# A Critical Discourse Analysis of Isaac Herzog's Speech on the U.S. Congress toward the War Against Palestine

**Celine Sekar Nathania Purnama Ong[1], Famala Eka Sanhadi Rahayu[2], & Wilma Prafitri[3]**
[1]English Literature Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences
Mulawarman University
[2]English Literature Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences
Mulawarman University
[3]English Literature Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences
Mulawarman University
Email: celineong1131@gmail.com

## ABSTRAK

Kemunculan konflik di berbagai negara telah meningkat beberapa tahun belakangan ini. Pemerintah negara adalah salah satu dari faktor penting yang menentukan keberlangsungan konflik. Bahasa mereka mempengaruhi rakyat mereka dan pihak-pihak yang tidak terlibat secara langsung dalam konflik. Pidato seremonial Isaac Herzog di Kongres Amerika Serikat pada tahun 2023 dapat digunakan untuk menganalisa strategi retorika untuk memengaruhi komite kongres Amerika Serikat dalam konflik dengan Palestina. Data utama yang digunakan, yang merupakan transkrip pidato, diambil dari website C-SPAN, tanpa editan, komentar, atau pun analisis dari pihak manapun. Menggunakan model Analisis Wacana Kritis tiga dimensi milik Norman Fairclough, tujuan dari studi ini adalah mengungkapkan bagaimana pembicara menggunakan kekuasaan dalam pidato dan memengaruhi pendengarnya, dengan menganalisa teks dari dimensi tekstual, diskursif, dan sosial. Metode menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, dengan menganalisis data dari pilihan kata, produksi diskursus, dan efeknya dari segi sosiokultural. Hasil penelitian ini menemukan strategi retorika dalam membentuk dan mempengaruhi pendengar, seperti pengendalian topik melalui pilihan leksikal strategis yang menggambarkan aktor secara ideologis, referensi intertekstualitas yang selaras dengan nilai yang dimiliki pendengar untuk meningkatkan persuasi, serta pemanfaatan konteks sosiokultural untuk membenarkan ideologi dan perbuatan. Analisis ini menekankan pentingnya bahasa dalam mempertahankan kekuasaan, dan strategi retoris dalam wacana politik sebagai alat untuk transfer dan mempertahankan ideologi.

**Kata kunci:** analisis wacana kritis (AWK), Isaac Herzog, Strategi Retorika, bahasa, kekuasaan

## ABSTRACT

The emergence of conflicts in various countries has been arising in the past few years. A country's leader is one of the important factors in determining the continuance of conflicts. Their language influences both their own people and the parties who are not directly involved in the conflict. Isaac Herzog's ceremonial address at the U.S. Congress in 2023 can be used to analyze the rhetorical strategies in influencing the U.S. committee in the conflict with Palestine. The primary data, in the form of speech transcript, is taken from C-SPAN's website without any editing, commentary, or analysis from any parties. Using Norman Fairclough's three dimensions Critical Discourse Analysis model, the goal of this study is to reveal how the speaker exercises power in speech and influences their audience, by analyzing the text from its textual, discursive, and social dimensions. The method employs a descriptive qualitative approach, by analyzing the data through its lexical choices, discursive production, and sociocultural impact. The result of this study found the rhetorical strategy in shaping and influencing audiences, such as topic control through strategic lexical choices that frame actors ideologically, Intertextuality references that aligns with audience values to increase persuasion, and utilize sociocultural context to justify ideologies and actions. This analysis emphasized the importance of language in maintaining power, and rhetorical strategies in political discourse as tools for ideologies transfer and preservation.

**Keywords:** critical discourse analysis (CDA), Isaac Herzog, Rhetorical Strategies, language, power

## A. INTRODUCTION

In an era marked by global instability, armed conflict continues to shape international relations with devastating humanitarian consequences. Recent data reveals an alarming proliferation of violence, with 59 active conflicts documented in 2023, nine of which escalated into full-scale wars across multiple continents (Rustad, 2024). Among these, the Israel-Palestine conflict stands out as one of the most prolonged and politically charged disputes of the modern era, having claimed over 120,000 lives since its emergence in 1948. This prolonged hostility, recently intensified by the October 2023 Hamas attacks and subsequent Israeli military response (Israel-Hamas), exemplifies Stewart's observation that wars predominantly emerge from political motives motives that comes from cultural differences and socioeconomic inequalities (Stewart, 2002, as cited in Ahluwalia & Miller, 2016), making the linguistic strategies of world leaders crucial to understanding conflict persistence.

Recent Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) research has explored power dynamics in political rhetoric, including studies on pandemic-era leadership (Kartika et al., 2023), Islamophobic hegemony in U.S. politics (Badarussyamsi et al., 2024), and persuasive language in media (Khramchenko, 2023). However, few apply CDA to ceremonial diplomatic speeches, particularly those reinforcing geopolitical alliances during active conflicts. This study addresses that gap by analyzing Herzog's 2023 U.S. Congress address, expanding CDA's scope beyond crisis communication or media discourse.

Within this context, political discourse serves as both a weapon and a shield, as a means to justify violence while cultivating international support. This is seen in the diplomatic rhetoric surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict, where language functions as a critical tool for ideological transmission and alliance maintenance. This study examines this phenomenon through a CDA of Israeli President Isaac Herzog's July 2023 address to the U.S. Congress, a strategic performance aimed at reinforcing the longstanding U.S.-Israel alliance during a period of escalating violence.

Applying Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA model, this research investigates Herzog's rhetorical strategies of power through textual analysis of lexical choices, discursive practice of intertextual references, and social practice of ideological naturalization. While CDA research on Israeli politics has predominantly focused on Prime Minister Netanyahu, Herzog's diplomatic rhetoric remains underexplored despite his unique position as both a Zionist leader and a figure of unity. The study analyzes Herzog's unedited C-SPAN transcript to reveal how political discourse justifies violence and sustains alliances. As Fairclough stated, CDA exposes societal power imbalances by decoding linguistic manipulation (Fairclough, 2010). This study emphasizes critical discourse analysis as important for understanding and potentially mitigating political conflicts.

## B. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) represents a transdisciplinary approach to examine how language constructs and reflects power dynamics, ideologies, and social structures (Weiss & Wodak, 2003). As Fairclough stated in his book, CDA serves both as an analytical tool for exposing power relations hidden in discourse and as a normative framework for addressing social wrongs (Fairclough, 2010). CDA actively bridges sociology, political science, and

linguistics to reveal how texts interact with broader social processes. Through methods like linguistic and framing analysis, it deconstructs how discourse maintains power asymmetries in media representations, political rhetoric, and institutional communication (Fairclough, 2015). The approach is not neutral, targeting discursive manifestations of social problems to change the existing ideologies for a better one. CDA exposes how leaders naturalize ideologies through strategic language choices. As this study demonstrates through Herzog's congressional speech, CDA provides the theoretical tools to unpack how political speeches legitimize power structures and shape public perception. The framework's critical-normative duality makes it a perfect tool for analyzing the Israel-Palestine conflict discourse, where language functions both as an instrument of hegemony and a potential site for ideological resistance.

Fairclough's approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) emphasizes the relationship between the meaning-making processes and social structures, particularly in exposing how discourse perpetuates power imbalances. His methodology follows four analytical steps, identifying socially harmful discursive practices, identify the issue in tackling the social wrong, consider whether the society "needs" said social wrong, and think of the possible ways to overcome the issue (Fairclough, 2010). Through a three-dimensional framework, Fairclough's model connects textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice. This framework enables researchers to identify how specific linguistic choices become institutionalized through discourse practices before naturalizing ideologies in broader social contexts. The framework's critical-normative dimension distinguishes it from descriptive approaches, as it not only reveals the power in discourse patterns but also proposes ways to challenge it. This methodology shows how leaders like Herzog construct ideological legitimacy through strategic language.

### a. Text Analysis

Fairclough's framework for textual analysis examines three interdependent meaning dimensions, ideational (representation of events/participants), interpersonal (identity and power relations construction), and textual (information structuring through foregrounding) (Fairclough, 2010). These dimensions are interlinked, for instance, political speeches represent policies, construct leadership images, and manage audience attention through strategic wordings. For systematic analysis, Fairclough identifies four core textual elements (Fairclough, 1992), vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure.

### b. Discursive Practice

Fairclough stated that discursive practice involves text production, distribution, and consumption, each shaped by social and institutional contexts (Fairclough, 1992). Text production reflects collaborative institutional practices, meanwhile consumption shows how interpretation varies according to readers' cultural knowledge and the text's real-life outcomes. Distribution varies from simple interpersonal exchanges to complex institutional distribution like political speeches designed for layered audiences. Three key dimensions in this analysis, interdiscursivity, manifest intertextuality, and intertextual chains.

### c. Social Practice

Fairclough puts social practice as the dimension where discourse interacts with broader structures of power, ideology, and hegemony (Fairclough, 1992). This framework examines how discourse both reflects and reproduces social realities through two key elements, ideology naturalizes power relations by framing specific views as common thing. Media communication, from political speeches to social media, serves as a primary media for ideological transfer, mixing economic and political agendas to shape sociocultural values

(Fairclough, 1995); Hegemony, following Gramsci (as cited in Fairclough, Language and Power, 2015), operates through consent rather than coercion. Where the dominant groups institutionalize their ideologies in economic, political, and cultural domains. Fairclough's three dimensions model analyzes these dynamics through situational contexts (immediate interactions), institutional contexts, and societal/cultural contexts.

## 2. Speech

Within critical discourse studies, speech is an act of communication to deliver ideas and influence the audience. Speech has several characteristics that shapes its form, such as sounds, intonation, rhythm, pitch, and pace (Cornbleet & Carter, 2002; Lucas, 2009). Unlike common conversations, political speeches represent discursive events where the speakers hold institutional authority to influence audiences. Three elements play a part in this process, context, purpose, and receivers' engagement.

## C. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design to analyze Isaac Herzog's speech transcript, focusing on discursive power structures and social interactions. Qualitative methods are suitable for examining non-numerical data, such as meanings, beliefs, and symbolic communication, allowing a deeper exploration of linguistic and social dynamics (Creswell, 2009). The study adopts a case study approach, as it investigates a single subject such as Herzog's speech to understand power practices in language. The primary data source is a transcript from a speech made by Isaac Herzog at the United States Congress on July 19th, 2023, taken from C-SPAN's website on https://www.c-span.org/program/joint-session-of-congress/israeli-president-herzog-address-to-joint-meeting-of-congress/629534.

The data preparation is implemented in three steps (Miles & Huberman, 1994). First, examines and reduces the data. Next step is to group the data based on their discourse patterns and functions. Lastly, the findings and grouped data are displayed in a narrative description.

## D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Findings

This sub-chapter displays the findings of Isaac Herzog's rhetorical strategies using Fairclough's three dimensions model.

### 2. Text Analysis

### a. Vocabulary

Vocabulary covers the linguistic elements in the text to identify and interpret the words that are used by the speaker and their function.

#### 1) Wording

Wording can be implemented through rewording and overwording, which can be seen from the excerpts below.

> *"In Jewish tradition, this is a somber period in which we mourn the loss of our **sovereignty**. Jewish communities all over the world lament the beginning of our national exile where throughout two millennia we continuously express the spiritual connection to our **ancestral homeland**, long-longing to return **home** and regain our **independence**."*

The rewording of "Jerusalem" using "sovereignty", "ancestral homeland", "home", and "independence" are to state the ownership Israel claims over the land for "two millennia", while erasing and denying any traces of Palestine's historical existence in that land. Thus, reflecting Herzog's image of Jerusalem and its connection to Israel, and the perception of Palestine as the opposing party that stands in between them.

> *"Iran has spread **hatred, terror** and **suffering** throughout the middle east and beyond, **adding fuel** to the **disastrous fire** and **suffering** in Ukraine. Iran is the only nation on the planet publicly **calling, plotting** and **developing** means to **annihilate** another nation, and members of the family of nations, the state of Israel."*

The negative overwording are used to describe Iran as a violent country that has been and actively participating in the destruction of other countries. The words were used to portray the danger of Iran to the world. Iran's direct threats of attacking and destroying Israel emphasize the emergence of situation that needs to be focused on by Israel with U.S. as their ally. Thus, indirectly rallying U.S. to participate in the war, whether directly or through other means, such as fundings or military assistance.

2) **Word Meaning**

> *"Iran has spread hatred, **terror** and suffering throughout the middle east and beyond"*
> *"Palestinian **terror** against Israel or Israelis undermines any possibility for a future of peace between our peoples. Israelis are targeted while waiting for buses, while taking a stroll on the promenade, while spending time with their family. At the same time successful **terror** attacks are celebrated, **terrorists** are glorified and their families are financially rewarded for every Israeli they attack."*

The two excerpts above show the difference in how Herzog addressed Iran and Israel. Herzog used "terror" in describing both Iran and Palestine, however, he used the term "terrorist" specifically for Palestine, despite them being on the same side. This selective labelling is used to centres Palestine as the main enemy, and it would help Israel to validate their oppressions towards Palestine. Furthermore, it is also to avoid aggravating Iran even further. This shows Herzog's strategy in avoiding further and direct conflict with Iran, as they hold nuclear weapon that threats Israel's safety.

3) **Metaphors**

> *"the land of the bible, of milk and honey"*
> *"This is the **sweetness** in which our country has been **blessed**"*

Herzog used metaphors to compare Israel with positive imageries, such as the word "sweetness" that represents advantages, privilege, opportunity which made Israel an advanced country, the word "blessed" frames those advantages as divine gift from God. It is a way of showing that Israel is still standing as an advanced country with various privileges, despite years of military violence towards Palestine. A strategy to show Israel's oppositions, and their ally that their standing in the conflict with Palestine is in the right.

**b. Grammar**

Grammar covers grammatical function of how each sentences reflect and shape the speaker's social identities, relationships, and ideologies.

1) **Transitivity**

Active and passive sentences can show how certain actor and event are portrayed by the speaker. As seen from the excerpts below.

> *"**Israel cannot and will not tolerate terror**, and we know that in this **we are joined by the United States of America.**"*

The excerpt shape ideological framing by putting a righteous label to Israel and United States, making them the hero in the conflict. Herzog openly stated that Israel and U.S. are the two nations that are against the act of terrorism, however he omission the facts and history of their own act of terror towards Palestine. Herzog purposefully highlights Palestine as the only "terror actor", and it is in Israel and U.S. nature to fight against that. Thus, justifying the history and ongoing oppression in Gaza and towards the Palestinians.

> *"At the same time, successful **terror attacks are celebrated, terrorists are glorified,** and their **families are financially rewarded** for every Israeli they attack."*

Passive voice hides the actors, as there were no specific mentions of anyone that celebrates, glorifies, and rewards violence. Herzog generalized the whole Palestinians as terrorists and terror praisers. When in reality, the Israel's militant enemy in the battleground is Hamas, and he strategically omission the fact that Palestinians and Hamas "terror" is a product of years of Israel's oppression in Gaza. Therefore, Herzog demonized the Palestinians, and normalizing terror as Palestine's cultural trait. Thus, justifying the legitimation of civil attacks as well, because it not just the terrorist or Hamas that needs to be fought, but the terror praisers as well.

2) **Modality**

> *"**Let's** elevate our partnership to new levels."*
> *"**Let us** base our next 75 years on hope."*

Herzog used the word "let us" to encourage the audience to share the same goal with him in maintaining the alliance between Israel and U.S. His goal is presumably to secure the support U.S. can provide for them, such as fundings and military assistance. Ensuring that their partnership can last in a very long time to continue trading and aiding supports with each other.

3) **Theme**

> *"My deep yearning, Mr. Speaker, is for Israel to one day make peace with our Palestinian neighbors. Israel has taken bold steps towards peace and made far-reaching proposals to our Palestinian neighbors"*
> *"Palestinian terror against Israel or Israelis undermines any possibility for a future of peace between our peoples"*

The patterns show that Herzogframed Israel as the main subject in performing positive practices, portraying them in a good light. He informed the audiences that Israel sought peaceful resolutions for the conflict with Palestine, showing that Israel was not always out for blood. That Israel tried to solve the geopolitical issue and create a harmonious relation, as seen from his use of word "neighbors". However, he pointed Palestinians and Hamas as the main perpetrators in spreading terror and obstructing the peace attempts made by Israel, refusing to settle for peace and foster mutual cooperation. Thus, resulting the reason for their continuous conflict over the years.

### c. Cohesion

Cohesion covers linguistic features that connect the sentences in the text to make sure the clarity of meaning.

1) **Reference**

*"How the nations **we** built overcame loss. How deeply **our** stories complement each others. How far **we** have all come together."*

The pronouns show that "we" and "our" combines Israeli and U.S. identities into a collective "us" to further create a connection between Herzog and his audience. He created an image of shared identity to unite Israel and U.S., even further, thus, making it easier for him to promote his ideologies, and later would help persuade the committee members to align with his belief.

2) **Conjunctions**

*"A mutually beneficial partnership that has withstood challenges **and** weathered great disagreements, **because** it is based not on uniformity of approach, **but** on the ultimate currency of trust."*

Herzog used conjunctions such as "and", "because" and "but" to anchor and strengthen the Israel-U.S. alliance. The sentence shows that the alliance between them have faced numerous challenges throughout the years, however, despite that they are still able to maintain the relationship. Herzog emphasized the main reason is because of their trust with each other, while omitting its militarized and transactional backgrounds. This suggests that Herzog avoids mentioning the mutual military interest, in order to ground their alliance more on mutual trust, rather than transactional security concerns.

3) **Lexical Cohesion**

*"However, true peace cannot be anchored in violence…about peace while **condoning** and legiti-legitimizing **terror** implicitly or explicitly. **True peace** cannot be **anchored** in **violence**. Palestinian terror against Israel or Israelis **undermines** any **possibility** for a future of peace between our peoples"*

The collocation from the sentence can be identified in the "condoning""terror", "true peace", "anchored"-"violence", and "undermines""possibility". Both the hyponymy and synonymy can also be seen from "violence" and "terror". This shows how Herzog used binary oppositions to deliver his ideology. Notice how the word "peace" is used when describing Israel, meanwhile, Herzog used "terror" when mentioning Palestine. This shows that Herzog associates Israel with peace, meanwhile he associates Palestine with terror and violence. This framing helps him create an image for the audience that Israel is good for striving peace, and Palestine is bad for spreading terror and violence. Thus, justifying the history of oppressions upon Palestine, and even possibly for their future actions as well.

### d. Text Structure

Text structure shows how the text is able to shape audiences' understanding of the content, by helping them connect the parts of the whole text.

1) **Topic Control**

Herzog strategically crafted three key narratives to influence his audience.
*"A land which became the start-up nation…", "a country which takes pride in its vibrant democracy"*

First, he highlighted Israel's identity as a thriving democracy and innovative country, reinforcing its value as a U.S. ally. By calling it the "start-up nation" and emphasizing their democracy, he appealed to American interests in sustaining the alliance.

*"This partnership is based, also, on similarities and the affinity between our peoples", "Our bond may be challenged at times, but it is absolutely unbreakable"*

Second, he reinforced the Israel-U.S. alliance as an unbreakable bond, rooted in shared values and mutual support. He expressed gratitude for U.S. military aid and diplomatic efforts, framing continued cooperation as a must for Israel's stability and safety.

*"Iran is building nuclear capabilities that pose a threat", "Palestinian terror against Israel or Israelis undermines any possibility for a future of peace", "Lieutenant Hadar Goldin was abducted in violation of a U.N.-sponsored humanitarian ceasefire negotiated by the United States"*

Finally, he framed Iran and Palestinian groups as perpetrators, citing Iran's nuclear threat and Hamas' ceasefire violations. This framing positioned Israel and the U.S. as fighters for peace while seeing Iran and Palestine as obstacles to said peace.

Through these narratives, Herzog's goal is to justify Israel's stance, strengthen U.S. support, and corner their oppositions into common enemies.

2) **Formulation**

*"Palestinian **terror** against Israel or Israelis undermines any possibility for a future of peace between our peoples. Israelis are targeted while waiting for buses, while taking a stroll on the promenade, while spending time with their family. At the same time successful **terror** attacks are celebrated, **terrorists** are glorified and their families are financially rewarded for every Israeli they attack. This is inconceivable, it is a **moral disgrace**. **Terror** is not a bump in the road. Terror is **hatred** and **bloodshed**"*

*"My deep yearning, Mr. Speaker, is for Israel to one day make **peace** with our **Palestinian neighbors**. Israel has taken bold steps towards **peace** and made far-reaching proposals to our **Palestinian neighbors**", "The younger generation of Israelis and Palestinians **deserve better**. They are all worthy of a future to look towards, a **future of peace and prosperity**."*

Herzog formulated his ideas to show the contrast of how he portrayed Palestine and Israel, the reflection of Israel's standing against Palestine. His utterance can be interpreted as Israel defending themselves against Palestine, as they refused the peace attempts from Israel and continue to terrorise the Israelis instead. However, despite the terrors, Herzog still expressed his wish in creating a peaceful situation for both Israel and Palestine for the sake of their young generations. This strategy is used to persuade the audience into thinking that supporting Israel is the best way to solve the conflict, as Israel is the only country that attempted to reach a peaceful solution, when Palestine denies it and opted for violence instead. This framing purposely done to make the audience lean more toward Israel's side to gain moral support and validation.

3. **Discursive Practice**

a. **Interdiscursivity**

Interdiscursivity shows how the speaker mixes different discourses, genres, or styles implicitly and explicitly.

1) **Genre**

*"Israel's hand is extended and our heart is open to any partner in peace, near or far"*

*"Israel cannot and will not tolerate terror and we know that in this we are joined by the United States of America"*

As Herzog combines political and diplomatic discourses, the speech shifts from giving emotional appeal to strategic messaging. This shows Herzog used diplomatic address as a cover to discuss political issues. He inserted his personal ideologies, to directly influence the audience, in order to achieve his goal in ensuring support for Israel in the geopolitical issue they have with Palestine.

2) **Style**

Style can be identified from its tenor, mode, and rhetorical mode.
*"Standing here today, representing the Jewish, democratic State of Israel in its 75th year, at the very podium from which my late father, President Chaim Herzog spoke, is the honor of a lifetime"*

Positions the speaker, Herzog, as both humble guest and state representative. In addition, the language used is formal, as the text uses standard English vocabulary and does not use informal words
*"I respect criticism, especially from friends, although one does not always have to accept it"*

The mode is in the form of spoken as if written. Since the text is addressed as a speech, but it is shaped in a way as if it was written. The sentence uses formal syntax, with "although" and avoids using a contraction in "does not" to create a grammatically well-formed and understandable speech.

3) **Discourse Types**

*"Israel cannot and will not tolerate terror and we know that in this we are joined by the United States of America"*
*"a country which takes pride in its vibrant democracy"*
*"the land which the almighty promised Abraham"*

Herzog used three types of discourses, political, nationalist, and religious discourse to appeal with the audience. Using political discourse, Herzog managed to address the issue with Palestine, directly and indirectly asked for their assistance and continuous support in their cause. Supported by using nationalist and religious discourse to persuade and convince the audience into believing that supporting Israel is a wise decision, as Herzog not only shows the benefit from the alliance, but the cause also aligns with the divine mandate in the bible, especially when the majority of the religion in U.S is Christians. Therefore, the mentions of biblical prophecies would push the audience to support Israel in the conflict against Palestine.

b. **Manifest Intertextuality**

*"Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto the inhabitants thereof"*
*"president Abraham Lincoln who spoke of the dream to restore the Jews to their national home"*

From the references, Herzog used them to connect Zionism with divine mandate and aligns Israel's goal with American's principle. As stated before, majority of the religion in United States is Christians. Though, they have different teachings and bibles, some of the history and verses are similar to each other. Making the two religions somewhat align with each other. Thus, propelling U.S. to support Israel in their cause to claim Jerusalem. Furthermore, Herzog also mentioned Lincoln as an influential figure in U.S. sharing the same wish to return the Israeli to Jerusalem. That information would further push the audience into believing the "truth" of Herzog's words.

### c.    Intertextual Chain

*"Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto the inhabitants thereof"*

The biblical references are used to confirm Israel's heritage over Jerusalem by the God. Thus, justifying Israel's Zionism as a reclamation of heritage. However, it needs to be noted that Herzog omission the context of the verse in Leviticus. The full verse was "proclaim freedom [for slaves] throughout the land for all who live on it.", it can be inferred that Herzog purposefully left out the context that it was talking about proclaiming the land for the slaves, to justify the conflict with Palestine. While in reality, Israel already has their own prosperous land, thus, they do not need to take other land for themselves.

## 4.    Social Practice

### a.    Situational Context

*"Standing here today, representing the Jewish, democratic State of Israel in its 75th year, at the very podium from which my late father, President Chaim Herzog spoke, is an honor of a lifetime."*

Herzog's speech on the U.S. Congress to the Congress Committee in the celebration for Israel's 75th anniversary is used as a setting to create new alliance for those who are against him and reinforce the on-going partnership between Israel and the United States. The meeting was held in Washington D.C., it shows that aside from honouring United States as the event coordinator, Herzog tried to use the place of event for his advantage. By aligning his and the Israelis' belief with the Americans directly, he could further encourage the power holders in U.S. or the committee members to extend their ongoing support in the conflict against Palestine and its allies. U.S. is known as Israel's biggest aid giver and supporter, in terms of fundings and also military power (U.S. Aid to Israel). The appeal strategy Herzog used through personal narrations, religious sermons, and persuasive diplomacy, mentioning their main oppositions, such as Palestine and its ally Iran, would further shape their perspective into the belief Herzog intended for them to have.

### b.    Institutional Context

*"Israel cannot and will not tolerate terror and we know that in this we are joined by the United States of America."*

Herzog's speech benefits from the institutional power in normalizing Israel's occupation in the Gaza. He addressed the U.S. Congress in a way to emphasize their partnership and shape the idea that fighting against the oppositions is their moral duty. The way he framed his words to normalise the Gaza oppression (blockade) and justifying Israel's action in their attempt of claiming Jerusalem as self-defence against the "terror" that Palestine, the Hamas, and their ally Iran perpetrated against them. Herzog engaged his audience into doing and adopting the same viewpoint that he and his people have in the conflict with Palestine, thus, normalizing the act of violence against the Palestinians.

### c.    Societal/Cultural Context

*"Since signing the accords, over one million Israelis have visited the Abrahamic nations, a clear expression of our will to become integrated in the region."*

The economic aspect in the speech can be identified in the excerpt. It can be seen from Herzog's utterance that the U.S. had not only been exchanging trades with Israel, but they had also mediated a peace treaty between Israel and the UAE on 2020. Which has opened up opportunities in the business field for Israel and U.S. Herzog informed the benefit from the treaty

has resulted in millions of Israelis going to the UAE nations as the result of the successful alliance. Both U.S. and Israel gain an economic expansion from the Abrahamic Accords, for example the Gulf markets. Herzog's strategy in offering for alliance is a cover for economic expansion for Israel and U.S., in a way to sustain their position as the dominating countries in the war against Palestine, Hamas, and its allies.

> *"Each of these challenges present an opportunity to seek out solutions together, which will benefit the global community. Israel has the ability to contribute in a unique, significant fashion to addressing these challenges. Israel and the United States are world leaders in aiding countries whose peoples have suffered. Our collaborative capabilities, coupled with our mutual beneficial partnership, are the key to the future of our children."*

The political aspect is reflected in the sentence where Herzog is certain of the capabilities of both Israel and U.S. as two countries that have the means to solve world's issues. With U.S. fundings and support, together with Israel's advanced military technologies. Herzog expressed they would be able to create a brighter future. It can be inferred that Israel is more optimistic with U.S. backing them, and vice versa. Herzog and the Israelis are more confident to dominate and facing the challenges they have along with U.S. Thus, the need to ensure and strengthen the alliance between Israel and United States to maintain that power position.

> *"The land which the almighty promised Abraham"*
> *"Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto the inhabitants thereof"*
> *"President Abraham Lincoln who spoke of the dream to restore the Jews to their national home as one shared by many Americans."*

Herzog's ideological and cultural aspects are reflected in the sentences to normalize Israel's standpoint in the conflict. He frequently used biblical verses to tie Jerusalem with Israel's ancestral history from the bible, as it is written in both the Hebrew and Christian bible that the land of Jerusalem was promised by God to the descendants of Abraham, which is the Israelis, and at some point in the history were exiled from it. Thus, today, resulting in the Israeli's claim over Jerusalem as their rightful land and made into their cultural belief that they should take back the right over it. Aside from religious references, Herzog also mentioned influential figures, such as U.S. founding fathers to further validate their standing in the conflict. The references he mentioned indirectly telling the audience that U.S. has been supporting Israel in their cause for years, and they should make it their duty as well to strive to reconnect Israel with Jerusalem. Thus, shifting the cultural value of oppressing Palestine from being a condemned action, into a valid reaction for self-defence against the Palestinians and Hamas for obstructing their cause in reclaiming Jerusalem.

## 5. Discussion

This study reveals that in text analysis, Herzog's lexical binaries (*"blessed" Israel vs. "terrorist" Palestine*) construct a moral hierarchy that justifies military aggression as "self-defense" while erasing Palestinian narratives of occupation. Grammatical structuring further erases Israeli violence of accountability (passive voice for Palestinians). Biblical metaphors strengthen Israel's territorial claims, weaponizing theology to frame occupation as divine mandate. Modalities (*"no doubt," "cannot"*) and pronouns (*"we," "our"*) form a unified U.S.-Israel identity. In discursive analysis, Herzog used different genre, style, discourse types to shape and promote his ideology. He mixed a diplomatic and political, storytelling, and sermon deliveries to engage his audiences to be more receptive with his messages. Herzog quoted different discourses and texts to further support his ideology and as hegemonic strategy. The combination of biblical references and

statements of influential figures in the U.S. are to justify Zionism, the oppressions, and their claim over the right for Jerusalem. Herzog inserted the Zionist territorial demands in religious discourse and framing oppression as divine mandate, thus making Palestinian resistance invalid. Meanwhile, quoting influential U.S. figures recontextualizes the Americans ideals to justify Israeli militarism, and further connecting Israel and U.S. in strengthening their alliance against Israel's oppressors, namely Palestine and its ally, Iran. In social practice, the situational context of the discourse, Herzog utilized the stage of which the speech was delivered to his advantage. By delivering Israel's ceremonial anniversary speech in the Washington D.C., Herzog is able deliver his ideologies and belief directly to the U.S. Committee, reshaping a Zionist ideology into a U.S. obligation, and encourages the elites or power holders in maintaining their supports in Israel's war against Palestine and its allies. In institutional context, Herzog's ideologies are normalized and legitimized by utilizing Israel's and U.S. partnership against Palestine as moral duty and labelling Palestine's resistance as act of terrorism. He justified Israel's stand as self-defence from the Palestinian, Hamas, and their ally Iran attacks. Lastly in societal/cultural context, by seeing from the economic, political, and ideological/cultural aspects. The researcher found that in the economic aspect, Herzog used alliance as a cover to gain economic expansion for both Israel and U.S. in a way to sustain their domination over Palestine. In the political aspect, Herzog openly expressed that Israel is more secure and powerful when they have U.S. alongside them, pointing that Israel is dependent on U.S. fundings and support in their issues. Lastly in the ideological and cultural aspect, Herzog referenced biblical verses and influential public figure's statement. He used biblical verses and the statements of U.S. founding fathers to claim Jerusalem as their rightful land. Thus, changing the ideology and cultural value of what seems to be an evil act of oppressions, into a justified act of self-defence for their Zionism.

The study shows how a political leader shapes power and changes reality through the strategic use of language. These findings align with Khramchenko's research in 2023, which the use of language techniques such as metaphors, interdiscursive and intertextual references help create a persuasive effect in influencing audiences' perception of the messages. Though Kartika et al. research in 2023 analyzed speech acts rather than rhetorical strategies, their findings similarly reveal how political leaders used language strategically to shape audience perception and justify real-life outcomes. This is also supported by the findings in Badarussyamsi et al. research in 2024, where it shows using rhetorical strategies to justify violence, whether Trump may increase the possibility of Hindu and Muslim conflict in India or, as in this study, Herzog's demonization of the Palestinians in U.S. These dynamics are seen in the ongoing Israel and Palestine conflict in 2025, where polarized discourse sustains geopolitical alliances and allowing violence between them, with U.S. and Iran supporting as their ally respectively. This study confirms that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) consistently exposes how language not only reflects power but also justifies ideologies and actions to prolong the conflict.

## E.  CONCLUSION

From the analysis of the three dimensions, the text analysis reveals Herzog's strategic ways of using polarized lexical choices and grammatical arrangements to create moral binaries, to anchor and strengthen his framings that Israel and U.S. actions are justified, and ultimately rephrasing Palestine's resistance as act of terrorism. The discursive practice reveals interdiscursivity and intertextuality created an opportunity for Herzog to achieve his goals.

Using mixes of order of discourse, he was able to make the audience to be more receptive to his messages and Zionism ideologies. Additionally, intertextual references such as biblical verses and statements by U.S. political figure recontextualize Zionism as a shared belief, thus strengthening Israel and U.S. alliance. Lastly, social practice reveals how each of the three layers of contexts serves Herzog to maintain his power relation and ideologies. The direct institutional setting of U.S. Congress boosts his messaging, turning Israel's personal mission and ideologies through shared values, beliefs, and interests into justified political actions. In the final analysis, this study confirms that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) consistently exposes how language not only reflects power but also justifies ideologies and actions to prolong the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

There is a quite noticeable limitation in this study that needs to be explicitly addressed. Such as the data used is limited to text only and does not include audience responses, which is also crucial for a whole CDA analysis in order to maximize the result of the analysis. Perhaps, for the betterment of the study, the next research could improve it by analyzing the speech from both the text and the media, or even expand this study in another topic, for example, analyzing the stand between Israel and Palestine from the perspective of Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian President, to understand their perspective of the conflict, or even from the perspectives of their allies, of what they could achieve from assisting either of the two countries.

# REFERENCES

Ahluwalia, P., & Miller, T. (2016). Why do wars happen? *Social Identities*, *22*(4), 347–349. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630.2016.1158952

Badarussyamsi, Syam, N., Ermawati, E., & As'ad. (2024). Hegemony of Trump: Manifestation of Islamophobia in an inaugural speech. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *14*(1), 93–103. https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v14i1.70355

Cornbleet, S., & Carter, R. (2002). *The Language of Speech and Writing*. Routledge.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. In *SAGE Publications* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Polity Press.

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Media Discourse*. Arnold.

Fairclough, N. (2010). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (2nd Ed.). Routledge.

Fairclough, N. (2015). *Language and Power* (C. N. Candlin, Ed.; 3rd Ed.). Routledge.

*Israel-Hamas War - Agreement for ceasefire and hostage exchange*. (2025). Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/event/Israel-Hamas-War/Agreement-for-ceasefire-and-hostage-exchange

*Israeli President Herzog Address to Joint Meeting of Congress | Video | C-SPAN.org.* (n.d.). Retrieved April 11, 2024, from https://www.c-span.org/program/joint-session-of-congress/israeli-president-herzog-address-to-joint-meeting-of-congress/629534

Kartika, D., Rahardi, R. K., Aziz, M., & Rahmat, W. (2023). Depicting reflections of power on illocutionary acts of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe's speeches on Covid-19. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *13*(2), 283–292. https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v13i2.63078

Khramchenko, D. S. (2023). The power of synergy in discourse: Exploring persuasive language in English mass media. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *13*(2), 368–379. https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v13i2.63068

Lucas, S. E. (2009). *The Art of Public Speaking* (10th Ed.). McGraw-Hill.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *An Expanded Sourcebook: Qualitative Data Analysis* (2nd Ed.). SAGE Publications.

Rustad, S. A. (2024). *Conflict Trends: A Global Overview, 1946–2023*. Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO). https://www.prio.org/publications/14006

Weiss, G., & Wodak, R. (Eds.). (2003). *Critical Discourse Analysis: Theory and Interdisciplinarity*. Palgrave Macmillan.