
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Unveiling the Power of Words: A critical Discourse Analysis of Benjamin Netanyahu's Speech at the United Nations General Assembly on September 27, 2024

Tasnim K. M. AlAsttal

English language teacher, UNRWA, Khanyounis, Palestine.

Corresponding Author: Author's Name, Tasnim Kamal Mohammed AlAsttal, E-mail: tasneemastal@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research paper aims to examine an extensive field of rhetoric concerning one of the most longstanding issues throughout contemporary history: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This study analyses Benjamin Netanyahu's speech before the United Nations General Assembly on September 27, 2024, with the objective of determining the rhetorical strategies employed and their impact on spreading the speaker's viewpoints. The main aim of the study is to investigate the utilization of power in Netanyahu's speech through textual, discursive, and cultural lenses. Therefore, the study employs a method of qualitative research and critical discourse analysis (CDA) for its analytical approach in order to accomplish that objective. Critical discourse analysis is employed in this study to delve into Netanyahu's speech to uncover the most important themes hidden within the text. The study makes use of Fairclough's research on language in context, elaborating on the Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis to conduct a detailed examination of the text at both the micro and macro levels. The findings demonstrate the effectiveness of discourse in spreading different points of view, influencing ideologies, and distorting history for the purpose of shaping the receivers' minds. Furthermore, the results of this research are expected to provide new perspectives on the relationship between language and power, along with politics and conflict.

KEYWORDS

Netanyahu, qualitative method, critical discourse analysis, three-dimensional model.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 15 November 2024

PUBLISHED: 23 December 2024

DOI: 10.32996/ijllt.2024.7.12.223

1. Introduction

Language is an effective tool that creates public opinion and impacts the way we think and feel of the surrounding world. The purposeful employment of language by political officials significantly influences public discourse and directs societal narratives. Political leaders carefully craft statements to convey their intentions, ambition and action plans. They use specific words and phrases to influence public opinion and justify their decisions (Bingtian, 2017). Language, as Taylor (2013) suggests, is not merely a passive tool for communication but an active agent in shaping social realities. It goes beyond conveying information; it constructs and negotiates meanings within social interactions. How language is used can have a profound effect; because it reinforces social norms, legitimizes the transition of power and influences our understanding of equality and inequality (Taylor, 2013, p. 77).

The strength of language is in its capacity to formulate and promote specific ideologies and perspectives. Political authorities employ language to express their decisions and actions in accordance with what they want. Rhetorical devices and persuasive methods are frequently used to gain support and shape public image. By wisely arranging their language, they may impact the narrative and portray their beliefs as rational, essential, and valuable to society.

During conflicts, the language expressed by politicians becomes increasingly significant as it conveys hidden meanings and exposes underlying objectives. Political statements, beyond their literal words, serve as powerful tools to shape public perception, influence decision-making processes, and advance specific political objectives (Anwar, Butt, & Shahzadi, 2024, p.256). Officials can

Copyright: © 2022 the Author(s). This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) 4.0 license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). Published by Al-Kindi Centre for Research and Development, London, United Kingdom.

convey subtle messages, frame specific issues and create a narrative that matches their interests through the strategic use of language. Analysing political speech is a valuable endeavour, as it can reveal hidden biases and ideologies and methods of distorting public perception to serve specific programs.

Political speech often contains subtle messages and discourse structures that reinforce certain ideologies and power dynamics. With critical analysis, we can identify strategic uses of language to legitimize policies, give reasons for action and influence public opinion. By raising awareness of these language changes, we help readers question and critically evaluate the information presented to them (Abu Khaled, 2020, p.34). Indeed, what cannot be revealed through admission, can surely be revealed via critical discourse analysis.

Israel launched war on the Gaza Strip on October 7, 2023. The Palestinian Health Ministry said more than 45,500 Palestinians have been killed as a result of Israeli attacks. Thousands additional individuals stay crushed beneath the rubble and face the threat of sickness (Al Jazeera, 2023). Nevertheless, the number is expected to keep rising as the war continues without any apparent resolution in sight. Despite the death and devastation in Gaza, the Netanyahu-led Israeli occupation persists in its brutal killings of innocent Palestinians in cold blood.

On September 27, 2024, Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). A discourse I would describe as deceitful, manipulative and a mechanism for brainwashing. To acquire the skills of a shrewd strategist, one should examine and analyse Netanyahu's statements to the UN General Assembly. He skilfully uses words to twist the truth and to make the audience agree with each and every word he utters. In addition to that, he knows well how to employ others' ideologies to serve his message.

So, in the research paper, I will try to shed the light on how Netanyahu masterfully uses the language to spread his ideology and influence the audience to adopt his narrative. The way to do that is through the lens of critical discourse analysis. Specifically, I will follow Fairclough's 3D model of CDA. Thus, I will analyse the text from both the macro and micro levels to try to answer the main question of this paper.

1.1 Research Questions:

"In what ways is power manifested at the textual, discursive, and societal levels in Netanyahu's (2024) speech at the UNGA?"

This will be further examined through these sub-questions:

- On the micro level:
 1. How is power expressed and applied at the linguistic level regarding the formation of coherence, syntax, lexical choices, figures of speech and pronouns?
- On the macro level:
 2. How is power represented and enacted at the discursive level involving inter-discursivity and inter-textuality?
 3. In what way is power manifested and symbolized throughout the broader level of ideology and dogmas to allow Netanyahu to widely spread his narrative?

1.2 Research Objectives:

Discourse analysts strive to uncover and interpret the messages conveyed by political figures through various linguistic means (Tariq, Nawaz, & Farid, 2020, p. 35). Thus, this paper has some objectives that came out of my duty as a Palestinian citizen. It is, indeed, my duty towards my homeland Palestine to expose all the attempts to twist facts and manipulate history. I consider this research paper to be as a torch of light that leads the world towards the pure truth that is no matter what massacres or aggression Netanyahu and his soldiers do to us, we will never surrender and we will stick even deeper to get our rights back. Moreover, this is to enlighten minds and make the next generations analyse everything they see or hear and not take what they are produced at for granted. My objectives in this paper are as follows:

1. To identify how Benjamin Netanyahu manipulates ideologies to serve his narrative.
2. To analyse the linguistic elements that show dichotomy in Netanyahu's speech.
3. To expose the untold meanings beyond certain words in his speech.

2. Literature Review

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) has developed into an effective analytical framework. Utilizing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a methodological tool enables researchers to explore the complex relationship between language, ideology, and power in political discourse, exposing the strategic employment of language. They serve to establish and reinforce particular beliefs, hence shaping social realities (Riman, 2024, p. 3). This literature review analyses numerous studies utilizing critical discourse analysis (CDA) to investigate political speeches. Examining these studies enhances our understanding of how political leaders use language as a powerful weapon. They construct identities, manipulate ideologies, and shape public perception. This review clarifies the intricate relationship between language, power, and ideology in political discourse, so it provides an in-depth examination of the topic in question.

In his master's thesis, Riman (2024) examines the language used in the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) 2024 Speeches on the genocide case against Israel. Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), he focuses on how these speeches create narratives of internal genocide within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Specifically, he analyses the speeches delivered by South African legal counsels. The findings reveal a stark contrast between the emotional language used by South African legal counsels to connect with individual Palestinian victims and the dehumanizing language employed by Israeli officials. Riman (2024) observes that South African legal counsels adopt a deliberate linguistic methodology, employing different verbs when addressing Palestinians as opposed to Israelis—"a difference that mirrored the victimization and victimizing of Palestinians respectively" (p. 30). This study enhances comprehension of the influence of legal language on public perception and the significance of international legal institutions in conflict settlement. This is particularly accurate in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Moreover, the study by Anwar, Butt, and Shahzadi (2024) seeks to uncover the hidden motives of the Israeli government by a critical examination of its official announcements during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Utilizing Fairclough's (2003) approach of critical discourse analysis, the researchers aim to uncover the foundational ideology of power that Israel has maintained since its inception as a state. Through the analysis of ten statements made by high-ranking Israeli government officials on a social media platform (Twitter/X), the study identifies the unequivocal power and ideology of Israel. The findings suggest that Israel's statements promote the dehumanization of Palestinians and the occupation of their land. Furthermore, the study demonstrates the critical function of language in preserving political authority and dominance. It shows the necessity for transparent and equivalent discourse to resolve the longstanding conflict between Israel and Palestine. The researchers assert that the objective of rhetoric is not only to "maintain control over Palestinian territories but also to influence the global narrative surrounding the conflict." (Anwar et al., 2024, p. 263).

Furthermore, Maalej and Zibin's (2024) study explores the employment of animal metaphors in the persistent conflict between Israel and Palestine. It discusses how these metaphors are purposefully used to justify violence and discrimination. The research reveals the important role of metaphors in shaping perceptions of out-groups and legitimizing brutal behaviors. The researchers claim that the intentional utilization of animal metaphors by Israeli officials and their supporters dehumanizes Palestinians, consequently justifying discriminatory practices and violence towards them (Maalej & Zibin, 2024, p. 16). This study emphasizes the vital role of language in forming social reality and shaping public perceptions of this conflict. It underscores the influence of figurative language in generating social narratives.

Additionally, Abu Khalid (2020) analyses the distortions of power and ideology in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech at the United Nations General Assembly in 2014. The research uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine the strategic use of language in justifying political acts and ideologies. Her main question is how Netanyahu creates dichotomy in his speech. She notes that Netanyahu suggests that the in-group is Israel while the out-group is Hamas. She finds that "the out group classifications revealed images of social unrest, security risk, violence, and crime. On the other hand, the in group was depicted as victims of the escalating violence committed by the Palestinians." (Abu Khaled, 2020, p. 37).

It is worth noting that Tariq, Nawaz, and Farid's (2020) study uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) to critically examine the Prime Minister of Pakistan's speech at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2019. Tariq et al. (2020) employ Fairclough's three-dimensional model to look into the portrayal of "us" and "them" regarding four crucial issues: climate change, money laundering, Islamophobia, and Kashmir. This study employs a mixed-method approach which combines qualitative and quantitative analyses to thoroughly evaluate the speech. It delves into the power dynamics within the discourse and the influence of power behind the discourse. They suggest that speeches delivered by political leaders at international forums often capture the attention of researchers interested in "investigating the role of language in asserting power and identity" (Tariq et al., 2020, p. 43).

In their contrastive Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) study, Rababah and Hamdan (2019) examine the speeches of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas during the Gaza War of 2014. The results show that both speakers portray the Self/in-group as a "beacon of strength, humanity and goodness" in contrast to the Other/out-group that is seen as "bit hole of evilness" (Rababah & Hamdan, 2019, p. 187). The researchers examine how linguistic selections mirror ideological stances and influence the interactions between in-groups and out-groups. Politicians carefully utilize language to accentuate the positive attributes of themselves and their group while underscoring the negative aspects of the opposing group. This corresponds with Van Dijk's "Ideological Square," which highlights positive self-representation and negative other-representation as fundamental techniques. The study emphasizes the function of transitivity structures in representing these ideological stances, depicting the in-group as victims and advocates of peace, while characterizing the out-group as hostile and destructive.

In addition to that, Cohen (2015) offers an empirical paradigm to understand the dehumanization of Palestinians by Israeli ex-soldiers, combining psycholinguistic and psychoanalytic tools. The study examines how language is employed to dehumanize enemy members, particularly in the context of military occupation. Cohen clarifies that dehumanization is linked to the identification of non-human or sub-human characteristics to oppositional individuals. The study discusses the psychological mechanisms that allow soldiers to think of Palestinians as inferior and dangerous, hence rationalizing aggressive conduct. Cohen (2018) argues that the implicit dehumanization of Palestinian women may serve as an attack on their human features, portraying them as inferior and potentially harmful creatures (p. 268).

It is, also, that Jaspel and Coyle (2014) examine how Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu construct the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in their speeches during the 2011 UN state membership bid. The study reveals that both leaders employ discourses of victimhood and threat to strengthen their positions and perpetuate negative intergroup dynamics (Jaspel & Coyle, 2014, p. 211). Jaspel and Coyle explain that these discourses serve to bolster and maintain these dynamics. The research emphasizes the use of metaphors and rhetorical devices to portray the in-group as innocent and non-violent. At the same time, it portrays the out-group as aggressive and threatening. This method corresponds with Van Dijk's assertion that in-group goodness is emphasized while in-group negativity is minimized.

Finally Bayram (2010) examines the relationship between language and identity in political discourse, using Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos as a case study. This study, grounded in Norman Fairclough's principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), investigates the ways in which language influences and reflects power dynamics. Bayram stresses that language is essential in social relations, converting power into rights and obedience into duties. The study notes that language selection differs based on the speaker's identity, the setting, and the intended audience. He further asserts that analysing political discourse, especially speeches, is most effective when it "relates the details of linguistic behavior to political behavior" (Bayram, 2010, p. 31), emphasizing the close relationship between language and politics.

Although existing literature offers valuable insights into various aspects of the Israel-Palestine conflict and employs means of CDA very well, there appears to be a notable gap in the exploration of political discourse of Netanyahu's 2024 speech at UNGA. No previous study has investigated this speech for both language elements and ideological impacts. This study seeks to fill this gap by conducting an in-depth analysis of the language and discourse utilized in Netanyahu's speech at both macro and micro levels.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

My research design uses a qualitative approach using critical discourse analysis (CDA) as the primary method. This study conducts an open-ended analysis that combines macro- and micro-level analysis using Fairclough's three-dimensional (3D) CDA model. The premise of Fairclough's construct is that language is a key component of social interaction (Fairclough, 2003). Therefore, this approach allows me to explore the complex relationships between language, power, ideology, and political and social practices within the context of Netanyahu's speech.

3.2 Data Collection

To gather the necessary data for my analysis, I will obtain the transcript of Netanyahu's speech at the UNGA on September 27, 2024, which will serve as the primary focus of my investigation, providing a rich source of linguistic and discursive material. It is available on the internet.

3.3 Analysis Framework

Fairclough's 3D Model of CDA will serve as the analytical framework for this study. According to Fairclough (2003), power isn't just about who has more control; it's about the differences between people and how they shape the way information is created, shared, and understood. His "three-dimensional" model sees communication as a mix of text, discourse, and social action. Fairclough wants to show how language, as a social practice, is connected to power and ideology, and how it can both influence and be influenced by power dynamics. Moreover, Fairclough argues that ideologies are like a lens through which we view different aspects of reality, and they play a crucial role in shaping power dynamics. These ideologies can either maintain or challenge existing power structures, and they influence how we perceive and understand the world around us (Anwar et al., 2024, p. 257).

3.3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

When it comes to analysing discourse, especially through a critical lens, it is important to recognize that language is an integral part of our social lives. It is not something that can be separated or reduced to just words on a page. Language is deeply interconnected with other aspects of our social reality, and it plays a crucial role in shaping our thoughts, behaviors, and interactions (Fairclough, 2003). The main aim of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is to understand how language is used in society to impact people's lives. By analysing different communication styles, CDA reveals how people share their beliefs, ideas, and goals, and how this can shape social dynamics (Alassiri, 2023).

Van Dijk (1993) argues that language is not just a means of conveying messages; it is a powerful tool that shapes our understanding of the world. A common misconception about CDA, addressed by Van Dijk (2015), is the belief that it relies on a specific method for discourse analysis. In reality, CDA is an interdisciplinary field that utilizes cross-disciplinary methods from discourse studies and various social science and humanities methodologies.

Thus, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a versatile approach that extends beyond language studies, encompassing media discourse, public discourse, organizational studies, and political discourse. Among the various researchers who have contributed to CDA, Fairclough's 3D Model stands out as a significant contribution, offering a comprehensive framework for analysis.

3.3.2 Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

Fairclough's (1989) Three-Dimensional Model is a widely recognized framework in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This model views language as a social practice, allowing researchers to analyse how text and talk reflect power dynamics and political dominance within discourse. By taking an interdisciplinary approach, the model provides valuable insights into the complex interplay between language, society, and power (Tariq et al., 2020).

Alassiri (2023) illustrates that Fairclough's framework is commonly visualized through a model consisting of three interconnected dimensions, often depicted as boxes. Each box represents a specific analytical dimension, providing a structured approach to understanding the complex relationships between language, power, and social practices. I will further explain this 3D model in the following figure:

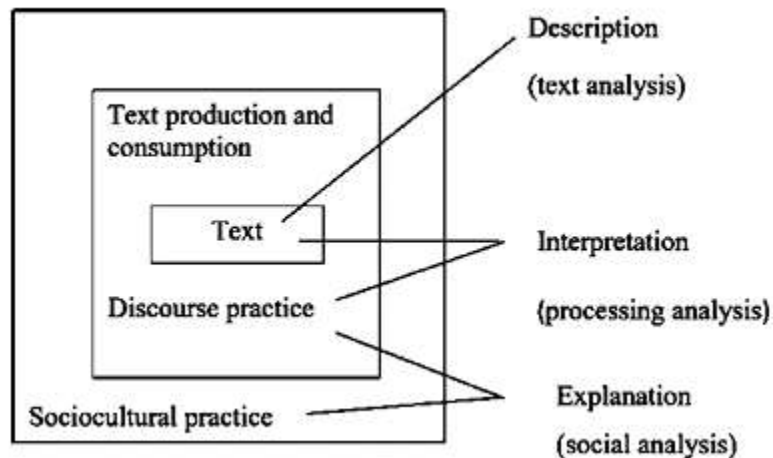


Figure 1: Three-dimensional model Fairclough (1989)

As the figure illustrates, Fairclough's three-dimensional model presents an approachable structure for analysing texts and their connection to power and social norms. The model has three separate phases, each of which offers an individual reading of the text. The initial phase of text analysis is an in-depth examination of the text's structural patterns and characteristics. Through the examination of language features and rhetorical tools, researchers can uncover the underlying message and intentions contained within it. In the second phase, the examination of processing concentrates on the context in which the message is generated and employed. The analyst discusses the message within the context of society and culture. It examines how the public interprets and understands such messages. This phase creates significant links between the text and the broader discursive activities that affect its meaning. The third phase of social practice analysis investigates power relations and social practices in greater depth. By analysing the message within a wider societal environment, researchers can recognize hidden power relations and their expression through language and discourse. This phase links the preceding dimensions to the overall discourse structure. It presents insights into the deep link between language, power, and society.

3.4 Data Analysis

The analysis will encompass the three phases of the model: textual analysis, discursive analysis, and social analysis. The analysis will start with a review of Netanyahu's speech via the initial dimension, Description, concentrating on the linguistic aspects, including the lexical, grammatical, and structural levels of the text. The second stage is Interpretation, in which the analysis looks at both situational and intertextual conditions. This dimension involves looking into the participants, along with the interpretations and implications generated within the text via language selections in interactions. The third component, Explanation, consists of an additional review of lexical choices and textual orientation. This involves an in-depth investigation of the relationship between power and ideology. Fairclough (1989) argues that the primary goal of the third dimension is to examine certain cultural, ideological, and societal assumptions, as well as the activities that either provoke change or reinforce existing power relations.

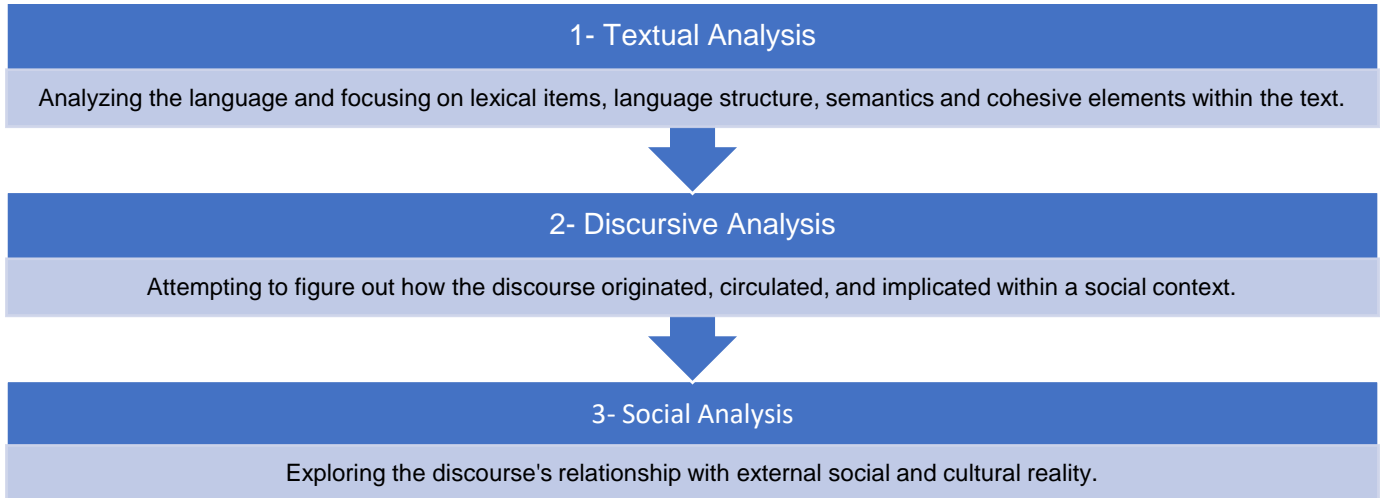


Figure 2: Stages of Analysis

4. Results and Discussion

Nearly one year into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, amidst on-going atrocities and bloodshed of innocent Palestinian civilians, Netanyahu, with false confidence and arrogance, addresses the UNGA, portraying himself and his armed forces as victims against the "brutal" Palestinian children, women, and elderly. Despite witnessing the killings of innocent Palestinians, the United Nations continues to support Israel with military assistance and technologically advanced weapons. What is the reason for that? What is the justification for that? I agree that Netanyahu's skilled declarations are a significant factor in that regard. How can he effortlessly manipulate minds and compel the audience to empathize with the murderers while ignoring the real victims, the innocent Palestinian infants who were slain in cold blood? In the subsequent pages, I will attempt to analyse the speech to uncover its authentic textual, discursive, and cultural significances.

4.1 Textual Analysis

Text Analysis represents the initial stage in Fairclough's approach. It applies to the linguistic examination of vocabulary, semantics, structure, phonology, and coherence beyond the sentence level. Netanyahu's 2024 speech at the UN General Assembly comprises almost 4,000 words. This extensive discourse employs language effectively to reinforce the Israeli narrative through its linguistic features. I will endeavour to analyse the linguistic elements from my point of view.

Netanyahu begins his speech with the verb 'intend' to indicate that he did not plan to speak on this occasion. This demonstrates that the decision for Netanyahu to come here remains solely his own choice. He establishes a perception of authority and supremacy, positioning himself as the decision-maker in Israel. This further reflects his profound unhappiness with the opinions of Israel shared by particular UNGA members. He therefore regards himself as an envoy representing all Israelis and the so-called 'state' of Israel. He emphasizes this in the subsequent phrase when he states: 'I decided to come here to speak for my people'. He reiterates his own feelings of disappointment on page 8 when he states: 'there is definitely nothing new at the United Nations.'

4.1.1. Reiteration

Winter (2001) defines reiteration as the repetition of particular lexical items in discourse, either to reinforce the presented concept or because of their connection to a related lexical set relevant to the topic. Reiteration within the text can occur in two forms: explicit reiteration and implicit reiteration. The former refers to the repetition of the same lexical item across many phrases in the text, whereas the latter indicates the use of synonyms, near-synonyms, or antonyms of the term. (Allassiri, 2023).

He employs the near-synonyms 'lies' and 'slanders' to enhance Israel's image and portray himself and his army as victims.

He utilizes **repetition** in the speech to draw attention to specific topics. For instance, he reiterates the term 'truth' in the third paragraph to persuade the audience of his narrative. In Arab traditions, though, when an individual repeatedly swears by God to affirm their honesty, it often leads us to perceive them to be significant liars. Furthermore, he goes on to say the term 'peace' numerous times, 22 times, to convince UN members that Israel desires peace, so they turn a blind eye to the horrific acts committed against Palestinians. Netanyahu argues that these actions are undertaken for the sake of 'peace.' He characterizes the Palestinians as 'vicious rivals' to create fear amongst UN members and eliminate any potential compassion for them, frequently employing the term 'destroy' to emphasize his claim that Palestinians are merely savage, barbaric rioters. So, it is permissible for him and others to slay and murder them.

He employs repetition to highlight his belief that Israel is destined to bestow blessings upon the globe, while its enemies seek to destroy it bringing a curse. He uses the word 'blessing' 13 times and the word 'curse' 10 times to achieve this. The excessive repetition of same phrases suggests an attempt to brainwash UN members and embed his narrative within their subconscious minds, so persuading them to support and empathize with Israel.

Furthermore, he employs **antonyms** by contrasting 'civilization' with 'dark ages' in order to divide the globe into two groups: the civilized group, including Israel and the United Nations as shown by his reference to 'common civilization,' and the underdeveloped group that remains stuck in the dark ages. In that way, Netanyahu establishes a dichotomy. Moreover, he underscores this idea by employing the antonyms 'blessing' and 'curse.' He argues that Israel aims to give benefits to future generations, whilst its enemies, led by Iran, impose the curse of destruction upon the civilized world. Consequently, he employs a binary opposition that frames Israel's activities as a dichotomy; Israel opts for 'blessings,' as articulated by Netanyahu, whereas Iran selects 'curse.' This is exemplified in the subsequent lines in which he mentions the 'curse of October 7th.' This is further explained in page 7, where he states: 'We seek to move forward to a bright age of prosperity and peace. Iran and its proxies have also made their choice. They want to move back to a dark age of terror and war.' He continues to employ contrasting terms: forward and back, bright and dark. Additionally, he employs antonyms to denounce the UN members who support the proposal to expel Israel from Palestine. He states that the UN was once 'respected,' but is now 'contemptible.'

4.1.2 Word Selection

He employs a harsh tone to characterize the incident of October 7th. He uses the word 'thousands' to magnify the count of attackers and to present Israelis as victims. He utilizes words like 'terrorists', 'burst into', 'atrocities', 'savagely', 'murdered', 'raped', 'beheaded', 'burned', and 'kidnapped' to convince UN members that these are brutal, barbaric riots, justifying the execution of those involved without compassion for the innocent civilians. However, his tone alters when he depicts his warriors. On page 2, he employs words such as 'incredible', 'courage', 'heroic', and 'sacrifice'. This shows his enormous trust in his soldiers, viewing their slaughters and atrocities as ordinary acts of heroism. Indeed, language is never neutral.

Other than that, he skilfully employs **pronouns** to persuade the listener of his narrative. When he states, 'I want to assure you, we will not rest until the remaining hostages are brought home too', he conveys that he represents his people in their commitment to securing the return of the hostages. He employs the pronoun 'we' to indicate his place among his people, with whom he collaborates. This underscores that Israel is a 'state' characterized by democracy and human rights. This reaffirms that Israel opts for blessings.

He employs the term 'wiped away' in reference to kibbutz Nir Oz to support the claim that Palestinians are brutal killers. He, however, avoided revealing the actual name of the kibbutz. He ignored the fact that the region in dispute had been taken from the Palestinians and that what happened on October 7th constituted an effort to reclaim their land.

He characterizes the tunnels in the Gaza Strip as the 'underground terrorist hell of Hamas' to emphasize that Hamas chose a curse, but Israel chooses blessings, as indicated by his reference to a 'holy mission.' Moreover, he utilizes the term 'responsible' to characterize the governments who approve and ally with Israel in its conflict against Iran. This aims to create shame among UN members, pushing them to take more responsibility and fulfil their obligations to their nations, which, from Netanyahu's perspective, means supporting and aligning with Israel.

In addition to that, he asserts: 'we destroyed nearly all of Hamas's terror battalions—23 out of 24 battalions.' It is worth to note that he fails to acknowledge that they also destroyed almost all the houses in Gaza. My residence, my parents' residence, and practically all the homes of my acquaintances had been demolished by the Israeli 'brave' soldiers, as stated by Netanyahu. We are merely civilians striving to earn a livelihood and pursue a decent life.

He employs simple, straightforward words while stating his belief that Hamas remains in power. He claims that "They sell the stolen food at exorbitant prices, and that's how they stay in power." The language is easily comprehensible to the majority of people worldwide. Netanyahu intends to spread his narrative widely. He employs the term 'exorbitant' in order to demonstrate that Hamas is exploiting civilian Palestinians to maintain its authority. Therefore, if they lack mercy for their own people, they will have zero empathy towards Israelis.

He, subsequently, adopts the victim's persona by asserting, 'Good is portrayed as evil, and evil is portrayed as good.' He employs the word 'falsely' to convey that Israel's accusation of genocide suggests that individuals are deceived and brainwashed when they claim that the brutal acts committed by Israel against Palestinians constitute genocides. He distorts the facts to cleanse himself and his troops.

Notably, he effectively employs **modal verbs** to highlight the ideas he offers. For instance, in his statement, 'appeasement must end immediately', he uses the verb 'must' to signify obligation. He believes that Israel is the dominant power and others must comply with its commands. A further example is his sentence, 'they should join Israel.' He employs the verb 'should' to urge the responsible governments to support Israel. He, additionally, states, "Hamas has got to go". "Has to" is a modal verb expressing obligation. He declares that this conflict will not end until he ensures the eradication of Hamas. Furthermore, he states: 'we will not stop until that mission is complete'. He uses 'will' to guarantee the future safety of all the hostages. In page 5, he states: 'this war can come to an end now,' employing the verb 'can' to place the blame on Hamas. He desires the world to prove that it is Hamas, not the Israelis, who enjoys the war and the killings of Palestinians. He insists that the war might be over if

Hamas yields. However he is fully aware that Hamas would never surrender. He simply states this to elicit greater sympathy for Israel, the 'peaceful' nation forced to fight Hamas and to undertake severe actions against innocent Palestinians.

In page 8, he states: 'Check your fanaticism at the door'. He utilizes the imperative mood to convey a clear message that anyone trying to expel Israel from its 'promised' land is simply a fanatic or extremist. This is a message addressed to the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and some UN members who support this resolution. He employs the word 'shamefully' to characterize the support for that resolution. This implies he is indirectly seeking sympathy with Israel, which has made its choice of 'blessings'.

4.1.3 Establishing a Dichotomy

Netanyahu shows the contrast between Israel's blessings and Iran's curse by presenting two maps that illustrate these binary oppositions. These maps emphasize his viewpoint. He uses maps as a persuasive device that captivates the audience's visual attention. Upon watching it, people accept it to be true. In Map 1, depicting the blessings of Israel, the world appears advanced and interconnected with railways, conveying a sense of satisfaction. Netanyahu characterizes it as a 'bright future of hope'. In map 2, depicting Iran's curse, the world is characterized by internal horror and devastation, devoid of trade or progress. It represents 'a dark future of despair', as Netanyahu states.

So, Netanyahu's principal claim in this speech is that Israel opts for blessings while its rivals select curses. Netanyahu personally asks the audience regarding their choice. He inquires: 'What choice will you make?'. This inquiry implies that Netanyahu is now assured he has provided sufficient justifications in his prior speech and that the audience wholly accepts and supports Israel. He employs antonyms in the subsequent questions. As an illustration, he employs the word 'democracy' while inquiring about supporting Israel, whereas he utilizes 'dictatorship' when discussing Iran.

4.1.4 Figurative Language

He uses **personification** in the expression: 'the long arm of Israel'. He compares Israel to a gigantic creature with vast reach. This personification represents the strength and advanced technology that characterize Israel and empower it to achieve its objectives. It further intensifies Netanyahu's threatening tone. He directly threatens Iran, stressing that Israel can reach it at any time it desires. Netanyahu does not only threaten Iran, but he also presents a threat to the Arab World, the Middle East, as he refers to it.

Furthermore, he uses **metaphor** by characterizing the UNGA as a 'swamp of anti-Semitic bile'. He describes the UN members advocating for the resolution that would remove Israel from Palestine as a disgusting swamp that serves as an ideal environment for diseases. This helps to reinforce the argument that opposing Israel brings catastrophes and pandemics.

He concludes his statement by quoting a saying from an Israeli poet: 'Israel will not go gently into that good night. We will never need to rage against the dying of the light because the torch of Israel will forever shine bright'. This statement signifies that Netanyahu possesses tremendous pride in his nation and senses no need to depend on the United Nations. He wishes to convey that he is unaffected by any resolutions made to ridicule Israel. This is due to his belief that Israel will ultimately prevail. This is exemplified in the rhyme employed by the poet using the terms 'night' and 'bright.' This suggests that Israel will keep growing and bestowing blessings, as Netanyahu asserts in his speech, despite all the 'false' resolutions launched against it.

4.2 Discursive Analysis:

The second component of Fairclough's paradigm is the discursive or processing analysis (Alassiri, 2023). The analyst at this level is attempting to figure out the origins, distribution, and implications of discourse within the societal environment. The discursive analysis investigates how Netanyahu constructs his argument and articulates Israel's points of view. He employs various rhetorical techniques, including:

4.2.1 Invocation of Historical Context:

Netanyahu seeks to provide the speech with historical significance, persuading the audience that Israel's struggle is a fundamental aspect of the everlasting conflict between good and evil.

For example, he states in page 1: 'we face the same timeless choice that Moses put before the people of Israel thousands of years ago, as we were about to enter the Promised Land'. He mentions **Moses**, the prophet sent to the people of Israel, which the nickname of the prophet Jacob. He intentionally exploits Moses and the 'promised' land to rationalize the Israelis' actions against the Palestinians. He asserts that regardless of our actions towards them, it is our own right to proceed, all for the sake of returning to our 'promised' homeland, as conveyed by Moses. Upon examining history, though, it becomes evident that the contemporary Israelis occupying Palestine bear no connection to the ancient Israelites, to whom Moses was sent. These Israelis resided in Europe and undermined its moral purity. The European authorities sought to eliminate them and determined that the most effective solution was to exploit the longstanding narrative of the 'promised' land to facilitate their migration there. Unfortunately for the Palestinians, what location could serve as a more suitable 'promised' land than Palestine, which has a strategic position connecting three continents: Asia, Africa, and Europe? This is close to accomplishing two objectives at once;

European authorities eliminate the Israelis while ensuring the Arab World remains weak and divided.

Netanyahu employs history by mentioning **King Solomon** in page 8. He distorts the truth by stating only a portion of it in his assertion: 'who reigned in our eternal capital, Jerusalem, 3,000 years ago' He employs the pronoun "our" alongside King Solomon in the same sentence to emphasize his legal claim of Palestine, asserting that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, not that of Palestine. He argues that history supports the Israeli's point of view.

He, also, utilizes the **Bible** because that the United Nations, as Christians, adhere to its teachings. He believes that it is inscribed in the Bible that 'the eternity of Israel will not falter'. However, we are all aware that the Bible has been distorted and additional passages have been incorporated into it.

4.2.2. Emotional Appeal:

Netanyahu employs **personalization** to elicit sympathy from the audience. He tells the narratives of Israeli individuals whose family members remain hostages in Gaza, including Eli Shtivi, Koby Samerano, and Sharon Sharabi. He engenders sympathy among UN members, so facilitating support for the Israelis' efforts to retrieve their hostages, regardless of the killings and war crimes committed. Furthermore, Netanyahu effectively capitalizes on the notion that Israel embodies democracy. He reinforces this notion through the example of the Arab Israeli, Salem Alatrash.

An additional significant element in capturing the audience's emotions is the tone of **victimization** employed by Netanyahu throughout his speech. He initiates this technique by recalling the Nazi Holocaust, stating that the event of October 7th is a 'reminiscent' of it. He further claims that Israel is isolated in its conflict against seven fronts organized by Iran: Hamas, Hezbollah, Houthis, militias in Syria and Iraq, Palestinian terrorists in Judea and Samaria, and Iran itself. Furthermore, he argues that the Israeli army shows mercy by attempting to prevent civilian casualties through the distribution of flyers, text messages, and phone calls to instruct Palestinian people to evacuate the targeted zones. Indeed, this is merely ink on paper, as the majority of Palestinian martyrs are civilians with no affiliation to Hamas or any other party.

4.2.3 Binary Opposition:

Netanyahu characterizes the struggle as a dichotomy between a "blessing" (peace and prosperity) and a "curse" (terror and war). This is effectively demonstrated in the two maps I mentioned above. He further confirms this notion when he discusses the 'blessings' selected by the Israelis. He insists that it will occur throughout the normalization agreement with Saudi Arabia. This will bring about significant benefits regarding trade, tourism, joint ventures, and peace, as suggested by Netanyahu. On the contrary, Iran chose the path of warfare and terrorism. He further clarifies this idea by characterizing Israel's selection of blessings as a 'holy' and 'sacred' task.

4.3 Social Analysis:

In the final phase of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis paradigm, the text is analysed within the socio-cultural context of communicative events. The socio-cultural framework encompasses three communicative events: economic, political, and cultural (Tariq et al., 2020). To clarify this point, the social analysis examines the broader social and political context surrounding the speech's delivery. This section will analyse how Netanyahu manipulates ideologies to support his narrative.

Netanyahu repeatedly states that Iran has chosen the curse. This exploits the ideology deeply rooted in the Western world, portraying Iran as the source of Eastern evil that seeks to destroy the modern Western civilization. The speech mentions Iran 30 times. This significant number signifies that Netanyahu perceives Iran as his primary enemy, seeking to persuade the UNGA to pass resolutions condemning Iran and to label it as a rogue state.

Netanyahu also employs the term 'Middle East' as the United Nations describes the Arab World. He refers to the Middle East, rather than the Arab World, to deliberately suggest that Israel has fulfilled its very first objective: the division of the Arab World. Consequently, as Israel has accomplished the objective set forth by the Western world, UN members have no alternative but to show their support to it.

5. Conclusion

This study conducted a critical discourse analysis of the speech delivered by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the United Nations General Assembly in 2024. The analysis employed Fairclough's Three-Dimensional framework to examine the speech textually, discursively, and societally. The findings indicate that Netanyahu intentionally crafted his language in order to promote the claim that Israel is the redeemer predestined to bestow blessings upon the world. He also distorted history and ideologies to justify the terrible killings committed by Israelis every single day against innocent Palestinians. A micro-analytical examination of the speech has revealed Netanyahu's tone of victimization intended for eliciting sympathy and support from UN members. This study points out that speeches by political leaders, particularly those presented at international forums, are of crucial significance to researchers exploring the function of language in establishing power and identity. Researchers in the future may, also, examine the conversational styles and non-verbal characteristics of political leaders and assess how they use language in context.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Publisher's Note: All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers.

References

- [1] Abu Khaled, D. Y. (2020). A Critical Discourse Analysis of Benjamin Netanyahu's Speech at the United Nations General Assembly in 2014. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation (IJLLT)*, 3(3), 34–47.
- [2] Al Jazeera. (2023, October 9). *Israel-Gaza war in maps and charts: Live tracker*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/10/9/israel-hamas-war-in-maps-and-charts-live-tracker>. Retrieved on December 9, 2024.
- [3] Alassiri, H. M. (2023). *Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Denzel Washington's Inspiring Commencement*. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.13535.47521>
- [4] Anwar, N., Butt, I. R., & Shahzadi, A. (2024). Portrayal Of The Hidden Agenda: A Critical Discourse Analysis Of Political-War Statements Of Israeli Officials. *The Journal of Research Review*, 1(04), 256-265.
- [5] Bayram, F. (2010) Ideology and Political Discourse: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Erdogan's Political Speech. *ARECLS*, 7, 23-40.
- [6] Bingtian, Z. (2017). Language and Power: An insight into American English dissemination. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 7(10).
- [7] Cohen, S. J. (2015). Breakable and unbreakable silences: Implicit dehumanization and anti-arab prejudice in Israeli soldiers' narratives concerning Palestinian women. *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, 12(3), 245–277.
- [8] Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Longman.
- [9] Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse* (Vol. 270). London: routledge.
- [10] Jaspal, R., & Coyle, A. (2014). Threat, Victimhood, and Peace: Debating the 2011 Palestinian UN State Membership Bid. *Digest of Middle East Studies*, 23(1), 190–214.
- [11] Maalej, Z. A., & Zibin, A. (2024). Metaphors they kill by: Dehumanization of Palestinians by Israeli officials and sympathizers. *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies*, 25(1), 1–21.
- [12] Netanyahu, B. (2024, September 27). Speech at the United Nations General Assembly. Retrieved from [\[httpsgadebate.un.orgsitesdefaultfilesstatements79il_fl.pdf\]](httpsgadebate.un.orgsitesdefaultfilesstatements79il_fl.pdf)
- [13] Rababah, A. G., & Hamdan, J. M. (2019). A contrastive critical discourse analysis of 44 Netanyahu's and Abbas's speeches on the Gaza War (2014). *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 10(1), 178–189.
- [14] Riman, R. (2024). *Redefining the Genocidal Narrative: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the 2024 ICJ Speeches in the Genocide Case against Israel* (Master's thesis).
- [15] Tariq, K., Nawaz, S. M., & Farid, A. (2020). Imran Khan's Speech at UNGA: A Reflection on Us vs. Them Divide Using Fairclough's 3D Model in CDA. *Research Journal of Social Sciences and Economics Review*, 1(4), 34-44.
- [16] Taylor, S. (2013). *What is discourse analysis?* London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- [17] Van Dijk, T. (1993). Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis. *Discourse and Society*, 4(2), 249-281.
- [18] Van Dijk, T. A. (2015). Critical discourse analysis. *The handbook of discourse analysis*, 466-485.
- [19] Winter, E. (2001). 'Clause relations as information structure: Two basic text structures in English': in Coulthard, R. M. (ed.) *Advances in Written Text Analysis*. London, Routledge. https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&sca_esv=594447929&rls=en&sxsrf=AM9HkKnTLlpXseD5G1d65fne2FjwBHqYIQ:1703863874727&q=Denzel+Washington+speech+put+God+first+transcript&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjLrP7H7SDAxXH2wIHHTaTdfUQ1QJ6BAg3EAE&biw=1440&bih=820&dpr=1#fpstate=ive &vld=cid:dfd14474,vid:BxY_eJLBflk,st:0