

Words of Peace in the Speeches of the Egyptian President, Abdulfattah El-Sisi: A Corpus-Based Study

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Abstract—The present study aims primarily at investigating words of peace (lexemes of peace) in the formal speeches of the Egyptian president Abdulfattah El-Sisi in a two-year span of time, from 2018 to 2019. This paper attempts to shed light not only on the contextual use of the antonyms, war and peace, but also it underpins quantitative analysis through the current methods of corpus linguistics. As such, the researchers have deployed a corpus-based approach in collecting, encoding, and processing 30 presidential speeches over the stated period (23,411 words and 25,541 tokens in total). Further, semantic fields and collocational networks are identified and compared statistically. Results have shown a significant propensity of adopting peace, including its relevant collocation network, textually and therefore, ideationally, at the expense of war concept which in most cases surfaces euphemistically through the noun conflict. The president has not justified the action of war with an honorable cause or a valid reason. Such results, so far, have indicated a positive sociopolitical mindset the Egyptian president possesses and moreover, reveal national and international fair dealing on arising issues.

Keywords—Corpus-assisted discourse studies, critical discourse analysis, collocation network, corpus linguistics.

I. PROLEGOMENON

THE world has been witnessing major skirmishes between peace makers, on the one hand, and war agitators, on another. Though, an innate role of discourse analysis, as an interdisciplinary branch of studying language with a perspective of social contexts, is to identify the reality behind. Therefore, an essential scope of this sort of linguistic study lies in looking into leaders' speeches by which nations may rise for a roaring war or for a righteous renaissance. This paper, though, presents a critique of peace and war talks in Egyptian president El-Sisi's speeches through deploying corpus methods. By inspecting 30 speeches made by El-Sisi over two years (2018-2019), the researchers examine the presidential speeches in relation to the anonyms of *peace* and *war*. It is expected that this sort of textual investigation reveal the ideational implications which presently shape Egyptian ideologies against current political issues.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Critical Discourse Analysis

This linguistic subset of discourse analysis deals with texts

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that have social and political implications. Power in discourse according to Fairclough is related to how relations of power are enacted, exercised and maintained [1]. The author further supported his approach [2] arguing that “discourse as a political practice establishes, sustains and changes power relations”. He contended that there are constant endeavors on the part of the powerful to impose their ideologies [1]. Similarly, Tannen [3] remarked that “every utterance displays power”. Moreover, Fairclough has discussed the strategies of power used in discourse in his doctor/patient interviews as an example of the power used in a discourse which commonly occurs in everyday discourse [1]. In doctor/patient interviews, the doctor has the right to give directions, and orders. On the other hand, the patient has only to listen. Such a phenomenon was further interpreted by Negm [4], [5] in his elucidation on resisting power in discourse to even discursively impact literary texts. Although, Fairclough has revisited his approach to power in discourse [6] in which he included an explanation of its representing reality. Therefore, subsequent actions by decision makers are dialectally reasoned by critical discourse linguists. And thus, in our case, this study contributes to better revelation and realization of the political utterance in question.

B. Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS)

Adopting computational methods to measure language attributes has been widely acknowledged. It is the fact that corpus linguistics, the branch of linguistics that applies computerized procedures quantitatively to answer a specific research question(s) [7], contributes enormously to discourse studies. Patrington & Marchi summarized the roles of corpus methods in examining discourse in three empirical rewards:

The most obvious advantage of integrating corpus resources into discourse analysis is the potential it offers for analyzing large numbers of tokens of any particular discourse type, which enables the analyst to study typical discourse structures, typical ways of saying things, and typical messages, alongside the local structures, meanings, and messages available to traditional close reading. It also provides a way of locating potentially interesting linguistic features Additionally, it facilitates comparison among discourse types, highlighting the relative frequency and the possible different roles of the linguistic features they display, for instance, differences in collocational patterning or “profile” of the “same” lexical item or set of items [8].

They argued that CADS presents a major qualitative analysis beside the qualitative one represented at the “traditional non-corpus-assisted discourse analysis” [8]. Since corpus studies insightfully supports theoretical frameworks of

co-selection in lexical grammar, Hoey's priming notion and other linguistic features, CADS greatly subsidized many sociopolitical scrutinies, such as the Arab Spring waves in Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Yemen, which required a systemic quantitative approach to cover the discursive debates in spoken and written registers [8].

III. CORPUS DATA: DESIGN, COMPILATION, AND PROCESSING

Taking into account the standards set by Weisser [9] and Hardie & McEnergy [10] about corpus design, compilation and process, as well as the statistical implications suggested by Brezina [11] and Gries [12], the outcome corpus encompasses 30 speeches that render 25,541 tokens and 23,411 words were retrieved from the Egyptian state information service official website (<http://www.sis.gov.eg>) [13] covering the years 2018 and 2019. The speeches are placed in 30 files in XML format with proper metadata and data compilation. The extraction was carefully processed through fine-grained consecutive steps that ensure proper data processing at the web concordancer (the web software to use in data analysis), Sketch Engine [14], which provides more sophisticated inspection, such as semantic networks and word sketch differences.

The following procedures were taken to construct the study corpus to summarize in four phases:

- i. Having the research formally consented from the state information service for adopting the published speeches for the present research purposes,
- ii. Extracting El-Sisi speeches from the SIS website individually in XML files to build manually using Notepad++ open-source software [15],
- iii. Applying the tagging rules where the body includes the speech content with metadata placed in files' headers (see Table I below). The process ended with 30 XML files (UTF-8 encoded) that represent the 30 sampled speeches over two years (2018 & 2019),
- iv. Uploading the files to Sketch Engine's database, using the researchers' personally paid account to auto-tag, using the English Pen Treebank Tagset of Marcus et al. [16], and compile the corpus files properly. The tagging process aims at having the machine recognize the parts of speech (POS) attributed to the words entered in the corpus. See Tables I and II to learn more about the corpus metadata, its structures and general statistics.

TABLE I
CORPUS METADATA

Metadata	Examples of XML Tags Used
Speech Occasion	occasion="Statement to Islamic Summit"
Speech Year	year="2019"
Speech Month	month="May"

Throughout the word distribution represented in Table II above, the Egyptian president used 23,411 running words in 30 different speech with an average 780 words approximately per speech. Also, it shows the number of unique words (3,536 in total) with a percentage that marginally above 15% related

to all words used in his speeches. In terms of POS tags, though, president El-Sisi elucidated a variety of grammatical patterns (58) in his formal discourse. We can look at the top 20 parts of speech with corresponding examples from the corpus in the Table III. However, insignificant tags, such as determiners and prepositions are removed from the list.

TABLE II
CORPUS STRUCTURES & ATTRIBUTES CREATED IN EL-SISI SPEECHES

Counts		Lexicon Sizes	
Tokens	25,541	Unique Words	3,536
Words	23,411	POS Tags	58
Sentences	670	lemma (Root words)	2,708

TABLE III
TOP 20 TAGS USED WITH CORRESPONDING MEANINGS AND EXAMPLES FROM THE CORPUS

Tag	Meaning	Top Examples with Freq.	A. Freq.
NN	noun, singular or mass	cooperation (77)	3,453
JJ	Adjective	African (107)	2,272
NNS	noun, plural	people (83)	1,937
NP	proper noun, singular	Egypt (133)	1,479
CC	coordinating conjunction	and (1,287)	1,363
VV	verb, base form	like (41)	1,003
PP	personal pronoun	I (166)	744
PPZ	possessive pronoun	our (232)	710
RB	Adverb	not (67)	708
VVG	verb, gerund/participle	enhancing (22)	600
NP	proper noun, singular	Egypt (133)	1,479
CC	coordinating conjunction	and (1,287)	1,363
VVN	verb, past participle	based (15)	358
VVP	verb, present, non-3rd p.	do (15)	237
WDT	wh-determiner	that (138)	235
MD	Modal	will (92)	220
VVZ	verb, present 3rd p. sing.	requires (10)	194
VVD	verb, past tense	witnessed (6)	117
NPZ	possessive noun, singular	Egypt's (38)	84
JJR	adjective, comparative	more (14)	49
NNSZ	possessive noun plural	people's (10)	44
NPS	proper noun, plural	brothers (8)	39
VVN	verb, past participle	based (15)	358
VVP	verb, present, non-3rd p.	do (15)	237

The provided list showcases clear nominalization in top ranks: singular nouns (3,453) followed by adjectives (2,272), plural nouns (1,937), and singular plural nouns (1,475). Only the four nominal types on the top list constitute 15,173 words (i.e. 64.8% roughly). Moreover, the most frequent lexes indicate either a neutral or a community-friendly discourse: for example: cooperation (77), enhancing (22), and brothers (8). Such positively-connoted words refer to a mindset which opposes the concept of 'war' whereby a verbal primary culture is naturally attributed with [17]. Moreover, the researchers follow corpus revisited approach in analyzing and discussing the results; it combines the traditional frequency-based and the current statistically based one, cf. [11]. Subsequently and particularly, peace collocations are displayed with their relevant co-occurrences, and candidate collocates in vicinity applying the common statistical measures of collocability strength, such as LogDice association measure. Although, we show traditional association measure in the tabular data

analysis, we add up Delta P due to the directionality characteristic which takes into account the asymmetric relationships, unlike common AMs, according to Gries and Brezina's contentions [11], [12]. Brezina argued that "in practical terms, a directional measure such as Delta P outputs two probabilities, one for each direction of the collocational relationship", whereas other measures (e.g. IM, t-score and LogDice in our case), "output only one value so cannot be used to explore directionality" [11, p.71]. Thus, the researchers utilized a software concordancer with directionality display feature, LancsBox 4.0 [18] by which figures are merged in the given results. It is noteworthy to state that collocation parameters in this study were set in a window of <5> with a frequency as minimal as 1 to generate enough lexical collocations to further review. Furthermore, collocation networks are to visualize in the results section according to what Brezina, et al. [11] suggest, as well as, their relevant discrepancy graphs when compared. As such, in addition to the tabular manifestation of data sets, the researchers embrace the collocation graphs as rendered through two prominent concordancers: Sketch Engine web concordancer [14], and LancsBox 4.0 [18]. On Sketch Engine collocation visualization model, collocation differs in color and distance-to-node according to its strength and collocability attributes following two main criteria herewith: a. how close it is from the center, and b. how big the collocate's circular shape is in reference to other collocates in the vicinity. However, color codes resemble the grammatical relation to the node. On the other hand, LancsBox 4.0 views collocation graphs in terms of distance and position (right or left) to the node word. Both presented graph generators would provide a multidimensional depiction of using peace vs. war, textually and ideationally across the Egyptian presidential speeches.

IV. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

In our scrutiny of the antonyms, peace and war, corpus results reflect what we intentionally state non-idiomatically as war and peace, for 'peace' conceptuality predominates the Egyptian presidential speeches in the 2018-2019 sampled corpus. In contrast, concepts of 'war' and 'conflicts' appear minimally in the reported speeches; even though, such negative thoughts are usually accompanied with modifiers which denote pacification rather than agitation. In this section, we display the diversified 'peace' and 'war' with regard to their lexical distribution, collocations, and similar vocabulary in the El-Sisi speeches.

A. Peace in El-Sisi Speech Corpus

The singular noun *peace* occurred 60 times across the corpus with a dispersion of 0.881487 in 23 texts (76.7%). In the following excerpt, taken from a speech delivered on the occasion of the opening session of the 32nd African Union Summit on February 2019, El-Sisi reiterated the word five times:

Bridging the gap between establishing peace and stability; in addition to yielding the people's development fruits, is on top of the interests of the international peace

and security forums. Also, the political leaderships give it great attention and instigate the best diplomatic, security and strategic minds. In this framework, it gives me pleasure to announce the launching of the first edition of Aswan Forum for peace and sustainable development in 2019 to be regional and continental platform gathering the political, intellectual, opinion, peace makers and development partners' leaders in "Aswan City" the gem of The Nile to discuss together the joint horizons between peace and sustainable development in order to make a remarkable difference in peoples' life and spread hope in their spirits.

However, that speech, in particular, includes nine occurrences of *peace*. Throughout his repetition of the word *peace*, El-Sisi stressed on the need of establishing sorts of international cooperation by which the world purposefully achieves a state of tranquility and welfare. Phraseologically, El-Sisi used the lexical item in two different ways: a) as an object, in *establishing peace...*, and b) as a modifier of a plural noun, in "peace makers".

On the semantic level, the Egyptian president has used 16 lexical items that denote textually a relatively strong ideational connection with peace. Table IV below reveals these converging items for *peace* in which the similarity score is calculated based on the percentage of collocates the synonym has in common with the search word [15].

TABLE IV
 CONVERGENT ITEMS WITH 'PEACE' AS USED IN EL-SISI SPEECHES

Lemma	Score	Freq
Progress	0.208	22
Prosperity	0.203	17
Interest	0.189	41
Stability	0.17	46
Community	0.109	12
Aspiration	0.093	18
Hope	0.09	19
Arena	0.085	10
Institution	0.082	24
Party	0.08	15
Issue	0.077	27
Level	0.075	33
Security	0.068	60
Organization	0.059	21
Development	0.058	77
Challenge	0.052	54

16 synonymous items are identified for the noun 'peace', Table IV shows, where progress, prosperity, interest, stability, and community are the top-5 candidates sharing collocates of 'peace' across the data compilation. For instance, progress obviously shares the similar positive conceptuality as viewed in the following concordances.

Notwithstanding, investigating lexical collocations uncover the true semantic field created by the speaker. The table and the graph below illustrate collocates of 'peace'. Below is the top list of lexical collocations with the noun 'peace' displayed with grammatical relations and LogDice scores (association

measure) and Delta P scores (directionality measure).

Left context	KWIC	Right context
eland, where construction, development and	progress	flourish day after day. </s><s> Today, we
broad, including enhancing its status, steadily	progress	and steadfastness against adversities. </
bushly harm our country, aiming to obstruct our	progress	and impede our steps. </s><s> I have re
occupation and war, from joining the march of	progress	and development. </s><s> Leaving confi
can peoples yearning to achieve stability and	progress	on one hand and provide impetus to deve
ing the development process to protect every	progress	we achieve on the track of peace against
African Union, and the consequent significant	progress	in the reform of the African Union, thus m
s exerted for the Egyptian people's takeoff for	progress	and prosperity. </s><s> The Egyptian so
us to go ahead with providing protection and	progress	to our citizens. </s><s> On the other han
omic cooperation. </s><s> We reviewed the	progress	of the joint projects like the power linkage
enuine desire for joint cooperation to achieve	progress	and prosperity for the two brotherly count
urces, thus contributing to realizing a tangible	progress	in the economies of the African states as

Fig. 1 Screenshot of Concordance Lines for the word *progress*

Table V and Figs. 2 and 3 illustrate collocations observed in the corpus for our search item, *peace*, categorized according to the lexico-grammatical relations. Despite the noun modifier fair (12.9 LogDice Score, and a Delta P scores of 0.033205, 0.399872) which belongs to the modifiers by *peace* group, *peace and/or...* classification comprises collocates with the highest collective frequency (total frequency: 34 of eight unique collocates). This category includes significantly collocable lexemes, such as, security, development, stability. To visualize the collocational network, see the figures below, as retrieved from Sketch Engine (based on LogDice scores) and LancsBox 4.0 (based on Delta P scores).

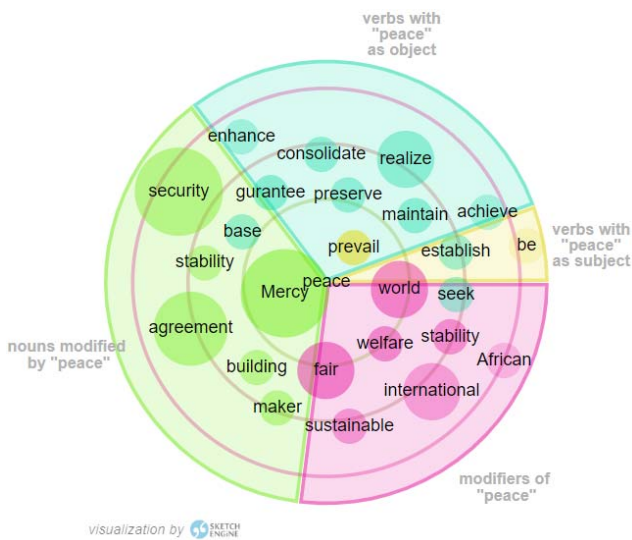


Fig. 2 Sketch Engine's Collocation Graph of *peace*

B. War in El-Sisi Speech Corpus

Only 10 occurrences of the word *war* in the corpus with a minimal lexical collocability; the lexeme collocates with the adjective *civil* (3 frequency) in a LogDice score of 12.19 and Delta P 0.3329 and a Bi Stat. of 0.1814. See the concordance lines in Fig. 4.

TABLE V

COLLOCATIONS OF PEACE WITH LOGDICE AND DELTA P SCORES

Grammatical Attributes	Collocates	Freq.	LogDice Score	Delta P		
				Stat.	Bi Stat.	
modifiers of 'peace'	Fair	2	12.19	0.033205	0.399872	
	World	2	11.83	0.048928	0.106072	
	Welfare	1	11.54	0.16538	0.249872	
	Stability	1	11.09	0.165123	0.215849	
	Sustainable	1	10.35	0.049357	0.166025	
	International	2	10	0.030889	0.031454	
	African	1	8.22	0.026987	0.006963	
	<i>total</i>	<i>10</i>				
	nouns modified by 'peace'	Mercy	4	12.6	0.299828	0.818011
		Agreement	3	11.67	0.049614	0.249615
Security		4	11.54	0.26448	0.236619	
Makers		1	11	0.016667	1	
Building		1	10.91	0.016238	0.090481	
Stability		1	10.6	0.165123	0.215849	
<i>total</i>		<i>14</i>				
verbs with 'peace' as object		Guarantee	1	11.41	0.016667	1
		Maintain	1	11.19	0.016624	0.499957
		Realize	2	11.04	0.016281	0.099615
	Seek	1	10.82	0.016538	0.249872	
	Preserve	1	10.82	0.016367	0.124701	
	Consolidate	1	10.82	0.016452	0.166453	
	Base	1	10.75	0.016066	0.066068	
	Establish	1	10.68	0.016495	0.199829	
	Enhance	1	9.57	0.015809	0.046763	
	Achieve	1	9.35	0.03179	0.051089	
<i>total</i>	<i>11</i>					
verbs with 'peace' as subject	Prevail	1	13.41	0.016667	1	
	Be	1	7.67	0.280418	0.197081	
<i>total</i>	<i>2</i>					
'peace' and/or ...	Security	13	12.38	0.26448	0.236619	
	Development	6	11.56	0.130632	0.109973	
	Stability	6	11.31	0.165123	0.215849	
	Mercy	4	11.19	0.299828	0.818011	
	Welfare	1	9.83	0.016538	0.249872	
	Victory	1	9.83	0.016495	0.199829	
	Forum	1	9.79	0.016281	0.099615	
	Prosperity	1	9.38	0.03269	0.117005	
	<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>34</i>				



Fig. 3 LancsBox's Collocation Graph of *peace*

Left context	KWIC	Right context
s are spreading, in Syria where 8-year long civil	war	and regional violations are committed, in Ye
oring Sinai back to the motherland first through	war	and then negotiations is an astounding natio
eeded despite the difficulty of the non-systemic	war	which does not terror the personnel of the A
Egypt, resorted to the psychological and rumors	wars	, aiming to produce untrue mental image tha
eness of the Egyptian people, all psychological	wars	would not shake their solid resolve, lies wou
s are spreading, in Syria where 8-year long civil	war	and regional violations are committed, in Ye
s, who have known nothing but occupation and	war	, from joining the march of progress and dev
ent: we witness nowadays armed conflicts, civil	wars	, ethnic clashes and terrorist attacks, not to
ute to them as they bear and still the scourge of	war	with patience and to overcome the scarcity c
edom and enjoy a decent stable life away from	wars	and sectarianism and from foreign interferer

Fig. 4 Concordances of War

In all contexts that included those segmental speech lines about war, the Egyptian president discussed the implications of war, surged in places such as Syria, Yemen, and Sinai, in which it was described as *non-systemic* and a *scourge* as it leads to issues of *poverty* and undermines *progress* and *development*. In other words, he has not justified the action of ‘war’ with an honorable cause or a valid reason. Rather, textually ‘war’ was depicted in a negative sense through his usage of nominal forms (adjectives and nouns). Despite of that, we cannot look through the collocational networks it designates corpus-wise due to the insignificant prevalence in El-Sisi speeches. Alternatively, we investigated the node’s semantic network to identify adjacent lexemes with statistical significance.

It has been observed that Abdulfatah El-Sisi has used the lexeme conflict (23 times) in singular and plural forms to express the concept of war. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines the term *conflict* as: “a state of disagreement or argument between people, groups, countries, etc.”, whereas *war* refers to the harmful physical encounters using deadly tools as, “a situation in which there is fighting between countries or opposing groups within a country, with a large number of soldiers and weapons” [19].

To say it differently, his discourse favors the fortification of verbal confrontations at the expense of explicitly discussing war dilemmas (appeared in 10 segments separately across 6/30 speeches) when addressing this sort of issues more than twice the time; as said in one of his speeches at the European Union, in 2019:

Here, I cannot but warn of the repercussions of the continuation of this conflict on all our countries.

An indicative tendency of choosing conflict instead of war represents a hedged discourse that aims at euphemistically mitigating the possible severe impact of the utterance. Thus, having explored the collocational network attributed to the noun conflict, the researchers identified 33 unique collocates in 43 co-occurrences. See Table VI and Fig. 5.

Table VI and Fig. 5 illustrate the collocational network of the noun conflict within the Egyptian presidential speech corpus with proper statistics. They remark 8 different grammatical categories where collocates belong to. Since the adjective armed (scored 13.12) shows the highest collocability score among other rendered items (a clear inference of the

concept of ‘war’), phraseologically El-Sisi has been shown to team with the deployment of the noun conflict in “n.+of conflict”, such as spread of conflict and continuation of conflict. However, his talk about conflict/conflicts as an indirect reference to the reality of war accounts for merely a discussion of a status quo with an attempt to inclusively find a solution to the escalations of war and put it to an end (end: the second top-rated verb form with a score of 12.58). See the following excerpt as an example in his speech about the Palestinian dilemma in which conflict is used three times.

TABLE VI
 COLLOCATES OF CONFLICT AS A NOUN

Grammatical Attributes	Collocates	Freq.	LogDice Score	
modifiers of <i>conflict</i>	Armed	3	13.12	
	long-awaited	1	11.99	
	Old	1	11.99	
	Other	1	11	
	Political	1	9.75	
	Total	7		
	nouns modified by <i>conflict</i>	Brutality	1	12.41
Phase		1	12.19	
Period		1	11.83	
Conflict		1	11	
Party		1	10.82	
Total	5			
verbs with <i>conflict</i> as object	End	3	12.58	
	Leave	1	11.41	
	Contain	1	11.41	
	Witness	1	10.3	
Total	6			
verbs with <i>conflict</i> as subject	Affect	1	13	
	Be	1	7.67	
	Total	2		
<i>conflict</i> and/or ...	Brutality	1	12.41	
	Legacy	1	12.41	
	Hotbed	1	12.19	
	Problem	1	11.67	
	Total	4		
	... of <i>conflict</i>	Spread	1	12.19
		Existence	1	12.19
Irony		1	12.19	
Continuation		1	12.19	
Hotbed		1	12.19	
Total	10			
... to <i>conflict</i>	Root	1	11.67	
	End	2	13	
	Solution	2	12.29	
Total	4			
<i>conflict</i> in ...	Solution	2	12.29	
	Accordance	1	11.99	
	Region	1	11.83	
	Libya	1	11.54	
	Continent	1	11.09	
	total	6		
Grand Total	44			

This Question is the oldest political conflict, a heavy legacy on our consciences, which we have been carrying since early the 20th century. There must be real

collaborative efforts of the international community to put an end to this long-awaited conflict in accordance with the relevant and agreed upon international references, and in enforcement of the principle of the two-state solution as well as the right of the Palestinians to establish their independent state on the borders of 4 June 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital, and alleviate their daily suffering as this will form the nucleus of the actual start to reach successful solutions to the other conflicts.

Throughout our exposition of the quantitative and qualitative results, El-Sisi formal speeches evidently contain a discourse of tranquil peace rather than agitated war fight. He tried to avoid stating *war* explicitly, which can be only spotted 10 times (cf. 44 occurrences of peace, i.e. more than four times). Instead, he utilized the euphemism of conflict rather than war to refer to the atrocities of war which had been imposed in the Middle East. Even though, collocation network of peace comprises highly positive lexical items that support conceptually peace making. On the other hand, collocations of the noun conflict encompass either a description of the status quo or items with denotations of ending it. To a greater extent, the Egyptian president has succeeded to reflect discursively the country's denial of the notion of war which is replaced with peace and welfare.

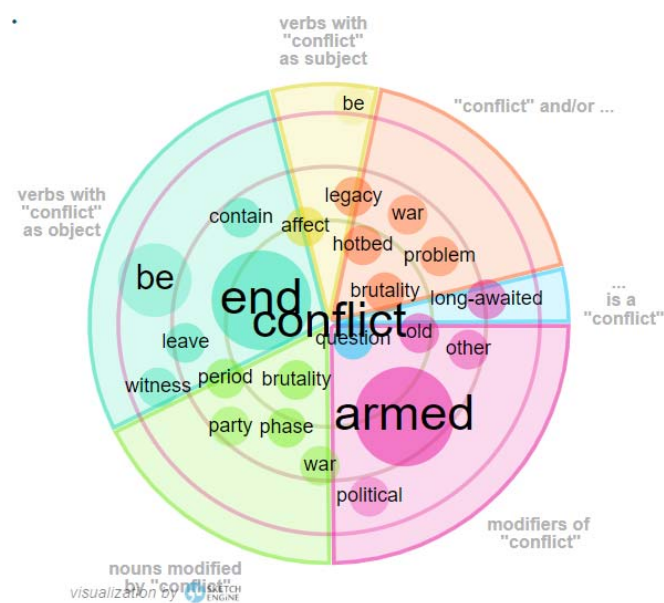


Fig. 5 Collocational Graph for Conflict

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper presents a CADS of the Egyptian president, Abdulfatah El-Sisi, in terms of peace and war concepts. Results provide sociopolitical implications by which we understand the current Egyptian stand nationally and internationally against the divergent notions that determine human lives and destinies. In short, president El-Sisi has proved himself to be a peace hero who denounces terror and war. Beside his focus on peace, he also asserted the necessity

of international cooperation (the mostly occurred lexical item in the corpus with 77 frequency). Nevertheless, the researchers recommend further quantitative studies of the current Egyptian political discourse that deals with other newly discussed topics, such as equity and economic challenges the country is witnessing these years. Studies may also include contrastive analysis of Egyptian discourse, written or oral, with international discourse around similar issues, illegal migration for instance.

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