

Investigating Recurrent Themes and Semantic Fields in News Reports on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam A Corpus-based Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), under construction since 2011, is a source of political tension between Ethiopia and Egypt. This study investigates the major recurrent themes and semantic fields occurring in the Egyptian and Ethiopian news media representation of the issues raised by the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). The objective of the study is to compare and contrast the ideological implications reflected in the Egyptian and Ethiopian news discourse on the controversy surrounding the GERD. The analysis uses the tools of Corpus Linguistics (CL) within the theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), adopting Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model of CDA. The method of analysis relies on conducting two corpus linguistic procedures, namely, keywords and concordances. The data under investigation consist of two specialized corpora of online news reports written in English and published in the period between 2013 to 2020. The findings of the corpus analysis reveal the impact of ideological and political stance on the representation and interpretation of the issues concerning the GERD in the news media.

Keywords: CDA, Corpus Linguistics, GERD, Egypt, Ethiopia, themes, semantic fields, news reports, ideology.

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1. Introduction:

This study provides a corpus-based critical discourse analysis of the representation of the issues concerning the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in Egyptian and Ethiopian online English news reports over the period of seven years ranging from 2013 to 2020. The study seeks to investigate the different linguistic aspects of the news reports, namely, keywords and recurrent themes. According to van Dijk (1991: 71), topical themes constitute an important aspect of news reports since topics “represent what news-makers construe to be the most important information about a news event”.

The study employs a synergy of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), particularly, Fairclough’s (1995) three-dimensional model, and corpus linguistics (CL). Being a corpus-based study, the application of CL techniques is based on the major frequency-based aspects of corpus linguistics, namely, the analysis of the statistically significant keywords and high-frequency words.

Media in general have the power to influence people’s “knowledge, beliefs, values, social relations, social identities” (Fairclough, 1995: 2). Newspapers, in particular, are referred to as one of the major sources of knowledge and opinions about everyday events and issues for people, and thus they can be said to have a great potential for shaping power relations within any society (Nisco, 2016). Therefore, news media language plays a vital role in constructing certain forms of reality out of events by drawing a picture of such events using recurrent words and phrases. Such repeated patterns of language in the news discourse, for example, can reveal the newspapers’ stances and ideological attitudes towards certain issues.

Thus, the significance of the current study lies in the fact that it enhances our understanding of the language of news reports on a very sensitive issue, namely the water of the Nile. The Nile river is considered a vital part of the life of all its riparian countries, and

securing the water supply is considered a national priority in Egypt in particular. According to Kendie (1999), maintaining the free flow of the Nile has always been a matter of national security for Egypt. Therefore, the launch of the GERD project in 2011 caused a massive and continuing controversy in Egypt due to its potentially harmful impact on Egypt's historic share of the Nile's water. This controversy was accompanied by huge media coverage of the issue and its related events. Two different stories have been represented in the Egyptian and Ethiopian newspapers to legitimize each country's stance on the issue.

Popp (2006: 6) defines media language as "an institutionalized means of framing reality". Journalistic practices play a big role in interpreting and portraying issues and accordingly communicate specific messages to readers. However, the way events are represented in news coverage is usually affected by the newspapers' intentions. Thus, the media coverage of the issue of the GERD was influenced by the political and ideological standpoints of the newspapers in each of the two conflicting countries. The GERD was constructed in Egyptian newspapers, on the one hand, within various media frames, such as 'concerns and crisis', 'historical right', and 'diplomacy', which all reflect Egypt's ideological stance on the issue. On the other hand, the Ethiopian news on the issue incorporated different themes, such as development, diplomacy and sovereignty. These themes were manifest in several keywords and high-frequency words.

Several previous studies have examined the media coverage of the issue of the GERD (e.g., Belay, 2014; Hailu, 2012; Mengistu, 2018). However, most of these studies were media-oriented as they focused on how the media framed the dam itself according to the theories of framing and agenda-setting. Most of these studies were also based on the qualitative analysis of a small amount of purposively sampled data. To the best of our knowledge, none of those studies combined the framework of CDA and the analytical

tools of CL in the analysis of the media discourse on the GERD. Thus, the present study attempts to fill in these gaps in the literature. The studies conducted by Hailu (2012) and Gienanth (2020) are particularly relevant to our study as they investigated the media frames or recurrent themes appearing in the media coverage of the GERD.

Hailu (2012) conducted a media study investigating the national and international press coverage of the GERD. The study aimed to identify the main discourse themes in the print news reports on the GERD that were published in Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan. The study's data consisted of 148 news articles that were selected from three different newspapers, namely Addis Zemen, Al Ahram Weekly, and Sudan Vision, published between March and September 2011. The theoretical approach of the study was based on the theories of agenda-setting and framing of mass media. The results of the study revealed differences between the themes occurring in the newspapers under investigation. For example, the most recurrent theme in the coverage of Addis Zemen newspaper was the theme of 'development', while the theme of 'diplomacy' was recurrent in the coverage by Al Ahram Weekly and Sudan Vision.

Gienanth (2020) studied the narratives of Ethiopian, Egyptian and international media items that cover the issue of the GERD. The study aimed to investigate the hegemonic discourse recurrent in Egyptian media representation, which reflects Egypt's claims of domination over the Nile and the counter-hegemonic discourse in the Ethiopian media. The study also intended to identify the points of contention and cooperation between Ethiopia and Egypt. The analytical approach of the study was based on a qualitative research method of analysis. The study's data consisted of 30 news articles published from February 2018 to April 2020. The findings of the study revealed differences in the representation of the GERD in the Egyptian and Ethiopian media. The main recurrent theme in the

Egyptian media was that of ‘threat to national security’. On the other hand, Ethiopian media framed the GERD within the theme of ‘economic development’.

This paper uses an interdisciplinary analytical framework, which is based on a synergy of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and CL tools, to analyze the language of the news reporting on the issue of the GERD and the events associated with this issue in the period between 2013 and 2020 in Egyptian and Ethiopian online newspapers. Thus, the present study aims to fill in a gap by adding to the body of literature on the critical discourse analysis of media representation of the issue of the GERD. Another significance of the present study is that the data under investigation comprise news reports covering events over a long period so that the changes that happened in the issue over time can be traced. According to Carvalho (2008: 164), “understanding the evolution of matters of conflict in relation to the media, is one of the most important contributions to be made by social researchers”.

Our study primarily seeks to fulfill the following objectives: (1) investigate the different thematic topics and semantic fields recurrently occurring in the two corpora of the online news reports to reveal the ideological stance of the two countries toward the issue of the GERD, and (2) explore the lexical choices underpinning the major themes and their related semantic subdomains. To address these objectives, the study intends to answer two research questions:

1. What are the top statistically significant keywords that occur in each news corpus and how do they reflect the ideological stance of each country?
2. What are the main recurrent themes and semantic fields in the discourse of Egyptian and Ethiopian online news reporting on the issue of the GERD?

2. Theoretical Framework

Discourse can be defined as “the whole process of social interaction of which text is just a part” (Fairclough, 1989: 24). It “is not simply an isolated textual or dialogical structure. Rather it is a complex communicative event that also embodies a social context” (van Dijk, 1988: 3). According to van Dijk (2009), defining discourse entails many notions as it is a multidimensional social phenomenon that can be a linguistic (verbal, grammatical) object (meaningful sequences of words or sentences), an action (such as an assertion or a threat), a social practice (such as a lecture), or an interactional or communicative event or activity. The type of discourse targeted for analysis in this study is news discourse, which is defined by van Dijk (1988: 4) as a “type of text or discourse as it is expressed, used, or made public in news media or public information carriers such as TV, radio, and the newspaper”.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is described by Fairclough (2001) as both a theory and a method, which in turn has been used by many researchers following a wide range of analytical approaches and methods. Meyer (2001: 14) states that CDA “must not be understood as a single method but rather as an approach, which constitutes itself at different levels”. Fairclough (2003: 6) claims that CDA “can in fact draw upon a wide range of approaches to analysing text”. The purpose of CDA is “analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, power and control as manifested in language” (Wodak, 2011: 53). Generally, one of the major assertions on which the diverse framework of CDA is based is that discourse is ideological; therefore, this approach aims to reveal and examine hidden ideologies.

This study draws upon Fairclough’s (1995) approach to CDA, which is known as the social theory of discourse. This approach incorporates social context in its framework, “viewing language use as a form of social practice in a dialectal relationship with other social factors” (Heberle, 2000: 122). Fairclough’s model

comprises three analytical parts: analysis of text, analysis of discourse practice, and analysis of social practice. According to Fairclough, analysis at the textual level involves the use of Halliday's (1994) systemic functional linguistics with its three domains of ideational, interpersonal, and textual analysis. The second part is the analysis of discourse practice through which texts are produced and received; it is concerned with how people interpret and reproduce or transform texts (Heberle, 2000). The third part involves a contextual analysis of different levels of society: economic, political, and cultural. The current study adopts Fairclough's approach with a special focus on providing a textual analysis of the data in hand.

The current study combines the tools of CL and the analytical framework of CDA, following a corpus-based approach to CDA. According to Baker et al. (2013), corpus linguistics is the study of assembled samples of language using computer software that makes it possible to accurately perform quick and complex calculations based on frequency information associated with statistical tests. Such calculations can present the data in ways that make it easier for analysts to identify linguistic patterns. This synergy of CDA and CL resulted in what has been called corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) (Baker et al., 2008; Partington, 2004). Nisco (2016: 57) states that "corpus-based techniques do make it easy to understand how language varies in connection to different purposes in different situations.". Corpus-based discourse analysis can also raise new research questions, remove bias, and identify linguistic norms and outliers (Baker, 2006).

3. Methodology

The data targeted for analysis in this paper consist of two corpora of online hard news reports expressing the newspapers' portrayals of the issue and related events. The corpus under investigation is considered a specialized one, compiled to investigate the way the issue of the GERD and the events connected to it are

differently depicted in Egyptian and Ethiopian newspapers. According to Baker (2006: 26), a specialized corpus would be used in order to study aspects of a particular variety or genre of language, for example, the language of newspapers.

The two corpora collected for this study include a total number of 2,655 news articles comprising more than one million running words (1,118,844). The news articles included in the two corpora were published within the period of seven years from 2013 to 2020. The online search database Factiva was used to retrieve the data for building the two corpora using two query search items, namely, '*The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam*' and '*the GERD*'. The retrieved data were automatically refined using the tools of the search engine, which allow for downloading only hard news reports and eliminating duplicated articles.

The Egyptian corpus was drawn from three online news websites that represent both state-owned and private newspapers: Ahramonline, Egypt Independent and Daily News Egypt. The Ethiopian corpus was built using mainly five Ethiopian news websites that also represent both state-owned and private newspapers: The Reporter, The Ethiopian Herald, Walta Info, Ethiopian News Agency and Addisstandard. The following table shows the size of the two corpora under investigation.

Table 1: The Size of the Egyptian and Ethiopian Corpora

Corpus	Number of Articles	Number of Words
Egyptian corpus	1,347	537,780
Ethiopian corpus	1,308	581,064
Total	2,655	1,118,844

The corpus-based analysis was conducted following the major CL methods, namely, frequency and keyword analysis. The analysis of the most salient keywords included cluster, concordance, and collocational analysis. Two corpus analysis software programs were used for the corpus-based analysis: Wordsmith Tools (Scott,

2020) and Wmatrix (Rayson, 2003) software. The qualitative analysis was based on Fairclough's (1995) approach to textual analysis through identifying the recurrent themes and semantic domains.

Extracting and analyzing keywords is one of the most important frequency-based concepts in the field of corpus linguistics. According to McEnery and Baker (2015: 2), "keywords are words which are more frequent than expected in one corpus when compared against a second corpus which often stands as a 'reference'". Therefore, to generate a list of keywords, the first step is to choose a reference corpus, which is usually defined as a larger general corpus of different genres and discourse types (Baker, 2006). However, since the current study focuses on a contrastive analysis of two specialized news corpora that cover a specific genre of discourse, we have decided to compare the two corpora under investigation against each other, using each corpus both as a target and as a reference for the other.

A concordance, as Baker (2006: 71) puts it, is "simply a list of all of the occurrences of a particular search term in a corpus, [...] usually a few words to the left and right of the search term". "A concordance presents the analyst with instances of a word or cluster in its immediate co-text" (Baker et al., 2008: 279). Accordingly, it "combines aspects of quantitative and qualitative analyses together" (Baker, 2010: 107).

The value of using keywords as a starting point for further analysis is asserted by Baker (2006) who points out that keywords act as "signposts to the underlying discourses". Hence, by extracting keywords and then comparing them across the two corpora under scrutiny, these keywords can be used to guide the analysis. Therefore, following the extraction and refining of keywords, we have categorized the full list of keywords generated from each corpus into groups that construct particular broad topics and semantic subdomains to address the study's first research question of

finding out the similarities and differences between the two corpora in terms of themes and semantic fields.

The categorization process was done in two steps: one pinpointing the broad recurrent themes and the second identifying the related semantic subdomains. For the first step, we thoroughly examined each list of the highest-ranking keywords extracted by Wordsmith Tools to manually categorize them on an ad hoc basis according to their contextual meaning following Baker's (2004) method of grouping keywords into "conceptual categories". Therefore, the two full lists of keywords were classified into the various major themes that run through each corpus and these major themes and their relevant subdomains were analyzed.

The second step of categorizing was to identify the semantic domains related to each major theme. This process of semantic tagging is done automatically. For this purpose, we made use of Rayson's (2003) Wmatrix software which is a web-based application for corpus analysis and comparison that provides automatic semantic analysis of texts. Wmatrix categorizes the corpus texts uploaded by the users into semantic fields using its USAS tagger tool. After uploading the corpus, the software requires a reference corpus to extract the frequent words and group them. Therefore, we used each of our two corpora as a reference for the other one. This process has generated a large number of semantic categories because Wmatrix identifies even low-frequency words and categorizes them. Thus, we only considered the domains relevant to the major themes.

4. Analysis and Discussion

The data analysis in this section covers the identification of the top 20 statistically salient keywords extracted from each corpus and an exploration of the recurrent themes and semantic fields that support each theme. The analysis is divided into two main sections covering the Egyptian and Ethiopian corpora.

4.1 Egyptian News Corpus

This section provides a corpus-based critical discourse analysis of the representation of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam in the Egyptian online news reports. It aims to critically examine the ideologically-loaded discourse on the GERD in terms of the lexical choices and the recurrent semantic macrostructures. To address the study's two research questions, the analysis focuses on the thematic analysis and the frequency-based aspects of the corpus: keywords, and concordances.

To answer the study's first research question, we utilized the Keyword tool of Scott's (2020) Wordsmith Tools software to extract a list of the top 20 statistically salient keywords in the Egyptian corpus by comparing it to the Ethiopian corpus as a reference. The keywords are derived and ordered based on the log-likelihood statistical measurement that is carried out automatically by the application. The list was then refined by excluding the grammatical words and other lexical items related to the nature of news reporting discourse, such as names of days and newspapers. The final list comprises the top 20 salient keywords.

Table 2: Top 20 Salient Keywords in the Egyptian Corpus

No.	Keyword	Freq.	Log_L
1	negotiations	2,178	1,093.48
2	Sisi	1,290	983.08
3	Egypt's	1,158	938.24
4	Shoukry	838	908.97
5	Egyptian	2,217	895.98
6	talks	1,788	809.49
7	Cairo	1,093	663.78
8	meetings	647	405.68
9	fears	442	386.73
10	Sudanese	1,046	359.24
11	reach	807	338.47
12	binding	405	331.86
13	discuss	587	331.42
14	crisis	369	324.73

15	AU	633	279.33
16	affect	413	257.14
17	disputed	217	254.20
18	operating	371	224.85
19	interests	559	201.88
20	Dam's	251	189.99

Table 2 shows a list of the top 20 keywords ordered according to their statistical significance using the log-likelihood score. The list of keywords reveals a great deal about the content of the corpus in terms of ‘aboutness’. Some words refer to the key social actors or participants and key locations in the representations of the events related to the issue of the GERD, such as *Sisi, Shoukry, Egyptian, Sudanese, AU and Egypt*. The biggest number of keywords emphasizes the recurrent theme of ‘diplomacy and no harm’, such as *negotiation, talks, and meetings*. A significant number of keywords refer to the theme of ‘concerns and threat’ which is depicted by words such as *fears, crisis, affect, and interests*. Finally, some keywords such as *dam's, disputed* and *operating* describe the GERD itself and refer directly to the contexts related to it. These contexts include, for example, describing the technical issues related to the operating and filling of the dam’s reservoir. The semantic and thematic categories represented by the top keywords are so similar to the ones that the frequency list provided earlier in Table 2. However, a few new lexical items, which are not included in the frequency list, cropped up in the list of keywords, such as the proper name ‘*AU*’ (African Union) and the action verbs ‘*discuss*’ and ‘*affect*’.

To address the study’s second research question, we conduct a corpus-based CDA analysis of the statistically significant keywords and the high-frequency words extracted from the Egyptian corpus in terms of their thematic categories. Generally speaking, topics or themes, according to van Dijk (1991: 71), are considered an important aspect of news reports since topics “represent what

news-makers construe to be the most important information about a news event”.

Following Baker’s (2004) method of grouping keywords into “conceptual categories” based on their contextual meanings, the full list of keywords, retrieved from the corpus using Wordsmith Tools (Scott, 2020) software, is thoroughly examined to manually group them into themes. Accordingly, we have categorized the keywords on an ad hoc basis into three broad themes that conform to the context of our study, namely, ‘concerns and threat’, ‘diplomacy’, and ‘hegemony and historical rights’.

In order to identify the most recurrent semantic subdomains in the two corpora under examination, the tagging process is automatically done using Wmatrix (Rayson, 2003) software, and then the domains are ordered according to their log-likelihood statistical score. Each semantic field is represented by some frequent words that are automatically extracted. Table 3 presents the list of the major themes and semantic subdomains with information about their frequency of occurrence and statistical saliency.

Table 3: The Major Themes and Semantic Domain in the Egyptian Corpus

Major Themes	Semantic Fields	O.Freq. EGY	R.Freq. EGY	O.Freq. EIH	R.Freq. EIH	Log_L
Concerns and Threat	Unilateral	439	0.09	105	0.02	246.12
	Worry	1108	0.22	550	0.10	235.51
	Fear and Shock	519	0.10	182	0.03	195.06
	Unlikely	403	0.08	177	0.03	108.13
	Failure	511	0.10	323	0.06	57.95
	Non-participating	96	0.02	35	0.01	34.27
	Quantities: little	728	0.14	566	0.10	34.24
	Cause & Effect/Connection	4298	0.86	4283	0.79	13.11
	Difficult	811	0.16	800	0.15	3.14
	Avoiding	212	0.04	194	0.04	2.71
Diplomacy and	Communicative	12477	2.48	9369	1.73	706.33

no Harm	Agreement/Comparing: similar	4319	.86	2572	0.47	587.89
	Paper document and Writing	2518	0.50	2019	0.37	98.6
	Reciprocal	1234	0.25	995	0.18	46.64
	No power	522	0.10	404	0.07	25.18
Hegemony and Historical Rights	Law and Order	2079	0.41	1594	0.29	105.58
	Unwanted	349	0.08	241	0.04	49.55
	General Ethics	294	0.06	203	0.04	24.25
	Time: Old	184	0.04	152	0.03	5.91
	Allowed	1198	0.24	1180	0.22	4.8

The table shows that the theme of ‘concerns and threat’ comprises the biggest number of semantic subcategories, while the theme of ‘diplomacy’ includes two semantic fields with the highest statistical significance, namely, ‘communicative’ (LL. score of 706.3) and ‘agreement, comparing: similar’ (LL. score of 587.89).

Concerns and Threat

The first theme that recurrently runs through the Egyptian online news media coverage of the GERD is that of ‘concerns and threat’. The keywords categorized under this theme include five of the top 20 keywords in the Egyptian corpus. The high statistically significant value of the keywords related to this theme in the corpus is not an accident. The keywords reflecting this theme show the type of topics that recur in the coverage of the issue of building the GERD by the Egyptian newspapers. There are also several recurrent semantic subdomains, automatically extracted from the corpus, which support this theme.

The semantic subcategories connected to the theme of ‘concerns and threat’ are ‘unilateral’ ‘worry’, ‘unlikely’, ‘fear and shock’, ‘failure’, ‘non-participating’, ‘difficult’, ‘avoiding’, and ‘quantities: little’. The thematic focus here is on how the GERD as a whole is being constructed in the Egyptian news media as a crisis at multiple levels and a threat to Egypt’s national security. This theme also points out the idea of being concerned about the possible negative effects of the dam on Egypt in relation to the water supply.

Concerns also centre upon other issues in contention between the two countries, including the way the project is being unilaterally built and operated by Ethiopia, the idea of not involving Egypt in the technical studies on the project, and the notion of not reaching an agreement with Ethiopia on the time frame for the filling of the dam reservoir.

Many keywords extracted from the Egyptian corpus represent this theme, such as the words *crisis* (369 occurrences) and *fear* (442 occurrences) which indicate that the dominant emerging thought in the Egyptian news coverage is to depict the GERD project on the whole as a national crisis leading the entire country to panic around the idea of the building of the dam and its negative impact on Egypt. Other keywords, such as *affect* (413 occurrences) and *interests* (559 occurrences), refer to the reasons behind these concerns, pointing out that these are directly related to protecting the country's interests regarding the supply of Nile waters. The two modifiers *disputed* and *negatively* are used to define both the dam itself, the relationship between the riparian countries and the dam's potential effects. Examining the concordances of the adjective *disputed* (217 occurrences) shows that it either directly describes the dam issue in general or refers to different points of disagreement between the two countries, which are mainly related to technical issues. The adverb *negatively* (257 occurrences) is mostly used as a modifier to the verb 'affect' to describe the impact of the dam on Egypt's interests with frequent reference to Egypt's historic share of the Nile. The following concordance lines show some situational contexts of using the keyword 'crisis', which is most representative of the theme of 'concerns and threat', in the Egyptian corpus.

Figure 1: Concordances of the Keyword ‘Crisis’ in the Egyptian Corpus

1	the differences between Egypt and Ethiopia regarding the	Renaissance Dam crisis,	in order to maintain Egyptian rights
2	Monday evening that the negotiations in Addis Ababa over the	Renaissance Dam crisis	between Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan
3	with the role the Egyptian media played in exacerbating the	Renaissance Dam crisis,	Al-Ahram arabic news website
4	Irrigation minister: Most likely will internationalize	Renaissance Dam crisis	Al-Masry Al-Youm 13 February
5	Healy Mariam Dessalines said that filing a complaint with the	Renaissance Dam crisis	to the UN Security Council was a
6	is possible as talks are the best way to find a solution for the	Renaissance Dam crisis,	said Water Resources Minister
7	resume negotiations with Ethiopia to reach a solution for the	Renaissance Dam crisis.	He also added that his visit to
8	, adding that Fahmy would discuss on Tuesday the Ethiopian	Renaissance Dam crisis	with the US Secretary of State John
9	Official: Ethiopia ready to discuss Egypt's proposals on	Renaissance Dam crisis	Al-Masry Al-Youm 22 May 2014
10	of the international committee of experts assigned to solve the	Renaissance Dam crisis.	Commenting on reports saying that
11	in Algeria. The meeting dealt with bilateral relations and the	Renaissance Dam crisis,	Foreign Ministry spokesperson Badr
12	Ethiopian ambassador: Ethiopia serious about	Renaissance Dam crisis	negotiations Al-Masry Al-Youm 10
13	2014 Ethiopia is serious about negotiating with Egypt on the	Renaissance Dam crisis	and wants to look ast previous failed
14	resume next Monday three-party negotiations on the Ethiopian	Renaissance Dam crisis	in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum.
15	Minister: 80% of sticking points over	Renaissance Dam crisis	solved Al-Masry Al-Youm 26 August
16	resumed the fourth round of negotiations on the Ethiopian	Renaissance Dam crisis	currently being held in the Sudanese
17	between Cairo and the Nile Basin countries to solve the	Renaissance Dam crisis.	He also expressed his delight with
18	Shokry announced on Saturday that the negotiations on the	Renaissance Dam crisis,	conducted during his visit to
19	in Daqahleya to discuss pressing issues with him, including the	Renaissance Dam crisis	with Ethiopia, according to Okasha.
20	Sisi to discuss	Renaissance Dam crisis	with Ethiopian PM in December
21	program would also consider the current Grand Ethiopian	Renaissance Dam crisis	as a ‘Red line’ that is closely related

The concordance lines above show that the node crisis appears with the name ‘Renaissance Dam’ in several co-texts that refer to different notions, such as “differences between Egypt and Ethiopia” (line 1), “negotiations” (lines 2, 7, 13, 14, 16 and 18), “solution for the Renaissance Dam crisis” (line 6 and 7), and “bilateral relations and the Renaissance Dam crisis” (line 11). These co-texts indicate that the Egyptian news media depict the issue as a controversial one, with a special focus on “negotiations” being the diplomatic path to resolve it. The “Renaissance Dam crisis” is also represented as a “red line” (line 21), which indicates the fact that the issue of the GERD is a matter of national security for Egypt. References to some countries and organizations such as “Nile Basin Countries”, “Sudan”, “African Union”, “Security Council”, and “Washington” appear in the contexts of the pattern *Renaissance Dam crisis*. The occurrences of these references reveal Egypt’s concerns over the dam crisis and how Egypt tries to “internationalize the Renaissance Dam crisis” (line 4).

The theme of *concerns and threat* is also manifested through the direct reference to the idea of Egypt's total dependence on the Nile for its water supply. This is evident by using words, such as *fresh, rely, preserve, diminish, storage, freshwater, and scarcity*. The use of these words implies that the Egyptian media narratives on the issue construct a victim role, trying to depict Egypt as the side whose interests are being harmed. Also, referring recurrently to the idea of water shortage is a way of legitimizing Egypt's concerns. Examining the contexts of using the words *overpopulation* and *groundwater* show that Egypt is concerned about cutting down the Nile water supplies because the other options, such as groundwater, cannot solve the problem, especially, in the light of Egypt's overpopulation. These references are also another way of justifying the whole idea of how the dam is seen as a crisis in Egypt.

Diplomacy and no Harm

The second main theme underpinning the Egyptian news media coverage of the GERD is *diplomacy and no harm*. Many of the keywords in the Egyptian corpus refer to Egypt's diplomatic approach to the issue to reach an agreement that safeguards Egypt's interests. The main diplomatic activities referred to in the corpus are related to reaching an agreement on the points of contention between the two countries, such as the filling and operating of the dam, the technical and legal issues associated with the construction process and the evaluation of the potential effects of the dam. The fact that a big number of the salient keywords in the corpus occur under this theme indicates that emphasizing Egypt's intentions and political will to find a peaceful solution to the conflict is given due consideration in the Egyptian news coverage.

Several keywords extracted from the Egyptian corpus are classified under this theme, such as *negotiations* (2178 occurrences), *meetings* (647 occurrences) and *talks* (1788 occurrences). These surprisingly reveal that despite the prevalent references to the topics of fear, panic, crisis and threat in the Egyptian news coverage of the

issue, the biggest number of keywords in the Egyptian corpus represents the theme of the diplomatic path attempting to influence the other party involved in the dispute through dialogue, negotiations, and various political measures other than violence or war. Moreover, another interesting fact is that the keyword 'negotiations' is the highest statistically ranking keyword (log-likelihood score of 1,093.48) and one of the highest frequency words in the Egyptian corpus (total frequency of 2,178 occurrences). The verbs *discuss*, *discussed*, *reach* and *resume* and the noun *keenness* reflect the self-positive representation of Egypt as being committed to finding a peaceful solution despite the difficulties in the process of negotiations. The words *seeking* and the modifier *balanced* are used in contexts that describe Egypt's assertion that any negotiation process should be a balanced one that protects Egypt's interests.

The central idea associated with the topic of diplomacy is Egypt's adherence to the principle of 'causing no harm' as being the anchor of the negotiation. Interestingly, as noted by the findings of Hailemichael's (2019) study, the idea of causing no harm at all comes as a counterpart to the notion of 'no significant harm' reiterated by the Ethiopian media, which refers to Ethiopia's claims that the GERD will have no significant impact on the lower riparian countries. The reference to the idea of 'no significant harm' implies that Ethiopia admits that "there could be a tolerable harm, which is not significant" (Hailemichael, 2019: 53). Although Ethiopia asserts that these claims are factual statements, Egypt does not recognize Ethiopia's claim there would be 'no significant harm'. Even though Egypt acknowledges, as part of its diplomatic practices, that Ethiopia also has a right to use the Nile for its development, Egypt keeps pushing for serious negotiations on the filling and operation of the dam to maintain its current share of the water, stating that any harm caused to Egypt by the Ethiopian Nile dam is unacceptable. Figure 2 below shows some concordance lines of the node

‘negotiations’ which is the most representative keyword of the theme of ‘diplomacy’.

Figure 2: Concordances of the Keyword ‘Negotiations’ in the Egyptian Corpus

1	impacted. Both Egypt and Ethiopia have engaged in	negotiations on the	dam but to no avail, with
2	impacted. Both Egypt and Ethiopia have engaged in	negotiations on the	dam to no avail, with Ethiopia
3	on Ethiopia dam Egypt underlines that it is open to	negotiations on the	Nile water crisis spurred by
4	August at the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, to resume	negotiations on the	Renaissance Dam issue. Talks
5	and Sudan will resume next Monday three-party	negotiations on the	Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
6	use of its water, beside the resumption of three-party	negotiations on the	crisis. The two sides agreed to
7	, Sudan and Ethiopia resumed the fourth round of	negotiations on the	Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
8	Sameh Shokry announced on Saturday that the	negotiations on the	Renaissance Dam crisis,
9	to the foreign ministry statement. The ninth round of	negotiations on the	dam was held in Cairo in
10	from the three countries, was formed to conduct	negotiations on the	contested Ethiopian Grand
11	Sudan have created a tripartite committee to conduct	negotiations on the	dam, a source of concern for

The most notable point in the concordances above is connecting the idea of negotiation with the negative depiction of the GERD as a source of conflict and crisis. This is evident in the following lines: “negotiations on the Nile water crisis” (line 3), “negotiations on the crisis” (line 6), “negotiations on the Renaissance Dam crisis” (line 8), and “negotiations on the contested Ethiopian Grand” (line 10). This representation is enhanced by the lexical choices of words such as “to no avail” (lines 1 and 2) and “contested” in line 10, which refer to the negative outcome of the negotiations.

Hegemony and Historical Rights

One of the most important themes recurrently occurring in the Egyptian corpus is the one referring to Egypt’s legitimate domination over the Nile. Throughout the course of actions related to the issue of constructing the GERD, Egypt has been holding on to the claim that no other country has the right to construct water projects without Egypt’s approval. This political standpoint was explicitly depicted in the news media to legitimize Egypt’s objections to the dam project since its announcement in 2011. This assertion is made by Egypt as part of the argument that it has

'historic rights' on the Nile waters. The theme of *hegemony and historical rights* is manifested in the Egyptian corpus through different propositions made by the Egyptian news outlets. First, Egypt's rightful share in the Nile is represented in the news media as being protected by the water agreements of 1929 and 1959, which in turn conform with the principles of international law. Second, any attempt to affect Egypt's share of Nile water is represented in the news media as a threat to the country's national security. Accordingly, the media refer repeatedly to the affirmation made by Egyptian politicians that Egypt will take any necessary measures to protect this share. Egypt is still represented in the media as the principal hegemon that holds the upper hand in the Nile basin. Finally, the media stress the depiction of Egypt's insistence on the idea that any agreement with Ethiopia has to be a legally binding one that cannot be reconsidered later. Egypt's hegemonic practices over the Nile are realized by the use of certain keywords that frame Ethiopia's attempt to build the GERD as a violation of Egypt's unquestionable rights.

Other keywords occur under this theme, including the words *quota* (70 occurrences), *preserve* (81 occurrences), *shares* (69 occurrences), *guarantees* (56 occurrences) and *preserving* (36 occurrences). These words are used in reference to retaining the historic Nile water share that Egypt has had access to since the 1959 agreement. These words also reflect the Egyptian government's position which assures that Egypt's power to veto any water projects on the Nile is still effective. The keywords *binding* (405 occurrences), which is one of the top 20 highest-salient keywords, *legally* (149 occurrences) and *rules* (329 occurrences) refer to the Egyptian keenness on maintaining a legally hegemonic position in the negotiations with Ethiopia. The contexts of these keywords also reflect the negative representation of Ethiopia as the side that tries to challenge Egyptian hydro-hegemony.

4.2 Ethiopian News Corpus

The main purpose of this section is to identify the way the GERD is constructed in the Ethiopian news coverage by revealing the ideological implications embedded in the lexical choices and the semantic structures occurring in the news reports. This section provides a thorough analysis of the thematic categories based on the keywords extracted from the Ethiopian corpus. It addresses the study's first research question. According to Baker (2006: 125), keyword lists are useful "in suggesting lexical items that could warrant further examination". The section then examines the list of the highest-ranking keywords extracted from the Ethiopian corpus. Lexical analysis of the statistically significant words in a corpus provides indications about the focus and the hidden ideological implications in that corpus. Accordingly, examining keywords is important since it presents a helpful indication of the text producers' stance towards a particular issue especially if it was further examined and analyzed with the aid of concordance and collocation tools (Haider, 2017: 21). Table 4 shows the list of the top 20 salient keywords with information about their frequency of occurrence and the measure of saliency based on the log-likelihood statistical test.

Table 4: Top 20 Statistically Salient Keywords in the Ethiopian Corpus

No.	Keyword	Freq.	Log_L
1	power	1,346	638.23
2	public	888	635.09
3	Ethiopians	674	481.25
4	riparian	427	382.05
5	diaspora	271	319.16
6	energy	681	302.79
7	utilization	252	301.96
8	bond	265	281.22
9	nation	293	224.90
10	growth	280	220.25
11	negotiation	561	212.49

12	Abay	145	171.76
13	Gedu	266	169.84
14	business	207	168.62
15	works	195	162.02
16	activities	238	154.03
17	discussion	287	152.80
18	contribution	149	139.36
19	resource	187	136.60
20	natural	205	135.75

An examination of the list above reveals that they reflect the major recurrent themes in the Ethiopian corpus. Firstly, a set of keywords in the list are related to the theme of ‘economic growth and right to development’, namely, the words *power*, *energy*, *nation*, *growth*, and *business*. These words refer directly to the idea of the potential outcomes of the GERD project as perceived by the Ethiopian side. Next, some lexical items emphasize the topic of ‘unity and nationalism’, including *public*, *Ethiopians*, *diaspora*, *bond* and *contribution*, which convey the idea of enhancing the efforts to mobilize all the domestic resources towards the goal of completing the dam. The theme of ‘equitable share’ is represented by three keywords: *utilization*, *natural* and *resources*, and *Abay* (i.e., the name the Ethiopians give to the Nile). These words refer to Ethiopia’s counter-hegemonic actions to recognize its sovereignty and rights regarding the fair utilization of Nile water. Finally, the two words *negotiation* and *discussion* manifest the theme of ‘diplomacy’. Investigating the concordance lines of the two words *works* and *activities* in the Ethiopian corpus reveals that they are associated with various semantic fields, such as construction works, diplomacy works, diplomatic activities, political activities, and economic activities.

This section provides an answer to the study’s first research question. Identifying the recurrent themes in a corpus provides a useful summary of the most important concepts in that corpus

(Baker, 2004). With regard to studying news discourse, frequent items reveal the lexical choices made by journalists, which according to Stubbs (1996), express an ideological position. This is also argued by Baker (2006: 48), stating that when people make one linguistic choice over another, that reveals something about their intentions, whether conscious or not.

Accordingly, it is important to study the recurrent topics in the two corpora being analyzed, which represent the two conflicting countries, in order to reveal the similarities and differences in terms of the ideological representation of the issue of the GERD. According to van Dijk (2011: 430) “it is true that the discourse of group members may typically be influenced by the ideology of the group, but this always depends on the context”. Thus, the first step in examining the ideological implications of the high-frequency words and keywords in the Ethiopian corpus is exploring their contextual meanings in terms of how they manifest certain thematic frames which reflect the different aspects of the issue and reveal each country’s position.

The main thematic categories are manually grouped based on the keywords’ contextual meanings and their relevance to the focus of the current study. The keywords are grouped on an ad hoc basis into the following four major themes: ‘economic growth and right to development’, ‘counter-hegemony and equitable share’, ‘nationalism and unity’ and ‘diplomacy and no significant harm’. Each theme is manifested in several lexical items from the full list of keywords extracted from the corpus. In addition to the broad thematic categories, the semantic subdomains related to each theme will be identified and investigated. These semantic fields are automatically generated by uploading the Ethiopian corpus files to Wmatrix (Rayson, 2003) software and comparing it to the Egyptian corpus as a reference. Table 5 shows the list of the major themes and semantic fields associated with them, ordered by their keyness score.

Table 5: The Major Themes and Semantic Domain in the Ethiopian Corpus

Major Themes	Semantic Fields	O.Freq. Egyptian corpus	R.Freq. Egyptian corpus	O.Freq. Ethiopian corpus	R.Freq. Ethiopian corpus	Log_L
Economic Growth and Right to Development	Business: Generally	2348	0.43	1054	0.21	412.88
	Industry	557	0.10	90	0.02	341.04
	Electricity	1166	0.22	447	0.09	280.59
	Work and employment	1405	0.26	695	0.14	194.73
	Evaluation: Good	1686	0.31	901	0.18	186.96
	Helping	4636	0.86	3221	0.64	161.48
	Cheap	689	0.13	301	0.06	128.61
	Money: lack	282	0.05	93	0.02	86.17
Nationalism and Unity	Belonging to a group	4970	0.92	2284	0.45	828.10
	Money generally	1295	0.24	242	0.05	715.74
	Money and pay	1640	0.30	575	0.11	457.41
	People	1646	0.30	764	0.15	267.88
	Self-reliance	266	0.05	142	0.03	29.59
Counter-Hegemony and Equitable Share	Using	1545	0.29	449	0.09	558.05
	In Power	5654	1.04	3626	0.72	308.23
	Unethical	282	0.05	82	0.02	101.79
	Sensible	187	0.03	52	0.01	71.19
	Warfare	1121	0.21	697	0.14	70.66
	Power: organizing	143	0.03	38	0.01	57.30
	Ethical	626	0.12	379	0.08	44.28
	Bravery	41	0.01	5	0.00	29.52
	Time: Past	1523	0.28	1159	0.23	26.10
Diplomacy and No Significant Harm	Evaluation: True	510	0.09	203	0.04	114.67
	Success	1120	0.21	729	0.15	56.68
	Evaluation: False	178	0.03	71	0.01	39.87

Economic Growth and Right to Development

While the major recurrent topics in the Egyptian news discourse on the GERD mainly revolve around the concerns over the dam's impact and the threat to Egypt's national security, the discourse of the Ethiopian news coverage of the issue focuses on the idea of the dam project being Ethiopia's hope for 'economic growth and right to development'. The Ethiopian news media has repeatedly depicted the direct relationship between the GERD project and the overall development of the country at all levels, particularly, in the fields of economic growth and fighting poverty. A large number of keywords extracted from the Ethiopian corpus refer to this theme.

The theme is also supported by some semantic subdomains which manifest the different facets of development.

The theme embodies the most recurrent topic in the Ethiopian corpus; the GERD is mostly represented in contexts that refer to the natural right of the people of Ethiopia to utilize the country's resources to bring about development. The major tendency in the Ethiopian media narratives on the GERD is to point out the idea that the people of Ethiopia have been deprived for a very long time of their right to develop, while Egypt and Sudan have unjustly claimed exclusive rights on the Nile. This theme includes the subcategories of 'business: general', 'industry', 'electricity', 'work and employment', 'money: lack', 'evaluation: good', 'helping' and 'cheap'.

The most noticeable fact concerning the keywords categorized under this theme is the occurrence of five of the top 20 keywords in the Ethiopian corpus, namely, *power*, *electric*, *energy*, *growth* and *business*. Additionally, the word *power* is the most frequent (1,346 occurrences) and the highest statistically ranking keyword (637.82 log-likelihood score) in the Ethiopian corpus. Examining the contexts of this word in the corpus reveals that it is mostly used in reference to the semantic meaning of the electric power generated from the GERD, which in turn is considered the most vital factor in economic development. The words *electric* (401 occurrences), *energy* (681 occurrences), *wind* (105 occurrences) and *generating* (172 occurrences) are used in similar contexts which refer to the idea of generating different kinds of power as the direct outcome of the dam. The following concordance lines show examples of using the word 'power' which is significantly indicative of this theme.

Figure 3: Concordances of the Keyword ‘Power’ in the Ethiopian Corpus

1	Nile River. Cairo says the Ethiopian dam project, set to	become Africa’s	largest, could diminish its share of Nile
2	the rivers that run through its rugged highlands, to	become Africa’s	leading power exporter. Centerpiece to
3	of the river to make way for the \$4.7 billion dam that will	become Africa’s	biggest hydropower plant. Ethiopia said
4	the rivers that run through its rugged highlands and to	become Africa’s	leading power exporter. Now 21
5	(MW) capacity and is central to Ethiopia’s plans to	become Africa’s	leading exporter of power. Cairo argues
6	the GERD and sugar industries. The GERD, set to	become Africa’s	largest hydro power dam with a
7	\$4 billion dam to be the centerpiece of Ethiopia’s bid to	become Africa’s	biggest power exporter, generating

The concordances above reflect the theme of ‘economic growth’ by the references to the idea of constructing the biggest power generation project in Africa to achieve socio-economic development. The keyword ‘power’ is pre-modified by some adjectives in the right concordance lines, such as *largest* (lines 1 and 6), *leading* (lines 2,4 and 5) and *biggest* (lines 3 and 7). The lexical choices employed here serve to enhance the description of the GERD as a massive project with huge potential in relation to power generation.

Counter-hegemony and Equitable Share

As opposed to the theme of ‘hegemony and historical rights’ recurrently appearing in the Egyptian news discourse on the GERD, the theme of ‘counter-hegemony and equitable share’ occurs very frequently, indeed the second most recurrent theme, in the Ethiopian media coverage of the issue. The topical focus here is the assertion that the country's overall development requires having the power to achieve it. This power relates to much more than just economic power; it also involves the political power that enables the country to impose hegemony over its natural resources for the well-being of society. Thus, Ethiopia challenges Egypt’s hegemony by claiming that it also has the right to control the Nile and demanding a fairer share of its water. That being the case, there is a need for the media to play a role in propagating those ideas.

The counter-hegemonic strategies depicted in the Ethiopian news reports centre around several arguments. First, the media

recurrently state the fact that the Blue Nile, which originates from Ethiopia where it is called the Abay River, belongs to all the riparian countries, so it is unfair that downstream countries should hold total control over its water supply. Accordingly, there are recurrent references in the media coverage to Ethiopia's legitimate right to development. Second, all attempts or proposals by Egypt to be involved in the operation of the dam are interpreted as a violation of Ethiopia's sovereignty. However, the most important assertion presented in the Ethiopian media concerning this theme is that Egypt's claims of the historical share of the Nile are no longer valid. This assertion is supported by the argument that Egypt's 'historical right' to Nile water is based on colonial-era agreements that were not signed by Ethiopia. Therefore, the recurring reference to the 'equitable share of the Nile' in the Ethiopian reports is ideological in the sense that it is employed to denounce Egypt's position and justify Ethiopia's stance.

This theme is supported by keywords like *utilization* (252 occurrences), *natural* (205 occurrences), *resource* (187 occurrences), and *equitable* (220). The examination of the contexts of these words reveals that they are mostly used in reference to the notion of the fair distribution of water resources among all the riparian countries. The occurrence of the word *Abay* in the Ethiopian corpus, which is one of the top 20 statistically significant keywords (with a log-likelihood score of 171.70) is ideological. This word refers to the name that Ethiopians give to the Nile; thus, this reference indicates that the Nile belongs to Ethiopia, and the Ethiopian people have the right to utilize it and challenge Egypt's domination of its flow. Another significant keyword categorized under this theme is the one referring to the battle of *Adwa*. This word refers to one of the most important Ethiopian historical events, in which Ethiopia defeated the Italian colonial army in 1896. The recurrent reference to this historical event in the Ethiopian corpus has its own ideological implications as it is employed by the

Ethiopian media to cite the notion of defeating the European power during the colonial era in order to indicate that Ethiopia's stance will not be affected by the colonial-era water agreements. Figure 4 shows some situational contexts of the node 'utilization' within its concordance lines.

Figure 4: Concordances of the Keyword Utilization in the Ethiopian Corpus

1	trust between the two countries and other riparian over the	utilization of the	Nile Waters. Dr. Tedros further
2	. This is partly because of the unfair distribution and	utilization of the	Nile waters among the basin countries.
3	the continuity and the change of the colonial status quo on	utilization of the	Nile waters. Besides, their foreign
4	which challenged Egyptian apartheid policy on the	utilization of the	Nile waters has lead to new political
5	Egyptian TV in 2010 clearly told the Egyptian public that	utilization of the	Nile waters is not a zero-sum game. It
6	panic. Hence, the idea of cooperation and equitable	utilization of the	Nile water is the only way forward. If
7	the two countries and with other riparian states over the	utilization of the	waters of the River Nile. Dr Tedros
8	that the country was keen to enhance development through	utilization of the	Nile waters without harming the
9	agreement that irreversibly corrects the age-long unjust	utilization of the	Nile River. According to the
10	the President side regarding Ethiopia's stand on equitable	utilization of the	Nile River, Alemayehu said.

The contexts in which the node 'utilization' occurs reveal the negative representation of Egypt as the side that is unjustly dominating the use of Nile waters. The word 'utilization' occurs in co-texts with several lexical items in the left concordance lines, which can be seen as examples of van Dijk' (1998) ideological strategies of negative other-representation. This negative representation of Egypt is supported by the lexical choices like using the words *unfair* (line 2), *colonial* (line 3), *apartheid* (line 4), *age-long* (line 9) and *unjust* (line 9). These lexical items connect Egypt directly to the notion of seeking illegitimate hegemony over the Nile.

Diplomacy and no Significant Harm

Another main theme that runs through the news media coverage of the GERD in the Ethiopian newspapers is '*diplomacy and no significant harm*'. Similar to the theme of 'diplomacy' recurring in the Egyptian corpus, many of the keywords in the Ethiopian corpus refer to Ethiopia's participation in negotiations to resolve the points of conflict between the three concerned parties. Some of the top keywords in the Ethiopian corpus represent this

theme, such as the words *negotiation* and *discussion* which have a very high statistical saliency and frequency of co-occurrence in the corpus. These words reflect the topical focus of constructing the Ethiopian position as having good intentions regarding the desire to resolve the dispute.

Additionally, this theme is directly connected to an important notion represented in the Ethiopian news: the principle of causing ‘no significant harm’ to the other downstream countries, especially Egypt. This principle is supported by the frequent assertions reiterated in the media that the dam will cause no significant harm while referring to Egypt’s claims of the negative impact of the GERD as being false allegations. This theme is supported by several semantic domains that include many frequently occurring words.

A detailed examination of the keywords grouped under this broad theme, such as *negotiations* (561 occurrences), *diplomacy* (165 occurrences), *discussion* (287 occurrences) and *relation* (143 occurrences), which also have a high statistical saliency, reveals that the topic of diplomatic efforts receives a lot of attention by the Ethiopian media. However, this topic is constructed in the media in association with frequent explicit references to Ethiopia’s strict determination on completing the building of the dam irrespective of reaching an agreement with Egypt. Further, the keywords representing this theme are used in the corpus in contexts referring to Ethiopia’s commitment to pursuing the diplomatic course only in line with maintaining its right to fair utilization of the Nile. Another prominent point involved in the theme of ‘diplomacy’ is the frequent references to the notion of causing no significant harm to Egypt or Sudan. This idea is asserted by Hailemichael (2019: 55) who argues that the notion of ‘no significant harm’ implies the existence of some harm; however, the “question remains on the definition or extent of the word ‘significant’ and how to define ‘harm’ as a significant harm”. The following concordance lines show some contexts of using the keyword ‘negotiation’ in the Ethiopian corpus.

Figure 5. Concordances of the Keyword ‘Negotiation’ in the Ethiopian Corpus

1	to take stock of the outcomes of the negotiation and continue the	negotiation on	outstanding issues, it was indicated. The negotiation
2	Ethiopia is of the conviction that the three countries can conclude the	negotiation on	the guidelines and rules with an outcome that
3	to compare the exchanged documents and focus on the upcoming	negotiation on	the outstanding differences. The negotiation will
4	in the region. The Congressional Black Caucus supporting peaceful	negotiation on	the implementation of GERD reiterated that it stands
5	. "As witnessed in many possible alternatives, the hurly-burly of the	negotiation on	the delaying of the reservoir filling is quite a comedy,
6	has been reached regarding the power purchase agreement and the	negotiation on	tariffs is handled by the countries' respective
7	not attend the meeting. Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt have been holding	negotiation on	the filling and operation of the Grand Ethiopian

The concordances above show some indications about how the Ethiopian news media depict the different aspects related to the diplomatic action and Ethiopia's standpoint regarding the negotiation process on the GERD. First, Ethiopia's position is positively represented as showing goodwill towards the other two concerned parties. This is evident in line 2 by using the words *conviction*, *conclude* and *outcome* and by using the word *peaceful* in line 4. These lines reflect this positive representation by emphasizing Ethiopia's commitment to the course of diplomatic negotiation. Second, some lines indicate that the main focus of the negotiations is on the technical issues related to the GERD, which is referred to by the words *filling* and *operation* in line (7).

Nationalism and Unity

Another recurrent theme that exemplifies a significant focus of the Ethiopian corpus is the theme of 'nationalism and unity'. This topic stresses the idea of mobilizing all members of the Ethiopian society: people, diaspora, private institutions and the public sector in support of the construction of the dam, emotionally and financially, to achieve the desired development of the country. In other words, the Ethiopian news media highlight the ideological idea of nationalism, which states that it is only through a solid national partnership that the GERD project can be completed and the country's development can be achieved. Several keywords and related semantic subdomains are classified under this broad theme.

The keywords included in this theme, such as *Ethiopians* (674 occurrences), *collected* (126 occurrences), *realization* (57 occurrences), *Diaspora* (271 occurrences) and *participation* (329

occurrences) are used in the Ethiopian corpus in contexts that promote collective emotions about the GERD to seek public support for legitimizing the Ethiopian position. The following examples are indicative of the contexts in which the node ‘Ethiopians’ is used.

Figure 6 Concordances the Keyword ‘Ethiopians’ in the Ethiopian Corpus

1	country, Fikerte underscored. Finally, Fikerte called up on	all Ethiopians to	persist their contribution for the support
2	use of resources. Not only has this big project brought	all Ethiopians to	a unified front, but it also helped
3	our national sovereignty and interest. As a result, we urge	all Ethiopians to	stand together on the issue of the Great
4	of “treating others as you want to be treated.” He called on	all Ethiopians to	stand united to defend their rights as the
5	one; and we are doing that. Wherever they are, I encourage	all Ethiopians to	stand together,” Obang said. There were
6	of the first year filling of the GERD, the CEO called on	all Ethiopians to	continue their unreserved support to the
7	of the first year filling of the GERD, the CEO called on	all Ethiopians to	continue their unreserved support to the
8	ADDIS ABABA – President Sahle-Work Zewde called on	all Ethiopians to	repeat the spirit of the victory of Adwa
9	of “treating others as you want to be treated.” He called on	all Ethiopians to	stand united to defend their rights as the
10	Dam since its commencement. The President called on	all Ethiopians to	sustain their support as the dam is a

The concordance lines above show that the keyword ‘Ethiopians’ is aggregated by using the quantifier ‘all’ to reinforce Ethiopians’ image as unified. In the right concordance line, the keyword occurs in various co-texts with words that enhance the positive self-representation of the unified Ethiopians. For example, the Ethiopians are associated with *contribution*, *support* (lines 1, 6, 7 and 10), *unified*, *together* (lines 3 and 5) and *united*. The lexical choices here refer to the importance of the notion of having a national unity and consensus in the Ethiopian stance on the issue of the GERD. Also, in line (3), the use of the inclusive pronoun ‘our’, according to Wodak et al. (2009), establishes the collective identity of the in-group and enhances the polarized self-positive representation of the Ethiopians as a people who should stand together to defend their rights.

5. Conclusion

The current study has provided a corpus-based critical discourse analysis of the Egyptian and Ethiopian media reporting on the issue of the GERD. The data analysis investigated the most statistically salient keywords in each corpus, which provided useful insights into the major topics running through the media coverage in

each of the two conflicting countries. Further, the thematic grouping of the full list of keywords extracted from each corpus reveals much about the most prominent semantic frames associated with the issue under investigation as represented in the news reporting.

The findings of the study show differences between the Egyptian and Ethiopian news discourse on the issue of the GERD in terms of the recurrent themes and the lexical choices represented by the salient keywords in each news corpus. The news coverage in each of the two conflicting countries has provided different interpretations of the issue of the GERD, which reflects each country's ideological and political stance.

First, the detailed examination of the Egyptian corpus has revealed the recurrent occurrence of three major themes: (1) concerns and threat, (2) diplomacy and no harm, and (3) hegemony and historical rights. Several other semantic fields have been identified as sub-categories that support the broad themes, for example, 'unilateral', 'worry', 'fear and shock', 'communicative', 'agreement', 'law and order' and 'participating'. On the other hand, the findings of the study have shown that four broad themes recur in the Ethiopian corpus: (1) economic growth and right to development, (2) counter-hegemony and equitable share, (3) nationalism and unity and (4) diplomacy and no significant harm. The major themes are also associated with different supporting subcategories of semantic fields that highlight the focus of the news reporting and reflect the political and ideological standpoint of Ethiopia.

Finally, the findings of the study have shown that both the Egyptian and Ethiopian corpora focused on the use of particular lexical choices to depict the dichotomy of 'us' vs 'them' which is reflected through the ideological self-positive and other-negative representations employed in the discourse of the news coverage in each country.

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ملخص

إن الخطاب الإعلامي بشكل عام والإخباري بشكل خاص يلعب دوراً هاماً في تشكيل الرأي العام عند تمثيل الأحداث الاجتماعية والمشاركين في تلك الأحداث. كما أن عرض الأحداث التي تتناول النزاعات الدولية على وجه الخصوص في التغطية الإخبارية يتأثر عادة باتجاهات المؤسسة الإخبارية وبالتوجه الأيديولوجي والموقف السياسي لأطراف الصراع. وتعتبر قضية بناء سد النهضة الإثيوبي من أهم المسائل التي تناولتها وسائل الاعلام بتغطية إخبارية مكثفه نظراً لما لهذا الموضوع من أهمية وكذلك نتيجة لحالة الجدل التي سببها ذلك الموضوع في مصر على وجه التحديد. وبالتالي فإن هذه الدراسة تتناول تحليل نقدي للتغطية الإخبارية لهذا الموضوع من خلال دراسة مقارنة للمقالات الإخبارية المنشورة على مواقع الصحف الإلكترونية في كل من مصر وأثيوبيا. تتبع الدراسة منهج التحليل النقدي للخطاب كأساس لتحليل البيانات. كما تستخدم الدراسة أدوات علم المخزونات اللغوية القائم على استخدام برامج تحليل البيانات الإلكترونية. في هذه الدراسة يهدف الباحثان لتحديد أوجه الشبه والاختلاف في تمثيل قضية سد النهضة والأحداث المرتبطة بها في الخطاب الإعلامي الإخباري المصري والإثيوبي خلال الفترة من ٢٠١٣-٢٠٢٠ وذلك من خلال تطبيق النظرية الاجتماعية للخطاب لنورمان فيركلف. حيث توفر تلك النظرية اطاراً عملياً للكشف عن العلاقة بين التحليل النصي للخطاب وعناصر الممارسة الاجتماعية. توصل الباحثان من خلال نتائج الدراسة الي تحديد المواضيع المختلفة التي تناولتها التغطية الإخبارية في كل بلد. حيث أظهرت النتائج تركيز المواقع الإخبارية المصرية على المواضيع المتعلقة بالتعبير عن المخاوف الجسيمة من تأثير السد على تدفق نهر النيل وانخفاض حصة مصر التاريخية من مياه النيل. كما تشير نتائج الدراسة الى تركيز التغطية الإخبارية في الصحف الإثيوبية على موضوع استغلال السد لتحقيق النمو الاقتصادي. كما أظهرت نتائج تحليل البيانات وجود أوجه اختلاف في استخدام المفردات والتراكيب اللغوية بين محتوى الصحف المصرية والإثيوبية في تناولها لمسألة سد النهضة.