including production and interpretation processes), and explanation (linking interpretation to social context and understanding how social factors shape both the production and reception of texts).

Results and Findings
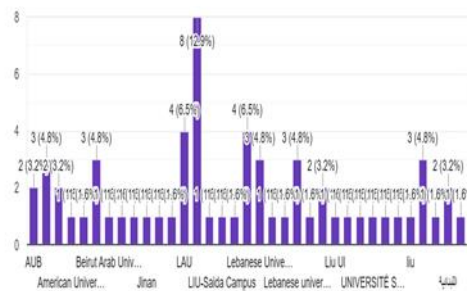## Survey Analysis
Section One: Demographics

This study includes (62) faculty members or academic employees at (13) universities in Lebanon across (6) governorates. This demographic distribution is significant, as it captures the linguistic and emotional experiences of university academics from various areas. Figure (4) depicts the results.
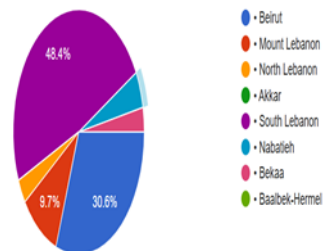
Figure 4: Demographics (universities and governorates)

The proportions represent (72.6%) females and (27.4%) males.The majority of the sample, (56.5%), fall within the 45 and above age group, while the minority group, aged 34–44, accounts for only (16.1%) of the respondents. (53.2%) of them got displaced to another area during the hostilities in Lebanon. Figure (5) depicts the results.
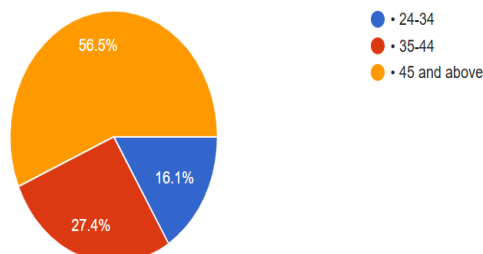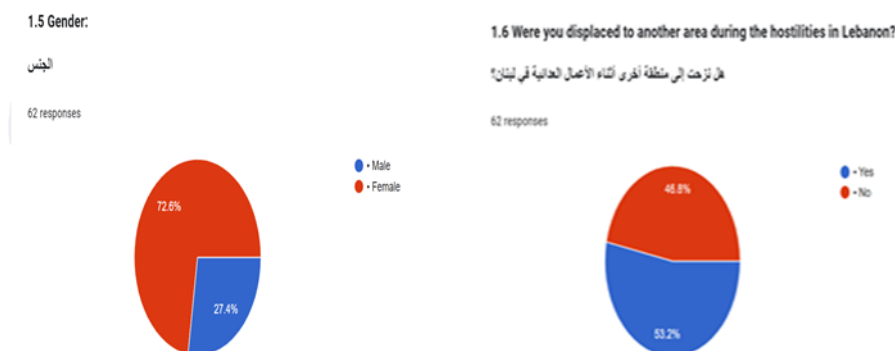
Figure 5: Demographics (age, gender) and displacement status

Section Two: Emotional Impact of the Clashes in Lebanon

Respondents were asked about the word that describes their state during the airstrikes. Generally, the responses reflect an average to high level of positive states of solidarity (45.2%), and resilience (41.9%). The minority (30.6%) chose displaced to express their state, while less than (23%) chose the adjective traumatized. Figure (6) depicts the results.
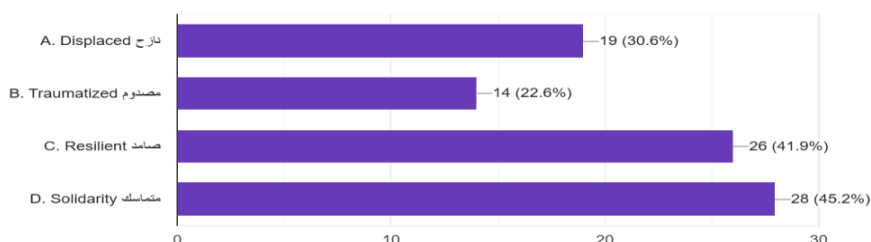
Figure 6: Emotional states during airstrikes in Lebanon

When asked question (2.2.1) about how strongly they felt loss, uncertainty, and disorientation during the 2024 displacement in Lebanon, the results show a strong level of these negative feelings that exceeds (54%). The minority, (9.7%,) did not feel displaced. Regarding question (2.2.2), the input shows that (64.6%) strongly felt traumatized i.e., distressed, overwhelmed, detached, and fatigued. The minority (9.7%) slightly felt so, and (4.8%) did not feel traumatized at all; however, respondents strongly expressed a parallel set of positivity, such as strong resilience (53.2%), and strong solidarity (69.3%). The minority (6.5%) were slightly able to endure, adapt, and maintain inner strength, and very few proportions (1.6%) did not feel a sense of unity, mutual support, and collective strength. Table (5) below summarizes the results.

Table 5: Intensity of Positive and Negative Feelings amid the Clashes in Lebanon

How strongly did you feel dispalced, traumatized, resilient and solid?					
	Very strongly	strongly	moderately	Slightly	Not at all
How strongly did you feel **displaced**?	16.1%	38.7%	27.4%	8.1%	9.7%
How strongly did you feel **traumatized**?	21%	43.5%	21%	97%	4.8%
How strongly did you feel **resilient**?	24.2%	29%	40.3%	6.5%	0%
How strongly did you feel **the sense of solidarity**?	29%	40.3%	27.4%	1.6%	1.6%

Further, the profile of adjectives and expressions chosen by the university academics on question (2.3) highlights their pervasive emotion due to the impact of the clashes in Lebanon. More than (48%) expressed that they are 'unified' to overcome this conflict, followed by (25.8%) who reflected that they are 'helpless' and 'angry', because they do not know where safety is. Only (22.6%) chose the adjective 'numb' to express their emotion. Table (6) depicts the emotional impact of the clashes in Lebanon on the university academics who participated in the study.

Table 6: Adjectives and Expressions That Reflect Emotions amid the Clashes

Choose the adjectives and expressions that reflect your emotions most.			
Adjectives	Expressions	No. of responses	%
Resilient and Unified	We will get through this. We will overcome.	30	48.4%
Displaced and Angry	Why is this happening to us? This is so unfair. I don't know where we'll be safe.	16	25.8%
Traumatized and Helpless	I don't know where we'll be safe. We have no control over what happens. We're powerless to stop it.	16	25.8%
Numb	I don't feel anything anymore. It's like I've shut down.	14	22.6%

The quantitative results in this section consistently demonstrated the dual presence of vulnerability and strength. When the participants were asked about their emotional states, the intensity of their feelings, and the nature of their emotions, their linguistic choices and expressions highlighted the prevalence of both negative and positive emotions; profound feelings of trauma and the disorienting experience of displacement as well as of strength, solidarity, and resilience coexisted.

Section Three: Language Use and Expression

Respondents were asked about the mode of expressing their emotions during the 2024 hostilities in Lebanon. The results of a question (3.1) show that (36/62) of the participants, representing (58.1%), primarily expressed their emotions verbally, while a minority (19/62) i.e., (30.6%) resorted to writing and posting on social media. Surprisingly, a remarkable number of (27/62), accounting for (43.5%), preferred keeping silent. Figure (7) depicts the results.
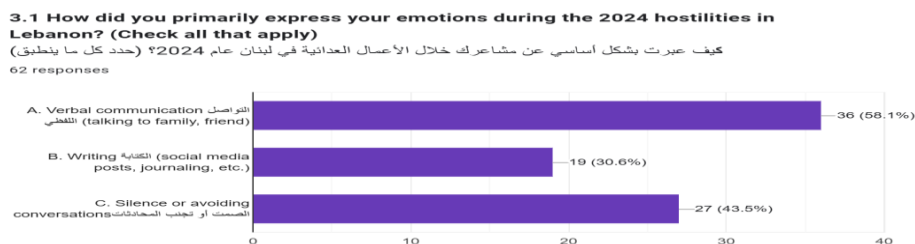

Figure 7: Mode of expressing emotions during the 2024 hostilities in Lebanon

As question (3.2) shows, the languages used are Arabic, English, and French. The majority of (51.6%) preferred using a mix of languages to express their emotions while posting on social media. Regarding the impact of the language used during the clashes, the responses to question (3.5) show that it affected the majority in a positive way. It helped them process their emotions of displacement and trauma (48.4%) and provided comfort, resilience, and solidarity (40.3%). The minority (11.3%) indicated that it increased their anxiety. Figure (8) depicts the results.
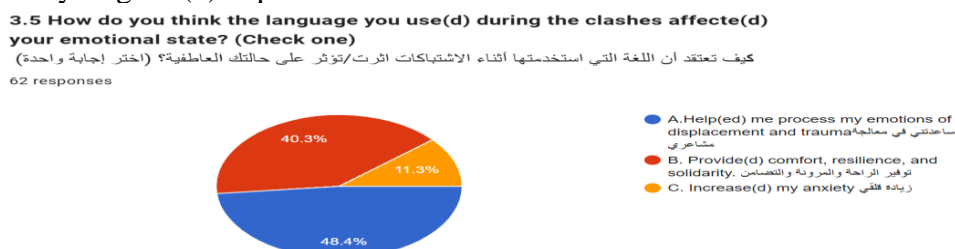
Figure 8: Impact of the language used on emotions during the 2024 clashes

The responses to question (3.3) depict that the participants used specific phrases, expressions, or words to channel their negative and positive emotions in constructive ways using English language (Table 7) and Arabic language (Table 8).

Table 7: Linguistic Markers That Convey Emotions during Hostilities

Category	Responses
Phrases, Expressions, or Words That Convey Emotions during Hostilities	
Positive	We are resilient.Yes, we will overcome difficulties.We will get over this as usual.We are in all this together.Praying.May God end this. We will trespass all of this.It will pass.We need to resort to god and our believes.We will pass this phase.The pride of my counry is more important than my own life to me.
Neutral	Didn't express.Speechless.This will eventually end.What will happen in the future? I write lots of posts none actually discuss my feelings so there are no specific words related to feelings.
Negative	We don't feel safe anywhere, I'm really sad for people and the huge losses. Scared, powerless, uncertain.I am very upset. Anxious. Worried, unsafe.Sad. We have to endure.God.Overwhelmed.Taking it one day at a time.I feel violated; I feel the injustice towards Lebanon.Too much hatred is showing up. I am horrified, yet resilient. There is much anger against the brutality of this war. The language I use will not sound like music to your ears. It's the only language I see that befits the sewage scums that oppose the war. Unsure about anything.

Table 8: Lingusitic Markers That Convey Emotions during Hostilities

Category	Responses
عبارات أو كلمات استخدمت للتعبير عن الحالة العاطفية أثناء تصعيد الأعمال العدائية في لبنان	
Positive	لله معنا, بالله المستعان, انا صابرة, الله بعوض, الله يفرجها, دمنا سيزهر نصراً, نحن أقوياء معاً, منتصرون, سوف باقون بالأرض,فالله خير حافظاً و هو ارحم الراحمين, عائدون, صامدون لننتصر
Neutral	أنا ضد مشاركة لبنان في هذه الحرب.
Negative	الوضع خطر, يا رب يخلص هالكابوس, تعبنا.

All participants are well aware that social media platforms play a vital role in communicating their emotions during the war in Lebanon. They are spaces for self-expression, connection, and advocacy. The linguistic markers not only express emotions but also signal belonging to a collective identity during times of crisis.

Further, the researchers extracted from the input on the question (3.4) that the participants tend to use national and cultural symbols, religious references, historical events, famous quotes, and proverbs or traditional sayings. Figure (9) depicts the results.
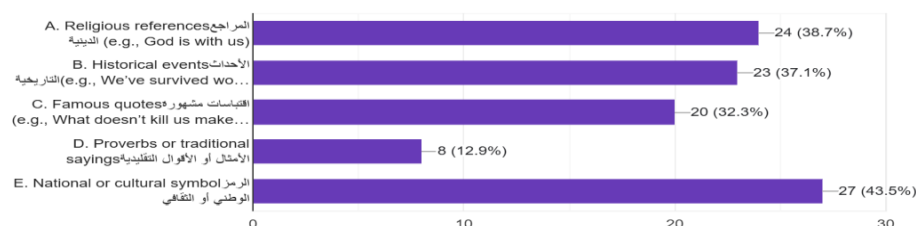

Figure 9: Social or cultural references usage during the hostilities in Lebanon

Section Four: Socioemotional Linguistic Markers of Displacement and Trauma

To underscore the prevalence of uncertainty and distress in the participants' emotional experiences, three questions were asked. Among the emotional feelings that reflect the experience of displacement raised in question (4.1), feelings of anxiety, nervousness, worry, and uncertainty were the most frequently reported (56.5%). Regarding question (4.2) about the expressions reflecting the emotional state of displacement, the majority selected "When will it end?" (67.7%), indicating a sense of uncertainty and longing for a resolution. (Table 9) depicts the results.

Table 9: Words and Expressions of Displacement

Words				
	Angry Outraged Furious Frustrated	Sad Heartbroken Devastated Mournful	Anxious Nervous Worried, Uncertain	Numb Disconnected Emotionless
Choose the state(s) that reflect your emotional experience of displacement.	38.7%	50%	56.5%	19.4%
Expressions				
	It's not safe anywhere.	We've lost everything.	This is our fate.	When will it end?
Choose the expressions that reflect your emotional state of displacement.?	51.6%	17.7%	21.4%	67.7%

To highlight their reliance on vivid metaphors in order to communicate the depth of their trauma, question (4.3) was asked. In describing trauma, the phrase "like walking through a nightmare" was the most frequently chosen metaphor (51.6%), illuminating the intensity of the experience. (Table 10) illustrates the results.

Table 10: Metaphors of Displacement

Metaphors					
	It felt like the ground was pulled out from under us.	We are like leaves blown by the wind.	Our lives have become a storm.	Like walking through a nightmare.	A never-ending cycle of fear
Choose the metaphors and/or similes that reflect your emotional state of displacement and trauma.	24.2%	19.4%	30.6%	51.6%	21%

Section Five: Positive Socio-emotional Linguistic Markers of Resilience and Solidarity

To underscore the prevalence of resilience and solidarity in the participants' emotional experiences during the clashes in Lebanon, two questions were asked. Among the emotional states on question (5.1), feelings of adaptability, flexibility, and fearlessness were the most frequently reported (59.7%), followed by perseverance, determination, pride, and strength

(37.1%). Regarding the expressions reflecting resilience and solidarity in question (5.2), the majority selected "We will get through this; we will overcome" (72.6%), indicating a sense of resilience. In the metaphorical language and similes describing their hope and endurance in question (5.3), the simile "As steady as the rising sun" was the most used (46.8%), (Table 11).

Table 11: Linguistic Markers of Solidarity and Resilience

Words			
	Perseverant steady, unyielding, strong, determined, proud of my community	Hopeful persistent, steadfast, optimistic, forward-looking, resilient	Confident firm, unshakable	Adaptable flexible, bold, fearless
Choose the word(s) that reflect your emotional experience of resilience and solidarity during the clashes in your country.	38.7%	50%	56.5%	19.4%
Expressions			
	We're in this together; you're not alone	Stay strong, we've got each other	We will get through this; we will overcome	We're one community
Choose the expressions that reflect your emotional state of resilience and solidarity during the clashes in your country	51.6%	17.7%	21.4%	67.7%
Metaphors and Similes			
	Like a tree standing firm in a storm (Resilience)	As unbreakable as a mountain (Resilience)	A shield, protecting those around me (Solidarity)	As steady as the rising sun (Hope and Endurance)
Choose the metaphors and/or similes that reflect your emotional state of resilience solidarity and endurance.	38.7%	50%	56.5%	19.4%

Narrative Reflection Logs Analysis

To gather qualitative data on how university academics across Lebanese universities articulate their emotional experiences in response to the 2024 hostilities in Lebanon, and understand how language conveys feelings and relates to identity, a narrative reflection log was assigned by November 2024 (Appendix B). (Table 12) illustrates the emotional and rhetorical markers identified in the responses of the twenty-six (26) participants.

Table 12: Socio-emotional Linguistic and Rhetorical Markers from Narratives

Category	Indicators	Examples from participants' responses		
Use of Linguistic Markers that Convey Emotions	Emotional terms indicating positive and negative feelings	Key Theme	Words	Phrases
		Trauma	**Shock**: stunned, dazed, paralyzed, speechless, numb, **Pain**: agonized, tormented. shattered, wounded, suffering **Fear**: terrified, haunted, panicked, uneasy, afraid. **Helplessness:** vulnerable, powerless, weak, overwhelmed. **Grief:** mourning, brokenhearted,	The children are terrified of every loud noise now. I cannot function properly anymore.

				devastated, despairing, bereaved.	
		Hope	**Hopeful emotions**: capable, hopeful, determined, strong. **Hopeful actions**: persevering, adjusting, coping, managing, rebuilding.	Things will get better. I just have to keep trying. I feel stretched, but I will not give up. One day, we will rebuild our lives. We are holding on to a better future.
		Endurance	**Positive:** persistent, strong-willed, determined, resilient, unyielding. **Negative**: exhausted, drained, burdened, struggling, worn out.	We have endured so much, and we are still standing. I remind myself every day that this struggle will not break us. Even when everything is falling apart, I find a way to keep going. I have learned to carry the pain and keep moving forward. Every challenge we face only makes us stronger. We have become experts at finding solutions, even in impossible situations.
Use of Linguistic markers that reflect personal identity and social practice	Emotional Terms indicating positive and negative feelings	Solidarity	**Social connection states**: supported, united, helpful, connected. **Emotional states**: loved, gratitude, thankful, blessed, empowered, encouraged.	Helping others in the same situation gives me hope. Even in hardship, kindness has no limits. Sharing stories with others keeps us going.
		Resilience	**Strength:** strong, unyielding, tough, unbreakable, steadfast. **Hope**:hopeful,optimistic, believing, positive, determined. **Courage**:brave,fearless, undaunted, bold, resolute. **Adaptability**:flexible, adjusting, coping, managing, embracing change. **Persistence**:persistent, tenacious, persevering, enduring, unstoppable.	Never giving up; fighting back Finding strength; pushing through; moving forward. We have learned to survive with the little we have. Our community has come together to support one another. Despite everything, we are finding ways to move forward.

Depth of emotional expressions	Vividness of descriptions and sensory details	Sensory Decriptions	**Destruction** : Crumble, shattered, rubble, burning, blood, destruction. **Tools of conflict:** gun powder, jets, explosions, sirens, drones, planes.	The sound of the airstrikes still echoes in my ears. Even the smell of my home felt like a distant dream. I saw buildings turning to sand. The sound of glass shattering is echoing. The loud sound of walls collapsing is in my ears. Explosions were like strong thunder which caused fear not rain. The sounds of people screaming and the crumbling of the concrete is in my ears and memory.
		Disrupted routines	Sleepless, chaotic, online classes, inability to work, loss of job.	No matter what I try, I cannot make things normal again for my children. Our daily lives were turned upside down in an instant. There is no such thing as a schedule anymore-every day feels chaotic. I used to have a job, a purpose, yet now I have nothing to do. The kids have not been to school in weeks, and I worry about their future. Online classes or work meetings feel irrelevant when survival is at stake.
		Collective sheltering	Shared space, collective shelter, togther, closer.	The room was packed with people, mats, blankets, and belongings. Piles of clothes and food supplies were provided. Despite the fear, we built a sense of community that helped us endure. We supported each other, even if it was just through a kind word or a shared meal. Strangers became like family; we shared food, stories, and comfort.
Use of rhetorical	Simile	The sound of the bombs was like a thunderstorm that never ended. Our shelter felt like a cage, confining us while danger lurked outside.		

techniques to convey emotion	Metaphor	Our lives became a puzzle with missing pieces, impossible to complete. Time was a thief, stealing our routines and sense of normalcy.
	Hypophora	What keeps us going in times like these? The hope that tomorrow will be better. Why do we stay together in the shelters? Because unity is our only strength. How do you endure such hardship? By reminding yourself there is no other choice.
	Epizeuxis	The screams, the screams, the screams-they haunt me every night. Home, home. We lost our homes, but we still had each other. We lost our routines, but we still had each other. We lost our sense of safety, but we still had each other. Every day we waited for news, but no news came. Every night we prayed for peace, but no peace came.
	Anaphora	We had no food. We had no water. We had no idea when it would end. The bombs fell. The buildings collapsed. The silence screamed. In the shelter, we found hope. In the shelter, we found resilience. In the shelter, we found each other.

The records show that the university instructors conveyed feelings of displacement, trauma, resilience, and solidarity using words and phrases that reflect their feelings of fear, loss, hope, or support for others. These terms highlight the duality of trauma and endurance: they involve both the weight of uncertainty and challenges and the strength to persist. Despite the dominance of overwhelming stands, some individuals exhibit growth or resilience as they process trauma. These terms often highlight how individuals or communities lean on each other for support, enabling them to rebuild and thrive despite difficult circumstances. Simultaneously, participants frequently employed rhetorical techniques such as metaphors and repetition to emphasize their experiences.

Further, the researchers looked for the relationship between the text and the interaction during the clashes to show the connection to the broader social context and the alignment with collective identity during times of crisis. (Table 13) emphasizes the relationship and shows how individual experiences of the 2024 hostilities in Lebanon were interwoven with a collective Lebanese identity.

Table 13: Narratives Connecting Personal Emotions to the Collective Lebanese Identity

Theme	Example Quotes from Narratives	Connection to Social Context
Shared Cultural Memories	In Lebanon, we've faced invasions before; we will overcome this too.	Reflects resilience rooted in Lebanon's history of conflict and survival.
Historical References	This feels like the 2006 war on Lebanon all over again.	Links present experiences to significant historical events, emphasizing collective memory.
Expressions of Unity	Together, we will rebuild Lebanon. We are relying on each other. Strength is in numbers. We're stronger when we stand together. Helping others in the same situation gives us hope. Even in hardship, kindness has no limits.	Highlights a shared national identity and solidarity in the face of adversity
National Pride	The cedar tree still stands tall despite the destruction in Lebanon.	Symbolizes national pride and the enduring spirit of Lebanon.
Collective Loss and Mourning	Every family has lost someone, yet in Lebanon, we share the same tears and strength.	Expresses collective grief and resilience through shared emotional experiences.
Resilience and Rebuilding	The rubble will not define us; we will rise from it like we always have. Never giving up; fighting back. Finding strength; pushing through; moving forward. We've learned to survive with the little we have. Our community has come together to support one another. Despite everything, we're finding ways to move forward. I believe our resilience will lead us back home.	Demonstrates hope and determination as defining traits of the collective Lebanese identity.

Therefore, in light of Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis framework (Figure 3) which asserts that the production of discourse is not isolated from the existing social power, but affects and is affected by it, the researchers interpreted the production within the specific social contexts shaped by the social practices and constraints i.e., war on Lebanon.

Discussion

In times of crisis, individuals could cultivate shared linguistic practices that reflect their emotional responses as they interact. The coexistence of positive and negative emotions aligns with Lindquist (2015) who showed that language is a tool for making sense of experience, and with Kazak et al. (2018) who emphasized the importance of written communication in conveying emotions.

The specific examples of resilience and solidarity from a Lebanese context additionally build on Volkova et al. (2021) who identified emotive language as central to collective identity formation and also resonate with Pizarro et al. (2022) who noted that individuals in similar social contexts exhibit common emotional reactions that reinforce collective identity. This suggests that linguistic practices do not only reflect individual emotions but also serve as mechanisms for collective coping.

Additionally, the predominance of emotions such as fear, worry, displacement, and trauma is consistent with Milevski (2020) and Cricenti et al. (2022), who observed negative emotions in war-affected societies. Similarly, the displacement-related emotions found in this study support the findings of De Rivera et al. (2007) who argued that such emotions contribute to collective behaviors and social identities, as well as those of Hamadeh (2024) who indicated that the prevailing sentiments of twenty-five Lebanese

teachers during the September war on Lebanon were those of instability and shared trauma.

Further, the emotional linguistic markers of the Lebanese academics that include shared national events, cultural symbols, and religious references, echo El-Maazawi (2023) who highlighted the role of narratives in fostering a shared understanding of events; the frequent use of simile, metaphor, hypophora, epizeuxis, and anaphora underscores the depth of rhetorical techniques employed to emphasize various emotions.

The findings underline the critical role of using language for emotional expression, connection, and advocacy during crises. Narratives facilitate the articulation of socio-emotional linguistic and rhetorical markers of collective identity that reinforce the feelings of displacement and trauma and the sense of belonging, solidarity, and resilience.

Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into linguistic practices during the 2024 hostilities in Lebanon, it is limited to a specific geographic and temporal context. Future research could explore similar dynamics in other regions or during different crises to examine whether the findings are generalizable. Additionally, a comparative analysis of linguistic practices across different social media platforms or demographic groups could offer a deeper understanding of how language reflects emotional and social identities during crises.

Conclusion

The linguistic markers not only express the profound feelings of trauma and the disorienting experience of displacement as well as of strength, solidarity, and resilience among academics across Lebanese universities but also signal belonging to a collective identity during times of crisis and adversity. Using language helps in processing complex emotional landscapes navigated by individuals during challenging circumstances and expressing collective identities during times of adversity.

This dual role of language, both as a tool for emotional processing and as a means of reinforcing social cohesion, highlights its significance in conflict and post-conflict settings. This insight is particularly relevant for sociolinguistics, policymakers, educators, and mental health professionals, who can leverage written communication in conveying emotions to foster solidarity and provide support during future crises.

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Appendix A
Questionnaire

4.1 Choose the state(s) that reflect your emotional experience of displacement. (Select all that apply) *

اختر الحالة/ الحالات التي تعكس تجربتك العاطفية مع النزوح. (حدد ما ينطبق)

☐ A. Angry غاضب(e.g., outraged, furious, frustrated)

☐ B. Sad حزين(e.g., heartbroken, devastated, mournful)

☐ C. Anxious قلق(e.g., nervous, worried, uncertain)

☐ D. Numb مخدر(e.g., numb, disconnected, emotionless)

4.2 Choose the expressions that reflect your emotional state of displacement. (Select all that apply) *

اختر العبارات التي تعكس حالتك العاطفية أثناء النزوح. (حدد ما ينطبق)

☐ A. It's not safe anywhere ليس هناك أمان في أي مكان– Reflecting fear and uncertainty

☐ B. We've lost everything لقد فقدنا كل شيء– Reflecting grief and loss

☐ C. This is our fate هذا هو مصيرنا – Reflecting acceptance or resignation

☐ D. When will it end? متى سينتهي؟– Reflecting frustration and anxiety

4.3 Choose the metaphors and/or similes that reflect your emotional state of displacement and trauma. (Select all that apply) *

اختر الاستعارات و/أو التشبيهات التي تعكس حالتك العاطفية المتمثلة في النزوح والصدمة. (حدد ما ينطبق)

☐ A. It felt like the ground was pulled out from under us وكأن الأرض قد سحبت من تحت أقدامنا شعرنا لقد – Simile – reflect...

☐ B. We are like leaves blown by the wind نحن مثل الأوراق التي تذروها الرياح– Metaphor – reflecting vulnerability and...

☐ C. Our lives have become a storm لقد أصبحت حياتنا عاصفة– Metaphor – reflecting chaos and turmoil)

5.1 Choose the word(s) that reflect your emotional experience of resilience and solidarity during the clashes in your country. (Select all that apply)

اختر التعبير الذي يعكس تجربتك العاطفية في الصمود والتضامن أثناء الاشتباكات في بلادك. (اختر كل ما ينطبق)

☐ A. Perseverant مثابر(e.g., steady, unyielding, strong, determined, proud of my community)

☐ B. Hopeful متفائل(e.g., persistent, steadfast, optimistic, forward-looking, resilient)

☐ C. Confident واثق(e.g., firm, unshakable)

☐ D. Adaptable قابل للتكيف(e.g., flexible, bold, fearless)

5.2 Choose the expressions that reflect your emotional state of resilience and solidarity during the clashes in your country. (Select all that apply) *

اختر التعبير الذي يعكس حالتك العاطفية من المرونة والتضامن أثناء الاشتباكات في بلادك. (اختر ما ينطبق)

☐ A. We're in this together; you're not alone نحن في هذا معا لست وحدك

☐ B. Stay strong, we've got each other ابق قويا نحن ندعم بعضنا

☐ C. We will get through this; we will overcome سوف نتجاوز هذا؛ سوف نتغلب عليه

☐ D. We're one community نحن مجتمع واحد

5.3 Choose the metaphors and/or similes that reflect your emotional state of resilience solidarity and endurance. (Select all that apply)

اختر الاستعارات و/أو التشبيهات التي تعكس حالتك العاطفية من المرونة التضامن و الصبر. (حدد كل ما ينطبق)

☐ A. Like a tree standing firm in a storm مثل شجرة تقف ثابتة في العاصفة(Resilience)

☐ B. As unbreakable as a mountain غير قابل للكسر مثل الجبل(Resilience)

☐ C. A shield, protecting those around me درع يحمي من حولي(Solidarity)

☐ D. As steady as the rising sun ثابت مثل شروق الشمس(Hope and Endurance)

Appendix B
Narrative Reflection Log

Narrative Reflection

The narrative reflection takes approximately 7-10 minutes to complete. Its purpose is to explore how academics across Lebanese universities articulate their emotional experiences in response to the 2024 clashes and airstrikes in Lebanon. We aim to understand how language conveys feelings of displacement, trauma, resilience, and solidarity. Participation in this reflection is entirely voluntary, and your responses will remain anonymous. By proceeding, you consent to the use of your answers for research purposes related to this study.

During the escalation of hostilities in Lebanon in September 2024, many people experienced emotions related to displacement, trauma, resilience, and solidarity.

Please, describe your personal experience during this time. Include vivid descriptions of your emotions, specific examples, key moments, and the words or phrases that reflect your feelings of fear, loss, hope, or support for others. Reflect on how these expressions relate to your personal identity, collective identity and social practices.