IDEOLOGICAL FRAMING OF TWO SENATORS TOWARD BIDEN'S PALESTINIAN IMMIGRATION PLAN

Fadllur Rohmah Ziyadatur Rosyidah, I Dewa Putu Wijana
Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia
fadllurrohmahziyadaturrosyidah@mail.ugm.ac.id, putu.wijana@ugm.ac.id

Abstract

The ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine after October 7 exacerbates, currently becoming the world's most alarming issue. In the United States, which has an intimate relationship with Israel for providing arms and funds, American pro-Palestinian citizens march to the streets to chastise the government's stance that bestows the wrong side. The endless action prompted Biden to consider the Palestinians entering the United States, which triggered the Republicans and Democrats to take sides, either to humiliate or support Biden's manoeuvre. The political polarization related to Biden's breakthrough became an enthralling topic delivered by politicians in their press releases, debates, or interviews. This study examines the contradictory ideological framing of the Republican and Democratic Senators toward the Palestinian immigration plan. The authors analyzed the interviews of Republican Senator Mitch McConnell and Democratic Senator Bernie Sanders, taken from YouTube, using a CDA approach. The transcribed interviews were observed to unveil the stylistic, syntactic, and semantic elements aimed at uncovering these senators' ideological biases. The study, which focuses merely on van Dijk's micro-textual structures, shows that McConnell rarely utilized stylistic and syntactic elements but heavily relied on actor description and evidentiality. In contrast, Sanders heavily applied dysphemism and example/illustration strategies.

Keywords: Palestinian discourse, senators' argument, stylistic, syntactic, semantic element.

INTRODUCTION

The most gruesome and well-documented conflict in Palestine emerges from the various sentiments, debates, and fuzzy narratives around the world. On specific notes, over 30,000 Palestinians, including thousands of children, have been slaughtered since October 2023 as a result of Israeli airstrikes, many funded by U.S. military aid (Amnesty International, 2024). The Israel-Palestinian conflict on the ground is not only a battle between the disputable sides but also among the international parties. Plenty of prominent

figures in global politics divulge biases, arguments, and historical narration to reassure their own perspective on the conflict, especially the United States. This study tries to delve into the political arguments expressed by American senators regarding Biden's plan to allow Palestinians to become newcomers with a concurrent arms delay for Israel.

The intimate relationship between the United States and Israel since the 1940s has enabled Israel to have access to enormous resources, weapons, and funds to satisfy its genocidal agenda. The immutable string developed as the billionaires shed millions of nickels into politics and built the AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) organization, advocating particular policies to the United States executive and legislative branches. This super-PAC (Public Affairs Committee) embraces pro-Israel politicians from the two parties to pass legislation and lobby the Israeli agenda, including sending armed forces and funding. Nevertheless, the October 7th, 2023 phenomenon divvied the politicians and disenchanted the hideous facts about the United States elites' ignominy. Thus, contrary perspectives emerge among politicians, especially in the Senate.

This article analyzes how linguistic choices made by two U.S. senators reflect their polarized ideological stances on the Palestinian immigration debate within the framework of van Dijk's discourse analysis. The arguments are taken from the question-and-answer interviews regarding the Palestinian immigration issue. Joe Biden Administration's plan to accept the Palestinians into the United States raised various sentiments, particularly from Democrats and Republicans. Two different parties with opposing arguments highlighted diverse political strategies in the interviews to strengthen their perspectives. This study scrutinizes the interviews applying van Dijk's discourse theory to unveil the senators' arguments. The YouTube video interviews of Senator Bernie Sanders with Hasan Minhaj and Senator Mitch McConnell after the Senate Judiciary hearing are taken as the data to analyze their contradictory perspectives, judgments, and ideologies.

Language became an integral part of the discourse to unveil the variety of expressions related to the social, cultural, and political aspects (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). In addition, Eriyanto (2006) expresses that discourse analysis investigates the structures and schema of texts or utterances and how they correlate to the context of society. The discourse allows the speaker and hearer to share the intended meaning of their utterances, the implicit meaning behind them, and the assumption that relies on the words. Language plays a significant role in addressing social inequality in the political sphere. Thus, as Al-Umami (2020) notes, language has a fundamental contribution in bargaining, negotiating, influencing, and extending the power of political discourse.

Utilizing van Dijk's discourse analysis, this study focuses on argumentation discourse analysis, observing the syntactic, stylistic, and semantic elements applied by the senators in their interviews. The syntactic element concentrates on the passive forms and the nominalization of the sentences. The stylistic element concerns the euphemism and dysphemism that the senators used in their arguments. Meanwhile, the semantic element distinguishes various strategies, such as actor description, authority, evidentiality, example/illustration, humanitarian, and number game, which the senators implemented

in the interviews. Thus, this study only investigates the arguments of Senator Sanders and Senator McConnell after digging into the syntactic, stylistic, and semantic elements. Hence, this study argues that Republican and Democratic senators deploy contrasting discursive strategies that reveal their political alignments and differing constructions of national identity and moral responsibility.

Various researchers have proposed numerous studies to attempt to investigate prominent figures, especially politicians, using van Dijk's discourse analysis. Afzal et. al. (2022) discovered that Imran Khan, the Pakistani prime minister, built positive branding and utilized specific topics, such as the climate crisis and the issue of women's marginalization, along with menacing India due to human rights concerns. Conversely, Kakisina et al. (2022) utilized van Dijk's discourse analysis to reveal the rhetorical claims and political polarization conveyed by Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro in their COVID-19 speeches. Moreover, in his speech in front of Arab leaders, Donald Trump also built self-personalization as a peacemaker and a religious person. President Trump rhetorically disparaged Iran and influenced the Arab leaders to assemble to deter the extremists with rhetorical and self-glorification strategies (Alenizi & AbuSa'aleek, 2022).

Aini et al. (2021) state that President Donald Trump, who came from the Republican Party, repeatedly marginalized immigrants in his speeches. The study reveals how Trump has occasionally created a barrier between Americans and immigrants and highlighted the *us vs them* discourse found in the three-dimensional framework. Through his speeches, Donald Trump declared that immigration is an invasion and a crisis for the United States (Aini et al., 2021). Furthermore, Khan et al. (2020) note that President Donald Trump also emphasized his stand with Israel, framing himself as a hero in his AIPAC speech. Through this rhetoric, President Trump explained how Muslims are a threat, mentioning the terrorist actions and foreign settlers from Muslim countries. This Anti-Muslim and Islamophobic framing increased after the 9/11 incident and has always been brought by the elites to present a negative representation (Siddiqa & Qurat-ul-Ain, 2021; Latif, 2024).

Zulhamsyah and Degaf (2022) wrote a paper on van Dijk's micro textual structure analysis of two politicians from diverse parties. However, these previous researchers focused on the inaugural addresses of Donald Trump and Joe Biden, which uncovered their different ideologies. Conversely, to further extend, this study elaborates on the arguments of Republican and Democrat senators about the immigration issue linked to the Palestine-Israel crisis. Besides, most existing studies focus on presidential speeches and overlook the role of individual senators in shaping immigration discourse through strategic linguistic choices. Thus, this study contributes to the political discourse to ascertain how the politicians' argumentation changed on the ongoing genocidal phenomenon in Gaza and Biden's plan to admit the Palestinians as newcomers in the United States.

METHOD

This study firmly exhibits the politicians' perspectives and ideologies shown in their arguments and talks. This study establishes the two interview videos of Democratic Senator Bernie Sanders and Republican Senator Mitch McConnell in response to the Joe Biden Administration's plan to accept Palestinians to come to the United States. The interview video of Senator Bernie Sanders was taken from Hasan Minhaj's YouTube channel. Meanwhile, Senator Mitch McConnell's interview was collected from the Forbes Breaking News after the Republican Senators held a press briefing. These two videos were chosen due to the significance of the Palestinian immigration issue and their statements regarding the Biden Administration's plans.

This study designedly chose the interviews of Senator McConnell and Sanders as the data due to their public influence in the United States political sphere. Senator Mitch McConnell is the Senate Republican Conference Leader and the politician who endorsed Trump's triumph twice. Meanwhile, Senator Bernie Sanders is a senior Progressive Democratic Senator who constantly champions the middle class, civil rights, and inequality. This study considered their significant track records and vocals as the research data. Therefore, the senators' interview videos taken from YouTube became the primary data to acknowledge the ideological framing toward the ongoing Israel-Palestinian conflict and their statements on Biden's Palestinian immigration plan.

As the primary data, these two YouTube interview videos were pulled from the official YouTube channel to guarantee the original data source. The first video is the Senate Republican Leaders' press briefing on May 1st, 2024, after the Senate meeting, taken from the Forbes Breaking News official channel, with a length of 17 minutes. Nevertheless, the researcher merely focused on the questions and answers between the United States Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell and the journalists related to Biden's plan. The second one is a 27-minute video from the Hasan Minhaj YouTube channel, in which United States Senator Bernie Sanders was interviewed on August 29th, 2024, discussing Palestine and American political issues. Therefore, the senators' political statements regarding the chosen issue were transcribed and categorized based on their stylistic, syntactic, and semantic elements.

This was a descriptive study which, as demonstrated by Lindlof (2009), is based on facts and three stages of elements, i.e., the syntactic, stylistic, and semantic elements applied by the senators in their arguments. These three elements are known as van Dijk's micro textual analysis method. The researchers, in accordance with Miles and Huberman (1984), delved into the lingual or non-numerical data to unveil the three micro-textual elements. Following Bryman (2012), the lingual data which consists of words, phrases, and sentences, were taken from the YouTube interview video and were transcribed using the web application named DownSub. Henceforth, the transcribed data were classified for analysis based on the micro-textual elements (Wellington, 2015). Nonetheless, this study

opted for senators' political statements relevant to unveil their arguments on Biden's immigration plan.

Van Dijk's discourse analysis is applied to investigate the senators' ideology, which came from different parties with different perspectives (van Dijk, 1998). Based on Sudaryanto (1993), the transcribed statements that categorized manually using a matrix would be aligned with van Dijk's framework. Each sentence was analyzed for patterns in sentence structure (passive/active forms), lexical choices (euphemism and dysphemism), and ideological indicators (actor description, authority, example/illustration, burden, and so on). The first stage will analyze the syntactic, stylistic, and semantic elements used by the senators in their interviews (van Dijk, 2006). Then, the second stage will examine the contradicting perspectives posed by the senators on their arguments that represent their ideology, which would be the third stage of this study.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Republican Senator Mitch McConnell and Democratic Senator Bernie Sanders promoted different viewpoints that opposed and aligned with the Joe Biden Administration in the United States. Hence, the findings and discussion here unveiled the strategies utilized by the senators, as they remarked in the interviews, to reveal their ideologies, as outlined by van Dijk in his *Politics, Ideology, and Discourse* paper (2006). In this part, the study displays the smallest element of van Dijk's critical discourse analysis approach, i.e., the three micro-textual structures: stylistic, syntactic, and semantic. The micro-textual structure is the minor element of the discourse, contained in the senators' choice of words and rhetorical phrases in their interview videos. The strategy is categorized into three elements: stylistic, syntactic, and semantic, respectively.

Stylistic Element (Euphemism and Dysphemism)

Euphemism and dysphemism strategies are part of stylistic elements. These strategies bring the wordplay as politicians' movements in their arguments. A specific choice of words shaped a particular presentation correlated to the audience's impression of the politicians (van Dijk, 2006). Politicians use euphemisms by choosing specific words to soften their potentially harmful statements to build positive branding. On the other hand, dysphemism is used to explicitly frame other parties in a negative manner. In dysphemism, a person intentionally uses harsh words to humiliate and offend a particular party.

> **Datum 1**
> "This is obviously an *extremely challenging* situation" **(Forbes Breaking News, 2024, 01:02-01:06)**.
> **Datum 2**
> "And, the carnage has been *horrific*, and we are looking at the *worst humanitarian disaster*, one of the worst, in modern history" **(Hasan Minhaj, 2024, 05:56-06:04)**.

Senator McConnell employs the *"extremely challenging situation"* to accentuate his statement, highlighting the ruling government and Democratic senators' behavior, which cuts the funding and arms for Israel. McConnell chooses *"extremely challenging"* as the preferable diction to exhibit how the government's actions were very extreme to harm the nation. As a representative Republican politician, McConnell used a euphemism to criticise Biden's Palestinian immigration plan, as well as maintain a safe boundary to implicitly express his alignment to Republicans and AIPAC which actively support the Israeli genocidal agenda. His euphemism strategy also conveyed his aim to drive Americans' viewpoints similar to his own.

In contrast, Senator Sanders applies the euphemism to emphasize Netanyahu and the Israeli government's horrendous deeds to Palestine. Sanders takes the 'horrific' and 'worst' words to portray the vigilante behavior that Netanyahu had undertaken. Through euphemism, Sanders deliberately chose these words to deliver his criticism in a rudimentary manner. However, the words that Sanders chose averment his restrains from humiliating Israel, as he knew that the United States has an intimate relationship with the Netanyahu government.

> **Datum 3**
>
> "So, you got a ***horror show***!" **(Hasan Minhaj, 2024, 07:18-07:19)**.

Likewise, in his interview, Senator Sanders preferably applied dysphemism due to his disgustful emotion toward the government, which still held a close relationship with Netanyahu. Sanders uttered the dysphemism above in response to Hasan Minhaj's request to explain Israel's actions toward Palestinians. Sanders utilizes the word *'horror'* to represent his intense feelings about the devilish action and Israel's genocidal agenda toward Palestine. With his *'horror'* diction, he also condemns Netanyahu's behavior as well as expresses how the government's action was horrible, that they were a bunch of vile people. Throughout the interview, Sanders frequently used dysphemism to state his ideological stance in championing Palestinians' rights and elaborate on the United States-Israel relationship to American citizens. In contrast, although Senator McConnell was straightforward in his interview, he did not use dysphemism because the Democratic Party led the ruling government. Thus, he was prominent for criticizing governmental policies while detaining his blatant statements.

Syntactic Element (Passive and Nominalization)

The use of the syntactic element which concentrates on politicians' narrated statements, i.e., active and passive forms deliberately leads to a specific effect on political discourse. Passive and nominalization strategies are given by irradiating only the phenomenon and eliminating the actor while merely focusing on the pointed situation to drag the audience's attention. Thus, although both senators commonly use the active form, they deliberately deliver passive and nominalization strategies to generate a particular sense as they intend.

> **Datum 4**
>
> "People fought and struggled" **(Hasan Minhaj, 2024, 17:24-17:26)**.

McConnell preferably expresses his statements and allusions in active forms. Meanwhile, Senator Sanders, in particular, established this strategy once throughout the interview. Sanders brought the passive form to maintain the Americans' attention, focusing on the fact that immigrants were not allowed to enter the United States back then. He used this passive form to narrate how Palestinians who had already suffered in Palestine would also fight for their immigrant rights in the United States if the Americans were not concerned about these people. He wanted the Americans to reckon with the Palestinian immigration due to their situation where they were slaughtered and displaced from their own homes by Israel. Moreover, he also used an empathetic sense by explaining the Palestinian position as his personal approach to reaching the American people's hearts and making them understand the truth about the most biased issue.

Semantic Element (Actor Description)

Semantic strategies are deliberately utilized to articulate the senators' intentions and perspectives. In the actor description strategy, the presented actor presents a shaped depiction for the audience, as intended by these senators. By applying this strategy, the senators aim to affect and drive the audience's view in a specific way (Wijana, 2021). Actor description is a semantic element that plays a significant role in remarking on the politician's strategy in constructing their interests. Politicians use the actor description strategy by selecting presented actors to limit and frame a particular perspective they desire toward audiences. The presented actors could emerge as members of a group, as individuals, as roles or occupations, in specific or unspecified ways, and through actions or exclusion (van Leeuwen, 1996).

> **Datum 5**
> "Obviously, *the previous administration* had more success controlling the borders" **(Forbes Breaking News, 2024, 15:30-15:34)**.
> **Datum 6**
> "*US* is significantly supporting the Netanyahu government, not neutral." **(Hasan Minhaj, 2024, 08:55-09:00)**.

Senator Mitch McConnell utilizes differentiation to deliver his argument or statement, intentionally driving and focusing the audience's thoughts. Thus, McConnell used inclusion by highlighting the presented actor, i.e., *"the previous administration,"* to actively promote the actions of Trump's administration. This actor description strategy deliberately gives a frame that the presented actor or *"the previous administration,"* is accountable and has exemplary achievements in controlling the border. As a Republican, McConnell specifies his group and explicitly differentiates from the current administration which is ruled by Joe Biden from the Democratic party. McConnell encourages the audience to perceive that the US is great in the hands of the Trump Administration and the Republican Party. This strategy significantly strengthens his further statement and decision as a member of Congress who refuses a new legislation plan related to the immigration intake and border situation.

Meanwhile, Senator Bernie Sanders utilizes the association strategy, where the presented actor is not specifically classified. In this case, the *"US"* that Sanders highlighted is associated with the group of people opposed to Sanders's behalf. Thus, the highlighted people are represented as one alliance with a strong agenda to maintain the ongoing humanitarian disaster situation in Palestine. Bernie Sanders intentionally wants to manage the audience's thoughts with a straightforward statement about the US agenda. Hence, Sanders applied categorization to frame and stereotype the *"US"* action that skewed and championed Israel rather than as a real dealbreaker. This move is important to support his further statement about how the US is not neutral as the reconciliation initiator between Palestine and Israel.

In sum, Senator McConnell and Senator Sanders have different approaches to utilizing the actor description strategy. Senator Mitch McConnell tends to emphasize his group, which is the preceding regime, as the good one, and make the audience agree with his arguments. Nevertheless, Senator Bernie Sanders likely illustrates the detailed arguments about the US vigilante to make sure that the audience understands how the ongoing occupation threatens more than half of the Palestinian population.

Semantic Element (Authority)

Authority is a persuasive tactic that politicians apply in their arguments. They mention entities with authority such as particular organizations or prominent people, especially political leaders and experts (van Dijk, 2006).

Senator Mitch McConnell utilizes this strategy to show the audience how on the ongoing issue, the Senate stands by and defends Israel. By referencing the Defense Minister of Israel and the United States National Security Advisor, McConnell elucidates his stance toward Israel and reproaches the Joe Biden Administration along with the Democratic Party, for trying to receive the Palestinians as immigrants. Senator McConnell also exhibited his statement about meeting Jake Sullivan and condemning the fund withdrawal and weapon shipments to Israel. He deliberately used this strategy to drive the audience in his direction. To support and enhance his argument, he highlights the authorities to criticize the Biden administration plan. Thus, McConnell intentionally serves the pro-Israel narrative and influences the Americans to align with his stance.

In contrast, Senator Bernie Sanders frankly accuses the Netanyahu administration of its genocidal agenda. Senator Sanders also articulates his argument with interrogative words to bolster persuasiveness and influence his audience. He used this strategy to educate the Americans about the ongoing issue of the fact that the United States fundraises for the Netanyahu government. His continuity in delivering similar question words and mentioning the authority was the strategy to refine the audience's viewpoint toward the Palestinian issue. Furthermore, he tries to guide the Americans so that they know how their government actively supports the genocidal state but makes a hypocritical plan about helping Palestinians as immigrants.

Datum 7

"I had a chance to talk to the *Defense Minister of Israel* yesterday, and *Jake Sullivan* this morning, and I continued to express my concern to the administration…." **(Forbes Breaking News, 2024, 00:36-01:00)**.

Datum 8

"Do you think your taxpayer, American taxpayer dollars, should go to support the *Netanyahu government* and the continuation of the war?" **(Hasan Minhaj, 2024, 10:46-10:52)**.

Mitch McConnell and Bernie Sanders applied the authority strategy in different ways. McConnell articulates the authority to strengthen his arguments and convince the Americans in accordance with his outlook. However, Sanders used the strategy to enlighten Americans and build empathy for Palestinians.

Semantic Element (Burden)

This is a conventional formula that politicians frequently use in their statements. Statements about the integral issue are taken for granted to gain the audience's support. Both senators applied this strategy by highlighting particular issues and blaming the opposite group for those problems. Senator McConnell accused his opponents, i.e., Democratic Party's Senators as well as the Biden Administration, of cutting the defense spending and restraining Israeli arms funding. He stated the issue to show the audience about the Democratic action that, in his opinion, will harm the United States. Nonetheless, McConnell implicitly wants to maintain the pro-Israel dominant narration, which is also the interest of AIPAC, the super organization that always endorses pro-Israel politicians.

In contrast, Senator Sanders described the ongoing issue as being in the United States' hands as tax dollars are being sent to the Netanyahu government. Thus, these suffering and disasters are Americans' problems until the United States administration stops funding them. Through this strategy, he made the statement to exhibit the devilish actions of the United States government in supporting Israel. He utters the burden strategy to establish judgment about the government's actions and its relationship with Israel, while simultaneously wanting the Americans to support his stance.

Datum 9

"And the *defense spending needs to reflect the needs of our country*, which clearly argues against having an arbitrary line that does not spend more on defense than on domestic" **(Forbes Breaking News, 2024, 16:28-16:42)**.

Datum 10

"But what is even worse is, *a lot of this is being done with US taxpayers' dollars*… you know what, not another nickel to Netanyahu's extremist government to continue the war against the Palestinian people" **(Hasan Minhaj, 2024, 07:24-07:41)**.

Both senators utilized this strategy similarly. Both humiliated the other party concerning the aforementioned issue while trying to sway the audience's point of view.

Semantic Element (Consensus)

The consensus strategy is used when politicians narrate the national issue and call for a cross-party assembly to address the country's threat. This strategy is only applied by Senator Sanders, underscoring the Israeli genocidal agenda that will harm the United States Government, the Americans, and the taxpayers. Sanders wants to invite the Americans to look at the issue more broadly and acknowledge how the government's stance toward Israel would endanger them. Thus, through this strategy, Sanders challenges the United States' dominant pro-Israel narrative. In contrast, McConnell does not use this strategy due to his position, which has consistently opposed and disagreed with Democrats' opinions.

> **Datum 11**
>
> "But, second of all, we have got to keep our eyes on an agenda…not only is it not a radical agenda, *we just discussed how the American people support*."
> **(Hasan Minhaj, 2024, 25:41-25:54)**.

Semantic Element (Evidentiality)

Evidentiality is a rhetorical technique that presents plausible evidence with scientific references and mentions authorities. Through this strategy, politicians said their personal statements are wrapped with detailed references to bolster the statement's validity and augment its persuasiveness.

> **Datum 12**
>
> "I at *the Derby* this weekend, I was with one of these *University Presidents*, and he indicated that *roughly 40%* of the people creating these problems were not students there, clearly, there is interference from outside" **(Forbes Breaking News, 2024, 14:08-14:26)**.
>
> **Datum 13**
>
> "They had a fairly decent *Health Care System* systematically destroyed, *very few* functioning hospitals right now… as a result of Israel's efforts to deny humanitarian aid, to block humanitarian aid" **(Hasan Minhaj, 2024, 06:48-07:06)**.

The evidentiality is crucial to decrease the bias of negative opinions that politicians utter. The evidence brought by politicians was essential to exhibit that their opinions are objective and credible (van Dijk, 2006). Senator McConnell provides detailed evidence of his agenda at the Derby, where he met several university presidents, to enhance his argument about the pro-Palestine march at every university in the United States. To produce a plausible statement, McConnell used the percentage to establish a biased opinion that the pro-Palestinian march is fabricated and chaotic, threatening college students. In contrast, Senator Sanders gives Americans a glimpse of how the real situation is in Palestine. Sanders uses the logical proof he monitored on the news and social media to evoke the audience's empathy with his plausible statement. Both senators utilized this

strategy with reliable and convincing data to enhance the Americans' beliefs in their well-built arguments.

Semantic Element (Example/Illustration)

The example or illustration strategy is one of the most used and powerful strategies established in political discourse. This strategy effectively underscores politicians' dedication and elicits the audience's empathy over their statements. An example or illustration strategy portrays a general frame of a certain story and a palpable picture of a particular phenomenon (van Dijk, 2006). This concrete illustration, which comes straight from their in-person experiences, is more persuasive, igniting the audience's empathy toward the phenomenon.

> **Datum 14**
>
> "We will absolutely have to do something by the end of the week, and exactly, how that plays out, I couldn't tell you right now, but we, this is a bill we need to pass and pass on time" **(Forbes Breaking News, 2024, 0:22-0:35)**.
>
> **Datum 15**
>
> "But what is happened since then is, rather than just going after Hamas… with Israel under an extreme right-wing government led by Benjamin Netanyahu, who has in his cabinet, people to the right of him or out and out anti-Palestinian racists" **(Hasan Minhaj, 2024, 05:28-05:46)**.

Senator McConnell shares how the Democratic senators' resolve and the administration's ruling about the defense withholding make the condition worse. He used it as an illustration to portray the failed agenda or action of the opposition. He illustrated the 'clickbait' narration as his own experience about how the Democratic Party was unsatisfactory in the Senate meeting, to serve the interest of the dominant pro-Israel discourse. To gain the audience's beliefs, he also assures that he will not let the plan happen as long as the Republicans brawl against it. He narrated about the country's merit at the table as a strategy to draw the Americans' reliance.

On the other hand, Senator Sanders applied this strategy with a vivid explanation of the October 7th, 2023 phenomenon and what happened afterwards. Senator Sanders wanted to show Americans how the wicked behavior of the Netanyahu government is affecting the Palestinians. He also highlighted the role of the United States, which was very infirm in framing the issue. Using the illustration strategy, he wanted to educate and grasp the Americans' conscientious traits and empathy to examine the issue. Furthermore, Sanders wanted to ruin the dominant narrative posed by AIPAC and Israel's interests.

Thus, both senators applied this strategy but in completely different ways. While Senator McConnell deliberately utilized this strategy to become the citizens' hero, Senator Sanders used it to present thorough information regarding the Palestinian situation and make them reflect on the Joe Biden Administration's plan for allowing Palestinian immigrants.

Semantic Element (Humanitarianism)

It is an argumentative strategy with normative opinions on anti-racism, human rights defending, and humiliation of discrimination, especially anti-immigration norms. This strategy is basically a manual on what should or should not be carried out as the right actions. The humanitarianism strategy emerges to uphold a favourable face-presentation when discussing a delicate or potentially adverse matter. While Senator McConnell does not apply this strategy, Senator Sanders took this strategy to guide Americans with a strong understanding of the Palestinian situation caused by the Netanyahu government to construct Americans' humanity and sympathetic feelings toward the Palestinians. Sanders highlighted the Biden administration's plan to ensure that the Palestinians become the United States' newcomers as the dedicated approach to be taken. Thus, he wanted the Americans to reconsider this as the least effort undertaken by the United States government.

> **Datum 16**
>
> "There's the West Bank, *where you're seeing unprecedented vigilantism against Palestinian landowners and homeowners* as well" **(Hasan Minhaj, 2024, 09:09-09:19)**.

Semantic Element (Number Game)

Utilizing numerical data and statistical information in the number game serves as a rhetorical approach to enhance a statement's credibility and persuasive impact (van Dijk, 2006). Senator McConnell presented data in the form of percentages as statistics to enhance the credibility of his narration regarding the problem caused by the pro-Palestinian people. Using this number game strategy, Senator McConnell stated his stance, which prolifically condemns and is against the Palestinians but supports Israel. As the opposition, he also highlights that Israel is an American ally. He also simultaneously humiliates the administration's plan. Through this number game strategy, McConnell wanted the Americans to align with his stance and still serve the intended interest.

On the other hand, mentioning his adequate knowledge about the Israel-Palestinian conflict, Senator Sanders strategically adopted the number game to underscore the brutal behavior of the Netanyahu government toward the Palestinian people. Sanders addressed the statistics and percentages of perpetual victims in the list of massacres in Palestinian territory, including women, the elderly, and children. The use of a specific number enhances the credibility and objectivity of his statement. The number game he used to challenge the biased narrative also increased the audience's sympathy toward the ongoing Palestinian issue.

> **Datum 17**
>
> "…and he indicated that *roughly 40%* of the people creating these problems were not students there." **(Forbes Breaking News, 2024, 14:13-14:21)**.
>
> **Datum 18**

"So, it's not just, they got a population there in Gaza, *2.2 million, 30,000 dead,* mostly women, children, and the elderly." **(Hasan Minhaj, 2024, 06:06-06:16)**.

Semantic Element (Positive Self-Glorification)

People employ this strategy to exhibit a sense of satisfaction and admiration for themselves. This strategy demonstrates the individual's pride by highlighting their roles in an issue. Senator McConnell applied positive self-glorification, although being interviewed as the US Senate Republican Leader. McConnell highlighted that he has immense power to start an intense discussion about the Administration's plan and decision related to the Israel-Palestinian issue. He also underscored that Senate members always took his disagreements into account. Similarly, Senator Sanders utilized positive self-glorification in his interview to persuade Americans to believe in him. Sanders offered a promise to take the best actions to condemn Israel, withhold the funding, and pass a policy related to Palestinian immigration. Thus, both senators used this positive self-glorification strategy to take a more individual form of impression management, emphasizing their positive presentation.

> **Datum 19**
> "So *I* certainly do disagree with that, and going to have a vigorous discussion about it" **(Forbes Breaking News, 2024, 16:42-16:46)**.
> **Datum 20**
> "As we speak, there is more military aid going to Netanyahu. *I'm* going to do my best to block it… and I will do my best to block it" **(Hasan Minhaj, 2024, 07:59-08:08)**.

In the interviews, Republican Senator Mitch McConnell and Democratic Senator Bernie Sanders aimed to influence Americans to adopt and agree with their arguments. However, the study revealed that these senators applied various micro-textual analysis strategies to increase positive self-presentation and negative portrayals of others, either as a part of their group or their individual roles. Regarding the larger discourse analysis level, this study scrutinized the micro-level analysis, which consists of syntactic, stylistic, and semantic elements. Taken on a serious note, these strategies still cannot be claimed as the standard investigation related to critical discourse analysis. Besides, the other two stages that are higher than the aforementioned analyses, are considered to be examined.

Table 1. Sum of Micro Textual Analysis

Strategy	Senator McConnell (Republican)	Senator Sanders (Democrat)
Euphemism	3	5
Dysphemism	X	6
Passive	X	1
Actor Description	5	12

Authority	1	3
Burden	X	2
Consensus	X	4
Evidentiality	5	5
Example/Illustration	2	18
Humanitarianism	X	6
Number Game	1	5
Positive Self-Glorification	1	1

This study found that McConnell emphasized evidentiality and actor description to support his ideological stance, while Sanders relied heavily on example/illustration and humanitarian appeals to oppose dominant narratives. It also notes that Sanders is dauntless in using dysphemism and passive structures rather than McConnell to express his stance on the Palestinian issue. Sanders' track record as a civil rights activist, speaking up for the segregated and marginalized groups from his early political career, led him to bravely call out the government's hypocrisy, which still has an intimate relationship with Israel but is planning to accept the Palestinians. Moreover, Sanders heavily explained various stories, his experiences, and several histories of the humanitarian disaster to reeducate Americans and support the Palestinians' resistance. In contrast, McConnell, as the Republican senator, maximized the evidence that only aligned with his argument to denounce the Biden Administration's planning and was ensconced under the described actors to blame the humanitarian action of the pro-Palestinian group. McConnell's strategies also unveiled how AIPAC, as the superpower Israeli organization, has a special role in lobbying the Republican members.

It can be stated that the different ideologies proposed by both Senator McConnell and Senator Sanders are due to their polarized background and stances either in the political coalition or in their relationship with AIPAC. As the US Senate Republican Leader, Senator McConnell appears to be standing firm against any plans and proposals from the government and senators of the Democratic Party. McConnell also straightforwardly decried the ruling administration regarding the funding and arms procrastination for the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) because of his Republican Party's relationship with the first-class organization, AIPAC. In contrast, Senator Sanders, who has a long-lasting record as a minority rights activist and was born into a Jewish family, has an in-depth understanding of the Israel-Palestinian issue. Sanders also tried to enlighten Americans about the ongoing Israel-Palestine issue that he believed was biased by the United States elites and media. Thus, the interviews of the two senators analyzed above aimed to influence public viewpoints and show their stances related to Biden's plan for accepting the Palestinians as newcomers in the United States.

Based on the result, the interviews were conducted after the tense political atmosphere due to a new plan suggested by Joe Biden's government, which is a

permission for Palestinian immigration, followed by the funds and arms delay to the U.S.'s main ally, Israel. Therefore, McConnell, the Republican Senate Leader, stated in his interview that he was against the government's actions and defeated them in a Senate hearing. McConnell expressed through the interview that his view related to Biden's suck plan is right supported by his evidence about the rebellion of pro-Palestinian marches on universities. Moreover, McConnell is assured that the Republican power failed the government's plan, which he assumed endangered the nation and all of the United States' allies. Nevertheless, McConnell's interview also implied that he wanted to drive the Americans' perspective for supporting him to decry Israel's funds and arms delay.

On the other hand, Sanders, a senior senator of the Democratic Party, stated in his interview that he condemned the Biden government's plan to bring Palestinians to the country but did not stop sending funds and arms to Israel and only delayed it. Moreover, Sanders revealed through the interview that the Americans' tax dollars were used to fund Israel's genocidal agenda and showed how cruel the United States government is toward its people. Sanders also presented a few historical stories to mend the biased narrations related to the Palestinian issue. Besides, his Polish-Jewish blood made him familiar with Jewish history, and he still deprecated Israel for actions toward Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. Thus, aligning with his progressive political movement, in his interview, Sanders fought for Palestinians as the minority and wanted the Americans to change their viewpoints related to the Palestine issue.

Relevant to the discussion, it suffices to state that various strategies applied by senators controlled not only what they said but also how they made the United States citizens understand their statements. This is aligned with van Dijk's ideological square strategy (2006), which contextually emphasizes our good deeds and de-emphasizes theirs. McConnell took positive action regarding what Republicans have done and pointed out the Biden administration's delinquency in ruling the country, especially in immigration and foreign affairs. McConnell's strategy reinforced the findings of Afzal et al. (2022) on political group alignment by delivering concordant statements to emphasize his party's positivity and associating the negative with his political opponent. On the contrary, as a progressive Democrat, Bernie Sanders and his stance on inequality led him to rebuke the ruling government's hypocrisy. He emphasized the United States government's negativity, which frequently stands on the wrong side, generating racist remarks toward Arabs or marginalized immigrants by utilizing the anti-immigration policy under the Trump administration, as described in Aini et al. (2021).

Besides the general, this study contributes a new atmosphere in applying the interview videos taken from YouTube as the research data, which enriches the study of van Dijk's micro-textual structures. The critical discourse analysis approach by van Dijk is frequently utilized to examine the inequality and racism occurring in media and political debates. Thus, this study applied interview videos, which are an informal and more flexible occasion for politicians to utter their statements compared to debates or

formal hearings. Therefore, these senators easily controlled the strategies' choices, which more loosely and persuasively framed the Palestinian issue in a specific way.

CONCLUSION

In examining Mitch McConnell and Bernie Sanders' ideological framing regarding Joe Biden Administration's plan to allow Palestinian immigration, this study has found that both of them used the interviews to express their statements and influence Americans to follow their ideology. Through evidentiality and actor description, McConnell affirmed his stance against Biden's policies that would be detrimental to his ally. On the other hand, Sanders applied dysphemism to berate the ruling government and used an example/illustration strategy with historical stories and his direct experiences to draw the Americans' attention to the Palestinian issue. Thus, both senators implemented contradictory ideologies related to the humanitarian disaster discourse, which was frequently skewed on one side. This study also found that Sanders, who is a Jewish senator, consistently condemned the Israeli genocidal agenda and championed Palestinian rights, smashing the biased discourse about how Jewish people are firm in standing with Israel.

This study merely focuses on the stylistic, syntactic, and semantic elements that contribute to the critical discourse analysis research, especially van Dijk's micro-textual strategy realm. This study found that the micro-textual strategy choices, such as actor description, dysphemism, and example, contributed to unveil the political elites' framed ideology. This study also highlighted how the chosen words and sentences could create a dominant narrative that is always biased, especially in the immigration issue. McConnell exhibited his ideological stance for reinforcing the biased discourse and revealed his allyship engagement with AIPAC. Nevertheless, Sanders resisted the biased Palestinian issue with the historical facts to contest humanity. Thus, the detailed description of in-depth processes in a broader way, which is the meso- and macro-structures that are also a part of van Dijk's critical discourse analysis approach, is neglected and beyond the scope of this article. It is necessary for future research to conduct a more comprehensive analysis involving media framing, public reception, and intertextuality across political statements.

REFERENCES

Afzal, N., Hameed, A., & Jabeen, I. (2022). The use of macro and micro structures in Pakistani prime minister's speech at UNGA: A critical discourse analysis approach. *Croatian International Relations Review, 28*(89), 39-61.

Aini, Y. S. N., Baskoro, B. R. S., & Firmonasari, A. (2021). "Pro-whom?": A critical discourse analysis of President Donald Trump's immigration policy speeches. *LITERA, 20*(2), 234-249. 10.21831/ltr.v20i2.34478

Alenizi, A., & AbuSa'aleek, A. O. (2022). Political discourse analysis: Analyzing building tasks in Trump's speech in Saudi Arabia. *Arab World English Journal*, *13*(2), 462-472. https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol13no2.32

Al-Umami, H. (2020). Weighing Iran's nuclear: Construing reality through its opposition. *PARADIGM: Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, *3*(2), 1-7.

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th Eds). Oxford University Press.

Eriyanto, E. (2006). *Analisis wacana: Pengantar analisis teks media*. LKiS.

Forbes Breaking News. (2024, May 9). Breaking news: Senate Republican Leaders lambast Biden for delaying military aid to Israel [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/XpL4QoETb3A?si=iHVYaFnhId6LEiAj

Kakisina, P. A., Indhiarti, T. R., & Al Fajri, M. S. (2022). Discursive strategies of manipulation in COVID-19 political discourse: The case of Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro. *SAGE Journals*, *12*(1), 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221079884

Khan, M. H., Adnan, H. M., Kaur, S., Qazalbash, F., & Ismail, I. N. (2020). A Critical Discourse Analysis of Anti-Muslim Rhetoric in Donald Trump's Historic 2016 AIPAC Policy Speech. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, *40*(4), 543–558. https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2020.1828507

Latif, M. A. (2024). Make America hate again? Before and after Trump, there were differences in how Muslims and Islam were portrayed in American media. *Social Identities*, *30*(4), 287–305. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630.2024.2382126

Lindlof, T. R. (2009). Qualitative methods. In *The Sage handbook of media processes and effects* (pp. 53-66). Sage Publications.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1984). *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods*. SAGE.

Hasan Minhaj. (2024, August 29). *Bernie Sanders on a Gaza ceasefire* [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/_Bb04MsmzcI?si=cAKD_GjKOroGqGqS

Siddiqa, A., & Qurat-ul-Ain. (2021). The representation of Islam and Muslims in pre- and post-9/11 *New York Times* news articles: A socio-cognitive analysis. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, *41*(2), 375–390. https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2021.1947585

Sudaryanto, S. (1993). *Metode dan aneka teknik analisis bahasa: Pengantar penelitian wahana kebudayaan secara linguistik*. Duta Wacana University Press.

van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. (1st ed.). Sage Publications.

van Dijk, T. A. (2006). Politics, ideology, and discourse. In K. Brown (Ed.), *The encyclopedia of language and linguistics* (pp. 728–740). Pergamon Press.

Van Leeuwen, T. (1996). The representation of social actors. In C. R. Caldas-Coulthard & M. Coulthard (Eds.), *Text and practices: Readings in critical discourse analysis* (pp. 32-70). Routledge.

Wellington, J. (2015). *Educational research: Contemporary issues and practical approaches*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Wijana, I. D. P. (2021). On speech acts. *Journal of Pragmatics Research*, *3*(1), 14-27. https://doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v3i1.14-27

Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2001). *Methods of critical discourse analysis: Introducing qualitative methods series*. Sage Publications.

Zulhamsyah, M. N., & Degaf, A. (2022). Micro textual analysis on first presidential speeches in US President's inaugural address. *PARADIGM: Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, *5*(2), 75-96.