

**Journalistic Language of Qatari Media Organizations' Instagram Posts Covering the 2026
US-Israel-Iran War**

Content Analysis Proposal

Areesha Usman, Linh Tran, Maryam Kafoud

Northwestern University in Qatar

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Abstract

This study proposes a content analysis of Instagram-based news coverage of the US-Israel-Iran regional war across three prominent Qatari media platforms: Al Jazeera English, Doha News, and ILoveQatar. These outlets represent distinct positions within the media ecosystem, including a state-affiliated broadcaster, an independent news organization, and a lifestyle-oriented digital platform. The study aims to examine how each platform constructs and communicates news about the war, with particular attention to variations in language, tone, and framing. A total of 120 Instagram posts will be analyzed, with 40 posts selected from each outlet, beginning from February 28, 2026. The sample will include both direct reporting on the US-Israel-Iran war and content related to its implications for the Qatari community. The findings show that while Al Jazeera English, Doha News, and ILoveQatar differed significantly in their use of war and peace-journalism language and in the degree to which they localized conflict coverage for Qatar-based audiences, all three outlets converged on a dominant use of episodic framing on Instagram.

Keywords: Instagram, Qatar, US-Israel-Iran war, content analysis, journalistic framing

Journalistic Language of Qatari Media Organizations Instagram Posts Covering the 2026 US-Israel-Iran War

On February 28, 2026, the United States and Israel launched missile combat operations against sites in Iran in attempts to overthrow the Islamic Republic of Iran's state regime (Aljazeera, 2026). Iran's retaliatory military strategy has involved attacking Israel and regional countries hosting US military bases, including Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar (Aljazeera, 2026). Most Gulf nations have reserved their right to respond after the provocative Iranian missile and drone attacks, but have continued under defensive, rather than offensive, military action (Ellyatt & Graham, 2026). Qatar's involvement is especially unique as it is both home to the largest US military base in the Middle East and one of the few Gulf states that maintains diplomatic ties with Iran. Despite this and its historical role as mediator within the region, the current war pushed Qatar to prioritize national security with Qatar's foreign ministry denying Qatar's involvement in any direct mediation between the US and Iran (Qatar MOFA, 2026). This shift creates conflicting imperatives for what conflict reporting within Qatar during the war looks like for its citizens seeking information through Qatari intermediary media organizations which are tasked with reporting Qatar's role as a regional party that is nevertheless directly affected and has unique diplomatic stakes in the war, while also rallying domestic reassurance towards a strategy of national security. This content analysis specifically considers Qatar's digital media landscape amidst the ongoing war examined through a comparative analysis of the Instagram posts of three Qatar media organizations: Al Jazeera English, Doha News, and ILoveQatar (ILQ). Through a systematic probability sampling technique, 40 Instagram posts will be selected from each media organization for a linguistic analysis of the differences and similarities when analyzed through journalistic theories on

conflict reporting including war and peace journalism framing practices first conceptualized by Johan Galtung (1986), localization practices, and Shanto Iyengar's (1991) episodic versus thematic framing technique to better understand how different Qatari media platforms communicate coverage of the US-Israel-Iran war for audiences on Instagram specifically within a digital media landscape.

Conflict Reporting Uses of Peace and War Journalism

The distinction between peace journalism and war journalism, originating from the work of sociologist Johan Galtung (1986, 1998), provides an important framework for analyzing conflict reporting. While Peace journalism is aimed at prescribing a win-win orientation that emphasizes non-violent responses, giving voice to non-elite actors, and prioritizing conflict resolution, war journalism contrastingly adopts a zero-sum, elite-focused and episodic framing (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). In today's digital age where traditional conflict reporting has extended into digital social media, platforms like Instagram create both opportunities and risks for peace journalism since while they enable wider distribution, two-way communication, and digital storytelling, they also incentivize speed, sensationalism, and engagement metrics that can push coverage toward war journalism (Sehl et al., 2023).

Qatar's traditionally peacebuilding-oriented foreign policy has continued to extend into its official, elite state-affiliated media (QNA, 2026). Recent empirical research provides a valuable model for analyzing Qatari media in a regional war where Qatar *did* act as a mediator. Kozman and Cozma (2025) compared headlines from five international news agencies covering the 2023 Israel-Gaza war and found that all agencies except Qatar News Agency (QNA) relied more heavily on war journalism. QNA, a state-affiliated Qatari outlet, recorded the highest peace journalism scores and the most frequent diplomacy framing of 39.8% of its headlines (Kozman

& Cozman, 2025). Its coverage unilaterally condemned Israel and advocated for Gaza, reflecting Qatar's official foreign policy stance as a mediator with pro-Palestinian leanings (Aras & Al Ansari, 2024). This precedent is especially instructive for this content analysis' present study, which examines a different geopolitical scenario in which Qatar has explicitly stated it is *not* engaged in mediation in the US-Israel-Iran war. How different Qatari intermediary media organizations that provide Qatar residents access to regional updates on the war and potential threats and damage inflicted within the country, navigate between peace and war journalism in the absence of an official state mediating role while still balancing ties with both the US and Iran remains an open question that this study seeks to address.

Due to the absence of comparative research conducted between Qatar's varying Instagram-based media organizations in the ongoing US-Israel-Iran war, our first proposed research question is to explore how language use varies across state-affiliated, private, and community-oriented platform:

RQ1: What are the differences in how Qatari media channels use peace versus war journalism language?

Strategic Localization of War Reporting

The localization of conflict reporting plays a key role in shaping how audiences understand and relate to war-related events (Evans, 2010). This process involves selecting and presenting aspects of a situation that connect directly to audience needs and concerns (Evans, 2010). Localization allows news to be communicated in ways that are meaningful and accessible, particularly when events have implications for everyday life (Evans, 2010). As a result, localized reporting focuses on information that audiences can directly relate to within their own social and regional context (Evans, 2010).

Furthermore, social media journalism influences how conflict-related information is adapted for specific audiences, shaping how localization occurs in digital environments (Hendrickx & Opgenhaffen, 2024). Platforms such as Instagram encourage concise and accessible reporting formats that focus on clarity and immediate relevance for users (Hendrickx & Opgenhaffen, 2024). These platform-specific features lead news organizations to highlight aspects of conflict that are most meaningful to their audiences, such as practical implications and locally relevant updates (Hendrickx & Opgenhaffen, 2024). As a result, social media reporting plays an important role in shaping how conflict information is localized and communicated to audiences (Hendrickx & Opgenhaffen, 2024).

At the same time, conflict reporting is not always localized, as some media organizations place greater emphasis on international political developments and geopolitical conflict dynamics during war coverage (Guta, 2022). Conflict reporting has been shown to focus on military operations, geopolitical tensions, and conflicts between international actors (Guta, 2022). Research also shows that conflict coverage frequently relies on official and elite sources, including military commanders and state authorities, which can contribute to stronger emphasis on broader international developments rather than local audience concerns (Guta, 2022). Furthermore, international news coverage has been linked to broader patterns of international communication and relations between countries, suggesting that some news organizations may prioritize international affairs and cross-border developments in their reporting (De Verneil, 2017).

Moreover, location-based information plays a key role in how audiences perceive and respond to news content (Ma et al., 2025). Research shows that proximity between the news context and the audience influences both credibility and engagement with news (Ma et al., 2025).

This suggests that audiences interpret news differently depending on how closely it relates to their own location and circumstances (Ma et al., 2025). Additionally, news selection is guided by values such as relevance, which influence whether information is considered meaningful to audiences (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017). Building on this, the present study examines how Qatari digital media platforms on Instagram localize coverage of the ongoing US-Israel-Iran war for Qatar-based audiences. Therefore, this study proposes the following research question:

RQ2: How is the US-Israel-Iran war localized across different Qatari media outlets for Qatar-based audiences?

Framing the News

Thematic frames focus on political issues and events within a broader context, presenting collective, abstract, and general evidence, whereas episodic frames describe concrete events and particular cases that illuminate the issue through specific, individual-level instances (Aarøe, 2011). In print and broadcast journalism, episodic framing historically dominates due to its ability to simplify complex issues for mass consumption (Iyengar, 1991).

Mainstream journalistic narratives, particularly in conflict reporting, are shaped and constrained by individual, organizational, institutional, and systemic factors that can limit the depth and framing of on-the-ground coverage (Fahmy et al., 2024). These constraints include political barriers and ideological pressures, which influence not only what is reported but also how stories are told (Fahmy et al., 2024). What makes Al Jazeera English stand out is its willingness to address controversial issues and critique governments in the Middle East (Zayani, 2019). Its digital platform, Aljazeera.net, marked a shift toward what has been described as a “journalism of opinion,” using language that reframes dominant Western narratives, for example, labeling actors as “martyrs” or “resistance fighters” rather than “terrorists” (Awad, 2019). More

recent coverage of the Gaza war further illustrates this approach, as Al Jazeera English incorporates personal stories and emotionally resonant discourse to highlight the experiences of war victims (Warshagha, 2026).

The rise of social media, however, has complicated traditional journalistic practices and tone. Social media journalism, defined as news production and dissemination centered on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, encourages the use of diverse sources and more immediate, engaging storytelling formats (Christensen & Khalil, 2021; Hendrickx & Opgenhaffen, 2024). Platform affordances also shape tone, shown in how Instagram posts often combine concise, breaking-news-style headlines with explanatory captions (Hendrickx & Vázquez-Herrero, 2024). In the context of war reporting, Al Jazeera English's Instagram content has been shown to emphasize the active roles of opponents and human-centered narratives (Zamzami et al., 2024). Alongside legacy media, digital-native outlets in Qatar, like Doha News and ILoveQatar, also contribute to this evolving media landscape, though their positioning as journalistic versus lifestyle-oriented platforms varies (Leber, 2017; ILoveQatar, n.d.).

RQ3: Do Qatari media outlets differ significantly in their use of thematic or episodic framing?

Methodology

This study uses a quantitative content analysis to examine how Qatari media organizations report on the US-Israel-Iran war through Instagram. Content analysis is appropriate for this study because it allows for a systematic and objective comparison of language, tone, and framing across different media platforms. The sample consists of Instagram posts from three Qatari media organizations: Al Jazeera English (state-affiliated), Doha News (private news), and ILoveQatar (community-based platform). A total of 120 posts will be analyzed, with 40 posts selected from each platform. The sampling period begins on February 28, 2026, which marks the

start of the war. Posts will first be filtered based on their relevance to the US-Israel-Iran war or its impact on Qatar. Only posts that directly mention the war or its regional or local implications will be included in the sample.

The study uses a systematic probability sampling technique. After identifying relevant posts, the posts will be selected at regular intervals by choosing every third post related to the war. This process will continue until a total of 40 posts per platform is reached. As posting frequency varies across platforms, this will result in different end dates for each media outlet. This approach ensures a structured and unbiased selection process while maintaining an even distribution of posts across the time period. Each member of the research group will code 40 posts, ensuring equal distribution of the dataset. The unit of analysis is a single Instagram post caption.

The study includes four main variables. Media outlet identifies the source of the post: Al Jazeera English, Doha News, or ILoveQatar. Peace vs War Journalism categorizes whether the caption reflects peace-oriented or war-oriented framing, based on language such as the use of emotive words balancing between conflict and resolution prioritization such as violence-specific language for war-journalism including killed/martyred, attack/invasion, strike/interception, as compared to more peace-oriented language such as diplomacy, negotiations, dialogue, international peace and security, and community among others for the peace journalism framework. Localization measures whether the caption focuses on Qatar-specific impacts such as safety, travel, or local updates, or presents general international information. Types of framing classifies captions as either thematic framing, which situates events within a broader political and social context, or episodic framing, which presents conflict as a standalone event or incident.

Findings

Table 1. Chi-square test between media outlets and peace or war journalism (RQ1)

Contingency Tables ▼					
Media Outlet		Peace or War Journalism			Total
		Peace Journalism	War Journalism	Mixed	
Al Jazeera English	Count	3.00	32.00	5.00	40.00
	% within row	7.50%	80.00%	12.50%	100.00%
	% within column	7.50%	59.26%	19.23%	33.33%
	% of total	2.50%	26.67%	4.17%	33.33%
Doha News	Count	12.00	11.00	17.00	40.00
	% within row	30.00%	27.50%	42.50%	100.00%
	% within column	30.00%	20.37%	65.38%	33.33%
	% of total	10.00%	9.17%	14.17%	33.33%
ILoveQatar	Count	25.00	11.00	4.00	40.00
	% within row	62.50%	27.50%	10.00%	100.00%
	% within column	62.50%	20.37%	15.38%	33.33%
	% of total	20.83%	9.17%	3.33%	33.33%
Total	Count	40.00	54.00	26.00	120.0
	% within row	33.33%	45.00%	21.67%	100.00%
	% within column	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	% of total	33.33%	45.00%	21.67%	100.00%

Chi-Squared Tests			
	Value	df	p
χ^2	46.76	4	< .001
N	120		

Note. Continuity correction is available only for 2x2 tables.

The first research question examines whether Qatari media outlets differ in their headline language strategies through the use of peace versus war journalism language, or mixed during the US-Israel-Iran war (Table 1). The chi-square test conducted revealed the association between the type of Qatari media outlet and war and peace journalism language strategy was statistically significant, $\chi^2(4, N = 120) = 46.76, p < .001$, where Al Jazeera English's headlines on Instagram posts were more likely to be written using war journalism language ($N = 32, 80\%$) and contrastingly, headlines from ILoveQatar's instagram post headlines were more likely to be written using peace journalism language ($N = 25, 62.5\%$) whereas Instagram post headlines from Doha News were more likely to be written using mixed war/peace journalism language ($N = 17,$

42.5%) as compared to its use of peace journalism language (N = 12, 30%) or war journalism language (N=11, 27.5%).

Table 2. Chi-square test between media outlet and local or international (RQ2)

Contingency Tables ▼

Media Outlet		Local or International		Total
		Localized	International	
Al Jazeera English	Count	3.00	37.00	40.00
	% within row	7.50 %	92.50 %	100.00 %
	% within column	4.69 %	66.07 %	33.33 %
	% of total	2.50 %	30.83 %	33.33 %
Doha News	Count	32.00	8.00	40.00
	% within row	80.00 %	20.00 %	100.00 %
	% within column	50.00 %	14.29 %	33.33 %
	% of total	26.67 %	6.67 %	33.33 %
ILoveQatar	Count	29.00	11.00	40.00
	% within row	72.50 %	27.50 %	100.00 %
	% within column	45.31 %	19.64 %	33.33 %
	% of total	24.17 %	9.17 %	33.33 %
Total	Count	64.00	56.00	120.0
	% within row	53.33 %	46.67 %	100.00 %
	% within column	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %
	% of total	53.33 %	46.67 %	100.00 %

Chi-Squared Tests

	Value	df	p
X ²	51.09	2	< .001
N	120		

Note. Continuity correction is available only for 2x2 tables.

The second research question examines how the US-Israel-Iran war was localized across different Qatari media outlets for Qatar-based audiences through the use of localized versus international reporting (Table 2). The chi-square test conducted revealed that the association between media outlet and type of localization was statistically significant, $\chi^2(2, N = 120) = 51.09, p < .001$, where Al Jazeera English was more likely to use international reporting (N = 37,

92.5%) than localized reporting (N = 3, 7.5%). In contrast, Doha News was more likely to use localized reporting (N = 32, 80%) than international reporting (N = 8, 20%). Similarly, ILoveQatar was more likely to use localized reporting (N = 29, 72.5%) than international reporting (N = 11, 27.5%).

Table 3. Chi-square test between media outlet and type of framing (RQ3)

Contingency Tables ▼				
Media Outlet		Type of Framing		Total
		Thematic	Episodic	
Al Jazeera English	Count	15.00	25.00	40.00
	% within row	37.50 %	62.50 %	100.00 %
	% within column	40.54 %	30.12 %	33.33 %
	% of total	12.50 %	20.83 %	33.33 %
Doha News	Count	8.00	32.00	40.00
	% within row	20.00 %	80.00 %	100.00 %
	% within column	21.62 %	38.55 %	33.33 %
	% of total	6.67 %	26.67 %	33.33 %
ILoveQatar	Count	14.00	26.00	40.00
	% within row	35.00 %	65.00 %	100.00 %
	% within column	37.84 %	31.33 %	33.33 %
	% of total	11.67 %	21.67 %	33.33 %
Total	Count	37.00	83.00	120.0
	% within row	30.83 %	69.17 %	100.00 %
	% within column	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %
	% of total	30.83 %	69.17 %	100.00 %

Chi-Squared Tests			
	Value	df	p
X ²	3.360	2	.186
N	120		

Note. Continuity correction is available only for 2x2 tables.

The third research question examines whether Qatari media outlets differed in their use of thematic versus episodic framing in Instagram posts covering the US-Israel-Iran regional war (Table 3). A chi-square test revealed the association between media outlet and framing type was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(2, N = 120) = 3.36, p = .186$. Although Doha News showed the highest proportion of episodic framing (N = 32, 80%), Al Jazeera English (N = 25, 62.5%) and

ILoveQatar (N = 26, 65%) displayed similar tendencies toward episodic framing as well.

Overall, episodic framing accounted for 69.2% of all posts, suggesting that event-centered storytelling was the dominant framing strategy across Qatari media outlets.

Discussion

The goal of this content analysis study was to examine relationships between different Qatari media outlets and their practices of specific conflict report strategies in their coverage of the ongoing US-Israel-Iran war. Particularly, this study looked for (1) the varying uses of war and peace journalism language, (2) the choice to pertain to localize or appeal to international audiences, and (3) applications of episodic versus thematic framing in 40 Instagram posts from each outlet beginning from the start of the war on February 28, 2026.

The findings of this study's first research question suggest that the three selected Qatari media outlets differed significantly in their linguistic adoptions of war and peace journalism frameworks, with each outlet emphasizing a different orientation to conflict coverage of the US-Israel-Iran war. Al Jazeera English's stronger use of war journalism language aligns with the literature of Al Jazeera English's history as a leading breaking news source based in the Middle East, therefore making war journalism reporting practices integral to Al Jazeera's reporting on any Middle-East-based conflict in order to preserve its audience's attention as a 24/7 broadcast channel (Guta, 2022). Opposingly, ILoveQatar's stronger peace-journalism findings fits previous literature's understanding of peace journalism as a more humane and context-sensitive approach that highlights specific victim suffering and considers nonviolent responses rather than only the visible outbreak of violence, especially given that ILoveQatar is a community Instagram page specifically for Qatar civilian residents, therefore the page's reporting is focused around fostering public reassurance and sharing community-specific harm and calls to nonviolent responses

towards ensuring safety (Guta, 2019). Doha News's mixed pattern is also consistent given literature which suggests that peace journalism should be understood as a continuum rather than a fixed checklist, where Doha News as a media outlet both functions as mediators of elite, state-official voices, as well as pertaining to Qatari community readers, indicative of how conflict reporting is able to combine elements of confrontation with more contextual or conciliatory framing (Mohamed, 2022).

The findings of the second research question suggest that the three Qatari media outlets differed significantly in how they localized coverage of the US-Israel-Iran war for Qatar-based audiences. While Doha News and ILoveQatar relied more heavily on localized reporting, Al Jazeera English primarily focused on international coverage of the war. One possible explanation for these differences is that media organizations adapt conflict reporting according to the interests and expectations of their intended audiences (Evans, 2010). As an independent news organization and a lifestyle-oriented digital platform, Doha News and ILoveQatar may focus more on information directly relevant to Qatar-based audiences, which aligns with research suggesting that social media journalism encourages audience-relevant reporting formats (Hendrickx & Opgenhaffen, 2024). In contrast, Al Jazeera English's stronger focus on international reporting may reflect its position as a globally oriented news organization that prioritizes broader geopolitical developments and international conflict dynamics (Guta, 2022). These findings therefore support existing literature suggesting that conflict reporting differs depending on whether media organizations focus more on local audience relevance or broader international developments.

The findings of the third research question indicate that editorial differences among the three outlets did not associate with substantially different framing strategies on Instagram, as

episodic framing remained dominant across all outlets, consistent with existing literature. The lack of a statistically significant association between media outlet and framing type suggests that outlet-specific differences were less influential than the nature of the social media platform itself. One possible explanation is that Instagram's emphasis on speed, visual immediacy, and audience engagement encourages outlets to report discrete events, breaking developments, and human-centered stories rather than broader contextual analysis (Woodside, 2010).

In conclusion, this study highlights how Qatari Instagram media platforms differed in their use of war and peace journalism language, localization practices, and framing strategies in coverage of the US-Israel-Iran war. The findings contribute to a broader understanding of how different types of media organizations adapt conflict reporting to digital social media environments and how platform-based journalism may shape the communication of war-related information to audiences. This study also provides a foundation for future research examining how social media platforms influence the localization of conflict reporting, the ways audiences engage with conflict-related content, and how different political, cultural, and media environments shape reporting practices during regional conflicts. Future studies could further explore how visual content, audience interaction, or additional social media platforms influence the presentation and interpretation of conflict reporting in digital media spaces.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include how our units of analysis focus only on Instagram post captions and do not include semiotic analysis of the visual elements of posts, even though images, graphics, and videos may also shape how audiences interpret war-related information. Additionally, the study analyzes 120 posts from only three Qatari media platforms, which limits the ability to generalize the findings to other media organizations, platforms, or forms of conflict

reporting beyond Instagram. Another limitation is that the coding process relies on the researcher's interpretation when identifying categories such as localization, peace versus war journalism, and thematic versus episodic framing. Although shared coding guidelines and cross-checking procedures were used to improve consistency, some subjectivity in coding decisions may still remain. Finally, the study examines coverage from a specific period during the US-Israel-Iran war, and due to the ongoing nature of the war, this means that reporting patterns may shift over time as political developments, military events, and audience concerns change.

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Appendix A: Codebook

Variable 0 - Coder:

1. Areesha Usman
2. Linh Tran
3. Maryam Kafoud

Variable 1: Media Outlet

1. Aljazeera
2. Doha News
3. ILoveQatar (ILQ)

Variable 2: Peace or War journalism Framing

1. Peace
2. War
3. Mixed

Variable 3: Qatar Localization or International

1. Localized
2. International

Variable 4: Type of framing

1. Thematic framing
2. Episodic framing

Appendix B: Coding Sheet

Unit ID	Media Outlet	Peace or War Journalism	Local or International	Type of Framing
1	1	2	2	2
2	1	2	2	2
3	1	2	2	2
4	1	2	2	2
5	1	2	1	2
6	1	2	1	2
7	1	2	2	2
8	1	2	2	2
9	1	2	2	1
10	1	2	2	2
11	1	3	2	1
12	1	2	2	1
13	1	2	2	2
14	1	2	2	1
15	1	3	2	1
16	1	3	2	2
17	1	1	2	1
18	1	3	2	2
19	1	2	2	2
20	1	2	2	1
21	1	2	2	2
22	1	2	1	2
23	1	2	2	1
24	1	2	2	2
25	1	2	2	2
26	1	2	2	2
27	1	2	2	2
28	1	2	2	2
29	1	2	2	2
30	1	2	2	2

31	1	2	2	2
32	1	2	2	1
33	1	1	2	1
34	1	2	2	1
35	1	1	2	1
36	1	2	2	2
37	1	2	2	1
38	1	3	2	2
39	1	2	2	1
40	1	2	2	1
41	2	2	2	2
42	2	1	1	2
43	2	2	2	1
44	2	3	1	2
45	2	2	2	2
46	2	1	1	2
47	2	3	1	2
48	2	1	1	2
49	2	1	1	2
50	2	1	1	2
51	2	3	1	2
52	2	3	1	2
53	2	3	1	2
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56	2	3	1	2
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59	2	3	1	2
60	2	2	2	1
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62	2	2	2	2
63	2	1	1	2
64	2	3	1	2

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66	2	3	1	2
67	2	3	1	2
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83	3	1	1	2
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87	3	2	2	2
88	3	3	2	2
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92	3	1	1	2
93	3	3	1	2
94	3	1	2	1
95	3	1	1	1
96	3	2	2	2
97	3	1	1	2
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99	3	1	1	1
100	3	1	1	2
101	3	2	2	2
102	3	2	2	1
103	3	2	1	1
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108	3	3	2	2
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110	3	1	1	2
111	3	2	2	2
112	3	1	1	2
113	3	1	1	1
114	3	2	1	2
115	3	2	1	2
116	3	1	1	1
117	3	1	1	2
118	3	1	1	2
119	3	1	1	1
120	3	1	1	1