



A Critical Discourse Analysis Study of Self-Representation in Netanyahu's Speech

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Abstract

Self-representation strategy is tackled in this paper. Self-representation is one of the techniques and strategies used by politicians, orators, and influencers to convey their goals in a convincing way. In political speech, the politician uses these techniques to represent himself and his people in a positive way, using vocabulary that denotes love, peace, and others. On the other hand, he uses harsh and strong vocabulary to diminish the value of the opponent or enemy. The researcher hypothesizes that the self-representation strategies are used by Netanyahu's speech. The researcher hypothesizes that metaphor is the most frequent strategy at the three levels in Netanyahu's speeches. The researcher hypothesizes that national self-glorification is the less strategy at the three levels in Netanyahu's speeches. Van Dijk's eclectic model of self-representation strategy is used to analyze the data. By using the qualitative and quantitative methods the reaches to the following conclusions; firstly, the descriptive analysis shows that Netanyahu uses many self-representation strategies in his speeches. Secondly, the statistical analysis shows that the most frequent strategy is the metaphor. Netanyahu uses metaphor to Iran's possession of a nuclear program and ballistic missiles not only threatens Israel but also destroying any country that stands in its way. Thirdly, the numerical analysis shows that the less frequent strategy is the authority. From the diagram, the repetition and lexicalization strategies are the second frequent in his speech. He uses lexicalization strategy to positively represent his people, the Jewish people. Thus, the researchers totally achieve their aims.

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1. Introduction

Language is a tool for communicating many ideas and meanings, representing the world in a clear way. Through language, culture can be transmitted and ideas and thoughts exchanged between groups. Language revolves around the use of signs, words, images, and symbols to explain things (Hall, 1997, p.15) ^[3].

From a psychological perspective, self-presentation is considered the psychological ability to create and embody intelligent behavior to prove one's ideas and points of view (Sperber, 2000, p. 123) ^[6]. The psychological aspect plays a role in predicting the behavior of others and preparing appropriate responses to each situation, whether verbal or nonverbal. Acting gives a person the opportunity to understand themselves and portray themselves as superior to others.

1.1. The Problem of the Study

The research problem centers on the significant impact of self-representation in political discourse on people. Self-representation has a powerful impact on the public image of presidents, especially during times of crisis or war.

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1.3. Aims of the Study

1. Finding out the self-representation strategies which are used by Netanyahu's speech.
2. Identifying the most frequent strategy at the three levels in Netanyahu's speeches.
3. Identifying the less frequent strategy at the three levels in Netanyahu's speeches.

1.4. Hypotheses of the Study

1. The researcher hypothesizes that the self-representation strategies are used by Netanyahu's speech.
2. The researcher hypothesizes that metaphor is the most frequent strategy at the three levels in Netanyahu's speeches.
3. The researcher hypothesizes that national self-glorification is the less strategy at the three levels in Netanyahu's speeches.

1.5. Limitations of the Study

The study limits itself to discover the self-representation strategies and to show how they are influenced the political speech.

1.6. Value of the Study

This study is important because it provides the reader with a clear insight into how certain linguistic strategies influence political texts. It also demonstrates politicians' ability to choose specific texts to assert and represent themselves and to persuade people during crises, wars, or political events.

2. Definitions of Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse can be defined as the method by which language is used as a means of social interaction and the way in which language is used to demonstrate power, dominance, ideology, and rapprochement between people. (Baker and Ellece, 2011, p. 26) ^[1]. Furthermore, it is an approach that studies the relationship between language and power, social and political issues, status, self-representation, and more. In other words, it studies how speech, whether verbal or written, can reflect power, social relations, ideologies, orientations, and connections between people (Mcleod, (2024, P. 1) ^[5].

2.1. Ideology

Critical discourse analysis can be defined as the way in which individuals' thinking, values and morals are influenced by what is called ideologies (Van Dijk, 2002, p.57) ^[8]. In addition, ideology can be explained as the control of ideas, customs, and beliefs over individuals' thinking. It can include economic, political, social, and religious aspects that govern how individuals interact with one another. All of these ideologies can influence how individuals interact with one another or may create social or political barriers between them (Zajda, 2014.P. 1) ^[11].

2.2. Political Discourse

Discourse analysts consider all political discussions, parliamentary debates, diplomatic statements, and legislative proceedings to fall under the umbrella of political discourse,

which is the foundation of political discourse. (Johnson and Johnson, 2000, p. 291) ^[2]. In Addition, Political discourse is a text with multiple meanings and characteristics. It is a vehicle for social and political discussions and government institutions. It involves both external and internal linguistic factors to occur. Therefore, political discourse relies on the relationship between government institutions and political positions, as well as the relationship between individuals and community organizations (Horbenko, 2023, P.169) ^[4].

2.3. Definitions of Self-Representation

The language which is used in discussions and texts to influence group behavior and give it a certain meaning can be considered representation. The speaker seeks to represent himself through his opinion and influence groups. Thus, the speaker constructs certain self-contests within groups, which serve as a form of social engagement. Therefore, when the speaker influences others and changes their opinion about the general situation, it is called self-representation (Wetherell *et al*, 2001, p. 235) ^[9].

2.4. Categories of Self-Representation

Three major division can be linked to self-representation, which are illustrated as oneself to oneself, self-representation to others, and self-evaluation according to one's own criteria (Thagard and Wood, 2015, p.2) ^[7].

2.4.1. Depicting Oneself to Oneself

It revolves about the speaker's ability to represent himself, his goals, his identity, and his self-image in diplomatic ways that influence others (Thagard and Wood, 2015, p.2) ^[7].

2.4.2. Self-Representation to Others

Individuals are influenced by the social reality surrounding them, and vice versa. People fear that some people will not accept them based on the way they present themselves. There must be harmony between the individual and society, as each individual has a sense of belonging and connection with groups and people who are important to them (Thagard and Wood, 2015, p.3) ^[7].

2.4.3. Self-Evaluation according to One's Own Criteria

This constitutes a form of self-assessment, self-monitoring, and identifying strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, it monitors outcomes based on certain criteria, which sometimes range from self-love to self-loathing (Thagard and Wood, 2015, p.7) ^[7].

2.5. Strategies of Self-Representation

2.5.1. Meaning Level Strategies

2.5.1.1. Actor Description

The person describes individuals and society according to certain standards and ideologies. He or she provides an accurate description of people, situations, things, and entities. The description is personal, as he or she describes external entities and groups in a negative way with a sense of hatred, while describing members of internal groups in a positive and neutral ways (van Dijk, 2006, p.735) ^[10].

2.5.1.2. Lexicalization

In the process of description, the politician uses a variety of words and vocabulary to prove his point of view, relying on the speaker's position, role, or opinion to indicate his goals (van Dijk, 2002, p. 83) ^[8].

2.5.1.3. National Self-Glorification

In this type, the speaker uses different forms such as praising the nation and touching upon its history, customs and glories (van Dijk, 2006, p.738) ^[10].

2.5.2. Argumentation Level Strategies

2.5.2.1. Authority

It is one of the strategies used by the speaker to reinforce his ideas and goals, such as mentioning some international political organizations, experts, experiences, and research related to the topic (van Dijk, 2006, p. 735) ^[10].

2.5.2.2. Comparison

When a speaker wants to convince audience of his goals, he tries to use some strategies such as giving an example, a parable, a short story, etc (van Dijk, 2002, p. 69-70) ^[8].

2.5.2.3. Illustration

The speaker uses comparison strategy to compare people in-groups and out-groups. Thus, the speaker gives out out-group's undesirable description while in-groups optimistic depiction (van Dijk, 2006, p. 735) ^[10].

2.5.3. Rhetoric Level Strategies

2.5.3.1. Number Game

The speaker tries to be realistic and objective, so he often reinforces his words with facts and avoids fantasy, such as facts arranged by statistics and the number of recent immigrants or dead if there is a war (van Dijk, 2006, p. 738)

^[10].

2.5.3.2. Metaphor

Metaphor is a device used to describe one thing with the characteristics of another, deepening the meaning, making abstract ideas and concepts more tangible. It is a type of comparison where the characteristics of one thing are attributed to another. For example, comparing migration to a flood that drowns everyone (van Dijk, 2002, p. 77) ^[8].

2.5.3.3. Repetition

There are many rhetorical strategies that can be used to highlight the negatives of others and reinforce the positives. Repetition is one of strategies which are used to emphasize positives or negatives. For example, Ms. Gorman uses repetition to reinforce the negatives of the government exploiting the people in the phrase, "They should not be exploited by those who exploit the system" (van Dijk, 2002, p. 83) ^[8].

3. Methodology

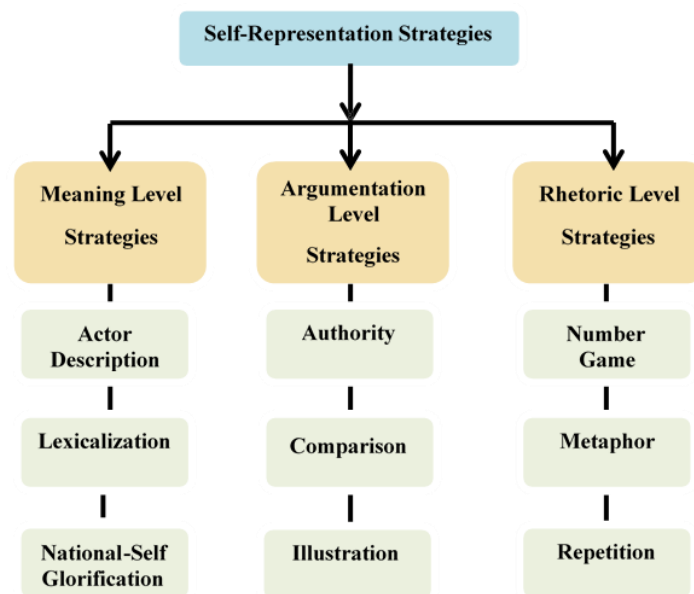
3.1. Qualitative Method

The researcher follows the qualitative method to describe and analyze the data.

3.2. Quantitative Method

The researcher follows the quantitative method to make statistical analysis to show differences between data.

3.3. Model of the Analysis



According to Van Dijk's (2002-2006) ^[8, 10], it is an eclectic model.

3.4. Data Analysis

3.4.1. The Qualitative Analysis

The data are collected from Netanyahu's speech on 26 September, 2025 in the United Nations General Assembly.

Extract 1:

"I showed this map. It shows the curse of Iran's terror axis. This axis threatened the peace of the entire world. It threatened the stability of our region and the very

existence of my country Israel."

Netanyahu clarifying, Iran was the first to initiate a year-long campaign that has spread to most Middle Eastern countries. He uses an actor description technique, describing Iran as a curse that has struck countries with annexation and may even reach the United States due to its uranium enrichment and ballistic weapons production.

In addition, he begins by describing his country's capabilities to achieve the goals in Iran, Yemen, and Hezbollah in

Lebanon. He authorized the termination of Iran's ballistic missile program. After that, the complete disarmament of all weapons in Gaza was completed, enabling the civilian population of Gaza to return to their homes, including maintaining security for Israel.

Extract 2:

"We lifted a dark cloud that could have claimed millions and millions of lives."

The president uses metaphor to express Iran's weapons affect all countries in the world. He compares Iran's weapons to a black cloud to illustrate the impact of nuclear and ballistic weapons, illustrating that clouds rain down on and destroy all countries, especially the Israel nation.

Extract 3:

"We paged Hezbollah. And believe me, they got the message – and thousands of terrorists dropped to the ground. We destroyed Assad's armaments in Syria. We deterred Iran's Shiite militias in Iraq."

By citing Israel's victories in Lebanon, Yemen, Iran, and Iraq, Netanyahu seeks to glorify his nation "the Zionist entity", claiming it is capable of eliminating Iranian influence in the Middle East, by possessing advanced weapons defense capabilities, particularly the Iron Dome. All the massacres and crimes committed in Gaza and Iraq are commensurate to Iran.

Extract 4:

"So, to the remaining Hamas leaders, and to the jailors of our hostages" Lexicalization

Depending on lexicalization strategy, Netanyahu uses the term "hostages" to indicate that the Israeli soldiers were being held captive by Hamas. He deliberately uses the term to strengthen his argument that Hamas was holding the Israeli soldier's captive. He also uses the term "brave" to inspire them to persevere and demonstrate that their goal was legitimate, and that all the crimes they committed were intended to prove their existence and protect the nation of Israel.

Extract 5:

"Let my people go! Free the hostages! All of them. The whole 48. Free the hostages now! If you do, you will live. If you don't, Israel will hunt you down."

By using number game strategy, Netanyahu mentions numbers in his speech, a common practice for politicians to confirm that their claims are true and not a slander against Gaza and Hamas. To make his claim truly representative, he emphasized that he is closely looking for the hostage prison by claiming that 48 soldiers are still detained.

Extract 6:

"If there are Gazans who don't have enough food, it's because Hamas is stealing it. Hamas steals it, hoards it

and sells it at exorbitant prices to fund its war machine."

He begins by describing his country's capabilities to achieve the goals of Iran, Yemen, and Hezbollah in Lebanon. He authorized the termination of Iran's ballistic missile program and the island's missile program. After that, the complete disarmament of all weapons in Gaza was completed, enabling the civilian population of Gaza to be prepared, including maintaining security for Israel.

Extract 7:

"The United States would wipe out that terror regime and ensure that such savagery would never threaten America again. This is precisely what Israel is doing in Gaza. Behind closed doors, many of the leaders who publicly condemn us, privately thank us. They tell me how much they value Israel's superb intelligence services that have prevented time and again terrorist attacks in their capitals. Time and again saving countless lives."

Netanyahu uses the comparison to blame Hamas for all the horrific massacres committed in Gaza, including murder, starvation, and child abuse. He said that if America were in his place, it would have committed the same variety and massacres, to prove its existence. Briefly, all the voices that have declared their rejection of Israeli policy are in fact covert supporters and backers of Israel, especially some Arab countries. Netanyahu is attempting to demonstrate that most countries are practicing political hypocrisy, as they publicly condemn the brutal massacres in Gaza, but covertly support them financially and morally.

Extract 8:

"Christians like Taylor Force – an American veteran, who was brutally murdered in Israel by Palestinian terrorists. So, here's another message for these Western leaders: Israel will not allow you to shove a terror state down our throats."

He uses lexicalization strategy, by using strong vocabularies to positively represent his people, the Jewish people. On the other hand, he also uses negative vocabulary to refer to the criminality and atrocities of Hamas's actions against Israelis, likening Hamas and its supporters to extremist terrorists who perpetrated massacres in New York, some Arab countries, and elsewhere. He also uses the term "Palestinian Authority" when he describes the Palestinian authority as has no differences from Hamas in all its actions.

Extract 9:

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, I want to do something I've never done before – I want to speak from this forum directly to those hostages through loudspeakers."

To galvanize public opinion, Netanyahu uses metaphor in his speech. He compares loudspeakers to soldiers besieging a certain place. To present himself powerfully, he uses loudspeakers to show that his voice and his speech reach the hostages wherever they are, that he is close to them and will free them. He uses this metaphor to reassure his people that the hostages, while being held captive in Gaza, are close to

their families and can hear him. Furthermore, to ease the pressure on the hostages' families, he wanted to prove to them that the hostages being held captive are still alive.

Extract 10:

“For Israel, every civilian casualty is a tragedy; for Hamas, it’s a strategy. Hamas uses civilians as human shields and as props in its sick propaganda war against Israel. A propaganda war that the Western media buys hook, line and sinker.”

Netanyahu uses another metaphor that Hamas uses innocent people as shields, to illustrate that Hamas is a terrorist organization that lacks humanity and is criminal. His use of this metaphor also proves that Hamas is a cowardly organization that protects itself by using the innocent people of Gaza to protect itself, while also stealing humanitarian aid to sell it and purchase weapons for the purpose of committing massacres.

Extract 11:

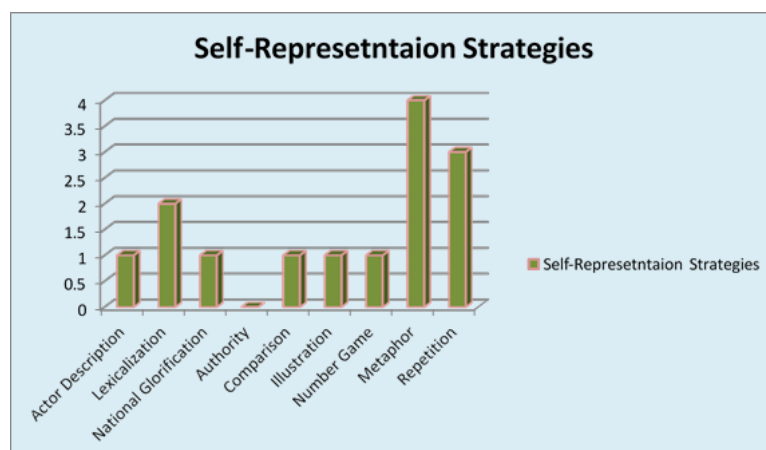
“So, here’s the point I want to make: Our enemies hate all of us with equal venom. They want to drag the modern world back to the past... to a dark age of violence, fanaticism, and terror. I think many of you are already feeling in your own societies the radical Islamist surge. I’m sure you do.”

To arouse public opinion and emphasize his goal, Netanyahu uses repetition to portray Hamas as a terrorist organization. Furthermore, he asserts that all Islamic organizations are terrorist organizations seeking to return to the Dark Ages. In his speech, he emphasizes that all Muslims are extremists, repeating this assertion repeatedly to highlight the negative aspects of his opponent.

Extract 12:

“Well, I have a message to these leaders: When the most savage terrorists on earth are effusively praising your decision, you didn’t do something right; you did something wrong. Horribly wrong. Your disgraceful decision will encourage terrorism against Jews and against innocent people everywhere.”

3.4.2. The Qualitative Analysis



Netanyahu responds to some leaders' walkouts during his speech, saying their reaction is incorrect because they are praising the actions of the world's most notorious terrorist organizations. He tells them that they make a grave mistake, saying terrorism would reach their countries and kill innocent people everywhere. Netanyahu uses the term "terrorism" and "terrorists" to legitimize his killing of innocent people in Gaza and the destruction of their homes. Netanyahu uses the comparison to blame Hamas for all the horrific massacres committed in Gaza, including murder, starvation, and child abuse.

Extract 13:

“Giving the Palestinians a state one mile from Jerusalem after October 7th is like giving Al-Qaeda a state one mile from New York City after September 11th.”

Most politicians use old stories and situations that happened in other countries to compare the current situation, which strengthens their claims and arguments. He asserted that it was as wrong to grant Gaza a state one mile away after the events of 7, October, as it was to grant a state to Al-Qaeda after the events of September 11.

Extract 14:

“To overcome that storm, you have to stand with Israel. But that’s not what you’re doing. As the prophets of Israel foretold in the Bible, you’ve turned good into evil ... and evil into good. I want to drill down on this.”

Once again, Netanyahu uses metaphor to demonstrate that the axis of evil, which includes Iran, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and others, is the primary cause of all the massacres and crimes taking place in Europe and the Middle East. Iran's possession of a nuclear program and ballistic missiles not only threatens Israel but will be like a storm, destroying any country that stands in its way. Here, Netanyahu seeks to galvanize the sympathy of the people who opposed his method of war in Gaza. Netanyahu justifies Israel's methods of response by claiming that they are for the sake of establishing goodness and peace and eliminating the evil which are mentioned in the Bible.

According to the statistical analysis, the researcher concludes that the most frequent strategy is the metaphor. Netanyahu uses metaphor to Iran's possession of a nuclear program and ballistic missiles not only threatens Israel but also destroying any country that stands in its way. In addition, the numerical analysis shows that the less frequent strategy is the authority. From the diagram, the repetition and lexicalization strategies are the second frequent in his speech. He uses lexicalization strategy to positively represent his people, the Jewish people. On the other hand, he also uses negative vocabulary to refer to the criminality and atrocities of Hamas's actions against Israelis. In order to arouse public opinion and emphasize his goal, Netanyahu uses repetition to portray Hamas as a terrorist organization.

4. Conclusions

Self-representation is one of the techniques and strategies used by politicians, orators, and influencers to convey their goals in a convincing way. In political speech, the politician uses these techniques to represent himself and his people in a positive way, using vocabulary that denotes love, peace, and others. On the other hand, he uses harsh and strong vocabulary to diminish the value of the opponent or enemy, describing them with heinous descriptions such as murder, displacement, theft, terrorism, and others. The researcher's findings can be summarized in the following points:

1. The descriptive analysis shows that Netanyahu uses many

5. Appendix

The Titles of Speeches	Date	Links
Benjamin Netanyahu's address to the United Nations General Assembly.	26 Sep 2025, 8:48 pm	https://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-of-netanyahus-speech-we-wont-let-the-world-shove-a-terror-state-down-our-throat/

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