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Analysis of Socio-Cultural in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Speech to Congress in Washington D.C., 2024

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ABSTRAK

Sidang gabungan Kongres di Washington, DC dimanfaatkan oleh Benjamin Netanyahu untuk mencari dukungan dari Amerika Serikat, membela dirinya, serta menyampaikan ideologinya terkait agresi Israel terhadap Palestina. Fokus utama penelitian ini adalah menganalisis bagaimana sebuah pidato dapat memberikan dampak terhadap dimensi sosio-kultural dalam masyarakat, yang mencakup aspek ekonomi, politik, dan budaya. Penelitian ini menganalisis pidato Benjamin Netanyahu pada sidang bersama Kongres di Washington, D.C., tahun 2024, dengan fokus pada kata-kata dan frasa yang digunakan, serta menerapkan Analisis Wacana Kritis (Critical Discourse Analysis) dari Norman Fairclough, khususnya pada dimensi sosiokultural. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan peneliti sebagai instrumen utama. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa bahasa tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai media komunikasi, tetapi juga sebagai alat kekuasaan untuk membentuk persepsi, membenarkan tindakan, dan memengaruhi opini publik. Dalam pidatonya, Benjamin Netanyahu membangun narasi yang membingkai tindakan Israel terhadap Palestina sebagai sebuah kebenaran yang didasarkan pada teks keagamaan, sekaligus menghadirkan perdamaian sebagai strategi retoris untuk memperoleh dukungan Amerika Serikat dan melegitimasi agenda politiknya. Penelitian ini memberikan pemahaman mengenai bahasa dalam dimensi sosio-kultural serta menunjukkan bagaimana Netanyahu memanfaatkan wacana politik sebagai instrumen kekuasaan untuk melegitimasi agresi Israel terhadap Palestina sekaligus merespons kritik internasional.

Kata kunci: Sosial budaya, Benjamin Netanyahu, Pidato

ABSTRACT

The joint meeting of Congress in Washington, DC, is a congress used by Benjamin Netanyahu to seek US support, defend himself, and also convey his ideology regarding Israel's aggression against Palestine. the main focus of this research is to see how a speech can impact the socio-culture that exists in society in the economic, political, and cultural aspects. This research analyzes Benjamin Netanyahu's speech at the Joint Congress meeting in Washington, D.C., 2024, focusing on the words and phrases used, and applies Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, specifically the socio-cultural dimension. The method of the research is qualitative as an instrument. The result of this research shows that language functions not only as a medium of communication but also as a tool of power to shape perceptions, justify actions, and influence public opinion. In his speech, Benjamin Netanyahu constructed a narrative framing Israel's action against Palestine as a truth based on religious texts, while presenting peace as a rhetorical strategy to gain U.S. support and legitimize his political agenda. This research provides an understanding of language in the socio-cultural dimension and shows how Netanyahu uses political discourse as an instrument of power to justify Israeli aggression against Palestine and respond to international criticism.

Keywords: Socio-cultural, Benjamin Netanyahu, speech

A. INTRODUCTION

According to Apriliani (2025), the Israel-Palestine conflict is the longest conflict that has been occurring since 1948. The majority of the victims in this conflict are women and children.



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The conflict that occurs there has been attracting a lot of attention. For instance, the media that reports the situation in Palestine. The response of the society that saw that news article is angry, demanding for ceasefire, and boycotting all the products that are affiliated directly to Israel.

The conflict that occurs in Palestine has claimed the lives of approximately 120.000 people since 1948. This was exacerbated in the event on 23 October 2023, in which Hamas attacked and a subsequent Israeli military response. Most wars arise from political motives that come from the different cultures and socioeconomic inequality (Ong. 2025).

People who had power utilized language to build a new ordered society according to their interests, because they had a lot of instruments to spread their influence. Support and refusal of the new order of society had been conveyed through language (Fairclough, 2013). Thus, language and power discuss how language was used to maintain and change the power relations in society (Fairclough, 2015).

According to Wodak (2009), political speech functions as an instrument to persuade, mobilize, and legitimize. One of the theories to analyze it is Critical Discourse Analysis. According to Weiss and Wodak (2003), Critical Discourse Analysis is a method used to analyze how language reflects and strengthens the power of social structure. Thus, by examining the speech, it has been dissected how the speech constructs the meaning, frames issues, and influences in the economy, politics, and cultural field.

For the object, the researchers focused on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech. In July 2024, he addressed the US Congress, urging support for Israel's actions against Hamas. In his speech, he highlighted the IDF's efforts to rescue hostages and confronted Hamas fighters, referencing the Jewish people's historical connection to the land for over 4,000 vears.

By applying Critical Discourse Analysis, specifically Norman Fairclough's threedimensional framework, the researchers examine the socio-cultural dimension of the Israeli Prime Minister's speech. This analysis aims to uncover the representative meaning of the speech, which has generated considerable criticism. While previous studies have applied CDA to analyze political rhetoric and conflict framing in international speeches, such as Joe Biden's 2020 inaugural address (Ehsan, Amin, & Hameed, 2024) and Donald Trump's speech at the Israel Museum (Faiz, Chojimah, & Khasanah, 2020), few have focused specifically on contemporary international addresses like Benjamin Netanyahu's 2024 speech to the US Congress. This study addresses that gap by exploring how his speech constructs socio-cultural meaning, frames Israel's actions in Palestine, and shapes domestic and international perceptions, thereby extending CDA's application to contemporary geopolitical discourse.

Benjamin Netanyahu is a political figure in Israel who is portrayed as a transformative and dominant leader. Benjamin Netanyahu is the Prime Minister of the Likud Party. Netanyahu is skillfully utilizing the criminal charge that has been given to him for bribery, fraud, and breach of trust for his advantage, framing himself as a victim of a biased judicial system and a politicized system orchestrated by the elite (Navot, 2022).

The Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu played a key role in the conflict in Gaza. Israel is blocking all the entrance access in Palestine. The blockade makes food supply, water, and humanitarian aid scarce for the Palestinian people. This tortured the Palestinian people because they could not fulfill their basic needs. Several countries have made an effort to end this conflict, one of them is Qatar as a mediator of the ceasefire between Israel and Palestine.



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The result of this mediation failed because Israel rejected the agreement to exchange the hostages. In this conflict, it is seen that Israel wants to look dominant and strong. The Israeli military state says it will win the war in Palestine and states the ceasefire is a delusion and unlikely to be fulfilled by Israel. Israel is getting negative feedback from Israeli citizens for the policy they made that refuses to exchange the hostages. They stated that if only the Israeli government had agreed to this hostage exchange agreement, the Israeli hostages would have been able to return to Israel, as this was their priority. These also received a negative response from Amnesty International ICC for perpetrators of genocide in Palestine, war crimes, and humanitarian violations (Jamilah, 2025). Benjamin Netanyahu is the party that is responsible for all the events that occur in the conflict Israel-Palestine because he is the stakeholder of Israel, who is a policy and decision maker for the state of Israel. Instead of being responsible for Israel do in Palestine, he created a narrative and framed himself as a victim, claiming that what he did was the right thing to do.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Critical discourse analysis

According to Weiss and Wodak (2003), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a transdisciplinary approach to examine how language constructs and reflects power dynamics, ideologies, and social structure. CDA is not only hanging on one theory; otherwise, it took another scientific study, such as sociology, linguistics, and psychology, to study the relation between language and people. CDA considered the context of language used and admitted that daily language creates social categories such as power, identity, or discrimination.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Machin and Mayr has been on uncovering hidden ideologies in language, whether they are expressed by institutions, governing groups, authorities, or individuals in direct communication (Alamsyah, 2025). CDA focuses on how power relates to power in discourse (Yasmin & Alamsyah, 2024). CDA sees how people with certain power can maintain the throne through language, show the power and change the way people think with their ideology to maintain the power they have.

According to Fairclough (1992), Critical discourse analysis emphasizes the relationship between language and social structure. The CDA approach was also interdisciplinary, which means that it mixes several theories, such as sociology, politics, and economics, to understand the complex problem. This approach made CDA flexible and possibly allows for deeper analysis because it could be seen from every perspective. Critical Discourse Analysis by Norman Fairclough is classified into three dimensions: the text, discursive practice, and the sociocultural practice. The text is a textual(microstructural) dimension that is analyzed by examining the linguistic unit to view representations, relations, and identities in discourse. The discursive practice interprets the (mesostructure) dimension to analyze the internal elements that are related to the discourse producers, distributors, and consumers of discourse. Lastly, the socio-cultural practice focuses on analyzing the socio-cultural (macrostructural) dimension by looking for the context outside of discourse in society (Yasmin and Tawakkal, 2024)

2. Three Dimensional Framework by Norman Fairclough

According to Fairclough (1992), the three dimensions of discourse analysis consist of the textual dimension, discursive practice, and the sociocultural dimension. The textual dimension



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involves analyzing language texts using methods from linguistics, focusing on features like vocabulary, semantics, grammar, and organization of spoken/written texts. practice dimension examines issues like interactions between the speaker/writer and listener/reader, and the situational context of language used, there is a sociocultural dimension analysis that is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context, focusing on how social factors shape the production, interpretation, and social effects of discourse.

A. Sociocultural Practices

According to Van Djik (2009), the socio-cultural encompasses dynamic interaction between diverse social groups. Each has distinct value, belief structure, and inequivalent power relations that are mediated through text or talk with a particular social context.

According to Fairclough (1992), Sociocultural dimension analysis examines social and cultural contexts shaping individuals, groups, and societies. Sociocultural dimension is approached in two ways: focusing on process or on structure. This analysis considers both the process of social struggle and the power structures that shape discourse. These aspects are examined at three levels: situational, institutional, and social.

According to Wodak (2003), socio-cultural factors have a crucial role in shaping discourse in society. A dialectical relationship exists between particular events in society, such as the situation or context, institution, intention, and social structure, which can shape the discursive event or vice versa.

a. Economy

Bălăceanu, Barbat (2013) state that the Economy reflects how social principles, beliefs, ethics, and law influence to power society to produce value, power growth, and maintain sustainable consumption.

Levchenyuk (2016) argues that the economy is not just about how people can survive, but also about how people have strong creativity. This possibly allows people to transform and develop their world by utilizing the resources that are provided for physical support and spiritual life in society. This is useful for society. The economy is involved in way in shaping both material and spiritual aspects of life. Practically, the economy is an activity that produces goods, services, priority public needs over private needs. Economic activity is united with social individuals, local, and global interests are interconnected.

b. Politics

According to Hedrick (1988), politics can be defined in several ways, like: the study of art governance, practice of political affairs, action and strategies of political players, or principles and beliefs yang lead the political group. politics can shape both what they want to evaluate and the way the findings can be used. Sometimes, the involvement in politics can lead to biased findings and manipulation. Different political opinions and political opponents can also improve the reliability of the evaluation by encouraging debate and monitoring, politics is the process of governance, influencing, and exerting power in the community and nation, which means that it includes making the law, struggling to maintain power, and carrying out war. Politics organizes something bigger, like a government institution, also in smaller things like a community and tribe.

According to Punjabi (2014), politics are activities associated with the governance of a country or area, especially the debate between parties having power. Politics can negotiate and compromise. If politics cooperate with sains will get a huge benefit.



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According to Alamsvah (2025), Certain ideological frames are used in the production and operation of political discourses. discourses use distinct linguistic methods to reflect a particular ideological frame that can reflect a certain ideological framework. Political discourse can be defined as an action that is intentionally purposeful with a certain purpose for each instance. Political discourse can be categorized based on subgenre (feminist, environmental, and nationalist) and power structure as well as ideologies (socialist, liberal/democratic, conservative, and totalitarian) (Alamsyah, 2025).

c. Culture

According to Ogburn (2014), culture, in the view of sociology, is a collection of knowledge, beliefs, customs, and values that are obtained by a social creature. If a society is less evolved, it tends to have a simple culture. however, every culture can be explained by biology, for instance, like someone who lives in a different place but has the same background will tend to have a different culture. Someone with different societies with similar racial backgrounds had vastly different cultures, and similar social institutions could be found in societies with different racial backgrounds. Culture often shapes and borrows ideas from other societies, not just internally.

According to Heyes (2020), argues that culture is the knowledge and behavior that characterizes a particular group of people. 'culture' is used by evolutionists to refer to: first, information or behavior acquired through social learning; second, one or more socially learned behaviors shared by the members of a group; or third, socially learned behaviors that are shared by members of a group and have improved over successive episodes of social learning.

Culture plays a significant role in shaping the cognitive, behavioral, and attitudinal boundaries of individuals. Culture is the domain of reason and moral awareness, which gives people the ability to identify and remove bad things from their lives. Culture is the result of the positive aspects of human intelligence in the setting of social interaction (Alamsyah, 2025).

3. **Political Speech**

According to Zinkovskaya (2020), Political speech is about convincing people, whether through logical arguments or powerful imagery. Political speech uses language for a mass audience, and tends to use symbols, emotional, and ritualistic expressions. Political speech uses persuasive techniques, like storytelling and emotional appeals, to shape opinions and motivate action. Political speech tries to convince people through logical arguments or powerful imagery. Political speech is a tool that can connect people, share ideas, and influence opinions. Political speech is used to convey political goals, shape public perception, and also gain or maintain power in society. Political speech also understands how language is used to persuade, inspire, or convince an audience (Kotenko, 2023). Speech is a communication act used to convey concepts and convince listeners. Sounds, intonation, rhythm, pitch, and tempo are some of the elements that influence speech's structure. In contrast to typical Political speeches and discussions are examples of discursive events in which speakers have institutional power to sway listeners. This process involves three components: context, purpose, and receiver engagement (Ong, 2025).

C. METHOD

The researchers used Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech as an object to analyze with a qualitative method to answer the research question. The purpose of the qualitative



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method in this research is to delve and explain the aspects such as ideology, language, power. and so on from the speech. According to Aspers (2019), "Qualitative research was multimethod in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter." This means that qualitative researchers studied things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people brought to them.

The data is the utterance from the Netanyahu speech in the joint meeting of Congress in Washington, D.C. The source of data is the speech of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the forum of the joint meeting of Congress. The speech was aired on 25 July YouTube account Fox 2024 through the (https://youtu.be/rKkcstwPd9k?si=jLcG_Barz7cCMVTT). The duration of the video of the prime minister on YouTube is 55 minutes.

Then, in this research, the research instrument was the researchers themselves. It refers to the researchers who had a role in the collection and analysis of data. Additional tools that assisted the author in conducting the research included a laptop and literature. The aforementioned instruments were employed to conduct the information search, data collection, and analysis.

For the next part, this research had three steps to collect data. First step, the researchers watched the speech comprehensively to get the appropriate written text from the speech. Second, the researchers collected and highlighted the data from the speech's transcript. Third, the researchers captured or sorted data that is relevant to the theory, such as economic, political, and cultural.

This research eventually followed through four steps to analyze the data. First, the researchers identified the data that contains the three dimensions of Critical Discourse Analysis. Second step, the researchers analyze the speech from the source data with three dimensions of Critical Discourse Analysis. Third, the researchers explained the reasons to clarify the context of the speech. Last, the researchers obtained the results and then concluded to answer the problem formulation of the research.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Cultural Dimension in Benjamin Netanyahu's speech at a joint meeting in Washington, D.C., 2024

1) Economy

The economy has a significant impact on how individuals live their lives, affecting everything from access to basic necessities to work prospects. The larger economic environment and its effects on society are influenced by governmental policies, international economic variables, and personal financial choices. The term "economic life condition" describes how different economic variables and regulations affect people's general quality of By expanding access to resources, opportunities, and necessary services, improving economic conditions can result in better living conditions (Salshabila, 2024). The following is the data "Israel has enabled more than 40.000 trucks to enter Gaza, that half a million tons of food and that more than 3000 calories for every man, woman, and child in Gaza. If there are Palestinians in Gaza who aren't getting enough food, it is not because Israel is blocking it, it's because Hamas stealing it [ECL 1-18/Fox 5 Washington D.C., 2024].



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The data above. Netanyahu states that Israel is also delivering the food supply to Gaza. The data show that the statement denied all the accusations out there that Israel makes the Palestinians starve. Netanyahu states that Israel always delivered tons of food to fulfill the calorie needs of Palestinians.

The data above shows that the people of Gaza have been suffering cause of the genocide Israel has been conducting all the destruction and killing of the that Israel conducts. Palestinian people on the pretext that they are fighting Hamas. With all of this destruction, the Palestinian people cannot fulfill the food supply for the citizens because Israel has taken out all that they have. This means the food supply in Palestine should be fulfilled from other countries or parties. The data above, Netanyahu states that Israel is also delivering the food supply to Gaza. The data show that the statement denied all the accusations out there that Israel makes the Palestinians starve. Netanyahu states that Israel always delivered tons of food to fulfill the calorie needs of Palestinians. It is seen in the data that "Israel had enabled more than 40,000 trucks to enter Gaza". Through this statement, Netanyahu tried to make the narrative of society in public global that Israel is responsible in terms of humanity in Gaza, proactively ensuring the abundant food supply for the Palestinian people. From the data above, Netanyahu also explained that "if the Palestinian people are not getting enough food, it is not because Israel is blocking it, it is because Hamas is stealing it". This data explained the accusation of Hamas against the Palestinian people. Through this statement, Netanyahu tried to make the narrative of society in public global that Israel is responsible in terms of humanity in Gaza, proactively ensuring the abundant food supply for the Palestinian people.

2) Politics

Political power is the capacity to manage resources, exert authority, and shape public opinion in order to affect or regulate society decisions and activities. Comprehending these components aids in elucidating the functioning of political systems and their influence on societal structure and governance (Salshabila, 2024). The following data. "For all we know, Iran is funding the anti-Israel protesters that are going on right now outside this building, not that many, but they're there and throughout the city" (PP 2- 14/Fox 5 Washington DC, 2024). The context in this data is that anti-Semitism is a group of people who are considered to be on the wrong side. Netanyahu stated that Iran is a party that likes to kill people arbitrarily, and Iran is a party that funds parties to hate or fight Israel. The data above shows that Benjamin Netanyahu stated that Iran is a mastermind behind the funding of the anti-Israel group, which this group has been funded to spread hate speech against Israel. he stated that Iran funds that group to spread bad news and also makes hoax news to make Israel look bad internationally. From this narrative, Netanyahu attempts to legitimize the anti-Israel protesters by claiming that all the things that happen by Iran's actions that fund and control them. With this narrative, these anti-Israel protesters are not from the public outrage that comes to criticize Israel, but are only considered as puppets. These group actions when Benjamin Netanyahu's speech at the joint congress on that day. And the news is spreading in all directions that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is a criminal. Netanyahu's state Iran, has funded the media to make bad news about Israel, and Iran has funded the Houthis to destroy Israel, from that statement, it seems that Iran is behind all the things to destroy Israel; Iran is the party that supports the anti-Israel economically.



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3) Culture

Culture refers to values or ideals that people or organizations find significant and appealing. By affecting ideas of good and bad as well as right and wrong, these beliefs direct behavior and decision-making. A culture's values can be ingrained in its members and passed down through a variety of social institutions, including the media, education, religion, and family (Salshabila, 2024). The following data "The bible says, "speaking Israeli," they shall rise like lions; they have risen like lions, the lions of Judah, the lion of Israel" (CV 24-10/Fox 5 Washington D.C., 2024). The context of this data is that Netanyahu stated the IDF army is filled not only with Jewish people who fight together to fight Hamas. Soldiers in here have to lose a certain part of their body in this fight, and after they recover from the injury, these soldiers are back on their duty. Netanyahu also states that these soldiers have souls and physics like lions based on their scripture. The data above shows how Benjamin Netanyahu expressed the character that should be had by the soldiers of Israel against Hamas in Gaza. Through this speech, he shows the spirit that should be in the soldiers of Israel, like the lion of Judah in the holy scripture of the Old Testament, whereas the verse quoted from the Old Testament Numbers 23:23-24. This can be seen in the phrase "they shall rise like lions; they have risen like lions, the lions of Judah, the lion of Israel".

Discussion

This research analyzes the socio-cultural dimension of Benjamin Netanyahu's 2024 speech at a joint meeting in Washington, D.C., using Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The study applies qualitative discourse analysis to examine how language, metaphors, and sentence structures construct meaning across economic, political, and cultural lenses. Data were coded for socio-cultural themes and shows how Netanyahu's speech demonstrates language as both a communicative tool and an instrument for shaping public perception, legitimizing authority, and promoting political narratives.

Economically, Netanyahu framed Israel as supportive of Palestinian welfare. He claims that Israel supplied sufficient food to meet nutritional needs, while blaming Hamas for obstructing aid. Benjamin Netanyahu stated that Israel has never starved the Palestinians. They always send a large supply of food, which can meet the calorie needs of each person up to 3000 calories. With the right number of calories, this can make Palestinians full and prosperous. However, this cannot be done because the Hamas group stole it. This narrative portrays Israel as committed to humanitarian values while shifting responsibility for Palestinian suffering onto its opponents.

Politically, Netanyahu positioned himself as a strong leader of Israel, demanding the release of hostages and urging U.S. support against Hamas and Iran. He appealed to partner nations to form peaceful alliances and expressed aspirations for stability in the Middle East, framing Israel and the U.S. as agents of global peace. Benjamin Netanyahu conveyed the demand for the Hamas armed group to stop holding Israeli citizens hostage. Then, he also gave a mandate to America because he was willing to immediately provide more assistance to Israel after the attack from Iran. Also, as the leader of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu conveyed directions to several partner countries to be willing to form a peaceful alliance against Iran. Not only that, he also explained his hopes and beliefs in the future of Palestine, Iran, and America, which are peaceful and safe without attacks from other countries and armed groups.



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Through this political framing, the speech sought to consolidate Israel's legitimacy and strengthen alliances, while projecting leadership on international security matters.

Culturally, Netanyahu grounded his arguments in religious heritage and moral responsibility. Referencing the Old Testament, he presented Israeli soldiers as courageous defenders tied to a 4,000-year historical claim to the land. Benjamin Netanyahu conveyed that the mentality should be owned by the soldiers of the state of Israel based on the book of the Old Testament. He also explained his purpose in the conference, that what he did in the Middle East was to maintain the security of the world, not only the Middle Eastern states. He said this because of the moral demands of being a human being. Not only that, he also conveyed how the character of the Israeli army, which is the character possessed by the Israeli army, is a brave army that does not fear anything. He invoked moral duty and cultural identity to justify Israel's actions. By doing so, the speech sought international moral support and reinforced Israel's historical and cultural legitimacy.

Beyond socio-cultural themes, it can be seen that the strategic use of language is also being a medium of power. Netanyahu framed Israel as a moral and historical entity to justify policies, counter oppositional narratives, and mobilize sympathy. Therefore, this study aligns with the use Fairclough's socio-cultural framework to explore economic, political, and cultural dimensions of discourse.

D. CONCLUSION

After conducting the research, the researchers came up with a conclusion. Benjamin Netanyahu's speech at the joint meeting in Washington, D.C., in 2024 was found to have a socio-cultural dimension in the aspects of economy, politics, and culture. In the economic aspect, he conveyed how struggling it is to feed the Palestinians so that they would not starve. In the political aspect, he conveyed what must be done to achieve peace and security in the Middle East. In terms of culture, he stated that Israeli soldiers must have the mentality of the lions of Judah. After analyzing Benjamin Netanyahu's speech, we saw how language had a big impact on social life and could distort the facts.

Future researchers are encouraged to expand their analysis by applying all three dimensions of Fairclough's CDA: text analysis, discursive practice, and socio-cultural practice, which would yield more comprehensive results. Researchers are also encouraged to examine how media outlets position themselves, whether neutrally or with bias, and how they contribute to spreading information globally. Such an approach would provide deeper insights into America's geopolitical stance, media representation of the conflict, and the power of discourse in shaping international perception.

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