

MAGA FORCES UNDER SCRUTINY: EXAMINING REPRESENTATION IN PRESIDENT BIDEN'S SPEECH

Janice Lie^[1], Trisnowati Tanto^[2]

^[1] janicelie251202@gmail.com
^{[1], [2]} Universitas Kristen Maranatha
Bandung, Indonesia

Abstract: This research critically examines President Joe Biden's 2022 speech, delivered in the context of the U.S. midterm elections, focusing on the portrayal of the MAGA (Make America Great Again) forces as a threat to U.S. democracy and the Constitution. Using Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework and Stuart Hall's representation theory, the study analyzes the speech through macrostructure, microstructure, and superstructure to uncover how Biden constructs the MAGA forces as a negative representation in contrast to the Democratic Party's commitment to equality and democracy. The research employs a qualitative method, examining linguistic tools such as examples, repetition, contrast, and comparison, to understand how Biden uses language to highlight the disruptive and violent actions of the MAGA forces. Through examples like the January 6th Capitol riot and election denialism, Biden portrays the MAGA forces as violent, authoritarian, and opposed to democratic processes. Repetition of key phrases, like "no right," emphasizes the regressive nature of the MAGA agenda, while contrast and comparison serve to define the Democratic Party's vision of unity and democracy against the MAGA forces' divisive actions. The superstructure of the speech, organized into distinct arguments and sub-arguments, further reinforces the portrayal of the MAGA forces as a serious threat to the nation's values, calling for collective action to preserve democracy. The findings suggest that Biden's strategic use of discourse positions the MAGA forces as an adversarial force, aiming to strip away fundamental rights and disrupt the democratic order. This research contributes to the broader field of Critical Discourse Analysis by exploring the role of political rhetoric in shaping public perceptions of political movements. It underscores the importance of critically engaging with political speeches to reveal implicit messages and power dynamics within discourse. The study's implications point to the need for ongoing discourse analysis to better understand the complex interplay between language and political ideology, particularly in the context of contemporary political polarization. Future research could extend this analysis by examining additional speeches or exploring the broader impact of discourse on public opinion and political behavior.

Keywords: micro-level, van Dijk, President Biden, representation, MAGA forces

INTRODUCTION

Trump's defeat in the 2020 United States of America presidential election gathered his supporters, the MAGA ('Make America Great Again,' a term coined by Trump) forces in the first place. It is because Trump claimed and told the MAGA forces that the election stole his presidency (Jacobo, 2021). The MAGA forces have committed many violent actions, for

example, rioting against the United States Congress (Donovan, 2021), organizing violent protests (BBC, 2020), adopting the belief that the Democratic Party was corrupted (Zimmer, 2022), and repeatedly committing political violence to overthrow the Democratic Party (Miller & Rivas, 2022), to name but a few.

In this research, the researchers selected a speech delivered by Biden that revolves

around Trump's MAGA forces and the Republicans. The speech itself is of high importance as it mainly addresses the MAGA forces and their perceived threats to the U.S. and its national values. In Biden's four-year presidency, the midterm election began on November 8, 2022 (Vox, 2022). The midterm elections occur about halfway through a U.S. president's four-year term. These elections are crucial because they allow voters to determine which political party will control Congress (BBC, 2022), which is key in shaping national policy and legislation. The outcome can significantly impact the president's ability to implement their agenda for the rest of their term.

In the speech, Biden spread awareness to the whole nation that the MAGA forces and the Republicans were hardcore supporters of Trump who were often engaged in acts that threatened the United States and its Constitution, emphasizing equality and democracy. Moreover, through this speech, Biden attempted to align the Democratic Party with equality and democracy. He also indirectly promoted voting for the Democratic Party in the midterm elections.

This analysis explores how Biden addressed the disruptive actions of the MAGA forces during his presidency, focusing on their portrayal in his speeches. In addition, this situation in the U.S. is intriguing to analyze because despite Trump's having been declared to have lost the presidential election, he and his MAGA forces are still powerful enough to cause obstruction and disturbances to the U.S. up to the present day.

To this objective, the researchers employed Stuart Hall's (2013) representation theory, which dissects the nuances of language to convey concepts. For instance, 'tree' may mean "a large plant that grows in nature." However, it may also possess the underlying representation of victory once delivered in Morse code and utilized in the Second World War (Hall, 2013).

Besides that, the authors integrated van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) theory to determine the representation of MAGA forces. CDA stresses power dynamics, dominance, and social context inherent in written or spoken communication in social and political areas (van Dijk, 2001). Moreover, CDA is a powerful tool for examining language use

in detail. It also allows the uncovering of subtle representations, domination, and power dynamics in written and spoken communication (van Dijk, 1999, as cited in Astari et al., 2021). While van Dijk's CDA may cover three macro, meso, and micro levels, this analysis focuses only on the micro-level analysis—a subset of CDA—to scrutinize language usage (van Dijk, 2001). This micro-level includes analyses of macrostructure, microstructure, and superstructure, which will be thoroughly explored in the following sections of this paper.

Prior research has extensively explored CDA within the macro- and micro-levels, investigating power, dominance, and inequality at the macro-level and delving into language use and discourse interaction at the micro-level (van Dijk, 2001). Pratiwi and Refnaldi (2018) investigated the macrostructures and superstructures within President Jokowi's speeches, uncovering sentence structure patterns that contributed to enhanced comprehension and orderly organization in superstructures, frequently conveying persuasive and informative messages. Conversely, Saadeen and Aibzour (2022) explored the linguistic techniques in Trump's speeches, unveiling adverse portrayals of self and others through micro- and macro-level examinations. Flayih and Taifoor (2018) analyzed Julia Gillard's speech to reveal self-presentation and other-presentation dynamics at the microstructure level.

This study uniquely focuses on representing the MAGA forces, specifically examining President Biden's perspective and language use. While previous studies primarily focused on macro- and micro-level patterns or self and other representations, this analysis emphasizes the representation of the 'other' within a single speech. Furthermore, the researchers incorporate all aspects of micro-level analysis, including macrostructure, microstructure, and superstructure, to comprehensively understand the nuanced language use.

This research, hence, assumes significance by advancing CDA literature and providing a reference for future scholars. In addition, the study prompts readers to engage better in critical analysis and become aware of the essence of moving beyond explicit

meanings to grasp implicit messages conveyed through discourse.

METHOD

This research employed a descriptive qualitative research method. The qualitative method enables the researchers to gain deep insights into the representation of MAGA forces in President Biden's speech because it focuses on detailed description and analysis of both the speech content and language use.

The data source for this research was President Biden's speech on September 1, 2022, in Philadelphia, addressing the threats posed by Trump's MAGA forces to America's Constitution (The New York Times, 2022). The MAGA forces, i.e., Republican Americans who advocate for Trump and endorse political violence (Bump, 2022), are central to this study's exploration. Given the qualitative nature of the data, the descriptive qualitative method helps to uncover the implicit representation of MAGA forces within the speech.

Additionally, this study utilized a comprehensive analysis approach. It included examining macrostructure, microstructure, and superstructure aspects to assess how the speech depicted the MAGA forces. The thesis statement and reiteration paragraphs were carefully analyzed in the macrostructure phase to identify the speech's primary theme and anticipated arguments. From this central theme, the representation

of the MAGA forces was inferred. Regarding microstructure analysis, specific linguistic features that convey the representation of the MAGA forces were pinpointed. This analysis also utilized four linguistic tools: examples and illustrations, repetition, contrast, and comparison.

Examples and illustrations were used to characterize the self and the other, particularly highlighting the self's positivity compared to the other's negativity. Consequently, the relevant data for this tool consisted of sentences from the speech that included examples or illustrations contributing to the conclusion about the representation of the MAGA forces. The repetition tool investigated recurring words or structures that could reveal their significance within the context. When selecting data for this tool, the focus was on

identifying the repetition of specific words or sentence patterns within a single paragraph.

The contrast tool identified contrasting polarizations indicative of the MAGA forces' representation. As a result, pairs of polarizations were deemed valid data to be analyzed through this tool.

The comparison tool was used to analyze paragraphs that subtly compare the self with the other.

The speech was categorized into schematic divisions in the superstructure analysis, providing an organizational framework. This categorization enabled a comprehensive examination of the speech's structure, contributing to understanding the MAGA forces' representation. Consequently, all the paragraphs in the speech were the data needed for the superstructure analysis.

Besides that, the library research method complemented the CDA analysis by supporting the interpretation of findings. Printed and online materials and references were consulted primarily for literature review and contextualization to substantiate and contextualize the analysis, strengthening the research's validity and breadth. In addition, the researchers considered all ethical issues when referring to all the sources.

Through integrating macrostructure, microstructure, and superstructure analyses, this study sought to holistically interpret the representation of the MAGA forces in President Biden's speech. Insights gained from each analysis aspect collectively contributed to an enriched understanding of the speech's implicit messages and the depiction of the MAGA forces. This research was expected to disclose how President Biden opposes the MAGA forces within his discourse by investigating the complexities of language usage.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section of the paper presents findings and in-depth discussion regarding the portrayal of the MAGA forces as unveiled in President Joe Biden's speech in 2022 in Philadelphia, published by *The New York Times* on September 1, 2022. The analysis operates at a micro-level perspective, concentrating on macrostructure, microstructure, and superstructure analyses.

Macrostructure

Van Dijk (1980) defined macrostructure as the structural aspect that gives or portrays the general meaning of a particular text or speech. This particular speech of President Biden is considered an analytical exposition, which constitutes an exposition used to persuade the readers that something is important (Gerot & Wignell, 1995). Moreover, this speech also strictly follows the structure of an analytical exposition, starting with a thesis statement, then arguments, and ending with a reiteration (Gerot & Wignell, 1995). It is further stated that the main or general topic in an analytical exposition is taken from the thesis statement and the reiteration (Vianica & Tanto, 2021, p. 59). In this text, the thesis statement can be found in paragraphs (2) to (10) as follows:

Table 1: List of Thesis Statement Paragraphs

No.	Thesis Statement
1.	(para. 2) I speak to you tonight from sacred ground in America: Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pa.
2.	(para. 3) This is where America made its declaration of independence to the world more than two centuries ago, with an idea unique among nations: that in America, we're all created equal.
3.	(para. 4) This is where the United States Constitution was written and debated. This is where we set in motion the most extraordinary experiment of self-government the world has ever known.
4.	(para. 5) With three simple words: we, the people; we, the people. These two documents and the ideas they embody — equality and democracy — are the rock upon which this nation is built.
5.	(para. 6) They are how we became the greatest nation on earth. They are why, for more than two centuries, America has been a beacon to the world.
6.	(para. 7) But as I stand here tonight, equality and democracy are under assault. We do ourselves no favor to pretend otherwise.
7.	(para. 8) So, tonight, I've come to this place where it all began to speak as plainly as I can to the nation about the threats we face, about the power we have in our own hands to meet these threats, and about the incredible future that lies in front of us, if only we choose it.

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| 8. | (para. 9) We must never forget, we, the people, are the true heirs of the American experiment that began more than two centuries ago. |
| 9. | (para. 10) We, the people, have burning inside of each of us the flame of liberty that was lit here at Independence Hall. A flame that lit our way through abolition, the Civil War, suffrage, the Great Depression, world wars, civil rights. That sacred flame still burns. Now on our time as we build an America that is more prosperous, free, and just. That is the work of my presidency, a mission I believe in with my whole soul. |

Additionally, the reiteration can be found in paragraphs (56) to (58):

Table 2: List of Reiteration Paragraphs

No.	Reiteration
1.	(para. 56) Our task is to make our nation free and fair, just and strong, noble and whole, and this work is the work of democracy, the work of this generation. It is the work of our time for all time. We can't afford to leave anyone on the sidelines. We need everyone to do their part, so speak up, speak out, get engaged, vote, vote, vote!
2.	(para. 57) And if we do our duty, if we do our duty, in 2022 and beyond, then ages still to come will say we, all of us here, we kept the faith. We preserved democracy. We heeded our words. We heeded not our worst instincts but our better angels. We proved that for all its imperfections, America is still the beacon to the world, an ideal to be realized, a promise to be kept. There's nothing more important. Nothing more sacred. Nothing more American. That's our soul. That's who we truly are. And that's who we must always be.
3.	(para. 58) I have no doubt, none, that this is who we will be and that we'll come together as a nation that will secure our democracy. That for the next 200 years we'll have what we had the past 200 years, the greatest nation on the face of the earth. We just need to remember who we are. We are the United States of America, the United States of America.

A comprehensive global topic emerges upon analyzing the thesis statement and reiteration paragraphs. It summarizes the essence of President Biden's speech: "America

stands as the greatest nation due to its foundational principles of equality and democracy, which now face a perilous threat. It is the nation's duty to overcome this threat and preserve its core values." Furthermore, the said threat in this global topic refers to the MAGA forces because they idolize Trump, whose dictatorial government system (Kamarck, 2021). As a result, this makes the MAGA forces a clear threat to the United States, considering that Trump's political ideology contradicts America's foundational principles, which are equality and democracy.

Expanding on this global topic, the predicted arguments of the speech are likely to center around two key aspects. The first aspect refers to the identification and nature of the threat to the American foundation. Some arguments concerning the individuals and systems threatening democracy and equality, which are the two main cornerstones of the United States, can be anticipated. These arguments play a crucial part in clarifying the root causes and origins of these problems.

The second aspect of the argument is likely to center around strategies for overcoming threats and safeguarding America's values. The speech is anticipated to contain some statements regarding the strategies and actions that America, as a unified country, may use to defeat the alleged threat. It aims to lay out a plan of action to uphold the nation's values and guarantee their enduring vitality.

Although not explicitly stated at this stage, the macrostructure analysis suggests that the threat hinted at within the speech carries a negative connotation. The speech implicitly portrays the threat as unfavorable by highlighting the potential weakening of America's core values.

More importantly, this macrostructure analysis serves as an initial step in unveiling the representation of the MAGA forces within President Biden's discourse. As the speech progresses, the implicit connections to the threat become more apparent, emphasizing the reference to the MAGA forces as the source of the challenge to America's foundational ideals. The macrostructure analysis contributes to the broader Critical Discourse Analysis by setting the stage for a detailed examination of how these representations unfold and intertwine throughout the speech.

Microstructure

Van Dijk (1988) stated that microstructure analysis involves delving into the local meaning of a text, encompassing word meanings, word groups, clauses, and sentences. Within this microstructure analysis, four distinct linguistic tools will be employed to explore the text and unveil its subtle meanings. The tools are examples and illustrations, the repetitions of anaphora, conduplicatio, parallelism, contrast, and comparison. The researchers aim to uncover the intricate layers of meaning and representation embedded within the speech by applying these linguistic tools to the microstructure analysis. Through this comprehensive approach, the authors aim to reveal the subtleties of language use and the nuanced portrayal of MAGA forces within President Biden's discourse.

Examples and Illustrations

As described by van Dijk (2007), the linguistic tool of examples and illustrations is essential for demonstrating arguments. Concrete instances strengthen representations of the self or the other.

In President Biden's speech, this tool is employed to uncover the negative representation of the MAGA forces. President Biden effectively utilized the examples and illustrations tool to underline the MAGA forces' engagement in political violence, intimidation, and disruption. These examples contribute to the vivid negative representation of the MAGA forces within his discourse. The strategic deployment of concrete instances strengthens the argument and fosters a clear portrayal of the MAGA forces' adverse impact on the democratic fabric of the nation.

Table 3: Data of Examples and Illustrations Tool

No.	Examples and Illustrations
1.	(para. 18) They look at the mob that stormed the United States Capitol on January 6, brutally attacking law enforcement, not as insurrectionists who placed a dagger at the throat of our democracy, but they look at them as patriots. And they see their MAGA failure to stop a peaceful transfer of power after the 2020 election as preparation for the 2022 and 2024 elections.
2.	(para. 28) You saw law enforcement brutally attacked on January 6. We've seen election officials, poll workers, many of

them volunteers of both parties, subject to intimidation and death threats. And, can you believe it, F.B.I. agents are just doing their job as directed, facing threats to their own lives from their own fellow citizens.

In paragraph (18), President Biden highlighted instances of political violence carried out by the MAGA forces, emphasizing how they stormed the United States Capitol on January 6 and brutally attacked law enforcement. He contrasted their actions with their self-perceived image as patriots. Additionally, Biden underscored their perspective that the failure to halt the peaceful transfer of power in the 2020 election was a preparatory move for future electoral disruption in 2022 and 2024.

Through these examples, President Biden portrayed the MAGA forces as actively engaged in acts of political violence and subversion of democratic processes. The juxtaposition of their violent actions with their self-identification as patriots exposes the dissonance between their behavior and their professed values, contributing to their negative representation.

In paragraph (28), President Biden cited further examples to illustrate the extent of the MAGA forces' disruptive behavior. He highlighted the harassment and death threats faced by election officials and poll workers, including both Democratic and Republican volunteers. Additionally, he underscored the threats faced by F.B.I. agents who were merely executing their duties.

By providing these concrete instances, President Biden portrayed the MAGA forces as agents of intimidation and threat who targeted law enforcement, election officials, and even government agents. An emphasis on their disruptive behavior reinforces the negative representation of the MAGA forces as a destabilizing and menacing force within the political landscape.

Repetition: Anaphora

As Harris (2008) explained, anaphora involves repeating the same word or words at the beginning of phrases, clauses, or sentences. This rhetorical device emphasizes specific ideas and concepts, and its usage in President Biden's speech contributes to the negative representation of the MAGA forces.

In applying the effectiveness of anaphora, President Biden crafted a discourse that emphasizes the MAGA forces' negative impact on democratic values, personal liberties, and the nation's well-being. Repeating key phrases serves as a rhetorical strategy to comprehend these representations. Moreover, this repetition device is also employed to draw out a distinct perception of the MAGA forces as a destabilizing and regressive influence.

Table 4: Data of Anaphora

No.	Anaphora
1.	(para. 17) MAGA forces are determined to take this country backwards, backwards to an America where there is no right to choose, no right to privacy, no right to contraception, no right to marry who you love . They promote authoritarian leaders, and they fanned the flames of political violence that are a threat to our personal rights, to the pursuit of justice, to the rule of law, to the very soul of this country .
2.	(para. 34) I will not stand by and watch — I will not — the will of the American people be overturned by wild conspiracy theories and baseless evidence-free claims of fraud. I will not stand by and watch elections in this country stolen by people who simply refuse to accept that they lost. I will not stand by and watch the most fundamental freedom in this country, the freedom to vote and have your vote counted, and be taken from you and the American people.

In the phrase "no right to choose, no right to privacy, no right to contraception, no right to marry who you love" (para. 17), the anaphora of "no right" is employed four times. This repetition underscores the notion that the MAGA forces would drive America backward into a state lacking in essential human rights—freedom of choice, privacy, access to contraception, and the liberty to marry without constraint. Using anaphora, President Biden emphasized the dangerous impact the MAGA forces would have on American fundamental freedoms. It paints them as a regressive force intending to stripping away individual liberties.

Another instance of anaphora appears in the phrases "to our personal rights, to the pursuit of justice, to the rule of law, to the very

soul of this country" (para. 17). The repetition of the preposition "to" highlights the notion that the MAGA forces pose a multifaceted threat to personal rights, justice, the rule of law, and even the essence of the nation itself. Through anaphora, President Biden underscored the comprehensive reach of the MAGA forces' impact, portraying them as disturbance agents who endanger American values' cores.

In paragraph (34), President Biden used anaphora again, repeating, "I will not stand by and watch" at the beginning of sentences. This strategic repetition stresses his resolute stance against the destruction of democratic principles, particularly in cases of the American people's will being overturned and the freedom to vote being compromised. The use of anaphora highlights President Biden's determination to counteract perceived threats to democracy. He implicitly claimed the MAGA forces' role in these concerning actions. Despite not being explicitly mentioned, the negative representation of these forces is strongly implied.

Repetition: Conducuplicatio

Conducuplicatio, as defined by Harris (2008), involves the repetition of specific keywords from a preceding phrase, sentence, or clause placed at the beginning of the subsequent phrase, sentence, or clause.

President Biden's strategic use of conducuplicatio in his speech contributes to the negative representation of the MAGA forces. By composing his discourse in this manner, President Biden utilized conducuplicatio to emphasize the essential prerequisites for a functioning democracy, which implicitly highlights the bad position of the MAGA forces about these prerequisites. This repetition technique reinforces the negative portrayal of the MAGA forces as the ones objecting to the foundational principles of a democratic society.

Table 5: Data of Conducuplicatio

No.	Conducuplicatio
1.	(para. 31) We can't let the integrity of our elections be undermined, for that is a path to chaos. Look, I know politics can be fierce and mean and nasty in America. I get it. I believe in the give and take of politics, in disagreement and debate and dissent. We're a big, complicated country, but democracy endures only if we, the

people, respect the guardrails of the Republic. **Only if, we the people** accept the results of free and fair elections. **Only if, we the people** see politics, not as total war, but mediation of our differences. Democracy cannot survive on one side believes there are only two outcomes to an election: Either they win or they were cheated. And that's where the MAGA Republicans are today.

President Biden employs conducuplicatio by repeating the phrase "only if we, the people" (para. 31). This repetition technique reinforces the idea that the survival of democracy depends on the citizens of the United States meeting certain conditions.

By utilizing conducuplicatio, President Biden points out the critical factors for maintaining a thriving democracy: acceptance of election outcomes and a perspective of politics as mediation rather than all-out conflict. Thus, this repetition strengthens the idea that democracy's continuation relies on collective responsibility.

In this paragraph, President Biden employs conducuplicatio to stress the negative portrayal of the MAGA forces indirectly. Given their documented refusal to accept election results (McManus, 2022) and their tendency to view politics as adversarial (Beauchamp, 2021), the conducuplicatio highlights their divergence from the necessary conditions for a healthy democracy. The implicit contrast between the principles highlighted through conducuplicatio and the MAGA forces' actions strengthens their negative representation within this context.

Repetition: Parallelism

Parallelism, as defined by Harris (2008), involves the repetition of structural elements within phrases, clauses, or sentences. President Biden strategically employed parallelism in his speech to emphasize America's contrasting options. By structuring his argument using parallelism, President Biden underscored the significance of the choices at hand and the negative implications of the path represented by the MAGA forces. In this manner, this rhetorical technique effectively contributes to the negative representation of the MAGA forces within the context of the speech's broader theme.

Table 6: Data of Parallelism

No.	Parallelism
1.	(para. 21) I believe America is at an inflection point, one of those moments that determine the shape of everything that's to come after. And now, America must choose to move forward or to move backwards, to build a future or obsess about the past, to be a nation of hope and unity and optimism or a nation of fear, division and of darkness.

President Biden employed parallelism in the phrases "to move forward or to move backward," "to build a future or obsess about the past," and "a nation of hope and unity and optimism or a nation of fear, division and darkness" (para. 21).

Using parallelism, President Biden starkly contrasted two divergent paths the U.S. could follow. The parallel structure amplifies the opposition between the options, making it straightforward for the audience to consider the implications of each choice.

In this context, Biden's speech's parallelism serves to highlight America's critical crossroads. The juxtaposition of positive attributes—such as moving forward, building a future, and embodying hope and unity—with negative attributes—such as moving backward, obsessing about the past, and embracing fear and division—creates a powerful contrast that summarizes the nation's fundamental choices.

Furthermore, what is important is that parallelism magnifies the consequences of each option. The positive attributes align with Biden's representation of the self or the Democratic Party, while the negative attributes align with the other—the MAGA forces. This opposition underscores the negative portrayal of the MAGA forces as contributors to a path marked by fear, division, and darkness.

Contrast

As van Dijk (2007) described, the contrast tool is a strong rhetorical device when a speaker or author presents opposing ideas. This polarity allows one to discern underlying representations of the self and the other, offering valuable insights into the discourse.

President Biden effectively underscored the opposing paths before the United States by employing contrast. It indirectly portrays the Democratic Party's stance as a positive

alternative and the MAGA forces' potential actions as a negative one. Hence, in this way, President Biden's use of contrast ultimately contributes to the negative portrayal of the MAGA forces.

Table 7: Data of Contrast

No.	Contrast
1.	(para. 21) I believe America is at an inflection point, one of those moments that determine the shape of everything that's to come after. And now, America must choose to move forward or to move backwards, to build a future or obsess about the past, to be a nation of hope and unity and optimism or a nation of fear, division and of darkness.

In paragraph (21), President Biden employed contrast to present an obvious dichotomy between the potential outcomes based on the U.S.'s choices. He presented a series of opposing ideas, each related to the actions and impact of either the Democratic Party or the MAGA forces. Biden's contrast emphasizes the distinct paths that lie before the nation. Through the juxtaposition of opposing ideas, he implicitly drew attention to the consequences that each choice entails.

In this context, Biden's choice of contrast effectively emphasizes the crucial turning point at which the U.S. faces. The contrasting ideas—moving forward vs. moving backwards, building a future vs. obsessing about the past, a nation of hope and unity vs. a nation of fear and division—capture the essence of Americans' choices. This contrast accentuates the seriousness of the decision and guides the audience's interpretation toward a deeper understanding of the implications.

Significantly, while President Biden refrained from explicitly naming the MAGA forces, the context enables readers to infer their role in the adverse outcomes portrayed. The contrasts align with the speech's broader theme, emphasizing the MAGA forces' potential lousy impact on the nation's paths.

Comparison

Comparison, as outlined by van Dijk (2007), is a valuable tool in discourse analysis, mainly when it involves the different perspectives of ingroups and outgroups. In President Biden's speech, the strategic use of comparison effectively underscores the

differing attitudes and beliefs of the Democratic Party and the MAGA forces. More specifically, it highlights the two groups' profound ethical and ideological differences. It confirms President Biden's reinforcement of the negative portrayal of the MAGA forces.

Table 8: List of Data of Comparison

No.	Comparison
1.	(para. 31) We can't let the integrity of our elections be undermined, for that is a path to chaos. Look, I know politics can be fierce and mean and nasty in America. I get it. I believe in the give and take of politics, in disagreement and debate and dissent. We're a big, complicated country, but democracy endures only if we, the people, respect the guardrails of the Republic. Only if, we the people accept the results of free and fair elections. Only if, we the people see politics, not as total war, but mediation of our differences. Democracy cannot survive on one side believes there are only two outcomes to an election: Either they win or they were cheated. And that's where the MAGA Republicans are today.
2.	(para. 48) The MAGA Republicans believe that for them to succeed, everyone else has to fail. They believe in America, not like what I believe about America. I believe America is big enough for all of us to succeed, and that is the nation we're building, a nation where no one is left behind.

Paragraph (31) shows how President Biden utilizes comparison to illuminate the contrasting ethical stances held by the Democratic Party and the MAGA forces. By juxtaposing these perspectives, Biden clearly differentiates between the two groups.

Through comparison, Biden emphasized the respect and regard for democratic values exhibited by the Democratic Party. Conversely, he highlighted the MAGA Republicans' rigid belief system, which only acknowledged victory or victimhood in election outcomes. In this context, President Biden implicitly reinforced the broader theme of the speech, underscoring the potential consequences of aligning with the MAGA forces' ideology.

Moreover, in paragraph (48), Biden extended the comparison to address the beliefs held by the MAGA Republicans directly. By juxtaposing his own beliefs, Biden accentuated

the MAGA forces' self-centered mindset, which prioritizes their own success at the expense of others.

Superstructure

The superstructure analysis systematically explores President Biden's speech organization, revealing the deliberate construction contributing to the MAGA forces' negative portrayal. By examining the hierarchical arrangement of the speech's elements, insights into how each component supports the main theme can be obtained.

Superstructure analysis provides a lens through which the overall organization of President Biden's 2022 speech on the MAGA forces can be examined, as seen in Figure 1 below. This analysis shows how the speech's structure emphasizes the central theme and reinforces the portrayal of the MAGA forces as the "negative other."

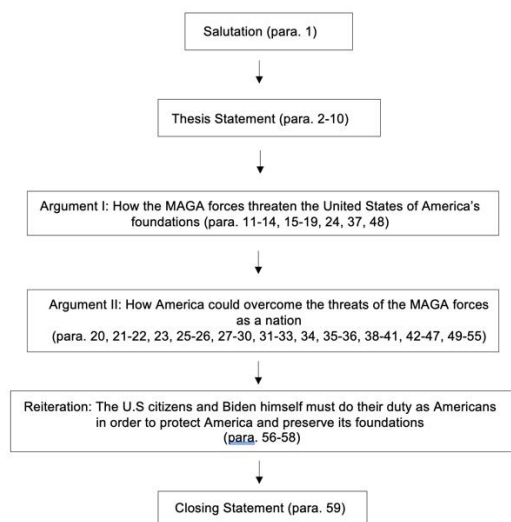


Figure 1. The Schematic Structure of Biden's Speech

President Biden's speech follows a coherent and structured organization (Figure 1), enabling the audience to follow his arguments clearly. The introduction of salutations establishes rapport, while the thesis statement summarizes the speech's purpose. The ensuing arguments detailing the threat posed by the MAGA forces and ways to overcome it are systematically presented. The reiteration and closing statement support the speech's core message. Collectively, the thematic organization serves to highlight the

contrasting perspectives between the Democratic Party and the MAGA forces.

Next, in this superstructure analysis, the first argument of this speech, which revolves around how the MAGA forces threaten the United States' foundations, will be analyzed in detail.

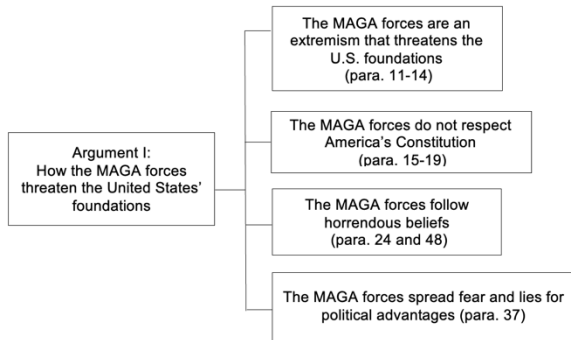


Figure 2. The Schematic Structure of Argument I

Figure 2 shows President Biden's first argument about how the MAGA forces threaten the United States' foundations. From this diagram, it can be noticed that President Biden presented the atrocity of the MAGA forces by mentioning the ideologies that they follow. Their ideologies threaten the U.S.'s foundations. They incite the ideological conflict that America and the MAGA forces are engaged in. Therefore, the first argument portrays the MAGA forces as the negative other.

Furthermore, based on the four sub-arguments, it can be concluded that the MAGA forces are a political movement that attacks the ideologies that America follows. It can be seen from Figure 2 that the MAGA forces would attack America's foundations and Constitution, which are the ideology and laws that America adheres to. Moreover, the MAGA forces also have their ideology and foundations, which are in opposition to the beliefs that America follows. On top of that, the MAGA forces would impose their ideology on the U.S. as they would often spread fear and lies for their advantage.

Moreover, the sub-argument about the MAGA forces not respecting the U.S. Constitution (para. 15-19) is made more specific, as shown in the following figure:

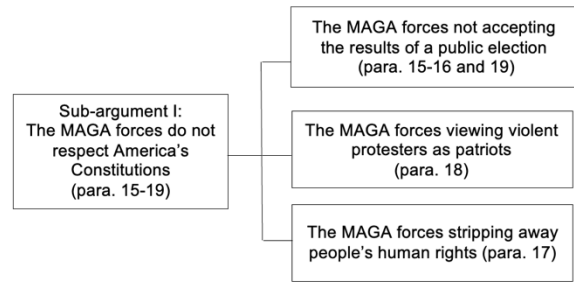


Figure 3. The Schematic Structure of the Sub-argument 'The MAGA Forces Do Not Respect America's Constitutions'

In Figure 3, Biden explains in detail how the MAGA forces did not respect the U.S. Constitution. In this diagram, Biden mentions that the MAGA forces did not accept the results of a public election, viewing violent protesters as patriots and stripping away the U.S. nation's human rights. Furthermore, the great details showing how the MAGA forces disrespected the Constitution clarify that the MAGA forces' negative representation is strongly emphasized.

This clear portrayal of the negative things of the MAGA forces can be seen again in sub-argument II, which concerns the MAGA forces' horrendous beliefs, as seen in the following figure:

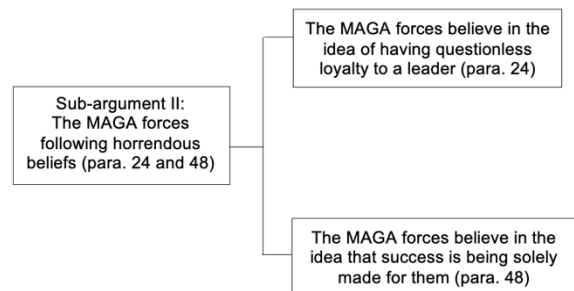


Figure 4. The Schematic Structure of the Sub-argument 'The MAGA Forces Following Horrendous Beliefs'

In Figure 4, similar to Biden's previous actions in sub-argument I, it can be seen that Biden also clarified the horrendous beliefs that the MAGA forces followed in such great depth, strongly clarifying the negative portrayal of the MAGA forces. In this context, Biden stated in his speech that the MAGA forces believed in the idea of having unquestionable loyalty to a leader. Besides, they also believed that success was solely made for them.

To sum it up, based on the first argument (Figure 2), the researchers notice President

Biden's detailed exposition of how the MAGA forces threaten the American foundations. The war of ideologies is brought to the forefront as the MAGA forces challenge the fundamental principles and Constitution of the United States. This clear depiction emphasizes their portrayal as a "negative other." Sub-arguments, such as the MAGA forces' disregard for the Constitution (Figure 3) and their adoption of horrendous beliefs (Figure 4), further solidify their negative representation.

The second argument in this speech focuses on how Americans can overcome the MAGA forces' threats as a nation. Figure 5 below shows the schematic diagram of this particular argument:

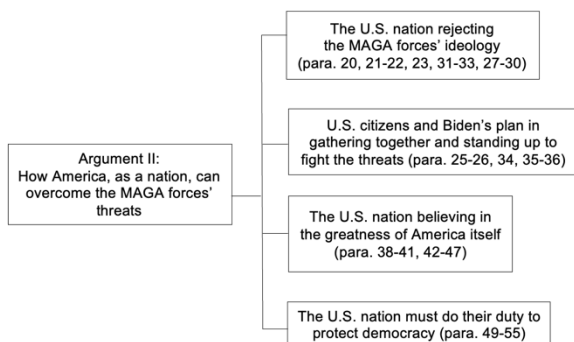


Figure 5. The Schematic Structure of Argument II

In the second argument (Figure 5), President Biden outlined the strategies for overcoming the MAGA forces' threats. Hence, this thorough exploration aligns with the theme of putting the MAGA forces in a negative light. This is mainly because the detailed structure itself clarifies his commitment to addressing the challenges posed by the MAGA forces; besides, it emphasizes the importance of defending democracy.

President Biden strategically employed the superstructure to complement the linguistic tools in the microstructure previously discussed. The superstructure enhances the impact of these tools by providing a framework for their deployment. The strategic arrangement of arguments and sub-arguments maximizes the persuasive effect on the audience, reinforcing the message of the MAGA forces as the "negative other."

At the end of the discussion, it is essential to connect the findings of this study with prior research to highlight both similarities and

differences, as well as their broader implications. In the introduction, it was noted that previous studies on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) have investigated political speeches, focusing on how language is used to frame political ideologies, power dynamics, and social relations. For example, Pratiwi and Refnaldi (2018) examined the macrostructure and superstructure of President Jokowi's speeches, identifying linguistic patterns that structured his arguments to enhance clarity and persuasiveness. Similarly, Saedeen and Aibzour (2022) explored how Trump's speeches used CDA to portray political adversaries negatively. While these studies focused on macro and meso-level analyses, this study uniquely emphasizes the micro-level analysis of Biden's speech, providing a closer examination of the linguistic devices used to frame the MAGA forces as a threat. The findings of this research align with prior studies in the way that language is strategically employed to create distinct divisions between the "self" and the "other." Like previous research, this study shows how political figures use discourse to shape public opinion by casting political adversaries in a negative light. The use of repetition, contrast, and comparison is also a common thread in both this research and the previous studies, underscoring the significance of these rhetorical devices in conveying political messages. However, this study differentiates itself by using a detailed micro-level CDA to focus specifically on the negative portrayal of the MAGA forces in Biden's speech, drawing attention to the explicit linguistic tools, such as examples, repetition, and contrast, that construct their image as a threat to American democracy.

In terms of implications, the findings of this study reinforce the broader discourse analysis literature by highlighting how political language can be a powerful tool in shaping public perceptions of political adversaries and ideologies. This study suggests that by using strategic linguistic devices, politicians like Biden can craft compelling narratives that influence the electorate's views on democracy and political stability. The contrast between the Democratic Party's vision of unity and the MAGA forces' divisiveness serves as a key rhetorical strategy, emphasizing the urgency of preserving democratic values. While prior research has focused on general patterns of

discourse, this study offers a more nuanced understanding of the specific linguistic strategies used to frame the MAGA forces as a threat, contributing valuable insights into the ways political language shapes the ideological landscape.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of President Joe Biden's 2022 speech, focusing on how he constructs the MAGA forces as a negative representation through the strategic use of linguistic tools. The analysis demonstrates how Biden employs examples, repetition, contrast, and comparison to frame the MAGA forces as violent, authoritarian, and a direct threat to the democratic values of equality and justice. Through a carefully structured speech, Biden not only critiques the MAGA forces but also calls for action to preserve the nation's democratic principles. By analyzing the speech through the lens of CDA and Stuart Hall's representation theory, this research reveals the power of political discourse in shaping public perceptions, particularly in the context of political polarization and ideological conflict. The findings underscore the significance of language in framing political adversaries and

the broader ideological battles within contemporary politics.

Future research should expand upon this study by analyzing multiple speeches from President Biden or other political leaders to explore whether similar linguistic strategies are used in different contexts. A more extensive analysis, incorporating both macro- and meso-levels of CDA, would provide a deeper understanding of how political figures represent adversarial groups and the implications of such representations on public discourse. Additionally, investigating how these representations influence public opinion, voting behavior, and political outcomes could offer important insights into the role of language in shaping political dynamics. Further exploration of the impact of political rhetoric on societal polarization and the rise of populist movements would enrich the field of discourse analysis, helping to illuminate how language not only reflects but also shapes contemporary political realities.

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