

Socio-Political Ideologies of Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu: A Political Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

The current study aims at exploring the socio-political ideologies in the speech of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the perspective of war situation between Gaza and Israel. The study's objectives are to highlight the socio-political ideologies of Israeli Prime Minister (henceforth PM). The findings show that the speaker has used different linguistic forms such as noun, pronouns, verb, adverbs and adjectives; rhetorical devices such as number game and hyperbole to construct the discursive strategies such as actor description, authority, burden, national self-glorification, victimization and lexicalization. PM used these linguistic forms, rhetorical devices, and discursive strategies to propagate his ideologies to represent in-group positively and out-group negatively. PM Benjamin Netanyahu made frequent use of actor description, number game, burden and authority and he also showed in-group positively to show his country position. He targeted the peace, terrorism, war negotiation & agreement and global & diplomatic position on war situation.

Key Words: Socio-Political Ideologies, In-group & out-group positively, War, Rhetorical Devices, Diplomatic position and Peace

Introduction

This study examines a method of Critical Discourse Analysis to analyse political speech about the Israel-Palestine War. Speech delivered by the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu on Oct 10, 2023 to giving Big Warning for Hamas and the other. The study also suggests theories by Vandijk's Political Discourse Analysis framework (2006) to show how the speech reflect different opinions influenced by his belief about this conflict.

The Israel-Palestine conflict is a very old and ongoing struggle. Sometimes, it gets really serious, leading to many deaths and a lot of destruction in the land. On October 7, 2023, Hamas fired over 5,000 rockets from Gaza at Israel. This attack called about 1,400 Israelis, and many Israeli soldiers and civilians, including women and children, were taken hostage to Gaza. The next day, Israel responded with airstrikes and declared war on Hamas. By October 15, around 2,700 Palestinians had died, and about 1 million people had to leave their homes in Gaza. Israel also stopped sending food, water, electricity, and fuel to Gaza. Israel told people in Northern Gaza to leave, but Hamas told them

to stay.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) studies written or spoken text to reveal the existence of power, dominance and inequality. It examines how these issues exist, persist, and are reproduced in social, political and historical context. Furthermore, CDA aims to show the connection between language, discourse, social practices and social structure which is not clear for many people (Van Leeuwen, 1991). CDA examines the social and political conditions that shape discourse to understand how power structures are created and analyzed. It describes, interprets, analyzes and critiques social life as reflected in speech. CDA looks at the connections between discursive practices, texts and events and also borderer social and cultural structures, relations and processes (Fairclough, 1992). In this framework, analyzing a text based on its topics or frames is appropriated for this research. This research uses Van Dijk's theory, which emphasizes themes and topics are crucial because it reveals underlying the ideology in the sequence of sentences (Van Dijk, 2006).

The persuasive nature of political speeches allows politicians to present their goals as their audience's goals: 'The good speaker can also lead a people, or rather mislead them, into believing that the narrow self-interests of the governing party are actually the interest of the people as whole' (Vandijk, 2006). According to Vandijk (1997), Political discourse analysis (PDA), involves examining speeches and talks made by politicians in political contexts. It can also refer to analyzing any kind of discourse from a political perspective. Political discourse often highlights opposing ideologies, showing a clear division between "us" and "them" groups through in-group and out-group (Vandijk 2006). In this model, speakers from one group usually describe themselves positively, whereas, other opposing groups negatively (Vandijk 1995). The researcher used Vandijk's PDA framework as the main model for this study.

Objectives

1. To identify the rhetorical and discursive devices used by PM Benjamin Netanyahu
2. To highlight socio-political ideologies are reflected in the speech of PM Benjamin Netanyahu

Rational and Practical Applications:

The significance of this study is to investigate the discursive strategies employed by PM Benjamin Netanyahu in his speech during the Israel-Palestine war. This research has given more vision, particularly in the field of PDA. This study will be beneficial for critical discourse analysis researchers; they would identify how political leaders reflect their ideologies regarding conflicts through language. The current study will benefit PDA researchers on how political leaders promote their ideologies through rhetorical and discursive devices.

Research Questions

1. What rhetorical and discursive devices are used in the speech of PM Benjamin Netanyahu?
2. What socio-political ideologies are reflected in the speech of PM Benjamin Netanyahu?

Review of the Literature

Any written or spoken conversation of ideas, concepts, and expression is referred to as discourse. There is both written and oral discourse (Van Dijk, 1997). Discourse may be restricted to spoken or written language or may be comprehensive enough to include all procedures of communication (Van Dijk, 2005). Discourse analysis is a critical discourse analysis that investigates the ways in which text and speech enact, propagate, and oppose social power abuse, domination, and inequality, as defined by Van Dijk (1997).

Fairclough says that Critical Discourse Analysis is a theory and method for studying how people and groups use words. CDA uses social and philosophical theory to evaluate and make sense of written and spoken materials because it deals with social problems and outside factors like ideology, power, and inequality (2001).

Van Dijk's 2006 Work for Political Discourse Analysis

Van Dijk's framework is employed to investigate political discourse as a domain of language and society. Politicians also generate or renew political speech in order to abuse it, defend their assertions, and secure public support (Bello, 2013; Bayram, 2010). Parliamentary speeches and written or spoken narratives are the primary forms of political discourse, according to Van Dijk (2006).

Social institutes, lectures, media discussions, talk shows, debates, conferences, campaigns, and legislative processes are additional venues for the development of political ideology. The philosophy of numerous politicians and political parties is disseminated through periodicals, articles, books, and newspapers (Ahmed, 2018).

Van Dijk's (2006) seminal work *Politics, Ideology, and Discourse* was indispensable for the analysis of political discourse. This depicts political discourse as the most ideological; Van Dijk (2006) observes that political organizations and politics are organized by ideological alliances, contrasts, and similarities. Political ideologies incorporate, analyses, and replicate political discourse. Discourse is the sole source that explicitly formulates ideologies. Other political activities, such as political, racial, and discriminatory discrimination, unconditionally disclose or test ideas. The political discourse surrounding these ideologies is characterized by polarization, which is evident in the categorization of groups into in-groups and out-groups and the opposing group memberships (Van Dijk, 2006).

Following are discursive devices and rhetorical devices proposed by Van Dijk in his 2006 framework:

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Actor Description, Authority, Burden, Categorization, Euphemism, Evidentiality, Hyperbole, Lexicalization, National self-glorification, Number Game, Polarization; US-Them categorization, Victimization, Comparison, Consensus, Counterfactuals, Disclaimers, Example/Illustration, Generalization, Irony, Metaphor, Norm expression, Populism, Presupposition, Vagueness, Implication

Political Discourse Analysis

Political discourse analysis looks at how social media changes the way people talk about politics and how that changes social and cultural growth (Fairclough, 1992). Some examples of professional politicians and political organizations are presidents, prime ministers, cabinet members, parliament, and political parties. They all talk and write to the public on a local, national, and international level. 1997 (Van Dijk).

Current Works Related to this Study

A Critical Discourse Analysis of the UN General Assembly Addresses Given by the Iranian President from 2007 to 2016 was uncovered by Shakoury (2018). In eight speeches given by Hassan Rouhani and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to the UN General Assembly, he analyzes linguistic elements using Van Dijk's paradigm for Political Discourse Analysis. Both the micro- and macro-level analyses were conducted using the following tools: positive and negative self-representation; a set of 25 discursive devices; and the Van Dijk model from 2005. Rouhani primarily employed the discursive tactics of "consensus," "illustration," "hyperbole," and "polarization," according to the data review. In contrast, "lexicalization" and "vagueness" were Ahmadinejad's go-to terms. At the macro level, our research reveals two presidents with diametrically opposed ideological beliefs. Compared to Ahmadinejad, Rouhani was more likely to rely on positive self-representation.

Kazemian (2014) analyzed five speeches delivered by Barack Obama in 2012 using Halliday's Ideational Grammatical Metaphor, Rhetoric, and Critical Discourse Analysis. An analysis was undertaken on the functions of nominalization, rhetorical strategies, passivation, and modality using five speeches delivered by Barack Obama in 2012. An analysis is conducted on the orator's strategic utilization of methods that align with his broader political objectives, employing Fairclough's critical discourse analysis approach, which is rooted in Halliday's framework. The researcher identifies nominalization, parallelism, unification strategies (such as the use of "us," "our," and "us"), and

modality by evaluating Obama's words. This study use Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis paradigm to analyze Barack Obama's speeches from 2012.

In the study, Khalil et al. (2017) examined the statements made by Imran Khan in Pakistan prior to the 2019 election. He analyzed the selection of words, repetition, portraying oneself in a positive light, and portraying others in a negative light, employing Fairclough's framework (1995). Imran Khan strategically employed language to manipulate public perception of himself, his allies, and his adversaries, with the ultimate goal of influencing individuals' political beliefs. The study employed Fairclough's three-dimensional theory to examine the dynamics of power in political leaders' speeches. Imran Khan aimed to establish a connection with the public and draw attention to governmental injustices through the strategic use of language tactics such as appellations and lexicon.

Research Methodology

Discourse is language used for writing, speaking, and corresponding (Van Dijk, 2005). We can say discourse involves sharing speech sounds to communicate. The important part of CDA sets it apart from other types of DA (Van Dijk, 2002). Inequality, power struggles, and societal change are some of the ideas that CDA shows. Language helps with all of these things.

Van Dijk's 2006 Framework for Political Discourse Analysis

This study relied on Van Dijk's (2006) PDA framework. Textual analysis uses discursive and rhetorical devices including actor description, authority, hyperbole, number game, etc. The 25 discourse analysis devices (discussed already) from Van Dijk's 2006 framework will be employed in this study:

Research Design

The researcher's model for this research is based on Van Dijk's 2006 framework. From the speech of the Israeli PM, the researcher will be able to extract the following devices.

The researcher will find out the grammar, rhetorical devices and discursive devices according to Van Dijk's 2006 framework.

a. Lexico Gramatical Analysis)

Noun, Pronoun, Adverb, adjective etc.

b. Rhetorical Devices

- Number game

c. Discursive Strategies

- Actor Description
- Authority
- Burden
- Victimization

Research Methodology

This research will be qualitative. The researcher has collected the English transcript of speech of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from the website.

Sampling

This study will use a purposive sample. This study will examine PM Netanyahu war speech.

The Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The current study only looked at one speech of Israeli PM on war, ignoring several additional speeches that deserve equal attention. No poll or interview was conducted to determine if the study's findings were shared by the public. This research mostly examines how language drives political discourse, with a brief mention of how it affects politics, economy, war and society.

Finally, this study is time-bound, thus it can only include the war statements of Benjamin Netanyahu (Israeli prime minister) regarding Palestine and Israel. Only Van Dijk's PDA framework from 2006

is used in this investigation. The lexical, semantic, pragmatic, and grammatical viewpoints of Israeli PM ideologies are examined within this framework.

Data Analysis

This chapter focuses on analyzing data by using the framework of Vadijk's PDA 2006. The data for this research has been collected from the official Israeli website. The first part consists on the textual analysis of speech (rhetorical and discursive strategies) as well as grammatically analysis and second part covers the sociopolitical analysis.

Discursive Devices: Textual Analysis of PM Netanyahu's Speech

Actor description:

i. PM Benjamin Netanyahu/ In a stern warning to Hamas, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday said that "though Israel did not start this war" but "will finish it"...

PM Benjamin Netanyahu is used as actor description here. He described the Palestine-Israel war's situation on October 10, 2023 as political and conflict actor and he highlighted this issue regarding that he and his county (Israel) is not responsible for this war. This is in-group positivity showed by Israeli PM Netanyahu. He raised this conflict issue for Israel and proved himself as a responsible and political leader. On the contrary, he showed the out-group negativity by saying that Hamas is responsible for this war. Prime Minister of Israel, addressing the nation about the recent attack by Hamas and outlining Israel's response that he will strict action against Hamas. He emphasizes the brutality of the situation, condemns Hamas' actions, and calls for international support in their fight against what he describes as barbarism. This provides a clear context about Netanyahu's role and the country he represents, highlighting the brutality of the situation. Grammatically, the word *Israeli* used as an adjective which describes the position of proper noun (PM Netanyahu) as a political and war actor. The word *stern* also used as adjective which indicates the action of Netanyahu which is warning to Hamas that not to engage in war with Israel by showing the positivity of in-group and negativity of out-group. He considered himself as a visionary leader by using the auxiliary verb *will*. He has future planning to survival his county and Israeli nation. As well as, he defined that he has made strategies of war against Hamas.

Authority:

ii. "In fighting Hamas, Israel is not only fighting for its own people. It is fighting for every country that stands against barbarism. Israel will win this war, and when Israel wins, the entire civilized world will win," Mr. Netanyahu said towards the conclusion of his speech...

PM Netanyahu used authority as Israel is fighting for every country against barbarism. Netanyahu emphasized that Israel's struggle is not only for its own nation but for every country that stands against barbarism, and that Israel's victory will be a victory for the entire civilized world. Here, he has combined qualities: first is authoritative leadership and second shows the moral and ethical qualities that he is fighting now and will fight in future against barbarism. As an authority, he says that Israel's success in the success of the civilized world, and Israel's failure will be proven as failure for the entire world. In this way, he showed Israelis are civilized and ethical nation. As an authoritative presence and leadership, he is addressing both national and international audiences during a time of war. By thanking world leaders and emphasizing global unity, he showed diplomatic access and authority on the international stage. He is conveying the emotions through strong language as a PM of Israel. PM Netanyahu introduced his country positively that he has internal and external forces to defeat all enemies' country. This is an authority which is used by Israel PM Netanyahu showing in-group positively. As an authoritative presence and leadership, he is addressing both national and international audiences during a time of war. He targeted his primary and secondary audiences to increase his popularity and gaining support in the war situation. Grammatically, *Hamas* used as proper noun which is spreading barbarism and the cause of fighting in whole world. Here, he showed negativity of out-group through *barbarism*. The modal verb *will*

used here which is indicating future planning as PM Netanyahu that he is a keen observer and visionary leader. He used *civilized* as an adjective which indicates the Israeli nation and whole supporter countries of Israel especially US. The adjective entire used as metaphorically, because he considered civilized just Israel and supporter countries not the whole world. By using his action *win* as verb, he showed himself as positive and global leader which has great influence and authority in the international forum.

Burden:

- iii. Branding Hamas as ISIS, he called on the "forces of civilization" to unite against the Hamas and defeat it. "Hamas is ISIS. And just as the forces of civilization united to defeat ISIS, the forces of civilization must support Israel in defeating Hamas," Mr. Netanyahu said...

PM Benjamin Netanyahu used *ISIS* as a burden in this speech. This is terrorist organization and threat for Israeli nation. ISIS also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, is designated as a terrorist organization by many countries, including the United States and Israel. This is ideological and religious war between two countries (Palestine and Israel). *ISIS* believe that they're better than Jews (Israel), and Jews believe that they're better than *ISIS* (Muslims). Netanyahu presented that Hamas as equivalent to *ISIS* to emphasize the brutality of the threat posed by the out-group (Hamas). PM Netanyahu highlighted his ideological and religious conflicts for convincing his targeted masses. Here, he showed the in-group human's losses due to the barbarism of out-group (Hamas). He used this device for gaining politically, morally and global support from his audience. By viewing whole consequence of war, all burdens and responsibilities are on the shoulders responsible leader to deal with these problems and think about the future generation. That's why, he called for International support, arguing that all civilized nations should oppose Hamas' actions and support Israel in its efforts to war. This rhetoric helped to justify Israel's military actions and diplomatic efforts against Hamas. Here, he showed himself and Israel as in-group positively. On the other hand, he compared the out-group from ISIS and showed negativity. Grammatically, PM Netanyahu used the term *ISIS* as proper noun which is the Islamic organization. ISIS stands for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Through the reference of ISIS, he showed the negativity of out-group. The modal verb *must* indicate the necessity or obligation. Here, Netanyahu expressed a strong sense of condition for the forces of civilization to support Israel in defeating Hamas. He used the word *civilization* as noun referring to himself a positive, responsible, and moral leader which having an ethics, culture, and strong technology.

Victimization:

- iv. "Hamas will understand that by attacking us, they have made a mistake of historic proportions. We will exact a price that will be remembered by them and Israel's other enemies for decades to come," said Mr. Netanyahu...

Mr. Netanyahu used *attacking us* as victim of Hamas' attack. The purpose of using this strategy, he showed the out-group negatively. By using the word used as verb *remembered*, he warned to Hamas and other enemies that future attacks not just for Hamas but from all of Israel's enemies. This show the binary of us-them. Through this binary, he showed in-group positively and out-group negatively. Rhetorically, he exaggerated his power by conveying the future planning, because Israel itself is also enduring the violence of the recent war. Metaphorically, he used these words *we will exact a price* to implies that the consequences of Hamas' actions will have a lasting impact on their memory and history. Here, Netanyahu describes Israel as a victim on savage attack by Hamas, emphasizing the brutal and inhumane nature of their actions. Along with that, he assured Israelis that he will raise his voice for their protection and support in the international community. He showed himself as responsible, sympathetic and positive leader. Grammatically, Modal verb *will* for future planning demonstrates that he has long-term strategy in war condition for dealing with these complications. Netanyahu used the word *price* as noun which is the response of Hamas' action. The *exclusive we* used here as pronoun, PM Netanyahu warned Hamas and all other enemies that they have strong

military power and support US. Through we, he showed the passivity of in-group. The *exclusive them* used as pronoun and showed the negativity of out-group. Here, he showed the binary of Us-Them.

Rhetorical Devices:

Number game:

- i. As many as 2,300 Israelis have sustained injuries and more than 700 have died so far in the surprise Hamas attack on Saturday morning...

As many as 2,300 Israelis used as a number game which showed the facts and figures. This is a number game device which indicated the numbers of injured Israelis during Hamas attack. Here, PM Netanyahu used this rhetorical device as *700 Israelis have died*. This figure showed the tragic loss of life. This show the seriousness of barbarism in this land. Due to this attack, there has a lot of human loss in Israel Land. This is a very serious problem for our future generation. Here, he highlighted the negativity of Hamas and declared them as out-group negatively. By presenting these figures, his aims to gain sympathy and support from both primary and secondary audiences, emphasizing the brutal nature of the attack. Netanyahu defined the injured and died Israeli through number game. The word *Israeli* used here as an adjective which is modifying the Israel nation. *Many* used here as uncountable noun that refers to thousand Israeli have lost their lives due to this attack. *More* is often considered to be the comparative adjective of much, here it used in the same context that more people have died in Hamas attack. *More than* shows no exact number of died Israelis.

Discussion and Findings

PM Benjamin Netanyahu used different themes such as, war circumstances, human losses, religious issues, end barbarism and Israeli power through discursive strategies to encourage his ideology. For examples, Israel is not only fighting for its own people. It is fighting for every country that stands against barbarism, in this example, PM Benjamin Netanyahu used this theme through the strategy of Authority to represent in-group positively. He gave the positive references that Israel is fighting against barbarism for every country. The ideology is that he wants to say that Israel is not just fighting for its own people but for the whole world. Israel will win this war. Israel's victory is the victory of the entire civilized world. All these themes are used by PM Benjamin Netanyahu to represent in-group positively and out-group negatively. PM Benjamin Netanyahu used 5 strategies in his speech. PM Benjamin Netanyahu employed statistical strategy, stating that Israel has mobilised 3,00,000 troops; here, he demonstrated in-group positivity. Israeli PM showed a good attitude toward his in-group and a negative attitude toward his out-group. PM Benjamin Netanyahu used hyperbole and said *this is the largest mobilization*. He wants to say that Israel has strong and powerful army to defeat Gaza. Here, he showed in-group positively by using this rhetorical device. PM Benjamin Netanyahu used I want to thank US President Joe Biden and many world leaders for your unprecedented support for Israel. Here he used this strategy of authority for showing in-group positively and out-group negatively. He also showed here the authority for showing his power and diplomatic relations with US. PM Benjamin Netanyahu used *savage attacks* as burden in his speech and declared this is dangerous attack for Israeli peoples. He also showed the responsible leadership and said to world leaders especially to US that this is a burden on the shoulders of all the world leaders to finish this war and support them. PM Benjamin Netanyahu mentioned the reference of *ISIS and Yom Kippur War* a different method he used to demonstrate dominance. PM Benjamin Netanyahu used *civilized*, *mindboggling* and *savage* as adjective in his speech.

Conclusion

The present research aimed at critical discourse analysis of the speech of PM Benjamin Netanyahu to examine how various discursive techniques are employed by the speaker to promote his ideologies. The research is conducted through Van Dijk's (2006) Political Discourse Analysis framework, there

has been used different strategies and techniques. These devices include actor description, authority, burden, number game, national self-glorification, lexicalization, victimization, and hyperbole. PM Benjamin Netanyahu made significant arguments about the Israel-Palestine war to supporting his country. PM Benjamin Netanyahu shows higher in-group positivity than out-group negativity. Although he have propagate his ideologies by using language, including war consequences, peace, religious beliefs, customs, agreements about Israele-Gaza.

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