



A Critical Discourse Analysis of Donald Trump's Speeches during the 2019/2020 American-Iranian Crisis

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ABSTRACT

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The current study is a critical exploration of Donald Trump's speeches delivered during the 2019/2020 tensions between the USA and Iran. The study analyzes the speeches given by Trump in the course of these heated confrontations, using a synergy of two critical discourse analysis tools, i.e., Fairclough's ten-question model (2001) and van Dijk's Ideological Square (2006), to reveal the experiential, relational and expressive values in Trump's language use as a way into exploring the interrelation between the discursive structure of the speeches and their ideological structure. The wordings and grammatical structures were examined to unveil the power strategies used by Trump in the two referred-to speeches. The results show that the speeches comprise perspicuous linguistic traces of Trump's ideological underpinnings. Thus, the analytical tools yielded more insight into discursive and ideological structures. Moreover, the linguistic features used by Trump to exert power and build power relations in the speeches were revealed.

KEYWORDS

CDA, Trump's speeches, American-Iranian crisis, Fairclough's ten question model, van Dijk's ideological square

1. Introduction

The crisis between the USA and Iran has been escalating since Donald J. Trump assumed the presidency in January 2017. Late 2019 and early 2020 have witnessed an intensification of the political and military confrontations between the two countries in the Persian Gulf region¹, with Iran launching a number of attacks against US forces in Iraq, attempting to assassinate the Saudi Arabian ambassador in the USA, and threatening the shipment in the Gulf. The US accused Qassem Soleimani, the commander Major General leader of Quds Force, the military section of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, of orchestrated repeated attacks on US targets in Iraq. One of these attacks led to the death of an American civilian contractor on the 27th of December 2019.² In retaliation, the USA launched an airstrike against Hezbollah militia facilities in Iraq and Iran, carried out the assassination of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani in Baghdad, and a number of officials from the Iran-backed Iraqi militias, and imposed further sanctions against Iran. During these confrontations, Trump made two speeches on the 3rd and 8th of January, 2020.

The present study examines these two speeches through the use of a critical discourse approach, i.e., the speeches will be linguistically scrutinized using a synergy of Fairclough's ten-question model (2001) and van Dijk's Ideological Square (2006) in order to detect how Trump's ideological conceptions are encoded into his linguistic choices on the levels of vocabulary and grammar. Critical discourse analysis, henceforth CDA, is the umbrella approach under which the present study is conducted. It is a multidisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that characterizes language as a 'social practice' (Fairclough 2010). As a social practice, the relationship between discourse and discursive instances, with all of the situational, institutional, and social structure, is a dialectical one (Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak 2011, p. 357). This two-way relationship is reciprocal in the sense that situations, institutions, and structures frame the discursive instance and are framed by it.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The critical study of language has generally been conducted under two broad disciplines: critical linguistics and CDA. However, the two notions are now used interchangeably, and it is preferable to use the term CDA for studies that go under critical linguistics (Wodak 2001). CDA takes special interest in the notions of power and ideology. Fairclough (2001, p. 4) points out that the word 'critical' is significant because it shows up interrelations that may go unnoticed by people. Wodak (2007, p. 209) argues that from a CDA perspective, ideology is regarded as an essential tool of creating and maintaining unequal power relations. Thus, CDA focuses on how language mediates ideology in different social institutions. Significantly, Fairclough (2010, p. 23) regards CDA as a framework for analyzing interrelations between language, power, and ideology. Hence, CDA inevitably comprises the following: (a) text analysis, (b) analysis of processes related to the producing, consuming, and distributing of text, and (c) analysis of the discursive instance itself from a sociocultural perspective. Accordingly, the analysis of discourse typically includes *describing* the language of the text from a linguistic viewpoint, *interpreting* the connection

¹ It is worth mentioning that the name 'Arabian Gulf' is typically used by Arab countries to refer to the Gulf in question. However, the naming of the Gulf has caused a dispute that persists till now (Forbes 2011).

² BBC, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50979463>

between discursive processes of producing and interpreting the text, and *explaining* the nexus between the discursive processes and the societal processes (Fairclough 2010, p. 97).

On the level of description, Fairclough (2001, pp. 91-116) provides a ten-question model to uncover the latent meaning suggested by language use. The model functions on three strata, that is, vocabulary, grammar, and textual structures. The present study focuses on the first two levels, vocabulary and grammar. Thus, only the first seven questions will be applied to the speeches specified. Though Question (8), relating to cohesion, belongs to the plane of grammar, it is not tackled by the current study.

A. Vocabulary

Question 1: Are words *experientially* valuable?

What are the classification schemes used?

What are the ideologically contested words used?

Is *rewording or overwording* utilized?

Are there any ideologically significant semantic relations between words, e.g., *synonymy, hyponymy, antonymy*?

Question 2: Are words *relationally* valuable?

Is there any use of euphemism?

What are the formal or informal words which are significantly drawn on?

Question 3: Are words *expressively* valuable?

Question 4: Are metaphors utilized?

B. Grammar

Question 5: Are grammatical features *experientially* valuable?

What are the *process* and *participant* types used?

How clear is the agency?

What are the significant *nominalizations* utilized?

Are sentences formed in the active or passive voice?

Are sentences formulated in positive or negative form?

Question 6: Are grammatical features *relationally* valuable?

What are the *modes* (*declarative, interrogative, imperative*) employed?

What features of *relational modality* are used?

How are the pronouns *we* and *you* used?

Question 7: Are grammatical features *expressively* valuable?

What features of *expressive modality* are used?

Question 8: In what way are simple sentences connected?

What are the logical connectors employed?

How are complex sentences formed? By *coordination or subordination*?

How are intext and out-text referring used?

C. Textual structures

Question 9: What are the interactional conventions employed?

Does one participant dominate the turns of the others? What are the means used for that purpose?

Question 10: Are there any larger-scale structures in the text?

(adapted from Fairclough 2001, pp. 92-93)

To answer Question (1), for example, Fairclough (2001, p. 94) compares two psychiatric texts to examine how ideological differences between them are encoded by wording differences. In this example, “I’m not walking down there with a load of coons from St Hildas coming out of school,” the use of *coons*, Fairclough (2001, p. 57) argues, has the experiential value of representing a certain ethnic group in a racist way. Question (2) mainly addresses how words are based on, and simultaneously create, social relationships between people. In the above-mentioned example, the relational value of *coons* assumes that the speaker and the hearers may have a common ground of a racist ideology. Question (3) relates to the negative evaluation of language producers. For example, the use of words such as *humiliation* and *incarceration* would negatively affect the speaker or writer (Fairclough 2001, p. 98). As for Question (4), concerned with metaphor, Fairclough (2001, p. 100) mentions the example ‘As the cancer spreads,’ used by a Scottish newspaper to describe the riots of 1981. The disease metaphors are ideologically significant since they resemble the dominant interests to the interests of society in its entirety.

Question (5) deals with the experiential value of grammatical structures. Fairclough (2001, p. 101) explains three types of declarative sentence structure: SVO, which relates to the process of actions, SV, which pertains to the process of events, and SVC, which is concerned with the process of attribution. The choice between representing a certain incident as an action, event, or attribution may be ideologically motivated as in, “South African police have burnt down a black township,” “a black township has burnt down,” and “many peasants are dead.” The relational value of grammatical features is the focus of Question (6). As explained by Fairclough (2001, p. 104), there are three sentence modes: declarative, grammatical question, and imperative. Typically, a declarative has the value of giving information, a question has the value of requesting information or action, and an imperative has the value of demanding action. The relation between participants may be indicated by the distribution of different modes, e.g., usually asking marks a powerful position. However, this is not always the case, as in “will you kindly go away?” which has the value of demand for action though it is in the form of a question. Question (7) addresses the expressive value of grammatical structures and, as explicated by Fairclough (2001, p. 107), deals with expressive modality. The ideological effect of expressive modals resides in their authenticity claims, as in the case of newspapers, e.g., “Mrs Thatcher is preparing for the crunch” and “Maggie plans the invasion,” etc.

The political realm, argues van Dijk (2006, p. 732), is essentially ideological, so are its discourses. He further explains that “discourses make ideologies observable in the sense that it is only in discourse that they may be explicitly expressed and formulated.” Moreover, to figure out the relationship between political discourse and ideology, it is not sufficient to analyze lexical and syntactic features; rather, discourse should be apprehended in relation to its political context structures. Ideologies usually have a polarized structure, representing conflicting mental models and group membership in different groups—ingroups and outgroups. The content of discourse is controlled by these mental models, and their polarization is likely to produce a discourse that will accordingly manifest varied types of polarization. Hence, ideological discourse usually has the following overall strategies, which can be called the ideological square:

- Emphasize **Our** good things
- Emphasize **Their** bad things
- De-emphasize **Our** bad things
- De-emphasize **Their** good things (emphasis in original, van Dijk 2006, p. 734).

Significantly, van Dijk (2006, pp. 734-753) argues that ideological discourse structures may take the form of expressions other than those related to the “polarized relationship between (opposed) ideological groups.” The meanings of different ideologies are expressed and persuasively conveyed using different grammatical, rhetorical,

and discursive features. Thus, concomitant with the overall strategies mentioned above, van Dijk suggests 27 detailed strategies that can be used for the purpose of ideological analysis of political discourse, i.e., correlating different discursive characteristics with political ideology. The examples proposed by van Dijk (2006) are excerpts from a debate on asylum seekers held in the British House of Commons. The strategy of CATEGORIZATION, for example, is apparent in "There are, of course, asylum seekers and asylum seekers" (van Dijk 2006, p. 735). Van Dijk's Ideological Square model (2006) and its in-detail strategies will be an asset in understanding the political context structure of the speeches under investigation.

2.2. Literature Review

A plethora of research studies focused on the American political discourse (e.g., A. Drygina et al. 2019). A great number of studies also has focused on Trump's linguistic behaviour, either alone or in comparison with Hillary Clinton in particular. For example, Mohammadi and Javadi (2017) used a CDA approach to study the relationship between discourse structures and ideological structures in Trump's acceptance speech in the American Presidential Election, 2016. Trump's use of power strategies, along with relational, experiential, and expressive values of vocabulary and grammatical structures in Trump's acceptance speech, were analyzed. Kayam (2017) investigated Trump's linguistic characteristics in interviews and debates to conclude that Trump's language scored low in readability and simplicity. Zhang (2017) conducted a transitivity analysis of the first television debate between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump using Halliday's systemic functional linguistics to conclude that material, relational and mental processes prevail the speeches of both candidates. Ahmadian et al. (2017) correlated Trump's success in the Republican primaries with his unique informal communication style, pointing out that his speeches were marked by grandiose style with recurrent use of first-person pronouns and large tone variation. Knoblock (2017) analyzed Trump's Facebook conversations related to Islam, immigration, and xenophobia using corpus linguistics and CDA. Examining Trump's choice of semantic, syntactic, and rhetorical devices, the study results referred to Trump's use of discursive strategies that mark Muslims as 'Others,' i.e., they were represented as inferior, violent, dangerous, and inharmonious with the American society.

Chen (2018) examined Trump's inaugural speech from a CDA perspective focusing on transitivity, modality, personal pronouns, and coherence in order to uncover Trump's political intention, with the result that Trump's use of language manipulates the audience's ideology. Blommaert (2018) studied Trump's tweets using the analytical technique of 'ethnopoetics' and concluded that some of Trump's tweets were instructional in the sense that they contained indicators for others to deliver them in spoken speech. Moreover, there was a noticeable connection between Trump's online and offline rhetorical worlds. Coutanche and Paulus (2018) traced Trump's linguistic characteristics in interviews from 2011 to 2017, pointing out that his use of filler words increased over time.

Using a corpus-based approach, Chen, Yan and Hu (2019) explored the linguistic styles of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump during the USA 2016 presidential speeches. The results indicated that Clinton's discussions of public policy were rational whereas Trump invoked people's emotions; Clinton depicted a positive futuristic view of reality while Trump introduced a negative dystopic one; Clinton focused on her commonalities with the American people while Trump concentrated on the differences between himself and his rivals. The notions of *impoliteness* and *shameless normalization* were used by Wodak, Culpeper and Semino (2020) to scrutinize the impolite behaviour of Trump and Berlusconi in their official press conferences. All these previous studies share the assumption that Trumps' style is simple, unconventional, and supercilious. This assumption was refuted by Jordan, Sterling, Pennebaker, and Boyd (2019), who investigated the political discourse in the United States and worldwide during the last 200 years. They concluded that Trump's language is not actually a breach in long-

established political traditions. On the contrary, Trump's rhetoric and style are in accordance with worldwide politics, i.e., a decent in rational thinking and a rise in confidence.

2.3. Research Questions

Using a CDA approach, i.e., Fairclough (2001, 2010), Fairclough's ten-question model (2001), and van Dijk's ideological square to discourse analysis (2006), the current study aims to investigate Donald Trump's speeches which were delivered in the context of the 2019/2020 American-Iranian crisis in order to highlight the interrelation of discourse structures and ideological structures in Trump's referred-to speeches. In this sense, the experiential, relational, and expressive values of vocabulary and grammar, along with the power strategies used in the speeches, will be analyzed. Thus, the present study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Are there any linguistic features that can be marked as ideologically relevant in the speeches? If yes, what are these features?
2. How to correlate the discourse structure of the speeches to the ideological structure behind their production?
3. What are the power strategies used by Trump in the speeches?

3. Methodology

3.1. Data

The text under scrutiny comprises two speeches delivered by Donald Trump on 3rd and 8th of January, 2020, during the peak of the American-Iranian tensions. The sum of the two speeches is 1572 words. The rationale behind selecting these two speeches, in particular, is the exact reason for their delivery; that is, they were specifically given because of the confrontations between the US and Iran, and hence, they were entirely dedicated to the crisis. Since the current study deals with the speeches related to the tensions of 2019/2020, it follows logically that only the speeches delivered for this purpose are selected. The speeches were collected from the Miller Center, a nonpartisan affiliate of the University of Virginia specialized in presidential speeches, US politics, and political history.

3.2. Procedure

In order to answer the research questions of the present study, Fairclough's critical discourse analysis model (2001, 2010) is adopted. Under the general umbrella of Fairclough's model, two specific models are synergized: Fairclough's ten-question model (2001) and van Dijk's ideological discourse analysis framework (2006). The rationale behind selecting these two particular models is two-fold: first, both aim to reveal the ideological underpinnings of texts (unity of goal). Second, in doing so, they have different, but complementary, techniques and strategies (complementarity). Thus, the two synergized models are operationalized throughout the current study to find out the correlations between discursive strategies and ideological structures and highlight power strategies used by Trump in his speeches.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Experiential Value of Words

Question (1) in Fairclough's model, which relates to the *experiential* value of words, covers *ideologically contested words, overwording, rewording, and meaning relations*. First, Fairclough (2001, p. 95) argues: "Some words are ideologically contested," in the sense that they show 'ideological struggle.' The most prominent ideologically contested word in Trump's speeches relates to terror: *terror, terrorism, and terrorist*. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines *terror* as "violence or the threat of violence used as a weapon of intimidation or coercion." It also defines *terrorism* as "the systematic use of terror especially as a means of coercion" and *terrorist* as "an advocate or practitioner of terrorism as a means of coercion." Trump's use of *terrorism* in, for example, "Iran has been the leading sponsor of *terrorism*..." is ideologically contested since what is taken by Trump to be actions of terrorism is ideologically defined by Iranians as actions of heroism and martyrdom, as illustrated by Iranian newspapers such as Resalat among many others.³ Actually, the Iranian Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, in his aftermath issue statement called Soleimani a martyr, announced three-day public mourning and called for retaliation. Strikingly, the Iranian foreign minister, Javad Zarif, called the assassination of Soleimani an act of 'international terrorism.'⁴ Trump's ideological inclination of condemning Iranian commander, Qassem Soleimani, as a terrorist is also encoded in his use of the ideologically contested word *terrorist* as in: "the United States successfully executed a flawless precision strike that killed the number one terrorist anywhere in the world, Qassem Soleimani." The same applies to his use of *terror* as in: "Soleimani has been perpetrating acts of terror to destabilize the Middle East...". The speeches are abundant of ideologically contested words which have direct repercussions on their expressive values, for example "Soleimani was plotting *imminent* and *sinister* attacks on American diplomats", "America's policy is *unambiguous* to terrorists...", "nations have tolerated Iran's *destructive* and *destabilizing* behavior in the Middle East ...", etc.

As for overwording, Fairclough (2001, p. 96) defines it as "an unusually high degree of wording, often involving many words which are near synonyms." In the text at hand, Trump perspicuously uses words like *injured, murdered, strikes, killed, assault, perpetrating, torture, wounded*, etc. which basically contribute towards the same meaning, as in: "For years, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and its ruthless Quds force, under Soleimani's leadership, has targeted, injured and murdered hundreds of American civilians and servicemen." Thus, again, the ideology-related experientially-valued overwording in this context is perceived as highlighting what Trump deems as atrocities committed by Quds Forces. It is noteworthy that overwording as a feature of vocabulary in Fairclough's model is the same as lexicalization as a stylistic feature in van Dijk's terms.

Fairclough (2001, p. 94) identifies rewording as "an existing, dominant, and naturalized, wording is being systematically replaced by another one in conscious opposition to it." Markedly, Trump does not often use rewording in the text. Significantly, the seeming absence of rewording in Trump's speeches signals his straightforward, and sometimes blunt, use of language. Among the meaning relations in the speeches, synonymy is most prevalent, for example, *highest* and *most solemn* are used to indicate rightfulness of Trump's actions as president; *ruthless, violent, brutal, viciously* to condemn Quds Force's actions; *remarkable people, good people, great people* to characterize the traits of 'good nation' in Trump's viewpoint; *no Americans were harmed* and *we*

³ Many Iranian and pro-Iranian newspapers portrayed Soleimani as a martyr, as elucidated in <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1609176/media>.

⁴ New York Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/02/world/middleeast/qassem-soleimani-iraq-iran-attack.html>

suffered no casualties (in this case a paraphrase) to assert the soundness of his decisions; *destructive* and *destabilizing* to mark Iran's actions as unacceptable; *leadership* and *direction* to stress Soleimani's responsibility for actions taken against USA interests as in: "... a violent assault on our embassy in Baghdad were carried out at the direction of Soleimani". The exact two words are used elsewhere to highlight Trump's leading role in the avenging actions as in: "... at my direction, the United States successfully executed a flawless precision strike that killed the number one terrorist anywhere in the world, ...".

Trump also uses antonymy in cases like: "We took action last night to *stop* war" and "We did not take action to *start* a war" as a means of stressing the good intentions of the USA. On the other hand, the antonymy between *planning* and *stopped* in "he was *planning* new attacks on American targets, but we *stopped* him" is a legitimization strategy to account for the USA actions. The experiential value of words has to do with the representation of the text producer's experience of the world. From this perspective, the content conveyed through Trump's two speeches can be traced through the experiential value of the words via ideologically contested words, overwording and different meaning relations. These linguistic features mark Trump's preoccupation with the negative portrayal of Soleimani and Iran, on the one hand, and the positive representation of himself and the USA, on the other.

4.2. Relational Value of Words

Question (2) in Fairclough's model pertains to the *relational* value of words which is basically related to two parameters: formal/informal use of language and euphemism. Due to the seriousness of the incidents instigating the speeches, Trump uses formal language throughout the two speeches, as in: "As president, my highest and most solemn duty is the defense of our and its citizens." Euphemism appears most conspicuously in substituting the verb *assassinate* or *kill* with *eliminate*, *terminate* and *remove* as in: "the United States military eliminated the world top terrorist, Qassem Soleimani." Here appears also the contrast between verbs assigned for the USA troops and Soleimani, that is, American troops *eliminate* while Soleimani *kills*. The relational value of words can be used to trace the social relationships enacted through the text. Here the political relationships are represented by Trump and the USA on one side and Soleimani, Albaghdadi, Iran, and ISIS on the other. Traces of the negativity of this relationship are ubiquitous in the speeches, e.g. "we have destroyed the ISIS territorial caliphate, and recently American Special Operations Forces killed the terrorist leader known as al-Baghdadi" and "Iran has been the leading sponsor of terrorism, and their pursuit of nuclear weapons threatens the civilized world."

4.3. Expressive Value of Words

The *expressive* value of words relates to the producer's evaluation of reality. It also has to do with subjects and social identities. In Trump's speeches, the evaluative nature of words conveys an enormously negative picture of Soleimani, Albaghdadi, Iran, and ISIS. All are represented as vicious terrorists who have a "campaign of terror, murder, mayhem" and "savage leader," who "wounded and murdered thousands of US troops," who "seized ships in international waters," who "maim and dismember victims" and whose hands are "drenched in both American and Iranian blood." On the other hand, Trump's highly positive evaluative words for himself and the American troops are pervasive, for example, the American troops succeeded "under my leadership," the American forces are "great" and "prepared for everything," their operation is "a flawless precision strike," "the US armed forces are stronger than ever before," "their missiles are big, powerful, accurate, lethal and fast" and "We have the best intelligence in the world."

The expressive value of words in the speeches under scrutiny is tightly linked to six interrelated strategies introduced by van Dijk (2006). The first strategy, related to meaning, is ACTOR DESCRIPTION. All the above-mentioned examples indicate that throughout the speeches, Trump describes himself, the US military forces, and the USA (ingroup members) in a positive way, whereas he describes Soleimani, Albaghdadi, Iranian leaders, ISIS (outgroup members) in a negative way. The way that different actors are described by Trump reflects his ideological convictions and affects the discursive structure of the speeches. Obviously, actor description plays an important role in positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation—two strategies proposed by van Dijk (2006). POSITIVE SELF-PRESENTATION and NEGATIVE OTHER-PRESENTATION are semantic macrostrategies. The former relates to ingroup-favoritism, while the latter pertains to outgroup defacement. Positive self-presentation is inherently ideological because it centers on “the positive self-schema that defines the ideology of a group” (van Dijk 2006, p. 739). The same applies to negative other-presentation, albeit it focuses on the negative other-schema. The examples discussed above show that the categorization of people into ingroups and outgroups necessitates transmitting ideologically-based values and norms.

Pertinent to the positive self-presentation is another strategy suggested by van Dijk, that is, NATIONAL SELF-GLORIFICATION. National self-glorification, related to meaning, is one way of achieving positive self-presentation. Clearly, this strategy is heavily implemented by Trump as he indulges in positive references and praising for himself, the USA, the US military, e.g., “the United States has the best military, by far, anywhere in the world,” “we have the best intelligence,” “under my leadership, our economy is stronger than ever before,” “under my administration, ... US Armed Forces are stronger than ever before. Our missiles are big, powerful, accurate, lethal, and fast. Under construction are many hypersonic missiles,” etc. Trump also uses another meaning-based strategy in his speeches, that is, POLARIZATION, US-THEM CATEGORIZATION. Using expressions of polarized cognitions and the categorical division of ingroup people (us) and outgroup people (them) is highly pervasive in political discourse. Polarization can be rhetorically enhanced when stated in the form of contrast, i.e., “by attributing properties of ‘us’ and ‘them’ that are semantically each other’s opposites” (van Dijk, 2006, p. 738). Evidently, Trump’s two speeches are abundant with contrast us/them expressions, e.g., “Soleimani was plotting imminent and sinister attacks on American diplomats” but “We will always protect our diplomats”; Iran has “targeted, injured and murdered hundreds of American civilians and servicemen” but “we remember and honor the victims of Soleimani's many atrocities” and above that “I have deep respect for the Iranian people. They are a remarkable people with an incredible heritage and unlimited potential”; the Iranian regime has “tortured and killed” its own people, but “No American or Iraqi lives were lost because of the precautions taken,” etc. Another strategy relevant to polarization is VICTIMIZATION. In rationalizing about airstrikes and assassination, positive self-presentation on the part of Trump appears in the form of an emphasis on tolerance as in: “For far too long — all the way back to 1979, to be exact — nations have tolerated Iran’s destructive and destabilizing behavior in the Middle East and beyond”, lack of bias as in: “Iran’s hostilities substantially increased after the foolish Iran nuclear deal was signed in 2013, and they were given \$150 billion, not to mention \$1.8 billion in cash”, and compliance with international authorities as in: “Today, I am going to ask NATO to become much more involved in the Middle East process.”

4.4. Metaphor

With regard to question (4) in Fairclough’s model, metaphor is recognized as a way of representing one experiential facet in relation to another (Fairclough 2001, p. 99). According to van Dijk (2006), metaphor is considered an efficient semantic-rhetorical device used for persuasion as it involves rendering an abstract meaning

into a concrete one. Thus, it is related to both meaning and rhetoric and is considered a successful tool of projecting ideology. Metaphors are particularly abundant and skillfully used in the two speeches. Most of the metaphorical expressions are dedicated to representing Soleimani and Iran negatively. For example, Soleimani was planning “sinister attacks” where the attacks are personified. He has a “reign of terror” where terror is materialized. Soleimani is “eliminated” or “removed” as a stain. He “orchestrated the violent assault on the US embassy in Baghdad,” where Soleimani’s role in the attacks is resembled to that of a maestro in an orchestra. As for the Iran-related metaphors, Trump states: “The future belongs to the people of Iran,” where the future is also materialized. Moreover, Iranian warlords loot their people to “finance bloodshed abroad,” where bloodshed is portrayed as a project. Iran “created hell” in different countries and “tightened the reins” on its people where hell is resembled to a material object, and the Iranian people are likened to a restricted horse. The JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) “gives Iran a clear and quick path to nuclear breakout,” where the consequences of the JCPOA deal are portrayed as a road that begins with the deal and leads to a nuclear spread. Iran has to “abandon its nuclear ambitions,” where ambitions are presented as a material entity to be left. But the American strikes are well-planned, so “No American or Iraqi lives were lost,” where death is equated to losing a material entity.

Closely related to the concept of metaphors is that of HYPERBOLE which is an in-detail strategy suggested by van Dijk as a way into realizing the ideological structure behind discourse. van Dijk (2006, p. 737) argues that hyperbole as “a semantic rhetorical device for the enhancement of meaning” can be used to magnify positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. Hyperbolic terms are sometimes conveyed through the use of metaphors, as in: “Soleimani’s hands were drenched in both American and Iranian blood,” where killing is represented as soaking one’s hands in blood. Another hyperbole conveyed through metaphor is found in: “The world is a safer place without these monsters,” where Soleimani and Albaghdadi are resembled to harmful scary creatures, and in: “Soleimani made the death of innocent people his sick passion” where killing people is likened to an abnormal passion.

Table 1. Synergizing Fairclough and van Dijk's Models on the Level of Vocabulary values in Trump's Speeches

Fairclough's Model		Van Dijk's Model	Speeches
Questions (values)	Linguistic Features	Detailed Strategies	Examples
1. <i>Experiential</i>	ideologically contested words	positive self-presentation, actor description	unambiguous, stronger than ever
		negative other- presentation, actor description	- terror, terrorist, terrorism - destructive, destabilizing
	overwording	negative other-presentation, actor description	injured, murdered, killed, etc.
	meaning relations	positive self-presentation, actor description	- synonymy (e.g., highest, most solemn) - antonymy (e.g., stop, start)
negative other-presentation		- synonymy (e.g., ruthless, violent, brutal) - antonymy (e.g., stopped, planning)	
2. <i>Relational</i>	euphemism	positive self-presentation	eliminate, terminate, remove
	formal language	positive self-presentation	As president, highest and most solemn
3. <i>Expressive</i>	ideologically motivated expressive vocabulary	positive self-presentation, actor description, national self-glorification, polarization	- under my leadership, flawless precision strike
		negative other-presentation, actor description, polarization, victimization	- savage leaders - maim and dismember victims
4. <i>Metaphors</i>	ideologically motivated metaphors	negative other-presentation, hyperbole	hands were drenched in ... blood

4.5. Experiential Value of Grammatical Features

Moving to the grammatical features in the text and the different values they represent, Question (5) addresses the *experiential* values of grammatical characteristics. According to Fairclough (2001, p. 101), there are three types of sentence structures: (1) SVO, which relates to action processes, (2) SV, which pertains to event processes, and (3) SVC, which corresponds to attribution processes. First, concerning the processes and participants involved, most of the sentences used in Trump's two speeches alternate between SVO and SVC. The reason behind Trump's selection of these particular types of processes is to highlight the agency of sentences which pertains to Soleimani's and Iran's responsibility for the atrocities done, on the one hand, and the USA and his own responsibility for protecting the American people by eliminating all possible threats, on the other. For the same reason, Trump opts for using active voice, i.e., most of the sentences have unambiguous and perspicuous agency and are in the active

voice whether coined in the SVO form as in: “we caught him in the act,” “the United States military successfully executed a flawless precision strike,” “Soleimani led the brutal repression of protest in Iran,” “nations have tolerated Iran’s destructive and destabilizing behavior” and “He (Soleimani) viciously wounded and murdered thousands of US troops...”; or in the SVC form as in: “my highest and most solemn duty is the defense of our nation,” “America’s policy is unambiguous to terrorists,” “The world is a safer place without these monsters,” “Soleimani was personally responsible for some of the absolutely worst atrocities,” and “Our great American forces are prepared for anything.” Interestingly, the few sentences formulated in the passive voice are not ideologically motivated, e.g., “Just recently, Soleimani led the brutal repression of protest in Iran, where more than a thousand innocent civilians were tortured and killed by their own government.” The same applies to nominalization, i.e., most nominalization cases are not ideologically driven since the agency is explicitly mentioned in the same sentence, as in: “Three months ago, after destroying 100 percent of ISIS and its territorial caliphate, we killed the savage leader of ISIS, al-Baghdadi, ...”

The choice between positive or negative forms also bears experiential value. Understandably, most of sentences are formed in positive form. Negation, however, “is the basic way we have of distinguishing what is not the case in reality from what is the case” (Fairclough 2001, p. 104). For example, the negation in “We did not take action to start a war” and “We do not seek regime change” is meant to negate what otherwise could have been perceived by the audience to be the case. The same applies to “we do not need Middle East oil” and “The fact that we have this great military and equipment, however, does not mean we have to use it. We do not want to use it.”

4.6. Relational Value of Grammatical Features

The *relational* value of grammatical features can be discerned through sentence modes, relational modality, and the use of *we* and *you*. Basically, there are three sentence modes: declarative, grammatical question, and imperative. In the current speeches, Trump adheres solely to the declarative mode. The reason, as previously mentioned, lies in Trump’s straightforward, simple and supercilious style, as well as his attempt to convey certainty about the truth of the propositional content of his speech, that is, there are no questions to be asked, only statements declaring ‘true’ sentences. Trump’s use of relational modality is particularly interesting, i.e., he uses the authoritative obligatory *must* seven times in the two speeches, three of which are addressed to Iran and four to the civilized world. For example, in “the Iranian regime’s aggression in the region, including the use of proxy fighters to destabilize its neighbors, *must* end, and it *must* end now” and “Iran *must* abandon its nuclear ambitions and end its support for terrorism,” Trump uses an obligation modal to set the powerful/powerless relation between the USA and Iran. Prominently, he uses the same modal to address countries of the ‘civilized world’ as well, as in: “The civilized world *must* send a clear and unified message to the Iranian regime” and “They *must* now break away from the remnants of the Iran deal.”

Trump’s use of the pronouns *we* and *you* is interesting as well. He uses plural first-person pronoun *we* 29 times. In most of the cases, Trump utilizes the inclusive *we*, i.e., in these cases *we* includes Trump as well as his audience, as in: “we remember and honor the victims of Soleimani’s many atrocities,” “We suffered no casualties,” “we took decisive action to stop a ruthless terrorist from threatening American lives,” “we have sent a powerful message to terrorists,” “we take comfort in knowing that his reign of terror is over,” “we will find you, we will eliminate you,” “We do not seek regime change,” “We have the best intelligence in the world,” “we have destroyed the ISIS territorial caliphate,” “we do not need Middle East oil,” etc. By invoking inclusiveness through the use of *we*, Trump assumes a unity between himself, the military, and the American people, which empowers and entitles him to take all that he considers necessary military and political actions. In some cases, as in: “The destruction of ISIS

is good for Iran, and we should work together on this and other shared priorities,” he even includes Iran with himself and the American people as referents of the inclusive *we*. The same applies to cases where he includes countries of the civilized world, as in: “we must all work together toward making a deal with Iran.” Trump’s use of the inclusive *we* is to be considered a power strategy since it makes an implicit authority claim and indicates the authority of speaking for others, as well as a legitimation strategy that empowers him to take political and military actions.

Trump’s use of the plural first pronoun *we* also fits neatly into van Dijk’s proposed strategies of how *we* is used as a norm expression. Rationalizing about airstrikes and killing a military general of an adversary country requires making explicit norm statements about what ‘we’, as military and nation, should do, as in: “We will always protect our diplomats, service members, all Americans, and our allies.” Argumentation for the American strikes is based on a standard argument (topoi) that presents evidence for US stance’s validity and introduces the topoi as self-evident. The topoi provided by Trump for the American actions is IRAN AS THREAT, as in: “Soleimani was plotting imminent and sinister attacks on American diplomats and military personnel” and “Iran appears to be standing down, which is a good thing for all parties concerned and a very good thing for the world.” According to van Dijk (2006), using topos is another strategy of relating discursual features to ideological considerations. As a means of providing justification for the military actions exerted by the US troops, Trump utilizes the NUMBER GAME as a rhetorical strategy for argumentation. One way of increasing the credibility of an argument is to show objectivity. Using numbers and statistics is a strategy of persuasively showing objectivity in discourse. In the following example, Trump uses numbers as proof that the USA has exhausted all solutions with the Iranian regime: “Iran’s hostilities substantially increased after the foolish Iran nuclear deal was signed in 2013, and they were given \$150 billion, not to mention \$1.8 billion in cash.”

Trump uses *you* 17 times in his two speeches, 10 of them are part of the welcoming and concluding notes “thank you” and “God bless you” in the speeches. The second person pronoun *you* in the rest of the cases is meant to address different addressees. For example, in “I’m pleased to inform you: The American people should be extremely grateful and happy no Americans were harmed in last night’s attack by the Iranian regime,” the intended audience is the American people, and hence, the use of *you* is meant to indicate solidarity. However, in “to the people and leaders of Iran: We want you to have a future and a great future — one that you deserve, one of prosperity at home, and harmony with the nations of the world,” the intended addressees here are explicitly stated: the Iranian leaders and people. In the following examples, the sentences are addressed to the terrorists and intended as a threat, “If you value your own life, you will not threaten the lives of our people,” and “we will find you, we will eliminate you.”

4.7. Expressive Value of Grammatical Features

The *expressive* value of grammatical features in Fairclough’s model is restricted to the use of expressive modality. Expressive modals in Trump’s speeches serve different purposes. For example, in “we will find you, we will eliminate you” and “Your campaign of terror, murder, mayhem will not be tolerated any longer,” the modal *will* is meant as a threat for terrorists. The modal *will*, in this case, is a power strategy directed by Trump to USA enemies. In other cases, *will* can be taken to indicate promising as in: “We will always protect our diplomats, service members, all Americans, and our allies” and “As long as I am President of the United States, Iran will never be allowed to have a nuclear weapon”—the latter example could possibly simultaneously be perceived as a threat. Hence, expressive modals can be regarded as contributing towards an understanding of power relations exerted in the speeches.

Most notably, throughout the two speeches, Trump uses 12 out of the 27 in-detail strategies suggested by van Dijk (2006). Together with Fairclough's model, they contribute towards a better insight into the correlation between the discursive structure and the ideological structure of the speeches. The analysis shows that Trump's use of words, metaphors, pronouns, topos, argumentations, grammatical structures, etc., serves his ideological agenda, i.e., the discursive structure of the text is ideologically driven and helps to reveal the ideological structure of the text as well. In this sense, at least two sides of van Dijk's ideological square can be claimed to be met in the speeches, that is, 'Emphasize Our good things' and 'Emphasize Their bad things.'

Table 2. Synergizing Fairclough and van Dijk's Models on the Level of Grammatical Structure Values in Trump's Speeches

Fairclough's Model		Van Dijk's Model	Speeches
Questions	Linguistic Features	Detailed Strategies	Examples
5. <i>Experiential</i>	processes, participants, agency	positive self-presentation, negative other-presentation	- we caught him in the act - Soleimani led the brutal repression of protest in Iran
	active voice	positive self-presentation, national self-glorification, negative other-presentation	- the United States military successfully executed a flawless precision strike - He (Soleimani) viciously wounded and murdered thousands of US troops...
	positive or negative	positive self-presentation, negative other-presentation	- We did not take action to start a war
6. <i>Relational</i>	declarative mode relational modality	(pervasive) negative other-presentation	(pervasive) - the Iranian regime's aggression ... must end
	<i>we and you</i>	polarization, us-them categorization, topoi, norm expression, number game	- We suffered no casualties - we will find you, we will eliminate you
7. <i>Expressive</i>	expressive modality	polarization, positive self-presentation, negative other-presentation	- Your campaign of terror ... will not be tolerated any longer

5. Conclusions

The current study is a critical discourse analysis of Trump's two speeches delivered during the American-Iranian 2019/2020 confrontations. The tensions between the two countries have been escalating since the killing of an American contractor during a rocket attack launched by an Iranian-backed militia on the 27th of December 2019 and the protestors' attack on the US embassy in Baghdad on the 31st of December 2019. The Pentagon said that Qassem Soleimani, Iran's military General and top security and intelligence Commander, was responsible for the two attacks as he planned the former and approved the latter. On the 3rd of January 2020, the US forces launched

an airstrike authorized by the then US President Trump, which led to the killing of Soleimani, among other Iran-backed officials, in Baghdad International Airport. Given by Trump in the context of these tensions, the two speeches are critically analyzed using a synergy of Fairclough's ten-question model (2001) and van Dijk's Ideological Square (2006) in order to answer the three research questions.

As an answer to the first research question, the current study results show that there are plenty of linguistic features, lexical and grammatical, which can be marked as ideologically relevant in the two speeches under investigation. To answer the second question, concerned with the correlation between the discursive structure of the text and its ideological structure, Fairclough's ten-question model (2001) is implemented since it takes roots in Fairclough's tripartite model (2010) for a CDA approach. That is, the critical analysis of discourse necessitates the study of both ideology and power, and goes through three phases of analysis: text, discourse practices, and sociocultural practices. The correlation is established using the linguistic features stated in Fairclough's ten-question model, that is, the experiential, relational and expressive values of vocabulary and grammar in the speeches, and the analysis is further sharpened by operationalizing the strategies provided by van Dijk's ideological square since they similarly aim at revealing the ideological structure of the discursive practices.

From an *experiential* perspective on word level, Trump used several ideologically contested words to mark his ideological conviction about Iran, Soleimani, ISIS, and Al-Baghdadi. The most important of these words are *terror*, *terrorist*, and *terrorism*. Overwording is also ideologically used to highlight the brutality of Soleimani and the Iranian regime. Significantly, Trump does not often use rewording in his speeches; the absence of rewording marks his direct and straightforward style. Moreover, two-meaning relations are utilized as a means of positively presenting oneself and negatively presenting his foes. On the grammatical level, the two sentence patterns SVO and SVC prevail in Trump's speeches. The rationale behind his choice of these two particular sentence types, and also of processes and participants, throughout the speeches is also ideologically motivated; that is, the responsibility of Iran and Soleimani for the brutal actions described is mostly clear and indubious through the SVO and SVC patterns. Harmoniously, active voice and clear, unambiguous agency persist thoroughly. Therefore, the experiential value of grammatical features in the speeches specified is most straightforward. This result is in accordance with prior research that marked Trump's style as simple, e.g., Mohammadi and Javadi (2017).

From a *relational* point of view, Trump's use of language is typically formal. He uses euphemism only minimally to diminish the gravity involved in the military operation executed by the American forces. The relational value of grammatical characteristics also contributes towards building the ideological structure of the speeches. The declarative mode is strictly preserved by Trump, which indicates his direct and straightforward style. Moreover, using the declarative mode endows the statements with an air of certainty and is meant to stress the authenticity and truthfulness of the content of Trump's speeches.

The *expressive* value of language used in the speeches is mostly related to positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. This pivotal axis is emphasized through the use of various strategies such as actor description, national self-glorification, polarization, victimization, use of topos, number game, norm expression, lexicalization, etc. The use of metaphor, including hyperboles, is particularly interesting. Metaphors are plenteously and skillfully used by Trump mainly to transmit his ideology about Iran and Soleimani.

As an answer to the third research question, results show that power relations in the speeches are created through the use of four linguistic characteristics: relational modal *must*, inclusive *we*, second-person pronoun *you* and expressive modal *will*. The use of relational modality is most significant in the current text. The authoritative obligatory *must* is prevalent, marking the power relations created through discourse; that is, Trump uses *must* to present himself as having a powerful authoritative stance that allows him to 'tell' Iran and even countries of the 'civilized world' what they should and what they should not do (norm expression). The use of the inclusive *we*

further strengthens the legitimization of Trump's political and military decisions on the one hand, and creates power relations through language, on the other, i.e., the use of *we* indicates the authority to speak for others. The use of *you* also participates in creating power relations via discourse. Likewise, the expressive modal *will* participates in delineating power relations since it is intended to form threats and address them against the USA enemies.

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Examples in: English

Applicable Languages: English

Applicable Level: General Education