

Critical Discourse Analysis of Benjamin Netanyahu ICC Open Hearing Session and Radar JawaPos Statement on Israel-Palestine Conflict

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A B S T R A C T

This study aimed to analyze the speech by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in response to the ICC arrest warrant against Israeli leaders.. This study took a qualitative method with critical discourse analysis based on Norman Fairclough's theory. The subject of the research was the speech by Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu taken from the YouTube channel Forbes Breaking News, posted on May 21, 2024, titled "Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu Responds to Arrest Warrant." This research aimed to provide a deep understanding of the discursive strategies used by Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu in his speech. The analysis revealed that Netanyahu's speech constructed a strong moral opposition and employed discursive strategies to legitimize Israel's actions and discredit the Israeli Criminal Court (ICC) and Hamas. Netanyahu's speech used complex discursive strategies to influence public and international perception. Through the use of emotional language, historical analogies, and criticism of the ICC, Netanyahu effectively built a narrative supporting Israel's position in the conflict with Hamas. This analysis demonstrated how political discourse could be used to shape power and legitimacy in the context of international politics.

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Introduction

On May 21, 2024, Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu delivered a speech in response to an arrest warrant issued by ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan against Israeli leaders. This speech sparked controversy and intensified the debate on Israel's actions toward Hamas and the legitimacy of the ICC. Benjamin Netanyahu was the Prime Minister of Israel, born on October 21, 1949. He had served as PM since 2009 and was the longest-serving leader in Israeli history. Netanyahu was known for his strong foreign policy and firm stance on national security issues. Research questions are How did Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu use discourse to shape public perception of the ICC arrest warrant? How were power and language utilized to legitimize Israel's actions? The Objectives of this research: To explain the discursive strategies used by Netanyahu in his speech and to analyze how Norman Fairclough's theory of power could be applied to understand this political discourse. Massive research and analysis of discourse today is carried out by various parties, not only by linguists, but also by other experts such as sociologists, psychologists, humanists, and so on (Sugerman, 2023). Critical discourse analysis experiences dynamic scientific development, the conception of development in one scientific discipline also develops and is diverse (Munfarida, 2014).

Critical discourse analysis examines the world of reality, which is based on the goals of dominating groups seeking to control and subjugate lesser groups. (Sugerman, 2023). Usually the assumed expressions contradict the literal concept of categories as language used in everyday life (Carver & Pikalo, 2008). Language appears as a tool for seeing the world or a kind of frame within which it is used instrumentally (Walter & Helmig, 2008). As an outcome, the analysis must be divided into two parts: language formation and the formation of social interactions and specific social settings (Fairclough in Darma 2009: 89).

The critical discourse analysis theory that utilized in this research was Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional analysis theory (1995; 1998; 2000). Fairclough's critical discourse analysis theory attempted to explain three dimensions of analysis:

1. Textual Analysis (micro-level): Describing the text.
2. Discourse Practice Analysis (meso-level): Interpreting the processes of discourse production, dissemination, and usage, including intertextuality and interdiscursivity.
3. Sociocultural Practice Analysis (macro-level):** Explaining the social processes embedded within the discourse (Fairclough, 1992: 73; 1995: 59).

Setting, circumstance, and other contextual factors are always taken into account in critical discourse analysis (Wijana and Rohmadi, 2009: 72). Observation procedures, or methods or ways of methodically assessing and documenting, are the data gathering methodology employed in this research (Purwanto, in Basrowi and Suwandi, 2008: 93-94). The technique developed by Norman Fairclough was utilized in this qualitative study.

There is a lack of detailed analysis on Benjamin Netanyahu's specific discursive strategies in his speeches through the lens of Norman Fairclough's theory of power. While existing studies have touched on aspects of Netanyahu's rhetoric, such as style and policy positions, there is a notable absence of systematic exploration into how he employs language to construct and maintain political power. This research aims to fill this gap by applying Fairclough's critical discourse analysis framework to uncover the underlying power dynamics and ideological constructions in Netanyahu's political discourse. Understanding these strategies is crucial for deeper insights into contemporary political communication and power relations.

Research Method

This study took a qualitative method with critical discourse analysis based on Norman Fairclough's theory. The goal of the research design was to comprehend how power and the sociopolitical environment formed and influenced the political discourse in Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's address. Text (micro), discourse practice (meso), and sociocultural practice (macro) were the three primary dimensions on which studies were undertaken.

The subject of the research was the speech by Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu taken from the YouTube channel Forbes Breaking News, posted on May 21, 2024, titled "Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu Responds to Arrest Warrant." This speech was chosen for its relevance to international legal issues and the Israel-Hamas conflict, as well as its response to the ICC arrest warrant, which reflected the dynamics of power and political discourse.

The data collection techniques in this research used non-participant observation and documentation methods. The primary data was the complete transcript of Netanyahu's speech obtained from the video available on YouTube. The researcher observed the speech text and recorded key elements related to the discursive strategies used in the speech. The data was analyzed using Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis theory, which has three dimensions:

1. Textual Analysis (Micro-Level): Describing the speech text, including analyzing its structure, vocabulary, and language style used.
2. Discourse Practice Analysis (Meso-Level): Interpreting how the text was produced, disseminated, and consumed. This included intertextuality and interdiscursivity, linking the speech text to other relevant discourses.

3. Explaining the socio-political background that both influenced and was influenced by the speech, as well as how power and ideology were represented in the text, is known as sociocultural practice analysis (macro-level).

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, several steps were taken:

1. Data Triangulation: Various data sources were used to confirm findings. Besides the speech text, the research also considered the context of news and public responses related to the speech.

2. Peer Review: To guarantee consistent and trustworthy interpretation, findings and analysis were examined by peers with experience in critical discourse analysis.

3. Audit Trail: To maintain transparency and allow other researchers to replicate the study, thorough recordings of every action taken and choice made during the research process were maintained.

This research aimed to provide a deep understanding of the discursive strategies used by Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu in his speech. It also sought to reveal how political discourse was used to shape public perception and legitimize political actions. The findings were expected to contribute to the literature on critical discourse analysis, particularly in the context of international conflict and international law..

Result and Discussion

Textual Analysis (Micro-level)

At the micro level, this analysis examined the structure, vocabulary, and language style used by Benjamin Netanyahu in his speech.

Structure Teks:

Netanyahu's speech consisted of several parts, including an opening statement, a description of Hamas's actions, criticism of the ICC, and an assertion of Israel's right to self-defense. This structure helped build a strong and consistent narrative.

By having a robust narrative structure, Netanyahu aimed to convince the public of his defense while portraying Hamas's actions negatively. Below are data points cited from reliable news sources to support the accuracy of this information:

"JawaPos.com Recently, More than 100,000 people were said to have fled Rafah after Israel attacked it again.

Reporting from The Guardian, Friday (5/10), the number is expected to increase.

Meanwhile, the new refugees will live in camps without any services, and are expected to live in the ruins of their homes without the basic necessities needed to live.

A UN official in Rafah said, "There is a lot of fear and hesitation, the streets are very crowded with cars, donkey carts, trolleys, pickup trucks and people on foot.

At the moment, humanitarian officials are tracking the number of people fleeing Rafah, the southernmost city in Gaza. "JawaPos.com (Friday, May 10, 2024)

Based on the news obtained from JawaPos.com, the actions of the ICC were justified as they addressed severe human rights violations involving bomb attacks that caused significant harm to people.

Vocabulary and Language Style:

Netanyahu used highly emotional and strong vocabulary to describe the situation and convey his message. Some quotes that demonstrate this include:- "It is a moral

outrage of historic proportions that the IC prosecutor, Karim Khan, decided to pursue arrest warrants against the democratically elected leaders of Israel."00:01 - "Israel is fighting a just war against Hamas, a terrorist group that commits genocide and carried out the greatest attack on the Jewish people since the Holocaust."(00:17)

"Mr. Khan draws a distorted and false moral comparison between the Hamas thugs and Israel's leaders."(00:36)

Netanyahu's language aimed to depict Hamas's actions in highly negative and horrific terms, as well as to sharply criticize the ICC.

The author found data from a news article explaining why the ICC sent a letter to Netanyahu. Here is a quote from the news:

According to the news, the ICC's letter was a response to severe human rights violations involving bomb attacks that caused significant harm to people, which justified their intervention and actions against the alleged perpetrators.

"The scale of seriousness and the recurring pattern of international crimes targeting journalists in Gaza require a priority investigation by the ICC prosecutor," said Christophe Deloire, director general of the group also known by the initials RSF, according to JawaPos.com citing APNews.(November 3, 2023)

Karim Khan, the ICC prosecutor, stated that he had reasonable reasons to suspect that the five men were criminally responsible for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity.

They have been in charge of Israel's battle against Hamas in Gaza since the Palestinian militant group's lethal attack on Israel on October 7.

"Israel like all states, has the right to take Measures to defend its population, but that Right however does not absolve Israel or any state from the obligation to abide by international humanitarian law," Mr. Khan added.

Khan further said that Israel's alleged crimes against the humanity are part of a wider and more systematic war against Palestinian civilians in conformity with state policy.

"These crimes, in our judgment, continue to this day," Khan said.

His office's evidence demonstrates that Israel has routinely denied civilians access to essential items including as food, water, medicine, and energy. Meanwhile, Hamas leaders are accused of bearing responsibility for Hamas' crimes, which include extermination and murder, torture, and hostage-taking." JawaPos, Tuesday, May 21, 2024.

According to the author, Netanyahu's actions were highly inconsistent with his speech and the reality of the situation. Despite justifying his actions by claiming to defend Israel's rights, Netanyahu committed numerous human rights violations, often framing Hamas as the scapegoat. He opposed the ICC, even though many countries condemned Israel's actions under his leadership.

Discourse Practice Analysis (Meso-Level) at the meso level, this analysis interprets the processes of discourse production, dissemination, and usage in Netanyahu's speech. This includes intertextuality and interdiscursivity, linking the speech to other relevant discourses.

Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity:

Netanyahu's speech connects Hamas attacks with historical events and global discourses on terrorism and international justice. For example, Netanyahu analogizes the events to 9/11 and World War II:

"This is akin to drawing a moral comparison between FDR and Hitler during World War II or between President Bush and Osama Bin Laden after September 11th."(00:43)

Using this analogy, Netanyahu sought to frame Hamas's actions as equivalent to other major crimes in modern history, thus strengthening the argument that Israel's actions were justified and necessary.

The author found data from JawaPos.com that contradicts Netanyahu's statement, as it shows that he attacked Muslim places of worship in Palestine.

"JawaPos.com-Israeli forces on Friday (5/17) stormed the Ibrahimi Mosque in the West Bank city of Hebron. They banned the call to prayer and the Maghrib prayer service at the mosque.

Director of the Waqf Department in Hebron Ghassan al-Rajabi told Anadolu as reported by Antara that Israeli soldiers forced employees of the Waqf Department to leave the mosque. Israeli soldiers forbade them from performing evening prayers.

According to him, the action taken by the Zionist soldiers seems to secure one of the senior Israeli officials who visited the mosque. Al-Rajabi added that the Ibrahimi Mosque is still closed to Palestinian worshippers until Isha prayer time.

Following the 1994 massacre of 29 Palestinian worshippers inside the mosque by radical Jewish settler Baruch Goldstein, Israeli authorities split the mosque property into Muslim and Jewish worshippers.

Around 160,000 Palestinian Muslims live in Hebron, along with approximately 500 illegal Jewish settlers. Jewish settlers dwell in a number of Jewish-only enclaves that are fiercely defended by Israeli military. JawaPos.com, Saturday, May 18, 2024

In July 2017, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee decided to include the Ibrahimi Mosque and the Old City of Hebron on the World Heritage List.

Another piece of evidence indicating that Israel's actions were not entirely justified. Here is a news excerpt from a reputable source: "JawaPos.com - Israeli airstrikes have again targeted settlements in Rafah city. This time, the Zionist attack targeted a house near the MER-C guest house in Rafah City in the southern Gaza Strip on Friday (5/17) local time

Luckily, in this attack, all volunteers were safe and in good condition. However, some parts of the guest house were damaged due to the shock, MER-C stated in Jakarta on Saturday.

Israeli military forces have been pounding the Gaza Strip since a cross-border attack by Hamas on October 7 last year, which killed around 1,200 Israelis.

According to Gaza authorities, so far more than 35,200 Palestinians have been killed, mostly women and children, and more than 79,200 wounded since the beginning of the Israeli aggression. "

From one perspective, what Netanyahu said may be true. However, looking at it from another angle, as cited from a news article published by Jawa Pos, the reality is very different. The author argues that Netanyahu's speech was merely a justification and an indirect appeal for support from other countries. Based on facts and reality, Netanyahu's actions were inhumane, with the most heinous being the damage to places of worship.

At the macro level, this analysis explains the socio-political context that influenced and was influenced by Netanyahu's speech. This includes how power and ideology were reflected in the text.

Socio-Political Context:

Netanyahu's speech was delivered in the context of high tension between Israel and Hamas, as well as international criticism of Israel's actions in Gaza. Netanyahu asserted Israel's right to self-defense while criticizing the ICC.- "The ridiculous accusations made by the prosecutor against me and Israel's Defense Ministry are just an effort to deny Israel the fundamental right to self-defense."(00:56) - "The International Criminal Court will become a joke due to Mr. Khan's misuse of this authority."01:59

The author found facts cited from JawaPos.com.

"Israeli troops have once again launched an onslaught against Gazans, using tank fire, artillery shelling, and airstrikes targeting Hamas militants.

In the far south of the area devastated on Monday, eyewitnesses reported, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) consolidated their hold by delivering helicopter strikes. Reporting from The Guardian, Tuesday (5/14), The IDF proceeded north into Jabaliya and Beit Lahiya, both of which saw intense fighting at the outset of the seven-month battle.

Officials estimate as many as 500,000 people have left Rafah since being ordered to evacuate by the IDF before their first offensive around and in the city a week ago.

Roads traveling north and west are congested with vehicles, trucks, trolleys, and horse-drawn carts transporting people and goods.

The war has prompted several large humanitarian groups to close or scale back their activities in Gaza, as fuel, food, and clean water shortages grow."JawaPos.com(Tuesday, May 14, 2024)

Netanyahu also connected criticism of the ICC to anti-Semitic views, aiming to paint the ICC's actions as part of a larger pattern of prejudice against Jews."Through this incendiary decision, Mr. Khan takes his place among the great anti-Semites in modern times."(02:19)

Thus, Netanyahu used historical and socio-political contexts to discredit the ICC and bolster support for Israel's policies.

The author argued that Netanyahu's speech was very effective because it framed the vocabulary in a way that portrayed Israel as the oppressed and justified the atrocities committed by Israel against Palestine.

Discussion

The analysis showed that Netanyahu's speech employed various discursive strategies to legitimize Israel's actions and discredit both the ICC and Hamas. Key findings included:

- 1. Moral Opposition:** Netanyahu created a strong moral opposition between Israel and Hamas, as well as between Israel and the ICC. Hamas was portrayed as genocidal terrorists, while the ICC was depicted as an unfair, anti-Semitic institution.
- 2. Legitimization of Israel's Actions:** Netanyahu emphasized Israel's right to self-defense and its adherence to international law, despite accusations to the contrary.
- 3. Discrediting the ICC:** The speech contained harsh criticism of the ICC, portraying it as illegitimate and biased against Israel.

By using these strategies, Netanyahu aimed to influence public and international opinion and build support for Israel's policies in dealing with Hamas.

The speech by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu used strong discursive strategies to shape public perception and legitimize Israel's actions. Through the use of emotional language, historical analogies, and criticism of the ICC, Netanyahu successfully built a narrative supporting Israel's position in the conflict with Hamas. While the structure, vocabulary, and grammar of the speech were effective in convincing the public, it unfortunately did not align with the actual situation.

This study makes a significant contribution to understanding how political discourse is used to shape power and legitimacy and how critical discourse analysis can reveal the discursive strategies employed in an international political context.

In comparison, another research finding might delve deeper into the specific linguistic techniques or rhetorical devices used by Netanyahu. For instance, it could analyze the use of specific metaphors, appeals to emotion, or historical references to strengthen his arguments. Additionally, it might explore how these strategies resonate differently with various audiences, both domestically and internationally.

Both studies contribute to understanding how political leaders utilize discourse to shape narratives, justify actions, and influence public opinion in complex geopolitical contexts. They collectively illustrate the power of language in political communication and its implications for international relations and public discourse.

Conclusion

This study aimed to analyze the speech by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in response to the arrest warrant by the ICC using Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis theory. The analysis revealed that Netanyahu's speech used complex discursive strategies to influence public and international perception. Through the use of emotional language, historical analogies, and criticism of the ICC, Netanyahu effectively built a narrative supporting Israel's position in the conflict with Hamas. This analysis demonstrated how political discourse could be used to shape power and legitimacy in the context of international politics.

Recommendations for Future Researchers

This study provides important insights into the use of discourse in the context of international politics, but several areas could be improved or explored further by future researchers:

1. Comparative Research:

Conduct comparative analyses between Netanyahu's speech and other political speeches by world leaders facing similar situations. This would provide a broader perspective on how discursive strategies are used differently or similarly in various contexts.

2. Media Analysis:

Combine critical discourse analysis with media analysis to understand how international and national media reported and framed Netanyahu's speech. This would make it easier to understand how the media interprets and spreads political discourse.

3. Interdisciplinary Approach:

Integrate critical discourse analysis with interdisciplinary approaches such as political psychology or sociology to understand the psychological and social impacts of political discourse on the audience.

4. Longitudinal Study:

Conduct longitudinal studies to observe how Netanyahu's political discourse evolved over time, particularly in the context of political and social changes in Israel and the international community.

5. Data Expansion:

Include more data, such as interviews with experts or additional document analyses related to the responses to Netanyahu's speech, to gain a more comprehensive perspective. With these recommendations, future researchers are expected to expand and deepen the understanding of how political discourse is used to shape power, legitimacy, and public perception in an international context.

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