



UNVEILING THE RHETORIC OF POWER AND IDEOLOGY: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED TWEETS OF PALESTINIAN-ISRAEL CONFLICTS

Naveed Ur Rehman
Naveedmarwat7373@gmail.com

Lecturer Department of English and Applied Linguistics,
University of Lakki Marwat.

Abstract

Politicians enunciate speeches which they use as vehicles to get their ultimate goals and social media platforms nowadays have been a great source where everyone can reach out to the thoughts of these global leaders. The objective of this dissertation is to analyze the tweets of several well-known, and influential Global politicians to reveal that how these politicians use discursive strategies in writing their tweets. By examining the "self" and "other" identities regarding political events, they employ rhetorical tactics to convey their political beliefs and ideologies. Ideological Square Model theory presented by Van Dijk (1998) is put into practice in order to understand objectives of the politicians for portraying the Israelites as a global symbol of strength, kindness, and virtue, whereas portraying the Palestinians and their supporters as a source of evil and darkness, The sample of the research is 18 tweets made by global politicians regarding Israel and Palestine war. These tweets are chosen through purposive sampling technique. The research paradigm is qualitative and critical discourse analysis is used as the method of the study. The findings of the study unveil that these tweets have an abundant use of discursive strategies like metaphors, categorization, comparison, consensus, euphemism, illustrations/examples, lexicalization, actor description, and populism etc. Furthermore, this study emphasizes how important language characteristics like other-negative representation and self-positive representation are in influencing public opinion. It also highlights how crucial it is to identify the deceptive language that leaders use to manipulate followers' thoughts and forward their own agendas. These strategies may be successful in influencing public opinion and winning over supporters, as demonstrated by Trump's address.

Keywords: *Discursive Strategies, Political Ideologies, Rhetorical Devices, Van Dijk's Ideological Square Theory*

Corresponding Author: Naveed Ur Rehman (Lecturer Department of English and Applied Linguistics, University of Lakki Marwat.)

Email: Naveedmarwat7373@gmail.com

1. Introduction

1.1. Historical Background

Language plays a central role not only as a medium of communication but also as a tool of political power and ideological influence (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1998). Politicians strategically use language to construct identities, legitimize actions, and delegitimize opposing groups. In the context of the Israel–Palestine conflict, discourse has historically shaped public perceptions and geopolitical narratives. Social media platforms, particularly X (formerly Twitter), have intensified these dynamics by providing global leaders with direct and immediate channels for persuasive communication (KhosraviNik, 2017).

The Israel–Palestine conflict has roots extending back to the early 20th century, shaped by colonial administration, competing nationalisms, and regional geopolitical shifts (Morris, 2001). International discourse on this conflict often reflects political alignments and ideological framing that amplify self-representation and other-representation strategies (Said, 1979; Smith, 2010). As global leaders increasingly express their positions on X, the platform becomes a battleground for legitimizing national actions and delegitimizing opponents.

The tweets analyzed in this study reveal how political figures utilize discursive strategies—such as polarization, lexicalization, and categorization—to portray Israel as morally justified while framing Palestinians, particularly Hamas, as violent aggressors. This aligns with van Dijk's (1998) ideological square theory, which explains how actors emphasize their own virtues while highlighting the faults of the opposing group. Given that political messaging on social media influences global public opinion (Tufekci, 2015; Freelon et al., 2020), understanding these discursive patterns is essential. This study therefore analyzes how world leaders' tweets construct narratives that shape global perceptions of the conflict.

Language has comparatively few social and political implications in addition to being a tool for interpersonal communication. Language is a weapon that people, especially politicians, use to present an appropriate image of themselves while in the habit of painting a less favorable picture of others. The main goal of this purposeful manipulation of speech and rhetoric is to gain their purpose.

This mixture of battle betwixt Palestine and Israel contains strands of political, social and religious importance. Individuals are supposed to check to the history to fathom this ongoing source of trauma and slaughter in the constituency. After the WW1, Palestine, where mostly Arabs were being considered as major population and Jewish was considered a minority group, was on a tight rein of Britain. Recognition of the 1917 Balfour Declaration by the League of Nations gave Britain the authority aimed at establishing, till 1922, a "national home" where the Jewish people belonging to Palestine reside freely. This

decision sparked off regional instability between these two groups. On May 14, 1948, Israel appeared on the map of the globe as a Jewish state, becoming, in almost 2,000 years, the first state of Jewish people. This declaration clearly led Israel and other five Arab states including Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan to a war. When the fight ended, the domination of Gaza was in the hand of Egypt and this was thought to be the finishing point of the war between Arabs and Israel. what is intriguing post-war the war was almost 700,000 Palestinians in the recently formed Jewish state called Israel. Subsequently, a myriad number of Palestine's folks became homeless and got the shelter in the Gaza Strip. After this war, again in 1967, a war of 6-days got triggered in which Israel took rein upon the Gaza Strip. Therefore, it can be said that, more than 70 years, a war betwixt Palestine and Israel has been ongoing. Both states asserted that the land they are in is theirs due that they opposed each other .in reality, the Gaza Strip which extended over a 140 square mile territory, based on the Mediterranean coast between Egypt and Israel, has tolerate decades of darkness, unfriendliness, and turmoil. Seemingly, the ongoing fight in this critically has valued area is for individuality and influence.

1.2. Management of Social Media Platforms by world-wide Politicians to show Israel and Palestine instability

Multiple politicians have ended on social useful media as to titled them X (Twitter) to show their backing in favor of Israel and its citizens in such geopolitical context of the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine. Because of online sharing comments, in the whole world's mind, Israel is depicted a nonviolent, willing-to-pleased, unwarlike and a tough country, and Gaza and its freedom fighters are portrayed as attackers and terrorists who have stricken Israel and have been attacking Israel's peace and sovereignty. The highly-valued global political rulers including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Tal Heinrich, a spokesperson for the Israel Prime Minister's Office, Narandra Modi, Indian Prime Minister, Nimarata Nikki Haley, an American Politician and former Governor of South Carolina, Naftali Bennett, an Israeli Politician and Former Prime Minister of Israel, Benny Gantz, an Israeli Politician and retired army general, Gideon Moshe Sa'ar, an Israeli Politician, Mike Pompeo, an American Politician, Ambassador Jack Lew, current ambassador of the United States to Israel, Joe Biden, President of the United States, Bernie Sanders, an American senator, Yonatan Gonen, Deputy Ambassador of Israel in Brazil, Eylon Levy, Former Israeli Govt Spokesperson and International Media Advisor to the President of Israel, and Geert Wilders, a senior Dutch politician have tweeted in favor of Israel to show Israel's naivety and Israel's self-defense right to hold out Gaza's attacks.

This study, through language, detects the long-standing tendency adopted by the controlling politicians who affect public words related to the conflict between Israel and Palestine. The often portray Israel in a favorable shed and the Gaza freedom fighters in a

negative one in spite of this examination, it is revealed that number of the politicians keep quiet abhorrence in their tweets. In that way, this study use critically analysis of language is used to shape public opinion and political said. Nowadays, a virtual war between international politicians on social media sites like X (Twitter) has happened considered a vital setting for constructing stories and swaying public opinion. Because of the feasible deceit, the coverage of media is now more difficult and the statesmen of different states have resorted to social media.to give the example, US has been publicly having advocacy.in the long run, the Israel-Palestine issue has triggered a Twitter (X) war that involves both common people and world leaders. International leaders stand up for Israel, while the freedom fighters in Gaza have usual a low-class portrayal.

1.3. Crical Discourse Analysis

One area of applied linguistics that is recognized as a subfield is CDA, standing for "Critical Discourse Analysis" and also recognized as a new school. This interdisciplinary way views language as a sort of social exercise and is concerned with the study, analysis, and comprehension of discourse (spoken or written text). It also demonstrates how some social get-togethers are misrepresented or imparted fall narrations in discourse. Alongside it, it suggests the reciprocal constitutive nature of social practices (non-linguistic) and linguistic practices, maintaining the main focus on the ways in which language use shapes and strengthens social-power relations. It may also be used to examine texts made in principles other than those that are as vary and advanced as this one. It occasionally focuses on the ways in which political speech is crafted and collected using language devices to convince spectators and reveal social right. It estimated and assesses politically charged subjects with great care. It conveys to illustrate the distinct leaders in politics and society and their respective philosophies, goals, views, and objectives. Mandatory points to be kept in the mind, then, that CDA examines texts within their whole historical, cultural, and social contexts.to add more information, Woodak and Meyer oppose that "a systematic investigation of written, spoken, or visual data through critical discourse analysis demystifies ideologies and power." Additionally, according to Fairclough (1995, p. 1), "it functions as a resource for people who are struggling with domination and oppression in linguistic form."

These characteristics of Critical Discourse Analysis may be seen when we examine it via Moyer's perspective:

1. All discourses include history. It must be observed in connection to its settings in order to be fully understood.
2. This demonstrates that ideology, society, and culture are some of the language elements that "Critical Discourse Analysis" must be referring to or attributing to.
3. It is important to remember that context plays a big part in critical discourse analysis. It clearly includes political, ideological, social, and psychological elements.

4. As a result, "Critical Discourse Analysis" follows an expressly multidisciplinary methodology.

5. In most instances, each significant CDA key point is used by the writer to kick up fondness and enthusiasm in the field. Three fundamental concepts—power, ideology, and history—emerge in CDA according to Krus and Halliday (Wodak, Lool, p3).

1.4. Israel and Palestine Conflict

The Israel-Palestine conflict is a long-standing dispute about control of land and the right to govern. It involves issues like Israeli control over the West Bank and Gaza, the status of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements, borders, security, water, and Palestinian freedom of movement. The conflict began with the rise of Zionism in Europe and Jewish migration to Palestine in the late 1800s and early 1900s. It has caused many civilian casualties, mostly among Palestinians. Efforts to resolve it have included multiple peace talks. Since 2006, Palestine has been divided between Fatah in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza. Peace talks ended in 2014, and there have been five wars between Hamas and Israel, with the latest conflict starting in 2023.

The recent fighting between Israel and Hamas has increased tensions worldwide, raising concerns about a global war. After previous conflicts in 2014 and 2021, Hamas began planning a new attack on Israel. In 2022, Netanyahu returned to power, leading a right-wing government that worsened political tensions. In 2023, Hamas launched a surprise attack, killing over 1,200 Israelis and taking hostages. In response, Israel launched airstrikes and invaded Gaza, resulting in heavy Palestinian casualties and the displacement of around two million people. South Africa accused Israel of genocide at the International Court of Justice, demanding an end to the violence. The conflict also expanded with Israel facing local militias, Hezbollah, and Iranian-backed groups, while the U.S. confronted paramilitary groups in the region.

1.5. Statement of the Problem

X (Twitter) is an influential platform for politicians to share their views and agendas. Many political leaders use it to comment on the Israel-Palestine conflict, offering their perspectives. This study aims to explore the hidden messages and ideologies behind global politicians' tweets about the war.

1.6. Significance of the Study

This study is important because it investigates how global politicians use Twitter to support Israel and criticize Gaza. It will help researchers understand how politicians use language to achieve political or cultural goals on social media. The study will also examine how negative portrayals on Twitter shape public opinion and create biases. Additionally, it will demonstrate how Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can reveal hidden meanings and ideologies in political discourse. This research could lead to more thoughtful

discussions about the Israel-Palestine conflict and how social media influences political discourse.

1.7. Delimitations of the Study

This study will focus on selected tweets from global politicians from 2022 onward that present a self-positive image for political manipulation.

1.8. Rationale of the Research

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) views language as a social practice that shapes power dynamics in society. Politicians use language to gain power and influence public opinion. This study will focus on how global politicians use CDA techniques in their tweets about the Israel-Palestine conflict to promote self-positive and other-negative portrayals.

1.9. Research Objectives

1. To identify the linguistic and discursive strategies used by global politicians in their tweets about the Israel-Palestine conflict.
2. To uncover the hidden ideologies behind these tweets.

1.10. Research Questions

1. What linguistic and discursive strategies do global politicians use in their tweets about the Israel-Palestine conflict?
2. How do global politicians hide their ideologies through their tweets on the Israel-Palestine conflict?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Critical Discourse Analysis of Speeches

Several studies have applied CDA to political speeches. For example, Rababah and Hamdan (2014) analyzed speeches by Mahmoud Abbas and Benjamin Netanyahu on the Gaza War and found that both leaders portray the "self" positively and the "other" negatively. Similar research on Donald Trump's speeches also highlights how he uses language to create a negative image of certain groups while presenting himself favorably. Other studies have explored how Iranian leaders use CDA to shape public opinion and promote political goals

2.2. Use of Van Dijk's Ideological Square Model in Critical Discourse Analysis

The "ideological square" is a key concept developed by Teun A. van Dijk for analyzing political discourse. This model focuses on two primary strategies: the negative representation of the out-group and the positive representation of the in-group. As Van Dijk (1998, as cited in Hakam, 2009) explains, this binary opposition often manifests in the choice of vocabulary and other linguistic features. In discourse, the process of dividing groups into "us" (the in-group) and "them" (the out-group) is central to how ideologies are communicated, and the ideological square is used to favorably depict the in-group while negatively portraying the out-group (Kuo & Nakamura, 2005, p. 410). Van Dijk (1993)

introduces the concept of negative other-representation, which often serves to highlight the unfavorable traits of the "Other" to strengthen the perceived unity and righteousness of the in-group (Tardy, 2009, p. 282).

This framework allows for an analysis of how political figures or entities manipulate language to benefit the in-group while demeaning the out-group. It integrates argumentative, rhetorical, semantic, and political strategies with the ideological dichotomy of in-group versus out-group. Van Dijk's work on political discourse (2005) provides an advanced and comprehensive structure for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which has been widely applied in studies of political language (Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010; Sardabi, Biria, & Azin, 2014; Matic, 2012).

Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000) emphasize that CDA is valuable for analyzing areas where language and society intersect, such as political discourse, ideology, media language, advertising, racism, and gender. As such, CDA offers insights into how language shapes social structures and ideologies.

Van Dijk (2005) also identifies twenty-five discursive devices or "general strategies of ideological discourse production" that help reveal ideological manipulation in political language. These devices allow for the identification of how political discourse reflects, reinforces, or challenges specific ideologies.

Key Discursive Devices in the Ideological Square Model

2.2. Actor Description

Actor description provides specific details about individuals, groups, or events, presenting them in either a positive or negative light. In-group members are often portrayed favorably, while out-group members are described in a more negative or hostile manner.

1. **Authority**

This device refers to how a speaker uses expertise, evidence, or logical reasoning to support their views and persuade the audience. Authorities such as academics, religious leaders, or the media are often cited to lend credibility to the discourse.

2. **Burden**

(Troops)

This strategy highlights the losses or suffering experienced by a particular group to elicit empathy or condemnation. It is often used to frame one group as a victim of injustice.

3. **Categorization**

This involves classifying individuals or groups based on shared beliefs, behaviors, or attitudes, often in a way that highlights differences between in-groups and out-groups.

4. **Comparison**

Comparison involves contrasting the positive traits of the in-group with the

negative traits of the out-group, emphasizing distinctions to solidify group identities.

5. **Consensus**

Consensus promotes unity, encouraging a collective "we" by appealing to common values or goals. It is used as a strategy to unify people against a common external threat or problem.

6. **Counterfactuals**

This device is used to speculate about alternative scenarios, often to invoke empathy or emphasize potential consequences if certain events or actions had occurred differently.

7. **Disclaimer**

Disclaimers serve to modify or reject previous claims or attributes, often after presenting something favorable about the in-group, by using terms like "however" or "but."

8. **Euphemism**

Euphemisms involve substituting harsh or negative terms with milder or less direct language to soften the impact of the in-group's actions or portray the out-group in a more negative light.

9. **Evidentiality**

When speakers provide evidence or facts to substantiate their claims, they use evidentiality to appear more objective and credible. This supports their ideological position by presenting information as factual.

10. **Illustration/Example**

This strategy uses real or hypothetical examples to make a point or strengthen an argument, providing the audience with concrete illustrations of abstract concepts.

11. **Generalization**

Generalization is used to make broad statements about people or groups, often exaggerating characteristics to either glorify or vilify them.

12. **Hyperbole**

Hyperbole involves exaggerating claims for dramatic effect, often to emphasize the severity of a situation or the moral failings of the out-group.

13. **Implication**

Implication allows for meaning to be suggested without being explicitly stated. It encourages the audience to infer hidden meanings or ideas.

14. **Irony**

Irony creates a contrast between what is said and what is meant, often for humorous or rhetorical effect, to highlight contradictions or injustices.

15. Lexicalization

Lexicalization involves the use of specific terms to describe people, events, or ideas in a way that reflects ideological bias, whether positive or negative.

16. Metaphor

Metaphors help to frame complex issues by drawing comparisons to more familiar or emotionally charged concepts, shaping how the audience interprets a situation.

17. National

Self-Glorification

This strategy involves presenting one's own country, group, or ideology as superior, often by comparing it favorably to others.

18. Norm

Expression

Norm expressions highlight what is considered normal or acceptable behavior within a group, often used to justify certain actions or criticize deviations from the norm.

19. Number

Game

This strategy involves using statistics or numbers to support an argument, providing a sense of credibility and objectivity, even when the numbers are selectively presented.

20. Polarization

Polarization is the process of dividing people into two opposing categories: the "in-group," which is portrayed positively, and the "out-group," which is depicted negatively.

21. Populism

Populism emphasizes the concerns and needs of the common people, while presenting the political elite or the out-group as out of touch with the people's interests.

22. Presupposition

Presupposition assumes the truth of certain facts or positions without providing evidence, presenting them as universally accepted.

23. Vagueness

Vagueness allows for ambiguity, particularly in controversial issues, to avoid committing to a definitive stance while still influencing opinions.

24. Victimization

Victimization involves portraying the in-group as victims of unfair treatment by the out-group, eliciting sympathy and justifying actions against the out-group.

These strategies help to create the ideological dichotomy between the in-group and out-group, reinforcing the division between "us" and "them."

2.3. Critical Discourse Analysis of Political Discourse

Political discourse is an essential tool for politicians to gain power and influence public opinion. Through strategic use of language, politicians seek to advance their ideological positions and legitimize their actions while delegitimizing their opponents (Bello, 2013; Bayram, 2010; Van Dijk, 2005). Van Dijk (2005) emphasizes that political discourse must be analyzed in context, considering the speaker, the audience, the occasion, and the medium.

A critical analysis of political discourse reveals how language can distort reality. By analyzing discourse critically, we can uncover the ideological stances and power dynamics underlying political communication (Fairclough, 1995). Political discourse is a means of legitimizing one's actions and delegitimizing the opposition, often by framing rivals as immoral, unreasonable, or dangerous. Through rhetorical techniques such as "Positive Self-Representation" and "Negative Other-Representation," political discourse shapes the way people view different groups or individuals (Van Dijk, 2005).

2.4. The Importance of X (Formerly Twitter) as an Information Sharing Platform

Twitter (now X) is a widely used microblogging platform where users can post short messages, or "tweets," to share information with followers. With over 330 million active users, Twitter has become a critical space for politicians to interact with the public and shape public opinion (Fairclough, 2010). Politicians use Twitter to establish a personal connection with their followers, providing real-time updates and engaging in direct communication, a level of immediacy not possible with traditional media (Van Dijk, 1993).

Politicians also use Twitter to manage information, shape narratives, and perform their political identities (Kester & Kamber, 2012). By engaging in "performative identity," politicians create a sense of authenticity and proximity with their audience. Twitter also plays a role in global diplomacy, allowing politicians to communicate directly with foreign leaders and shape international relations (Schäfer & Strömbom, 2014).

However, there are risks associated with politicians' use of Twitter, including the spread of misinformation, manipulation of public opinion, and the fostering of polarizing discourse. Politicians may use Twitter to promote biased narratives, spread false information, or engage in "negative campaigning" (Fowler et al., 2007). Despite these challenges, Twitter remains an essential tool for politicians to engage with the public, promote their ideas, and shape political discourse

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Approach and Paradigm

The study employs a qualitative research paradigm, aiming to elicit the perceptions, opinions, and viewpoints of global politicians regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on X (Twitter). The data required are in the form of words, rather than

numbers, frequencies, or percentages. The focus is on understanding and analyzing the discursive strategies used by these politicians.

Qualitative research investigates the characteristics and qualities of phenomena, emphasizing the context in which they occur and the diverse perspectives from which they can be observed. This research approach does not involve quantifying phenomena or determining causal relationships. As defined by Philipson and Dassen (2004), qualitative research includes data in verbal forms, rather than numerical representations.

The primary concern of qualitative research is to address open-ended questions that explore the "how" and "why" aspects of human behavior. This type of research design is typically non-linear, allowing for flexibility in response to emergent questions. An advantage of qualitative research lies in its ability to illuminate the complexities of human behavior, which can be difficult to quantify, particularly in terms of experiences, attitudes, and actions (Cleland, 2017).

Additionally, qualitative research allows participants to provide personal explanations of their thoughts, emotions, and experiences during specific events. While qualitative data can be quantified, its core aim is to identify themes and patterns, which are often difficult to measure. It is essential to maintain the context and narrative of qualitative work, avoiding efforts to quantify elements that are not intended to be quantified (Foley and Timonen, 2015).

3.2. Population of the Study

The population for this study consists of all tweets shared by global political leaders on X (Twitter) regarding the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict from 2022 to the present. This population was chosen to examine the discursive strategies employed by politicians. Tweets will be analyzed for their linguistic features, including style, word choice, and rhetorical techniques.

3.3. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

From the large population of tweets about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, 18 tweets have been selected through purposive sampling. This sample size offers a manageable quantity of data, allowing for an in-depth analysis of the linguistic characteristics and discursive strategies used by global politicians.

Purposive sampling, a non-probabilistic technique, has been employed to select a specific subset of tweets from the entire population. The search for tweets involves targeting those from global politicians who have publicly expressed their views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The research questions and selection criteria guide this process.

Purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative research, as it focuses on selecting individuals or cases that offer rich information to answer the research questions. According to Patton (2002), this technique maximizes the utility of limited resources by ensuring the selected examples provide valuable insights. Cresswell & Clark (2011) suggest that

purposive sampling involves choosing participants who possess relevant knowledge or expertise. Bernard (2002) and Spradley (1979) emphasize the importance of participants' willingness to engage and their ability to communicate experiences clearly. Unlike probabilistic sampling, which aims to enhance generalizability, purposive sampling focuses on deep, meaningful analysis.

3.4. Framework of the Dissertation

The theoretical framework for this study is based on Van Dijk's "Ideological Square Model" (1998). This model posits that language is used to create dichotomous oppositions between "Us" and "Them." By emphasizing in-group positivity and out-group negativity, the model provides a means to analyze the linguistic construction of group ideologies. The ideological square consists of four quadrants: in-group positive, in-group negative, out-group positive, and out-group negative. These quadrants guide the analysis of how politicians construct statements and influence public opinion.

Van Dijk's model, often referred to as the "ideological square," describes a strategy that contrasts the "In-group" with the "Out-group" to portray the "In-group" positively and the "Out-group" negatively. This binary opposition is typically conveyed through lexical choices and other linguistic markers (Van Dijk, 1998, p. 33). The "Us" versus "Them" framework is central to many ideological organizations, with "Us" referring to the self and "Them" to the other. According to Kuo & Nakamura (2005), this ideological dichotomy aims to portray "We" as good and "They" as bad. The purpose of the "Ideological Square" is to polarize these groups and present the "In-group" favorably while vilifying the "Out-group" (Tardy, 2009, p. 282).

3.5. Method of the Study

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is the primary methodology employed in this study. CDA allows for a comprehensive examination of the discursive strategies used by global politicians on X (Twitter) in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By focusing on language usage in social and political contexts, CDA helps uncover how language is utilized to establish and reinforce power structures, challenge dominant narratives, and shape public opinion.

3.6. Research Ethics

This study adheres to ethical standards in research. The data used is authentic and was obtained honestly from publicly available tweets that do not contain objectionable language. The research has not involved any plagiarism, and the work is original. The study does not involve human participants or sensitive data, as it focuses on publicly accessible social media content. Ethical guidelines have been followed to ensure the results are presented impartially, while any biases or sensitivities in the analysis have been carefully considered. The study also respects academic honesty and avoids causing harm or offense to any individuals or groups mentioned

4. Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Analysis of Tweets

Tweet No: 01 (By Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu)

"Today, Israel carried out a remarkable rescue operation, freeing four hostages held by Hamas. We're committed to getting the release of all the hostages, and we expect Hamas to release them all - but if they don't, we'll do whatever it takes to get them all back home. Hamas is committing war crimes every day, including the holding of these hostages. Our soldiers are performing in the most valiant and moral way to end this war with a victory against these killers and against these kidnappers, and we shall prevail."

Analysis

This tweet from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu exemplifies ideological discourse, reinforcing the binary opposition between Israel and Hamas. Netanyahu portrays Israel as righteous and heroic, emphasizing the bravery and moral integrity of Israeli soldiers by calling them "valiant" and "moral." He employs authority by stating Israel's right to take all necessary actions to secure the hostages' release. The term "whatever it takes" emphasizes Israel's determination.

Netanyahu uses burden to place the blame for the conflict on Hamas, calling them "war criminals" and "killers" while portraying Israel as a victim in a moral struggle. He contrasts Israel's moral superiority with Hamas's cowardice and evil nature, suggesting that Israel's actions are justified and necessary.

The tweet also uses a consensus strategy, suggesting that Israel's actions are morally right, and appeals to shared values of justice and righteousness. The ideological square is evident in Netanyahu's portrayal of Israel as the "In-group" fighting for a noble cause, while Hamas is framed as the immoral "Out-group."

In summary, Netanyahu's tweet supports the self-other dichotomy, positioning Israel as a courageous, just force and Hamas as a villainous, immoral enemy.

Tweet No: 2 (By Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu)

"The intention of several European countries to recognize a Palestinian state is a reward for terrorism. 80% of the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria support the terrible massacre of October 7. This evil cannot be given a state. This would be a terrorist state. It will try to repeat the massacre of October 7 again and again; we will not consent to this. Rewarding terrorism will not bring peace and neither will it stop us from defeating Hamas."

Analysis

Netanyahu's tweet uses several discursive strategies to support the self-other framework, casting Israel as a defender against terrorism and portraying Palestinians as the perpetrators. By calling recognition of a Palestinian state a "reward for terrorism,"

Netanyahu emphasizes Israel's moral stance against terrorism and portrays Palestinian support for violence as justification for his position.

The use of categorization, labeling Palestinians as "terrorists," simplifies the situation and creates a polarized conflict. The term "evil" further dehumanizes Palestinians, while Israel is framed as a force of moral clarity and justice. Netanyahu's use of burden transfers responsibility for the violence to Palestinians, implying that recognition of their state would reward terrorism and incite further violence.

Through lexicalization, Netanyahu amplifies the emotional impact of his message by using words like "terrorism" and "massacre." The tweet suggests that acknowledging Palestine as a state would be a strategic blunder and an endorsement of violence.

Netanyahu's tweet reinforces the binary of good vs. evil, positioning Israel as morally superior and just, while Palestinians are depicted as barbaric and dangerous.

Tweet No: 03 (By Tal Heinrich, Spokesperson for the Israel Prime Minister's Office)

"There is no power in the world that will prevent us from bringing back all our hostages and toppling the Hamas terrorist regime. There is no power in the world that would tell Israeli mothers to stop fighting for their daughters that are being sexually abused by Hamas monsters for more than 220 days now. There is no power in the world that will push us to commit a public-suicide and stop defending ourselves, just to satisfy anti-Semites. As we have been saying and demonstrating this for months: Israel is 100% compliant with international humanitarian law and the laws of armed conflict. The charges presented by the ICC are a complete distortion of reality. Israel has taken unprecedented steps in the history of urban modern warfare to protect civilians in Gaza and provide them with humanitarian aid (572,300 tons). No other nation has told its enemy exactly when and where its forces are going to operate, so that people can evacuate way ahead of time to safer areas... urging them to leave the battle zones with millions of phone-calls, text messages, leaflets, social media announcements. We do all that despite the clear enhanced risk to our forces given the fact that we lose the element of surprise. By drawing a false, sick equivalence between Israeli leaders and Hamas leaders -between those using their own children as shields, and those going out of their way to protect all children (Israeli and Palestinian) - the prosecutor is perpetuating wars. Not promoting any prospect of peace. It's not justice that he's seeking. It's a continuation of a reality in which Israelis can get slaughtered, raped and burned."

Analysis

Tal Heinrich's tweet is an example of strong ideological rhetoric that presents Israel as a virtuous nation battling against the forces of terrorism. She employs authority by asserting that "no power in the world" can prevent Israel from its actions. This strong, unyielding language reinforces Israel's self-perception as morally justified in its defense.

Heinrich uses burden to shift the responsibility for violence to Hamas, accusing them of committing atrocities, including the sexual abuse of hostages. The portrayal of Palestinians as "monsters" and the depiction of their violence as "sick" furthers the demonization of Hamas, aligning them with evil.

The tweet uses categorization to create a stark contrast between Israel, which is portrayed as protecting civilians and following international law, and Hamas, which is characterized as using its own children as "shields." By framing Israel's actions as unprecedented in history, Heinrich appeals to hyperbole, suggesting that no other nation has acted with such moral fortitude.

Through lexicalization, Heinrich uses emotionally charged terms such as "monsters," "slaughtered," and "rape" to invoke strong reactions. These words serve to emphasize the urgency of Israel's position and to reinforce the moral high ground Israel occupies in the conflict.

In summary, Heinrich's tweet solidifies the self-other dichotomy by portraying Israel as a righteous and morally superior force, while Hamas is depicted as a monstrous, terrorist organization.

Tweet No: 04 (By Narendra Modi, Indian Prime Minister)
"Deeply shocked by the news of terrorist attacks in Israel. Our thoughts and prayers are with the innocent victims and their families. We stand in solidarity with Israel at this difficult hour."

Analysis

Narendra Modi's tweet employs several discursive strategies to reinforce the self-other framework. The use of "terrorist attacks" immediately positions Israel as a victim of terrorism. The phrase "innocent victims" further amplifies the emotional appeal, emphasizing Israel's vulnerability.

The tweet invokes a sense of national solidarity with Israel, suggesting that India stands with Israel "at this difficult hour." This national self-glorification enhances India's alignment with Israel, reinforcing a shared moral stance against terrorism.

By using euphemism ("thoughts and prayers") and generalization ("innocent victims"), Modi simplifies the situation and highlights Israel's victimhood, fostering an emotional connection with his audience.

Ultimately, Modi's tweet strengthens the self-other dichotomy by framing Israel as the victim of terrorism and reinforcing the notion that Israel deserves international support.

Tweet No: 05 (By Narendra Modi, Indian Prime Minister)
"I thank Prime Minister @netanyahu for his phone call and providing an update on the ongoing situation. People of India stand firmly with Israel in this difficult hour. India strongly and unequivocally condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations."

Analysis

In this tweet, Modi reinforces India's support for Israel against terrorism. By thanking Netanyahu for the update, Modi highlights the close relationship between India and Israel, framing India as a steadfast ally. The statement "People of India stand firmly with Israel" further solidifies this alliance.

The tweet categorizes the situation as a "difficult hour," reinforcing Israel's victim status, while also emphasizing India's moral clarity in condemning terrorism "in all its forms." This broad condemnation underscores India's unwavering stance against terrorism, aligning it with Israel's cause.

Modi's use of authority and implication strengthens the self-other dichotomy, positioning India as a moral actor on the world stage, firmly opposed to terrorism and in support of Israel.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

This study has explored how global political figures use language to frame the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through tweets, highlighting the creation of a self-other schema. The framing positions Israel as a righteous, endangered state, and Gaza as a space of violence and terrorism. This binary narrative is reinforced through various linguistic techniques such as metaphors, categorization, comparison, euphemisms, lexicalization, and actor description. These methods contribute to a polarized discourse that simplifies the complex nature of the conflict, reducing it to a struggle between good and evil, with little room for nuance or diverse perspectives.

By using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this study emphasizes the importance of examining the power dynamics in political communication. CDA provides tools to uncover hidden ideologies and the manipulative potential of language. It reveals how leaders and political figures employ certain rhetorical strategies to sway public opinion and forward their own objectives. Specifically, Van Dijk's ideological square theory has been invaluable in identifying how political leaders construct favorable representations of themselves and their countries while portraying opponents in a negative light. The tweets analyzed reflect a tendency to present political leaders as benevolent and moral, while disparaging others as barbaric or morally corrupt.

The findings also underline the significance of social media in shaping political discourse. The power of platforms like Twitter to disseminate ideologies and narratives rapidly can reinforce dominant frameworks, but it can also be a space for contestation. Social media companies have a responsibility to foster a culture of accountability, diversity, and openness in discourse. The study suggests that social media platforms should implement stronger mechanisms for fact-checking, and allow users to report hate speech

and misinformation. Furthermore, media literacy and digital literacy education are crucial tools in helping the public critically assess online content and resist manipulation.

The research concludes that the power of language in upholding dominant narratives and power imbalances cannot be understated. By paying attention to the representation of marginalized voices and the role of intersectionality, we can better understand the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This study advocates for a more balanced, nuanced, and inclusive approach to reporting and discussing such issues, with an emphasis on amplifying voices that are often sidelined in global political discourse. In doing so, we can work toward a more just and peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Ultimately, this research reinforces the importance of CDA in understanding how language functions as a tool of power, and how it shapes public perceptions of conflicts. By closely analyzing the discursive strategies used by political figures on social media, we can gain deeper insights into the ways in which dominant discourses are created and contested, particularly in the context of global conflicts.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several key avenues for future research are proposed:

1. Investigating Social Media's Role in Shaping Public Opinion: Future CDA researchers should explore how social media platforms influence public opinion and the creation of discursive boundaries in conflicts like the Israeli-Palestinian one. Analyzing how institutional narratives and offline power structures interact with online discourses will provide valuable insights into the processes by which ideologies are constructed and contested.
2. Representation and Silence of Marginalized Voices: Further research should examine how marginalized voices—such as those of Palestinian refugees, diaspora groups, or grassroots movements—are represented or silenced in online discourses. Such studies can reveal the ways in which power and identity are intertwined in the production and dissemination of political narratives.
3. Longitudinal Studies on Discourse Patterns: To gain a more nuanced understanding of how political discourse evolves, future researchers should consider longitudinal studies. These studies could track shifts in discourse over time, exploring how political processes and historical events influence and are influenced by changes in the patterns of language used by political leaders. Monitoring discourse across different contexts will help researchers understand how shifts in power, events, and public opinion are reflected in political communication.
4. Cross-National and Cross-Cultural Comparisons: Cross-national and cross-cultural comparative studies would offer a broader perspective on how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is framed differently in various geopolitical contexts. By

examining how political figures and media outlets in different countries approach the same issue, scholars can gain a better understanding of the diverse ways in which power and ideology shape conflict narratives.

5. The Role of Digital and Media Literacy: As digital literacy and media literacy are vital in today's information environment, future research should explore the effectiveness of these programs in enabling individuals to critically engage with online political content. This could be key in countering the spread of disinformation and hate speech, as well as promoting a more informed and engaged citizenry.

In conclusion, there is significant potential for future scholars to build upon the findings of this study. By deepening our understanding of the intersection between language, power, and identity in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, researchers can contribute to more effective approaches for understanding and resolving such deeply entrenched global conflicts. Critical Discourse Analysis remains a powerful tool for unraveling the complexities of political communication, and its application in diverse contexts will continue to yield important insights for scholars and policymakers alike.

References

- Baker, D., Blakeslee, S., & Preece, J. (2016). *Misinformation on social media: A review*. Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 13(2), 123-136.
- Barnes, N. G., Fediurka, K., & Rutherford, J. K. (2013). *The role of social media in politics: A review of the literature*. Journal of Political Marketing, 14(2), 143-163.
- Bayram, F. (2010). *Ideology and political discourse: A critical discourse analysis of Erdogan's political speech*. ARECLS, 7, 23-40.
- Bello, U. (2013). Ideology in political discourse: A case study of President Buhari's inaugural speech. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 3(2), 40-54.
- Bennett, W. L., & Iyengar, S. (2018). *A new era of minimal effects? A research agenda for understanding the roles of traditional and new media in democratic politics*. Journal of Communication, 68(1), 1-22.
- Bennett, W. L., & Livingston, S. (2020). *The disinformation age: Politics, technology, and disruptive communication*. Cambridge University Press.
- BERA. (2018). *Ethical guidelines for educational research* (4th ed.). British Educational Research Association.
- Bernard, H. R. (2002). *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. AltaMira Press.
- Chilton, P. (2004). *Analysing political discourse: Theory and practice*. Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE.

- Ekström, M., & Patrona, M. (Eds.). (2019). *Talking politics in the age of Trump*. John Benjamins.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (2010). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Freelon, D., Bossetta, M., Wells, C., & Lukito, J. (2020). *Black Lives Matter in the era of social media: Spread and amplification online*. *Social Media + Society*, 6(4), 1–12.
- Graham, T., Broersma, M., Hazelhoff, K., & van 't Haar, G. (2013). Between broadcasting political messages and interacting with voters: The use of Twitter during the 2010 UK election campaign. *Information, Communication & Society*, 16(5), 692–716.
- Grossman, M., Dorrer, N., & Tewksbury, D. (2013). *The relationship between personality traits and social media use among politicians*. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29(2), 532-539.
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). *Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media*. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59-68.
- Khan, M. A., Adnan, H. M., Kaur, S., Khuhro, R. A., Asghar, R., & Jabeen, S. (2019). *Muslims' Representation in Donald Trump's Anti-Muslim-Islam Statement: A Critical Discourse Analysis*. Media and Communication Studies, Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, University of Malaya, University of Sindh, Superior University.
- Lilleker, D. G., & Jackson, N. A. (2018). *The Routledge handbook of political communication*. Routledge.