

Producing Liberal Discourse in the Digital Space: an Analytical Study of the Podcast “Al-Bilad” on Al-Jazeera's Platform

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Abstract:

The study examines the liberal discourse in the podcast "Al-Bilad" as a digital tool for representing the Palestinian issue. It hypothesizes that audio blogs create counter-narratives that challenge mainstream media and promote critical political awareness. The study uses media dependence theory and discourse analysis to analyze 11 episodes from 2021 to 2024. Results show a dominant rational and emotional liberation discourse, deconstructing the Zionist narrative and highlighting the Palestinian as a historical actor. Podcasts are seen as a strategic means of resistance digital media, restoring consideration for liberation issues within the digital space.

Keywords: Liberation discourse, podcasts, Palestinian issue, resistance, digital media

1. Introduction:

Digital developments have significantly transformed the media field, reshaping discourse production and reception, and influencing symbolic power dynamics. Podcasts have emerged as an alternative medium, reshaping media-public relationships. These platforms have evolved into active spaces of expression, generating new narratives that challenge existing discursive systems and redistribute voice and meaning in public online spaces. The Palestinian issue is at the center

of this transformation, as podcasts challenge current media biases and deconstruct the Zionist narrative that has long dominated international media representations of the conflict.

This study explores the liberationist discourse produced by Al-Bilad, a popular Al Jazeera Podcast, as a digital media model aiming to restore Palestinian collective memory and present alternative representations of Palestinians as historical actors. It uses discourse analysis to reveal symbolic structures and ideological connotations, and media dependence theory to understand the relationship between the digital recipient and audio content. The study aims to explore how Al-Bilad promotes a liberating debate on the Palestinian issue in the digital environment.

This study is based on a series of sub-questions that are defined as follows:

What are the communicative characteristics of the communicator in “Al-Bilad” podcast?

What types of communication arts does the program use?

What are the media and educational goals does the podcast express?

What types of introductions are used? What is their communicative significance?

How does the duration of the episodes influence the type of reception and analysis?

How does the program utilize different characters to convey its discourse?

What is the geographical distribution of the issues raised? What are its political dimensions?

Which persuasive strategies are employed (emotional, logical, or mixed)?

How are audio elements employed to enhance the dramatic and analytical dimensions?

2. Research Objectives:

This study aims to achieve a set of scientific and cognitive objectives: as follows:

1. Examining the form of the Liberation discourse provided by Al-Bilad podcast.

2. Investigating the symbolic patterns and ideological representations related with the perception of Palestinians and the liberation struggle.
3. Understanding how Al-Bilad podcast employs audio narrative and media framing to construct a counter-narrative to the Zionist narrative.
4. Evaluating the significance of audio blogs as an alternative media platform in shaping critical awareness of liberation issues.

3. Significance of the Research:

This study draws its importance from its intersection with changes in digital media, as podcasts emerge as an alternative space that reproduces discourse outside the hegemony of traditional institutions. The importance is further reinforced by the choice of the Palestinian issue as a model for analysing liberation discourse that challenges colonial narratives and restores symbolic justice. The scientific value also arises from the adoption of a complex analytical approach that combines media theories and discourse analysis, giving the study an interpretive dimension for understanding the relationship between the media message and the symbolic context in which meanings are produced.

4. Terminological and procedural introduction to the research:

An accurate scientific examination of the topic requires the explanation of fundamental concepts that support its central problem, as well as the refinement of operational definitions in accordance with the research framework.

4.1 Liberation Discourse

4.1.1 Terminology:

Liberal discourse is a persuasive argumentative discourse in which language is used to facilitate engagement and change. It shows itself in political and cultural situations that aim to challenge authoritarianism and eliminate dominating structures. Philippe Breton defines it as a human activity that takes numerous communicative forms and uses diverse means to persuade individuals and communities of the importance of adopting a liberal viewpoint or participating in a vision of justice, liberation, and emancipation. (Breton, 1998, p. 03)

4.1.2. Procedurally:

In this research, it refers to a symbolic and epistemological framework based on opposing hegemony, rejecting occupation and colonialism, and defending the values of dignity, justice, and sovereignty by creating alternative narratives that restore the local actor and reconstruct historical and social truth from a resistant perspective. In this setting, liberation speech serves as a symbolic weapon for raising critical collective awareness and challenging prevailing media narratives, particularly those related to the Palestinian issue.

4.2. Podcast:

4.2.1. Terminology:

In light of the dynamic shifts characterizing contemporary digital media, podcasts have emerged as one of the most significant means of expression and impact, profiting from the dynamic nature of digital dissemination and content personalisation to reach a wide-ranging audience. In an article published in *The Guardian*, journalist Ben Hammersley used the term "podcast" to describe the benefits of merging blogging and audio. He wrote: "With our deep relationship with sound, the interaction of blogging via the web, and the mobility of MP3 players, it appears like podcasting is set to provide the best not only for the listener, but also as a worldwide experience". (Hammersley, 2004) Podcasting, with its technological and participatory aspects, is an effective communication medium for altering media production and reception patterns. It is defined as a digital audio file, which is essentially an electronic medium for storing and transmitting audio data that can be downloaded via the Internet, allowing for easy access and mass consumption of digital audio content, indicating a significant shift in the mechanisms of distribution and reception in the modern media landscape (Jay Daniel Thompson & John Weldon, 2022, p. 35) . (Perks, Turner, & Tollison (2019 another definition, a podcast is "a digital audio file that can be downloaded or streamed through a personal device, and is usually available free of charge." (Perks, 2019, p. 617)

4.2.2. Procedurally:

This study explores the evolution of podcasts as interactive digital media, highlighting Al-Bilad's use of participatory technology to generate a liberating discourse on the Palestinian issue, deconstructing the dominant narrative and placing Palestinians as historical actors.

4.3. Digital Space

4.3.1. Terminology:

Digital space encompasses various digital technologies, such as virtual reality, databases, and the internet, and is similar to cyberspace but focuses on the digital infrastructure. It involves communication with people, devices, and the infrastructure that allows for this interaction. Digital space is widespread and growing. (Benyon, 2014, pp. 37–44)

4.3.2. Procedurally:

This study explores digital space, a communication space that includes digital technologies, platforms, and technical specifications for decentralized media content production, distribution, reception, and interaction. It includes digital storage media, synchronous and asynchronous interaction channels, and measures communication patterns and symbolic power distribution within Al-Bilad podcasts' environment.

4.4. Digital Media

4.4.1. Terminology:

The digital world encompasses all media stored, edited, and displayed via computers, phones, and tablets, including e-books, images, audio, videos, web pages, and social networks. (Peakson & 2025) It involves new digital methods and activities that enable the production, publication, and receiving of media content through electronic devices connected or disconnected to the Internet. (Maher, Mahmoud, & Mustafa, 2015, p. 19)

4.4.2. Procedurally:

This study explores how Al-Bilad podcasts can break free from traditional media constraints by adopting digitally liberated discourse. With ease of distribution, on-demand listening, and direct audience interaction, podcasts provide alternative narratives about the Palestinian issue, reshape political consciousness, and provide an independent platform for marginalized voices. Podcasts are a visible

example of resistance digital media, promoting justice and dignity while challenging mainstream ideological narratives. This study uses theoretical and methodological concepts to analyze the interaction between liberating discourse and digital media (podcasts) in the political context of the Palestinian issue.

5. Methodological Procedures of the Study

5.1. Research Community and Methodology:

The research community in the current study is considered as all episodes of the “Al-Bilad” podcast produced by “Al-Jazeera Podcast” platform on the digital space focusing on the Palestinian issue. It uses a descriptive analytical approach to analyze digital media discourse and its symbolic and ideological content. Discourse analysis is used as a complementary qualitative method to examine power relations, meaning, and representation within discourse, and how Palestinian reality is reconstructed through language, sound, and narrative frameworks.

5.2. Research Sample and Data Collection Tools:

This study used a comprehensive sampling method to analyze 11 episodes of the podcast "Al-Bilad" on the Palestinian issue from 2021 to 2024. Qualitative content analysis was used to detect semantic patterns, symbolic frames, and ideological connotations in the audio texts, particularly in political and controversial issues.

The analysis of Al Bilad podcast episodes uses topic and word units to identify main issues and monitor key words. The "How it was said" category examines rhetorical style, tone of voice, narrative structure, sound effects, and quotations. The "What was said?" category describes the content, type of program, topics, and values, along with introduction and presentation style.

5.3. Field of research:

“Al-Bilad Podcast” – one of Al Jazeera Podcast's productions – as a free narrative platform, this study approaches the discourse of the “Al-Bilad” podcast as a qualitative model of audio journalism that reshapes the relationship between media and knowledge.

The program, presented by journalist Mona Al-Omari, hosts researchers, experts, and eyewitnesses to deconstruct the founding concepts of the issue within a broader Arab framework that repositions Palestine in its liberating and humanitarian context.

5.4. Scientific Quality Control Tools:

This study aims to establish methodological aspects and control tools, using a questionnaire based on previous studies and reviewing it. The analysis units were classified based on communication arts, media objectives, and rhetorical features to understand the structure of liberation discourse. Measurement units were controlled using counting and repetition methods, supported by qualitative analysis, to ensure accurate results.

6. Presentation and Analysis of the Applied Study Tables:

6.1. Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of Form Categories (how it was said):

Table No. (01): Represents the duration of the selected episodes from the program under study.

Title	Duration	Date
How Israeli society thinks	01 hr 47 minutes	14/04/2025
This is how we raised millions of dollars in donations	03 hrs 37 minutes	22/04/2025
The night of the storming of Al-Shifa Hospital resembles the Day of Judgement	04 hours 09 minutes	14/01/2025
A tour of Sinwar's mind with Dr Fawzi Al-Badawi	01 hrs 15 minutes	14/12/2024
Behind the scenes of Hezbollah's founding with Saud al-Mawla	03 hours 55 minutes	27/10/2024
The Palestinian Struggle. From Arafat to Sinwar	05 hours 50 minutes	30/06/2024
Can a Palestinian Christian carry a stone?	02 hours 03 minutes	10/06/2024
Psychology: How does the state control us?	01 hr 58 mins	01/04/2024
Why did Al-Aqsa's preacher refuse to pray during the Naksa?	02 hours and six minutes	09/04/2024
Ghassan Abu Sitta - The war doctor who witnessed the events in Gaza	01 hour 18 minutes	12/12/2023
Israel after 07 October	02 hours 19 minutes	20/11/2023

Al-Bilad podcast, with its lengthy episodes, focuses on in-depth analysis and documentation, particularly on the Palestinian issue. These episodes, some exceeding five hours, are a departure from the short, fragmented format of Arab digital podcasts; (The Palestinian Struggle: From Arafat to Sinwar), (A Tour of Sinwar's Mind), indicating that the program relies on lengthy narratives as an editorial

tool for producing liberal political knowledge aiming to build cumulative awareness.

The program uses historical investigation and political analysis to gather arguments, interviews, testimonies and opening up spaces for the structural deconstruction of dominant discourses. It aims to monitor Arab digital spaces' production of alternative liberal discourse, focusing on multifaceted knowledge entry points rather than sensationalism or superficial symbolism.

The program's production intensity increases with major events like Gaza aggression (episodes from October and December 2023 and January 2025) indicating a new media model that combines momentary documentation with in-depth analysis, goes beyond news to broader political understanding.

Table (02) shows the types of languages used in presenting the content of Al-Bilad podcasts.

Podcast content Language	Arabic	English language	Arab Media	colloquial dialect	Total
Repetition	30	10	50	10	100
Percentage	30%	10%	50%	10%	100

The study reveals that Arabic media language is the most widely used language in podcasts, accounting for 50% of content. This linguistic strategy is used by Al-Bilad podcast producers to frame political content professionally, ensuring neutrality and receptivity to a wide audience. The podcast uses English and colloquial Arabic for complementary communicative functions, engaging in global dialogue on Palestine and re-internationalizing the Palestinian issue within global human rights and academic concepts. English conveys critical concepts like settler colonialism, cultural normalization, and structural racism, while colloquial Arabic builds emotional bridges with Arab listeners through the voices of ordinary Palestinians and personal testimonies. The podcast uses multiple linguistic distribution to create interlingual discourse, utilizing language as a communication tool and a counter-hegemonic strategy to redistribute symbolic power within media. with classical Arabic and English providing legitimacy and media Arabic ensuring dissemination.

We conclude from the above that Al-Bilad podcast establishes, through this multiple linguistic distribution, what can be called interlingual discourse, where language is used not only as a tool of communication, but also as a counter-hegemonic strategy that redistributes symbolic power within the media space. While classical Arabic and English grant epistemic legitimacy, media Arabic ensures dissemination, and colloquial Arabic brings the ordinary person into the center of the narrative.

Table (03): Distribution of audio elements in Al-Bilad podcast episodes

Content Themes	Repetition	ratio
success	15	07.31
Fame and popularity	35	1707
Citizen's voice	20	09.76
diligence	15	07.31
influence	20	09.76
sedition	02	0.98
Libertarianism	43	20.98
charisma	15	07.31
professional	30	14.63
Interpretive Hegemony	10	04.87
Total	205	100

Based on statistical data on audio elements in the 11 episodes of Al-Bilad podcast, it reveals that voice communication is the dominant strategy, dominating 27.85% of audio elements. Live testimonials are the most influential media element, with 18.99% relying on victims' experiences. Opening and transitional music and sound effects are crucial for emotional positioning and narrative depth. Deliberate silence is a key component, creating moments of reflection or tension. The podcast employs an integrated editorial audio model, combining charisma, sincerity, and aesthetic design.

6.2 Quantitative and qualitative analysis of content categories (what was said):

Table (04) shows the statistical distribution of the types of introductions in the content of *Al-Bilad* podcast.

Country podcast Introductions used	Repetitions	Ratio
Analytical	4	36.36 %
Narrative	3	27.27%
Descriptive	2	18.18 %
Interrogative	1	09.09 %
Quotations	1	09.09 %
Total	11	100 %

The statistical distribution of the types of introductions used in the “Bilad” podcast reveals a deliberate structural approach that is consistent with the characteristics of liberal media discourse in the digital space. Analytical introductions came at the top of the list with 36.36% of occurrences, indicating that the content creators rely on an interpretive approach that provides listeners with a conceptual framework that deepens their political and sociological understanding of the issue at hand. This analytical tendency is clearly evident in episodes such as: “(How does Israeli society think?)” (Psychology: How does the state control us?), where the discussion begins with a deconstruction of contexts and assumptions, reflecting a desire to promote critical thinking and break free from stereotypical media indoctrination.

Narrative introductions come next with 27.27%, which employ storytelling techniques to embody facts and events through sensory experience, as in the episode “The night of the storming of Al-Shifa Hospital was like Judgment Day,” where narrative is used to build deep emotional and human empathy, serving the function of testimony as an act of resistance through digital media.

Descriptive introductions (18.18%) are used to frame the scene with sensory vocabulary that evokes the place and event, and are an important gateway to creating an auditory mood that paves the way for receiving the liberating message. A prominent example of this can be found in the episode “Ghassan Abu Sitta... The Doctor of Wars), which begins with a description of scenes of ruin and destruction, contributing to the evocation of the moral geography of the conflict.

In contrast, some episodes resort to interrogative introductions (9.09%) that raise questions as a stimulus for thought, as in the episode “Can Palestinian Christians carry stones?” where the question

becomes an emotional and cognitive stimulus that breaks with prevailing patterns and invites the listener to reconsider cultural and political assumptions.

The list concludes with quotational introductions (9.09%), which invoke symbolic religious or intellectual texts, giving the discourse cultural and missionary depth and anchoring the issues within broader ethical and conceptual frameworks, as in the episode " Why did the Al-Aqsa preacher refuse to pray with the people during the Naksa? This type of introduction reconnects the present with history and collective consciousness, in complete harmony with the elements of liberating communication.

The variety of introductions in the Al-Bilad podcast reflects a high level of awareness of the function of the audio introduction, not only as an aesthetic component, but also as a strategic tool in constructing a complex liberating discourse.

Table (05) shows the characteristics of the communicator (podcaster).

Content Themes	Repetition	ratio
success	15	07.31
Fame and popularity	35	1707
Citizen's voice	20	09.76
diligence	15	07.31
influence	20	09.76
sedition	02	0.98
Libertarianism	43	20.98
charisma	15	07.31
professional	30	14.63
Interpretive Hegemony	10	04.87
Total	205	100

Al-Bilad podcast is an alternative media platform that promotes liberatory communication and critical understanding, focusing on popular engagement and deconstruction of dominant narratives. The podcast's content is known for its diligence, professionalism, and interpretive dominance, which suggest a knowledge-based approach. It effectively utilizes marginalized voices to raise political and social awareness, bridging the gap between traditional media and the public sphere. The podcast's low "incitement" trait score (0.98%) indicates a

balanced approach to inflammatory issues like Nakba and Gaza aggression, reflecting a moral commitment to social justice and national liberation. Al-Bilad podcast is an advanced alternative media model that balances liberalism with professional and ethical values.

Table (06) represents the persuasive methods presented through the content of Al-Bilad podcast

Country podcast	Persuasive methods	Repetition	Ratio
	Emotional	50	50%
	Logical	25	25%
	Unclear	25	25%
	Total	100	10%

Al-Bilad podcast uses an emotional style as the main communication tool, representing 50% of the total styles, focusing on political issues, particularly those related to Palestine within an Arab and Islamic emotional-cultural space. This approach promotes transnational discourse and emotional participation, outperforming logical and indeterminate styles. However, the podcast uses 25% logical methods for understanding adversary mental structures and historical contexts, while the remaining 25% use "unclear" methods that combine emotion and logic depending on the topic, guest, and audience. The podcast aims to deconstruct authoritarian discourse using studies, research, and social investigations to reconfigure news and reports.

Table (07) shows the type of media objectives employed by the study sample through the content of the podcast

Media podcats	Media goals	Repetition	Ratio
	A media target	30	30%
	An educational	25	25%
	Guidance objective	20	20%
	Awareness	15	15%
	A marketing goal	03	03%
	Educational Objective	5	05%
	Recreational goal	02	02%
	Total cases	100	100%

Al-Bilad podcast aims to dismantle political and cultural structures of hegemony by offering interpretive alternatives, particularly for the Palestinian issue. Its media objectives include informative (30%), educational (25%), and guiding (20%) functions, with a 15% awareness-raising goal. The podcast uses digital space to raise public awareness about liberation, violations, and hegemonic mechanisms in contexts like siege, settler colonialism, and normalization. The content strategy is based on political depth and cultural accountability, moving away from consumerist or commercial platforms. Al-Bilad serves as a media model to establish a consciousness resistant to traditional narratives in the digital space.

Table (08) shows the personalities hosted or centralized in the selected episodes of Al-Bilad podcast

Media podcasts characters	Repetition	Ratio
Media personalities	02	18.18%
Famous personalities	03	27.27%
Public figures	02	18.18%
Researchers and academics	03	27.27%
Military figures	1	09.090%
Total	11	100%

The statistical distribution of the types of personalities hosted on Al-Bilad podcast reflects that it employs a central editorial approach to create a libertarian media discourse with multiple cognitive and symbolic levels. The mix of celebrities and academic researchers (27.27% each) combines symbolic and cognitive legitimacy, transforming the discourse from narrative to hermeneutic. This strategy re-engineers public spaces by overcoming the binary between "elites/masses" and "knowledge/opinion" and promoting an interactive perspective through symbol rotation. Hosting media personalities (18.18%) bridge the gap between specialized knowledge and public opinion, adapting editorial discourse for mass reception without compromising depth. This percentage reflects a trend towards democratization, where liberatory consciousness is reproduced within popular experience, providing narrative legitimacy and symbolic resistance. The program's structure reverses the trend of a "liberation of liberatory discourse from the power of the security approach" due to the limited presence of military figures.

Table (09): The qualitative distribution of the nature of the discursive trends in Al-Bilad podcast.

Countries podcast	Repetition	Ratio
Podcast Trends		
Podcasts with positive attitudes	06	54 %
Podcasts with negative trends	01	09%
Neutral oriented podcasts	02	18%
Mixed-minds podcasts	02	18%
Total	11	100%

Based on the statistical results regarding the attitudes of Al-Bilad podcast reveals that it has a positive attitude towards justice issues, with 54.54% of its episodes exhibiting a positive outlook. This indicates a commitment to a liberal media project that presents just issues from a critical and constructive perspective. However, a small percentage of episodes have a negative orientation, reflecting the role of journalism in documenting pain as an act of resistance, particularly in Palestinian contexts or conflict zones. The neutral orientation is present in 18.18% of episodes, often featuring news or documentary content without clear evaluative analysis. The mixed attitudes of 18.18% indicate that the editorial discourse in some episodes combines news and analysis, resulting in a mix of neutrality and implicit bias towards justice issues.

Table (10): Representing the geographical framework of the issues at hand

Countries	Repetition	Ratio
United States of America	20	20%
Russia	10	10%
Palestine	40	40%
Turkey	08	08%
Algeria	07	07%
Egypt	05	05%
Other countries	10	10%
Total	100	100

Al-Bilad podcast's geographical frequency distribution shows a bias towards liberatory issues, with Palestine being the central issue, accounting for 40% of the total issues raised. The United States (20%) is a dominant geopolitical actor in conflict, funding and supporting settlement projects. Russia (10%) and Turkey (8%) show interest in

international shifts and regional alliances related to the Palestinian issue. Algeria (7%), Egypt (5%), and other countries (10%) tend to read the Palestinian Situation from an Arab perspective, evoking experiences of resistance and popular support. The podcast presents an analytical media discourse that reshapes geopolitics from a liberatory perspective.

7. Discussion and interpretation of the results of the analytical study of Al-Bilad podcast (2024-2021):

- The results of the analytical study found that Al-Bilad podcast's communicator primarily focuses on libertarianism, accounting for 20.98% of observed traits. This approach reflects a commitment to liberation and justice, avoiding controversial positions like incitement or sensationalism. This approach balances personal appeal with professional awareness.
- The study revealed that 27.78% of the program's communicative arts involve dialogues and media conversations, promoting direct interaction and public debate. Episodes are intentionally chosen for their length, with some exceeding four or five hours, indicating a preference for in-depth analysis.
- As for the media objectives, the data shows that 55% of episodes' content is aimed at informational and educational purposes, with 30% being informational and 25% being educational, indicating a liberal approach to media objectives.
- Regarding the types of introductions, the results showed a significant reliance on analytical (36.36%) and narrative (27.27%) introductions, indicating that the program seeks to prepare the audience for rational and contextual content, combining logical construction of information and narrative emotional engagement.
- In the dimension of media discourse, the study found that 54.5% of episodes (6 out of 11) in Al-Bilad's media discourse contained positive emancipatory narratives, indicating their commitment to counter-hegemonic messages and supporting resistance values.
- In terms of media language, the study found that media language, predominantly "middle language," a blend of classical and colloquial language, accounts for 50% of content, indicating a communication strategy aimed at achieving clarity, ease of reception, intellectual depth, and balanced liberal discourse.

- The audio elements, including the presenter's voice and transitional music, effectively create a dramatic environment, supporting emotional interaction and enhancing analytical content, with testimonies scoring 18.99%.
- In the geographical dimension, the study reveals Palestine as a significant geographical axis, with 40% of references, followed by the US, Russia, Turkey, and other Arab countries, indicating strategic awareness.
- Regarding to persuasive methods, the analysis reveals that emotional methods account for 50% of persuasive episodes, while logical and mixed methods account for 25% and 25% respectively.

Finally, the study found a diverse group of key figures, including researchers, academics, celebrities, media figures, and the general public, with a small military presence. This diversity balances epistemological legitimacy, public appeal, and field credibility, promoting an inclusive analytical discourse with a participatory dimension.

8. Conclusion:

Based on the analytical treatment of Al-Bilad podcasts during the period 2021-2024, it can be said that the study revealed a complex discursive structure based on a deep liberatory reference, in which the podcast is positioned as a digital platform of resistance that engages in shaping collective consciousness and deconstructing dominant narratives about the nation's issues, especially the Palestinian issue. The theoretical-applied approach showed that the program employs modern communication elements with a critical openness that combines the rationality of knowledge and the mobilized emotional dimension, giving the content a double horizon: cognitive-analytical on the one hand, and affective-emotional on the other.

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