

Manufacturing Consent: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Benjamin Netanyahu's Speech to the United States Congress in 2024

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Abstract

In this paper, the researchers investigate Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech before a joint session of the US Congress on July 25, 2024. The researchers primarily aim at highlighting the ideology behind Netanyahu's speech by using qualitative research through the application of critical discourse analysis (CDA), which is employed here in order to show how certain linguistic choices can manipulate and determine concepts related to power and ideology. The CDA method used is Discourse Historical Approach with the main focus on argumentation management through discursive strategies. The researchers adopt DHA by Wodak (2009) with focusing on the taxonomy of social actor representation by Van Leeuwen (2008). The study reveals that language has an extremely effective role in shaping opinions and changing perspectives while exposing speakers' ideology and agenda behind their political rhetoric.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Discourse Historical Approach, Social Actor Representation, Ideology, discursive strategies, argument, fallacy.

Introduction

Van Dijk (1998:352) states that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a field concerned with investigating and analyzing written and spoken texts to unravel the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias. Fairclough and Wodak (1997:258) argue that CDA is concerned with analyzing real examples of social interaction that take a complete or partial linguistic form as it aims to make visible "the ideological loading of particular ways of using language and the relations of power", which underlie them. To Taiwo (2004), CDA is a field of study which has paved the way for linguists to find out the hidden ideologies behind seemingly simple and plain words.

Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) is one of CDA's many approaches that makes the object under investigation and the analyst's own position transparent and provide justifications for the validity of certain interpretations and readings of discursive events. Reisigl and Wodak (2001) illustrate that for DHA, language by itself is not powerful—it is a means to possess and sustain power by influential people. This explains why DHA critically analyzes the language use of those in power who are capable of swaying public opinion. Wodak (2009) DHA's qualitative method is the most effective model used to filter information and detect strategies employed to legitimize reasons for particular war against the other nation (Bazzi, 2009)

Moreover, through language, "social actors" can be portrayed in certain forms of identity by the employment of certain linguistic strategies. Van Leeuwen (2008: 52) explained and classified these strategies under the term Social Actor Representation Network. This model of analysis focuses on how speakers can use language to include or exclude certain parties mentioned in their discourse.

Literature Review

Persuasion and fallacies

The Aristotelian three-dimensional description of persuasion can be easily detected in arguments aimed at inducing the audience to endorse certain concepts and ideas. This description includes *ethos*, the speaker's own moral character and ethical demeanor; *pathos*, the appeal to emotions and *logos*, the logic behind the argument (Ponton, 2020: 3). In politics, these three means are employed to manipulate people to believe politicians' version of truth regardless of the absence of proof. Even though arguments are perceived as tools operating by skilled, dispassionate, disinterested reasoning intended to seek the truth (Clark & Clark, 2005: 7), Politicians often employ fallacies as a persuasive tactic, manipulating emotions and avoiding logical reasoning. Understanding these fallacies is crucial for critical thinking and discerning the validity of political claims. This analysis exposes different kinds of fallacies used by Netanyahu to persuade people to believe his manipulative version of the truth.

Historical Context

The United Nations General Assembly on September 18th, 2024 voted overwhelmingly to adopt a resolution demanding Israel to “bring to an end without delay its unlawful presence” in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (UN News, 2024). This resolution comes after Israel killed more than 43.000 Palestinians, injured about 102.000, and displaced 1.9 Million in Gaza alone (according to the UN OCHA’s figures, which are climbing everyday) in response to the attack Hamas, The Islamic Resistance Movement governing Gaza, launched on Israel on October 7th, 2023 causing the death of 1200 Israelis in an attempt to resist the Israeli decades-long occupation.

To save his country’s reputation and clear his name, since an arrest warrant was issued against him by the International Criminal Court, the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave a speech aiming to manufacture consent for the war crimes he is committing against the people of Palestine. Bazzi (2009) states that politicians can manipulate power to mold people’s ideology by asserting certain identities and distorting facts to justify crimes.

Methodology

The researchers decided to use a combination of Wodak’s (2009) DHA and Theo Van Leeuwen's (2008) model of representation of social actors. The qualitative analysis was organized according to the sequence in which social actors are presented in the speech to uncover the linguistic strategies used by Netanyahu to build up his arguments since each topos is developed and supported by the previous one with the exploitation of discursive strategies and numerous fallacies.

Discursive strategies	Objectives
Nomination	The constructions of in groups and out groups. The naming of persons, objects, phenomena/events, processes, and actions.
Predication	The characteristics, qualities, and features attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena/events, and processes (positively or negatively).
Argumentation	The justifications of positive or negative attributions using topoi (formal or more content-related) and fallacies.
Perspectivization	Positioning the speaker’ or writer’s point of view and expressing involvement or distance.
Intensification	Intensification or mitigation of utterances for specific purposes.

The study also focused on detecting the following strategies of Theo Van Leeuwen's (2008) social actors’ representation network as explained by Caldas-Coulthard (1995):

- 1- Exclusion strategies, such as suppression, excludes the social actors completely.
- 2- Inclusion strategies like:
 - a. Activation: shows the social actors as the active doer of an action.
 - b. Passivization, including subjection, presents the social actor as undergoing an activity.
 - c. Identification: which is either physical, as social actors are represented in terms of physical characteristics which uniquely identify them; or relational, when they are represented in terms of their personal, kinship or work relations.
 - d. Appraisal: in which social actors are evaluated as good or bad, loved or hated, admired or pitied.
 - e. Impersonalization: which occurs when labeling social actors with nouns whose meaning does not include the semantic feature “human”.
 - f. Classification: in which social actors are referred to in terms of the major categories according to which classes of people are differentiated. These categories include age, gender, class, race, and religion and so on.
 - g. Association: in which social actors are represented in relation to specific activity or realized by circumstances of accompaniment.
 - h. Functionalization: in which social actors are referred to in terms of something they do, an occupation or role.
 - i. Individualization: which assigns greater value to social actors by presenting them as individuals.
 - j. Assimilation: in which social actors are referred to as groups.

Data collection

The data examined in this paper is the speech with which the Israeli PM Netanyahu addressed the US Congress on July 25, 2024 and can be accessed through the following link: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/were-protecting-you-full-text-of-netanyahus-address-to-congress/>

Data analysis and discussion

The main idea of this nearly one-hour long speech is basically summed up in its first few lines as Netanyahu opens his speech with a metaphor designed very carefully for the specific purpose of injecting a sense of urgency in his listeners to be on what he views to be, the right side of history by using the metaphor “*crossroad of history*”.

“We meet today at a crossroad of history.”

Netanyahu intentionally uses this metaphor to trigger flashbacks of times when some had been on the wrong side of history for supporting the Nazis during the Holocaust. What he actually does is manufacturing consent through appealing to people's sympathy by persistently evoking the memory of the Holocaust as if it is a justification for the tragedies Palestinians have endured under the Israeli occupation. This is an *argument* Netanyahu puts forward supporting *topos of* (Justified crimes) by using a persuasive strategy known as *appealing to pity fallacy* which is a motive-based fallacy that occurs when there is an irrelevant appeal to pity, sympathy, or compassion in support of a conclusion, rather than an appeal to considerations that directly bear on the conclusion, so failure to provide relevant evidence is accompanied by an attempt to cover up the failure by arousing irrelevant feelings of pity and sympathy (Castell, 1935: 31).

Since the very beginning of the speech, Netanyahu makes sure he draws a very clear distinction between two parties: Iran on one hand, and Israel and America on the other. He purposely uses a very intimidating language like *"confront"* which is a verb with negative connotations as it denotes facing others in hostility or defiance. Through utilizing the *activation strategy*, Netanyahu presents Iran as the active "bad other" actor who is determined to put world's peace at risk by defying "the good us: Israel and the US". Iran is also associated with negative terms like *"axis of terror, barbarism and glorification of death"*, in which *intensification* is employed, to instill a sense of threat in the addressee's mind in comparison to Israel and the US, the positively represented actors associated with positive terms like *"civilization and sanctification of life"*.

"Our world is in upheaval. In the Middle East, Iran's axis of terror confronts America, Israel and our Arab friends. This is not a clash of civilizations. It's a clash between barbarism and civilization."

The comparison drawn between the two parties is symmetric and parallel in structure:

"It's a clash between barbarism and civilization. It's a clash between those who glorify death and those who sanctify life."

Parallelism is a persuasive strategy used to emphasize a specific idea in a rather more eloquent manner and its form and function in political speech-making is intended to make the language memorable and foregrounded (Aarts et al., 2019: 676):

"... when Israel fights Hamas, we're fighting Iran. When we fight Hezbollah, we're fighting Iran. When we fight the Houthis, we're fighting Iran. And when we fight Iran, we're fighting the most radical and murderous enemy of the United States of America"

Moreover, the *appraisal strategy* is employed to defame Iran in the eyes of the audience as Netanyahu, throughout the speech, refers to them as *"mobs, thugs, tyrants and enemies"*.

Netanyahu employs the *association strategy* to reinforce the notion of the good in-group actors represented by Israel and the US by *repeating* the idea mentioned in the previous lines of them being *"the forces of civilization"* as *repetition* is a rhetorical technique used for persuasion purposes (Stonehouse, 2023).

"For the forces of civilization to triumph, America and Israel must stand together. Because when we stand together, something very simple happens. We win. They lose. And my friends, I came to assure you today of one thing: we will win."

He also emphasizes the *argument* based on the *topos* (the unity of Israel and the US leads to inevitable victory) by, first, laying out an argument based on the *proof by repeated assertion fallacy* in which a certain proposition is repeated as many times as needed to the point it is claimed to be true despite any refutation or adverse opinion, and it is sometimes used by politicians as a form of brainwashing (Everette, 2013: 203). A vivid example here is when he links the triumph of the forces of civilization to the unity of Israel and the US and then reasserts that claim in the next line with different lexical and grammatical arrangements bearing the same exact premise. Secondly, the argument itself is based on the *begging the question fallacy* which operates by using the conclusion of the argument in support of itself in a premise (Clark & Clark, 2005: 29), just like what happened in the aforementioned example as there is no evidence first to them being the forces of civilization, given their history of colonialism, or to the fact that their unity will definitely lead to triumph as he assures in the following extracts in different parts of his speech:

"Working together, I'm confident that our two nations will vanquish the tyrants and terrorists who threaten us both."

"If you remember one thing, one thing from this speech, remember this: Our enemies are your enemies, our fight is your fight, and our victory will be your victory."

"Together, we shall defend our common civilization. Together, we shall secure a brilliant future for both our nations."

He also uses the *argument of consequences* repeatedly in his speech by, later on, resorting to *appealing to fear fallacy*, in which "the advocate will not entertain the possibility that the opponent's argument is correct, because if it is

correct there will be advert consequences” (Ibid: 25). He pulls this fallacy’s strings to convince his audience that whatever affects Israel will similarly affect America as he professes in these lines:

“The ICJ is trying to shackle Israel’s hands and prevent us from defending ourselves. And if Israel’s hands are tied, America is next. I’ll tell you what else is next. The ability of all democracies to fight terrorism will be imperiled. That’s what’s on the line. So let me assure you, the hands of the Jewish state will never be shackled. Israel will always defend itself.”

Then, Netanyahu employs the *relational identification* strategy as he refers to the Americans he addresses as “my friends” which he repeats “8” times throughout his speech as a form of *appraisal* in order to establish trust, familiarity and support. He also makes sure that the distinction is made clear in his addressees’ minds by repeating the logic of “we” your friends and “they” the enemy, to reaffirm in-group and out-group classification. Moreover, and for the same purpose of luring the American public opinion to adopt his perspective, Netanyahu makes sure to use the *perspectivization strategy* by thanking America “6” times, asking God to bless America and using metaphors like “force of light and good” and “beacon of liberty” to describe it. He also makes a life-long promise to be America’s friend and partner.

“Israel will always remain America’s indispensable ally. Through thick and thin, in good times and in bad, Israel will always be your loyal friend and your steadfast partner.”

“... may God bless the great alliance between Israel and America forever.”

After setting up the basis on who is good and bad, Netanyahu puts forward the *argument* that what happened in Israel on the 7th of October 2023 is similar to the attack on Pearl Harbor that happened in the US on December 7th, 1941 when a surprise military strike by the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service hit the American naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii despite the fact that the US was a neutral country in WWII, and it is also similar to the 9/11 attack carried out by Al-Qaeda on September 11th, 2001 against the US resulting in the death of 2,977 people making it the deadliest terrorist attack in the US history.

“Like December 7th, 1941, and September 11th, 2001, October 7th is a day that will forever live in infamy.”

The motive behind such argument is appealing to the addressees’ sympathy by establishing a common ground of shared agony and suffering through the employment of *false analogy fallacy* where an argument is made by analogy in which the analogy is poorly suited (Clark & Clark, 2005: 57). Netanyahu deliberately makes this analogy because he knows that by doing so, he will be opening old wounds for Americans since those attacks were unprovoked and deadly, which is the *topos* Netanyahu’s *argument* is based on and that is exactly the intention behind listing these attacks in one group in order for the audience to consequently draw the same conclusion about the 7th of October attack.

Netanyahu then resorts to a very powerful tool to attract as much attention and sympathy as he can, i.e. storytelling. Storytelling is a very effective persuasive tool especially when it aims at affecting the emotional state of the audience since in order to persuade someone to act in a certain way, the emotional dimension is essential as emotions play a central role in rational thought, especially in decision-making process (Ferretti, 2022: 20). Netanyahu proceeds in his plan to appeal for his American addressees’ sympathy to gain their support by giving a vivid description of a perfect day turning bad but in more graphic words:

“It was the Jewish holiday of Simchat Torah. It began as a perfect day. Not a cloud in the sky. Thousands of young Israelis were celebrating at an outdoor music festival. And suddenly, at 6:29 a.m., as children were still sleeping soundly in their beds in the towns and kibbutzim next to Gaza, suddenly heaven turned into hell.”

Intensification can be detected in the metaphors “heaven turned into hell, dark dungeons and monsters”. He also employs the *activation strategy* in criminalizing Hamas “butchered people, raped women, beheaded men and burnt babies” and presenting them as the out-group active actor who committed all these alleged crimes, while portraying Israel as the in-group passive actor or the victim. By doing so, Netanyahu resorts to *Ad Hominem fallacy* in which someone fallaciously attacks the person holding an opposing view making it impossible for the other party to bring forward their argument, rather than engaging with the core of the argument (Arp et al., 2018: 196). Since the pro-Palestinian side of the October 7th narrative is that the attack is basically a retaliatory reaction to decades of occupation that killed hundreds of thousands of Palestinians over the years with total impunity, and with Israel committing several massacres whose mortality rates of Palestinian lives exceeds those of Israelis in October 7th, yet faced with blatant silence by the whole world (e.g. The two-day Sabra and Shateela massacre alone resulted in the death of nearly 3000 lives), Netanyahu schemes to distort the truth by fabricating lies about his opponents without providing any sort of evidence in order to destroy their image before the international community rendering anything they say or do into a cause for condemnation (No tangible evidence of any of the above allegations about Hamas butchering, raping, beheading, burning people has been provided). *Impersonalisation* is also detected in the use of the metaphor “monsters” in order to dehumanize Hamas as in denying them their human attributes and rights which stresses their out-group negative identity depriving them the possibility of evoking compassion, sympathy or any

human emotions despite any horrific heart wrenching conditions they undergo since, according to Enge (2014: 4), one can only evoke compassion if he/ she is seen as part of the group of humans. Knoblock(2022:142)explains that derogatory, dehumanizing metaphors are routinely used in political rhetoric to transform opponents into enemies. Okulska & Cap (2010) note that the dehumanization (or more accurately infra-humanization which according to Bar-Tal (2000: 122) means labeling groups by referring to negatively valued superhuman creatures such as demons, monsters and satans) of one's opponent through the use of such metaphors is a common discursive technique which serves the purpose of legitimation as, according to El Refaie (2001),they may sanction the use of inhuman and violent behavior and justify various official measures against the dehumanized party. By excluding a group from a moral community, it becomes possible to act inhumane towards them and it also legitimizes the inhumane acts for others to accept them.Netanyahu also utilizes *the appraisal strategy* by calling Hamas "*enemies, rapists, murderers and terrorist thugs*" throughout his speech, then he employs *the perspectivization strategy*with the exclamatory statements "*What monsters!*" and "*What monstrous evil!*" to serve his goals.

*The Appeal to pity fallacy*is quite prevailing in the whole speech, as Netanyahu employs it once again to justify wiping out Gaza by bringing up "the Israeli hostages" narrative which is full of sympathy evoking linguistic elements(see social actors' nomination, predication and argument table).It is also important to note the use of the *individualisation strategy*in the hostages' rhetoric in particular, as Netanyahu mentions each and every hostage by their names, which opens the door for more elaborate descriptive account of each case to stress the *topos*of (hostages' victimization) in contrast to Hamas which has always been referred to by means of *assimilation*as in mass nouns or nouns denoting a group of people to attach certain negative qualities to each and every member of that group equally to stress the *topos* of "Hamas being the monstrous aggressors".

His employment of the *subjection strategy*when describing the first hostage's situation can be detected by the use of the passive structure in the sentence "*she was violently abducted*" which gives rise to what the hostage have gone through and stress the evil nature of the action which was described as "*violent*" rather than anything else. He uses *the relational identification strategy*as he makes reference to the hostage's "*mother*" to highlight the fact that these hostages are innocent civilians who left family members worrying about them. He also employs the *intensification strategy*when describing the hostage's mother as "*dying of cancer*" and painting a very emotional scene about the mother pleading him to make her "*last wish*" to hug her daughter come true, as the adjective "*last*" carries death *connotations*as well. The use of such lexical items is intentional as there are many ways with which one can address a health issue, for instance one can say "fighting cancer" rather than "dying of cancer" but it wouldn't be as emotionally effective and sympathy evoking.

"On the morning of October 7th, the entire world saw Noa's look of desperation as she was violently abducted to Gaza on the back of a motorcycle. I met Noa's mother Liora a few months ago. She was dying of cancer. She said to me, "Prime Minister, I have one final wish. I wish to hug my daughter Noa one last time before I die."

Another hostage's story began with the use of the *classification strategy*by focusing on the fact that the hostages were "*boys, toddlers and children*"to help the audience relate to and sympathize with them. Netanyahu, again, uses *The relational identification strategy* to refer to "*the grandfather*" of those hostages to create a familial atmosphere and highlight the gravity of the situation and how it affects the entire family, and *the physical identification strategy*to describe those hostages as "*beautiful red-headed*" and. He once again uses *the subjection strategy*throughpassivization in the sentence "*beautiful red-haired children taken hostage*"in order to bring the suffering of the victims into the focal point. He also uses *repetition*to amplify the effect of his statement by repeating the same line "*beautiful red-haired children*"and *impersonalizing* Hamas, again, by using the term "*monsters*".

"Many hostage families are also here with us today, including Eliyahu Bibas. Eliyahu Bibas is the grandfather of those two beautiful red-headed boys, the Bibas boys, toddlers. And they were taken hostage with their mother and Eliyahu's son. The entire family was taken hostage. Two beautiful red-haired children taken hostage. What monsters!"

Netanyahu follows that by reiterating the strong bond between Israel and the US and thanking President Biden for his efforts which he describes as "*tireless*" and his "*heartfelt support*". He also makes sure to quote Biden's words saying, "*Hamas is sheer evil*" and that he is "*a proud Irish American Zionist*" and by doing so he achieves two goals, first he tells Americans that they are involved in this war as they have been arming Israel and their president approves of that which is a way to have their approval as well. Secondly, by mentioning the "Irish" part, he attempts to attract a wider range of supporters in the Irish community and his choice of this particular nationality is not random or haphazard, but it is carefully designed to target this specific community as the majority of the Irish people are against what Israel is doing in Gaza since they themselves suffered the plague of occupation and starvation for years so it would definitely come in handy to quote an Irish man, and not any Irish man but he might be the most powerful Irishman in the world being the president of the United States, describing Hamas negatively and priding

himself on his Zionist affiliation by using *the association strategy* as he used all the other adjectives to highlight and pre-modify the main aspect rooted deeper than any other in his core, namely “being a Zionist”. He did not, for instance, say a “Zionist American” which would indicate that he is mainly American and being a Zionist is one way to describe him, but it is actually the other way around. This strategy is based on the *Appeal to Authority fallacy*, in which the opinion of an authority figure (or figures) is used as evidence to support an argument (Clark & Clark, 2005: 13), regardless of this figure’s credibility or objectivity.

“I want to thank President Biden for his tireless efforts ... I thank President Biden for his heartfelt support for Israel ... He rightly called Hamas “sheer evil.” ... I want to thank him for half a century of friendship to Israel and for being, as he says, a proud Zionist. Actually, he says, a proud Irish American Zionist.”

All the aforementioned account is used to set the foundation for the next topic which is the showcasing of the heroic feats, selflessness and compassion of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) soldiers. For Netanyahu, it’s a matter of critical importance to exonerate IDF soldiers from the infamous crimes they have been committing against Palestinians while boastfully posting footage of themselves gloating over the death of women and children with total impunity (checkfbendyy and absorberyt channels on Instagram for recorded interviews with IDF soldiers expressing joy and pride over the killing of Palestinians). Netanyahu also provides elaborate accounts of the incredibly life-threatening missions the IDF soldiers have been carrying out for the sake of rescuing these hostages, making use of the *Scheherazade’s strategy* which is usually employed by US politicians, particularly Karl Rove who was George W. Bush’s Advisor. Salmon (2017) refers to Ira Chenus, professor of religious studies at the university of Colorado, as he explains that when Bush’s ratings were at an all-time low after the war in Iraq ... Karl Rove began to implement “Scheherazade’s strategy” which works by the simple principle: “When policy dooms you, start telling stories ... stories so fabulous, so gripping, so spell-binding that the king (or in this case, the American citizen who theoretically rules our country) forgets all about a lethal policy... the Scheherazade policy ... plays on the insecurity of Americans who feel that their lives are out of control”. Rove used moralistic tales with rhetoric designed to manipulate popular passions rather than engage people in political debates.

“In the early hours of October 7th, Avichail heard the news of Hamas’ bloody rampage. He put on his uniform, grabbed his rifle, but he didn’t have a car. So, he ran eight miles to the frontlines of Gaza to defend his people. You heard that right. He ran eight miles”

In Netanyahu’s narrative of the IDF’s courage and fearlessness, he uses *the functionalization strategy* to refer to them as “soldiers”, a word with just the right connotations for that picture he is drawing as it implies working diligently for a cause and defending the helpless. It also correlates with bravery and resilience. While when he states that they are “from every ethnicity, color and creed” he does not refer to them as “soldiers” but as “men and women”.

“The men and women of the IDF come from every corner of Israeli society, every ethnicity, every color, every creed, left and right, religious and secular.”

He employs *the classification strategy* to highlight these soldiers’ backgrounds according to nationality “Ethiopian and American” and religion “Muslim, Christian, Jewish and Druze” so that people can relate to them and to identify these soldiers according to gender to make the audience see them through a human lens as being the “men and women” who come from every corner of the society. He asserts this notion by mentioning several soldiers by name using the *individualization strategy* and exploits *the relational identification strategy* by referring to family members of these soldiers like fathers and sons for the same purpose.

“Like Ashraf, the Muslim soldiers of the IDF fought alongside their Jewish, Druze, Christian and other comrades in arms with tremendous bravery.”

He also does not fail to mention these soldiers’ injuries and sacrifices, in specific details, and elaborate on their courageous rescue missions while enduring these injuries to create a quality he wants people to associate his soldiers with, i.e. selflessness.

“Asa fought as an officer in the tank corps, and he was wounded in battle. He was wounded in battle while protecting his fellow soldiers from a grenade. He lost his right arm and the vision in his left eye”

“... Lieutenant Yonatan, Jonathan Ben Hamo who lost a leg in Gaza and continued to fight.”

Then, there is the Holocaust survivor’s card, as he mentions that some of the IDF soldiers’ parents are Holocaust survivors and some of whom fled to America, made families and then went to Israel. In this way, he uses the *proof by repeated assertion fallacy* to strengthen the main topos he started his speech with, the unity of Israel and the US.

“With us today is Yechiel Leiter, the father of one of those Maccabees. Yehiel’s father escaped the Holocaust and found refuge in America. As a young man, Yechiel moved to Israel and raised a family of eight children.”

Netanyahu leaves nothing for the audience’s imagination as he quite vividly tells the stories of these soldiers in such a planned manner as he makes sure to stress certain topoi concerning them such as IDF’s bravery, IDF’s humanity and selflessness and IDF’s victimization topoi. He does so by resorting to *False Attribution fallacy* as Clark and Clark (2005: 61) explain that such fallacy occurs when the speaker “appeals to a marginally relevant, irrelevant,

unqualified, unidentified, biased or even non-existent source to support a claim” and these following words uttered by Netanyahu is an example of such fallacy:

“For all we know, Iran is funding the anti-Israel protests that are going on right now outside this building”

Netanyahu also uses the *Appeal to Authority fallacy* to back up his (IDF soldiers' bravery) *argument* by resorting to an authority in a different domain to provide evidence for his claims by using the metaphor “lions” to describe IDF soldiers as part of his *nomination strategy* while quoting the Holy Bible:

“As the Bible says, “עם כלביא יקום” —they shall rise like lions. They've risen like lions, the lions of Judah, the lions of Israel”

It should not strike anyone as a surprise that Netanyahu would not complete the abovementioned verse since it would draw a distasteful image about the IDF soldiers. The complete verse in Numbers 23:24 as stated in the Holy Bible, New International Version, NIV (2008) goes as follows:

“The people rise like a lioness; they rouse themselves like a lion that does not rest till it devours its prey and drinks the blood of its victims.”

Regardless of the background narrative preceding this verse, the mere mention of the imagery stated in the rest of the verse possesses certain connotations that could sabotage the portrait Netanyahu is so keenly painting of his brave but selfless and humane IDF soldiers. Political correctness necessitates resorting to this case of *omission fallacy*, in which important information is left out rather than attempting to explore and discuss various aspects of the issue in hand (Van Vleet, 2021: 17).

Eysenck and Brysbaert (2023) refer to this fallacy as “omission bias” since the harm resulting from a specific action is the subject of omission. It is critical to use omission fallacy in this case as “prey devouring” and “drinking the blood of victims” is not exactly what he wants people to associate the “*lions of Israel*” with. One more strategy Netanyahu does not miss in his account regarding the IDF soldiers is *appraisal*, as he refers to them as “heroes” and “Holocaust survivors” to evoke certain feelings in his audience which would go in line with his plotted ends.

There is another social actor who, unquestionably, has to be addressed, i.e., the pro-Palestine protestors, who are referred to in the speech as “anti-Israel protestors”. These protestors are groups of people who belong to different ethnic, religious, racial backgrounds simply demanding a ceasefire for Gaza to stop Israel from killing innocent children, women and men. Netanyahu tries to devalidate these protestors' credibility in the eyes of the public opinion, so he proposes an argument based on the *topos* (the protestors are evil) and supports it by multiple ways such as the *activation strategy* in the sentence:

“... many anti-Israel protestors, many choose to stand with evil. They stand with Hamas. They stand with rapists and murderers. They stand with people who came into the kibbutzim, into a home, the parents hid the children, the two babies, in the attic, in a secret attic. They murdered the family, the parents, they found the secret latch to the hidden attic and then they murdered the babies. These protestors stand with them.”

Through the verbs “choose” and “stand” and using *parallel* structures in these three sentences as a persuasive technique. Then, he resorts to *misleading vividness fallacy* which is a psychological shortcut made by vivid accounts and emotionally charged anecdotes to mold our decision-making on both conscious and unconscious levels (Grimes, 2021: 3). He describes a heinous (yet unsupported by evidence of any sort) incident in such elaboration and specific heart wrenching details to convince his audience with his claims. Then he uses *the perspectivization strategy* by expressing his own feelings and views that clearly cast these protestors in the out-group camp by adding the following sentence to the end of the previous paragraph:

“They should be ashamed of themselves”

He proceeds with his agenda to defame these protestors by putting forward another argument based on the *topo* (anti-Israel protestors hate America) and he backs it up by *appealing to his listeners' anger*, which is a fallacy designed to substitute arousing anger for giving reasons (Hinderer, 2005: 247). Since there is no tangible evidence to support his claims of Iran paying these protestors, he stirs people's feelings, particularly anger and rage, by saying:

“... They want to disrupt America. So, these protestors burned American flags even on the 4th of July”

where the *intensification strategy* is strongly present, first by *the activation strategy* through the use of the verb's “refuse”, “want” and “burned” to make “disrupting America” seem like the main motive behind these protests. Secondly, *Intensification* can also be detected by the adverb “even” to emphasize the gravity of the action of “burning the American flag” since the 4th of July is the American Independence Day, a day Americans celebrate and take pride on.

Moreover, since he cannot inject credibility into the proposed argument (the protestors are paid by Iran), he uses *red herring fallacy* which is, according to Bennett (2017) “a deliberate diversion of attention with the intention of trying to abandon the original argument”. He introduces a second argument, which is irrelevant, and starts describing certain negative practices by Iran, like killing women who are not covering their hair or hanging gays from cranes,

just to draw the attention from the main argument which is basically the reason why these protestors are advocating for the Palestinian cause, and portray them as puppets manipulated by an evil enemy, so then he would make use of *the appraisal strategy* by calling them “Iran’s useful idiots” to help the audience form a negative perception of them and see any hostility or force used against them as justified procedures.

“When the Tyrants of Tehran, who hang gays from cranes and murder women for not covering their hair, are praising, promoting and funding you, you have officially become Iran’s useful idiots.”

He once again stresses the dangers posed by Iran towards, not only Israel, but the USA as Iran’s main target pushing the fear buttons of his American audience as *appealing to fear fallacy* is very much present in his words:

“... the foreign minister of Iran’s proxy, Hezbollah, and he said this: “This is not a war with Israel. Israel,” he said, “is merely a tool. The main war, the real war, is with America.”

“That’s why the mobs in Tehran chant “Death to Israel” before they chant “Death to America.” For Iran Israel is first, America is next. So, when Israel fights Hamas, we’re fighting Iran. ... we’re fighting the most radical and murderous enemy of the United States of America.”

“When Israel acts to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, nuclear weapons that could destroy Israel and threaten every American city, every city that you come from, we’re not only protecting ourselves. We’re protecting you.”

Swiftly, he resorts to the *guilt by association fallacy* in which an individual’s beliefs, values or actions are connected to a group based on certain associations with that group, regardless of whether the individual truly represents or agrees with which (Hadley & Boon, 2022: 179). By doing so, he attempts to exploit the audiences preexisting spite for Iran with which he associates the protestors. Since these protestors are advocating for Gaza, he associates them with the Iranian practices mentioned earlier and uses *false analogy fallacy* as in the following lines:

“It’s amazing, absolutely amazing. Some of these protesters hold up signs proclaiming, “Gays for Gaza.” They might as well hold up signs saying, “Chickens for KFC.”

Here, Netanyahu uses sarcasm in an attempt to make the argument “Gaza kills gays” just like the Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise slaughters chicken, even though there is not a single incident supporting such allegation in contrast to many reported crimes of this nature in Israel (look up “Tel Aviv gay centre shooting” and “Jerusalem gay pride stabbing by ultra-orthodox Jew”).

He also presents the *argument* (protestors are uneducated and stupid) based, again, on the *Ad Hominem fallacy* as he insults their intelligence to discredit them:

“These protesters chant “From the river to the sea.” But many don’t have a clue what river and what sea they’re talking about. They not only get an F in geography, they get an F in history”

Then he *appeals to the authority* of the Bible by giving a historical account based on religious teachings, which is a fallacy he uses to support his claims by illuding the listeners that the religious evidence bears higher legitimacy than that of the international law.

“They call Israel a colonialist state. Don’t they know that the Land of Israel is where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob prayed, where Isaiah and Jeremiah preached and where David and Solomon ruled? For nearly four thousand years, the land of Israel has been the homeland of the Jewish people. It’s always been our home; it will always be our home.”

In his Speech, Netanyahu exerted every effort to stigmatize anyone opposing him. He criticized presidents of some of the most prestigious universities in the world, like Harvard, by first making the *predication* that they “get it wrong” then using the *activation strategy* by accusing them of deliberately not condemning what he claims to be “the calls for the genocide of Jews” referring to the protestors chants and banners calling for a ceasefire in Gaza which has no indication or implication, explicit or tacit, to his false claim as he resorts to *straw man fallacy* which, according to Macagno and Walton (2017), is the attack on the view that the speaker attributes to his adversary after distorting and misinterpreting that view. He then employs the *perspectivization strategy* when he says “I’m ashamed to say my alma mater MIT” to add to the disgrace of whom he later on refers to as “academics”, using the *functionalization strategy*, and premodifies them by the adjective “befuddled”, using the *appraisal strategy*, to make it clear to the audience that even though they seem educated and prestigious but that does not make them, in any way, immune to what he tirelessly and elaborately describes as massive antisemitic propaganda. In other words, he makes the argument that if the world elite cannot distinguish right from wrong, what chance do average people have? In this way the whole world is then easily accused of being “befuddled” and “antisemitic”.

“It’s not only the campus protesters who get it wrong. It’s also the people who run those campuses. Eighty years after the Holocaust, the presidents of Harvard, Penn, and I’m ashamed to say my alma mater MIT couldn’t bring themselves to condemn the calls for the genocide of Jews ... Well, let me give these befuddled academics a little context.”

To back up this last argument, he adds:

“And don't be fooled when the blood libels against the Jewish State come from people who wear fancy silk robes and speak in lofty tones about law and Justice”

in order to introduce what seems to be the most important social actor Netanyahu has to address, by using *the functionalization strategy*, that is definitely the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court who has earlier accused Israel of deliberately starving and targeting the civilians in Gaza and requested urgent issue of arrest warrants for the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for his atrocious crimes in Gaza. Netanyahu employs *physical identification strategy* by referring to the ICC prosecutor as *“people who wear fancy silk robes and speak in lofty tones about law and Justice”* to delegitimize him in the public eyes. Then he uses *the perspectivization strategy* to achieve his goal by describing the ICC prosecutor's actions as *shameful, a complete nonsense and fabrication*:

“The prosecutor of the International Criminal Court has shamefully accused Israel of deliberately starving the people of Gaza. This is utter complete nonsense. It's a complete fabrication”

Then he uses the rhetorical question *“What in God's green earth is he talking about?”* to support the previous argument. He also activates the defensive mechanism by numerating a number of procedures Israel carries out to ensure that no civilians are harmed in an attempt to exonerate himself from the crimes the ICC charged him with. He employs *the activation strategy* by stating that Israel:

“dropped millions of flyers, sent millions of text messages, made hundreds of thousands of phone calls to get Palestinian civilians out of harm's way”

and *the intensification strategy* when expressing that:

“every civilian death is a tragedy” for Israel to foreground the topos of humanity regarding their actions. He also resorts to *the appeal to authority fallacy* by using the *individualization strategy* and *functionalization strategy* as he quotes “Colonel John Spenser, the head of urban warfare studies at West Point” to convince the audience that he has an expert opinion on the matter. Then he mentions that he had mistaken this expert's specialty with *“modern history”* while he is specialized with *“history”* to place a greater emphasis on the fact that this expert's opinion is based on his study of history in general not just the modern one which validates his statement even more.

“He studied every major urban conflict, I was going to say in modern history, he corrected me. No. In history”

Netanyahu quotes this expert saying that Israel *“has implemented more precautions to prevent civilian harm than any military in history and beyond what international law requires.”*

Moreover, he uses the same strategies when quoting an Israeli IDF commander telling him that the Palestinian civilian casualties in Rafah is *“practically none”* then he repeats it to stress this information. In that same narrative, Netanyahu employs the *activation strategy* when asking the commander about the number of terrorists the IDF soldiers killed to showcase their heroism and bravery, while when asking about the killing of civilians he resorts to *the suppression strategy* by passivization to exclude the passive social actor responsible for the act of killing in order not to be associated with that act in the audience's minds.

“I asked the commander there, “How many terrorists did you take out in Rafah?” He gave me an exact number: 1,203. I asked him, “How many civilians were killed?”

In this long speech, Netanyahu fails to mention any of the huge amount of documented evidence showing Israel bombing the tents of civilians in humanitarian safe zones they themselves urged Palestinians to evacuate to (look up Al-Mawasi massacre, flour massacre, Rafah tent massacre, Al-Tabaen school massacre, etc.). This is a living example of *the omission fallacy* unfolding right before the whole world's eyes, yet it somehow goes impunely unseen.

(Social Actors' Nomination, Predication and Argument Table)

Social Actors and events	Nomination	In-text Predication	Social Actor's Arguments
Iran	- Axis of terror - Barbarism - Tyrants - Enemies - enemy of the United States of America - mobs of Tehran - threat	- brutal - the most radical - the most murderous	The barbaric terrorist and shared enemy of Israel and the US
Israel and the US	- Forces of civilization - Friends		The civilized peaceful but targeted victims of shared enemies and are victorious only when united
7 th October 2023 attack	- Hamas's rampage	- savage	Unprovoked, tragic infamous attack

		- bloody	
Hamas	- Terrorists - Monsters - sheer evil - enemies - rapists - murderers - terrorist thugs	- brutal - bloody - monstrous	- Monstrous terrorists, murderers, rapists who commit the most atrocious crimes with cold blood against the innocent Israeli and Palestinian civilians
Smichat Torah (day)	- Holiday	- Jewish - Perfect	- A perfect day for Jews to enjoy and celebrate in peace
Israelies			Innocent people who only want to live a peaceful life
Gaza		- demilitarized - - deradicalized	- A horrible place run by terrorists who wish to destroy Israel
Jewish people/ Jews		- helpless - now are no longer helpless in the face of Israel's enemies -	- Always the victims who are hated and wrongfully accused with false accusations and underwent horrible massacres like the Holocaust
Israel	- Good - State - Homeland for the Jewish people for four thousand years - democracy	- democratic - proud - pro-American	- A democratic state for the Jews and their homeland since ancient times according to Holy Jewish scriptures. - It cares about civilians and does everything to prevent them from getting harmed. - The only one standing in the face of Iran whose main goal is to destroy America
The Israeli Hostages and their families	- children, boys, toddlers - mother - grandfather - son	- beautiful - red-headed - red-haired	- Innocent men, women and children who were brutally abducted by Hamas.
President Biden	- Friend of Israel	- a proud Irish American Zionist -	- Israel's unequivocal ally who would go far and beyond for its sake.
IDF Soldiers	- Maccabees - son of a Holocaust survivor - hero - men and women - soldiers of Israel - the lions of Judah - the lions of Israel	- Ethiopian - Muslim - Christian - Jewish - Druze - unbowed - undaunted - unafraid - American - heroic	- Moral heroes who sacrifice their lives to save those of Israeli and Palestinian civilians
Palestinians			- Civilians in Gaza who are used as human shields and targeted by Hamas and are taught to hate Jews
Pro-Palestine Protestors	- Anti-Israel protestors - Iran's useful idiots		- Iran's stupid puppets who call for the death of Jews and America
Those who run university campuses like Presidents of Harvard	academics	befuddled	Despite their exceptional intellect they are deceived by the lies criminalizing Israel
The prosecutor of the International Criminal Court	people who wear fancy silk robes and speak in lofty tones about law and Justice		Seemingly privileged sophisticated people assuming high positions wrongly accuse Israel of crimes in which they have no hand.

President Trump			Israel's strong ally
America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - refuge for Jews surviving the Holocausts - the guardian of Western civilization - the world's greatest power -Iran's greatest enemy - force of light and good - beacon of liberty 		The world's guardians and Israel's friends and steadfast ally

Conclusion

In his tireless endeavors to manufacture consent of the American people in particular and the international community in general, Netanyahu leaves no stone unturned, linguistically speaking. He manipulated different strategies in order to make his claims seem factual and convincing to the audience. He made sure that all his out-group opponents were stigmatized using different discursive strategies with which he presented in-group actors such as America and the IDF soldiers as heroes. Topoi of self-defense, IDF's bravery and selflessness and Jews victimization are repeatedly stressed. As there is no evidence to support any of his arguments, Netanyahu often resorted to fallacies such as Ad Hominem, appeal to pity, appeal to authority, appeal to anger, appeal to fear, cherry-picking, false analogy, guilt by association and omission bias and employed metaphor, repetition, parallel structure, story-telling and different persuasive strategies for the same purpose as this paper disclosed by means of linguistic research and analysis.

Discourse Historical Approach is evolving, and more exploration needs to be done in this arena to discover its full potential, research wise. This paper can serve as a background for any study aiming at decoding manipulative messages plotted by linguistic techniques to influence people's perceptions of certain parties and shape their attitudes towards them by encouraging critical thinking. It can further contribute to research in the fields of political discourse analysis, applied linguistics, psycholinguistics since it provides a practical framework of how certain goals can be reached by communicative means.

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