

Framing War and Peace Narratives: A Corpus Based Study of Netanyahu and Pezeshkian's UNGA Speeches 2024

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Abstract

This study examines the speeches of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Masoud Pezeshkian at the 2024 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). It employs both corpus and computational linguistic techniques to analyse linguistic patterns, themes, and frames. It examines how each leader frames war and peace narratives through the use of keywords, concordance, and frequency analysis. Netanyahu positions Israel as a peacemaker and Iran as a global threat by labelling his opponents as alleged sponsors of terrorism. On the other hand, Pezeshkian highlights how his nation is being victimised by external aggression and facing imposed sanctions. He frames Iran as an actor advocating for justice and Israel as actively involved in establishing Western hegemony. The comparative framing analysis emphasises how discourse is used as a geopolitical tool to shape international perceptions, legitimise national policies, and expand alliances globally. Hence, this research offers insights into the polarisation of Israeli and Iranian discourse by highlighting their respective linguistic strategies. The use of specific lexical choices reflects broader ideological stances and aligns with their respective foreign policy goals. This corpus-based study effectively reveals that war and peace are not merely political realities but also discursive constructions shaped and reshaped through rhetorical strategies on global platforms, such as the UNGA.

Keywords: War and Peace, Frame Narratives, Netanyahu, Pezeshkian, Speeches, Corpus.

Introduction

Over the decades, Israel and Iran's geopolitical conflict has been one of the most enduring tensions in global politics. It is deeply rooted in the differences regarding their ideologies, religion, and politics. This rivalry is seen in military, social, economic, and political confrontations. The relationship between these nations has been defined primarily in terms of hostility since the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Majorly, Iran favours the oppositional groups of Israel, like Hamas and Hezbollah.

On the other hand, Israel has always accused Iran of genocidal attacks and promoting its hegemony throughout the entire world. Unfortunately, this conflict carries significant consequences on a global scale. Iran makes its close alignment with those nations that are anti-Israel and, in broader terms, anti-Western. In contrast, Israel has strong bonds with the countries that are against Iran, particularly the United States.

In terms of defending themselves, both nations frame their narratives as promoting stability, justice, and peace. In this way, although they repeat the same actions, they maintain their global reputation. They attempt to enhance their international reputation by openly expressing their

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genuine stance against terrorism. By portraying their actions and positions as justifiable, they also create polarity between themselves and other global actors. Indeed, their actions not only affect their nations but also actively shape international policies. This is exemplified in the speeches recently given at the 79th United Nations General Assembly in 2024 by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel and President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian of Iran. It serves as a crucial platform where both nations present their narratives and employ specific rhetoric that alters perspectives regarding their state of affairs.

Netanyahu frames Israel as a beacon of peace and democracy. He emphasises how they are protecting their civilians. Also, he establishes a narrative where Iran is the reason behind the regional instability and bombing. By presenting the cases of Eli Shtivi, whose son was abducted, Koby Samerano, whose son was murdered, Salem Alatrash, whose brother was murdered, and many other individuals, he creates the narrative that Iran backed all these missions that happened through Hezbollah on 8th October. Similarly, he argues that Iran's Shiite militants targeted them dozens of times. Also, the Palestinian terrorists are fueled by Iran. Moving on to the other argument, he presents a map stating the difference between a blessing and a curse.

One side of the map highlights Israel's relations with the Middle Eastern countries, particularly Arab partners. By promoting the idea of creating rail lines, fibre optic cables, and energy pipelines, he illustrates how they are trying for the betterment of 2 billion people. On the other side of the map, he demonstrates the idea of a curse. Here, Iran is presented as the arc of terror where it has cut off trade, shut down waterways, and destroyed the nations internally. Hence, the dichotomy of good and evil, blessing and curse is created. Netanyahu objects to the world disregarding the aggression shown by Iran. He aims to gain support from other nations in stopping Iran's nuclear weapons program. He boldly declares that if other countries fail to help Israel halt this mission, their peace and security will be compromised. Therefore, he undermines Iran's credibility as a legitimate actor and a promoter of dangerous regimes.

In contrast, Pezeshkian labels Israel as a terrorist state and an oppressor. He showcases how human rights, especially Palestinian rights, have been violated over the past eleven months. By labelling oppressed people as "terrorists" who stood against several decades of occupation, he counters the narrative built by Netanyahu that Iran promotes terrorism. Also, by presenting how Israel has justified its attacks by stating it as "legitimate self-defence", it positions Israel as inhumane and hostile. Moreover, Pezeshkian answered the false allegations by arguing that Iran has been supporting people who have flooded the streets against the antagonistic behaviour of Israel in Gaza. He put forward the notion of a cease-fire in Gaza and an end to the atrocities and barbarism in Lebanon before it is too late. Additionally, he notes that they never occupy the territory of any nation and emphasises the unity and stability in the region. For a better future, he offers valuable insights regarding economic, social, and political empowerment globally.

Therefore, both narratives are well-crafted as the leaders seek to position their nations on humanitarian grounds. Their speeches resonate with non-aligned nations as they have the power to shift global perceptions. By condemning each other, the ideological divide reveals the war and peace narratives constructed by Netanyahu and Pezeshkian.

Research Questions

1. How Netanyahu and Pezeshkian frame the concepts of war and peace strategically and linguistically in their speeches?
2. What are the most frequent keywords that frame the ultimate perspectives of both speeches?
3. What kind of impact do both speeches have on global alliances?

Literature Review

A growing body of research has examined the discourse of Iranian presidents (Shakoury & Makarova, 2021; Allami & Barzegar, 2020; Shakoury, 2018; Sardabi et al., 2014). They applied critical discourse analysis to see differences in their lexical choices and self-presentation. For instance, Alemi et al. (2018) employ a discourse-historical approach to analyse Iranian Presidents' Speeches at the UN General Assembly. They examine the speeches of President Mahmoud and Hassan Rouhani. They assess the concept of "self" and "other" by identifying their stance and political ideology. Both presidents portray a positive self and a negative representation of the other. Ahmadinejad declares a confrontational tone while Rouhani adopts a diplomatic tone that shows mutual respect. This study demonstrates how national identity and robust international relations are constructed through the strategic use of language. The socio-political and historical contexts are necessary in shaping diverse discourses. Overall, the nature of political discourse is discussed to shape countries' relations. Several studies examine the linguistic strategies employed by Iranian and US politicians to construct their public image and influence their audience. Some studies investigate US and Iranian presidential candidates (Jalilifar & Savaedi, 2012; Khajavi & Rasti, 2020; Mirzaeian, 2020) to see the rhetorical devices used by politicians to influence voters. They also explain that preferences for particular devices over others may change audience perspectives. For instance, researchers investigate linguistic devices used by politicians. Kenzhekanova (2015) examines the linguistic features of political discourse and discusses the inherent, distinctive characteristics of political communication. These features provide a deeper understanding of how language is used to craft politicians' public profiles. It examines how politicians use language to address common beliefs and expectations of their audience, thereby influencing them. Similarly, the intentions behind certain rhetoric and the expression of emotions that mobilise the audience are discussed. Moreover, she examines how aggressiveness influences the collective consciousness. Hence, her work gives a detailed discussion regarding linguistic elements and their role in the objectives of political communication.

Few studies focus on the relationship between Iran and Israel. Leslie (2019) investigates Fear and Insecurity, the perceptual change and its evolution from former allies to threats in the context of Iran and Israel. Leslie employs securitisation theory to explore the Iran-Israel Relationship. Leslie examines how Israeli leaders have specifically constructed a narrative regarding Iran. This narrative propagates the nuclear programs of Iran as a menace to the survival of Israel. Leslie argues that Israeli politicians have framed Iran as a dangerous state that is a threat to global security. These narratives shape public opinions and perceptions regarding Iran as a hegemonic state. These narratives are constructed in a way that aims to garner external backing and internal support against Iran, regardless of security concerns. Leslie's work contributes to the understanding of how political narratives promote fear and insecurity regarding the nations that are declared as hegemonic. Overall, the study explores international relations shaped by constructed narratives.

There is a growing body of research that has focused on corpus-based methodology to investigate speeches of politicians with various linguistic and cultural backgrounds, e.g. Amaireh (2023), American President Joe Biden; Abuelwafa (2021), Donald Trump speeches; Nazeer et al. (2023), Pakistani politicians; Adagbonyin et al. (2016), Nigerian and American presidential speeches, Li & Zhu (2020), Chinese political discourse. All of them employ corpus tools to explore linguistic features. For instance, Simanjuntak (2023) utilises AntConc to examine the linguistic features of Joko Widodo's Presidential Speech. The themes and lexical choices reveal the focus on action and tangible outcomes. Moreover, Simanjuntak analyses the strategic use of self-presentation and the negative portrayal of political adversaries. The findings suggest that President Widodo's speech is well-crafted to influence his nation's

political agenda. Overall, Simanjuntak explains the importance of linguistic analysis in shaping and influencing public perception.

However, none of the studies mentioned above investigates the thematic framing of geopolitical rivals. This present study employs both corpus and computational linguistic methods to explore the thematic and strategic distribution of lexical devices across the discourse. These themes and devices purposefully construct a narrative that influences a global audience and serves specific political agendas.

Methodology

The present study uses quantitative methods to analyze the primary data comprised of following transcripts of speeches: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech at the UN General Assembly in New York, 27 September 2024, and Address by His Excellency, Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly New York, 24 September 2024. These transcripts are collected from official and reliable sources. These speeches were first transcribed into plain text format and cleaned to remove non-linguistic elements, creating corpus files. This study employed a combination of corpus linguistic tools and computational linguistics techniques. AntConc software was used to search the keyword list of both speeches. Then, the concordance lines are generated to see how those keywords are framed into particular contexts. N-grams were extracted to identify repeated phrases that reveal patterns of language, highlighting common word combinations. Moreover, the linguistic strategies and thematic emphases in speeches expose the persuasive techniques used in constructing narratives and framing issues.

Analysis

The vision of war and peace is deeply rooted in the Israeli Prime Minister's speech. Netanyahu advocates for Israel as a nation that is drawn to conflict. His depiction of Israel as reluctantly engaged in war positions Israel where it had to take defensive measures against the aggression. He emphasises that groups like Hamas and Hezbollah are the existential threats not only to Israel but to the whole world. By doing so, he consciously aligns the threats against Israel to a broader narrative of self-defence. Here, the narrative is built in a way that failure to act promptly could lead to destructive consequences. He also broadens the horizon of Israel's conflict scope by framing it as a nation under duress and positioning Israel as a global defender of democratic ideals against extremism and tyranny. The central theme of this speech is the portrayal of the notion that Israel is not actively involved in conflict but is compelled to respond against the aggression it faces. By labelling it as responses, he positions Israel's inhumane actions as justified. Also, Iran is cast as the orchestrator of this conflict. This highlights that broader geopolitical instability is a result of Iran's actions. Thus, Israel rallies international support by presenting a common adversary.

In terms of framing the conflict, Netanyahu seeks to influence the global audience and garner the attention of Western democracies. This agenda aims to convey a message regarding Israel's fight as a shared fight. Netanyahu manipulates existential threats to justify strikes and military campaigns. He dismisses allegations against Israel by presenting counter-criticism to legitimise the actions of Israel as necessary for survival. Furthermore, it evokes an emotional response among the global audience. Israeli military allies and diaspora communities strongly sympathise with Israel due to the emotional appeal advocated in Netanyahu's speech. His rhetoric suggests that sometimes it is crucial to take military action, as it is a prerequisite for peace. They have no alternative but to fight to deter future aggression from their adversaries. He posits that war is necessary for stability.

Netanyahu rejects the ceasefire initiatives by promoting the idea that they undermine Israel's security. He takes a hardline stance against ceasefire proposals. He emphasises military action for the nation's stability. For him, negotiations for settlements play no role in regional conflict. He suggests that peace can only be achieved when the adversaries are neutralised. Here, the perspective presented by Netanyahu prioritises the nation's security over diplomatic compromise. He constructs a narrative that implies external pressure, leaving no room for alternative options but to endorse the role of military dominance in regional relations.

Moreover, Netanyahu's language frames Iran as a central antagonist. This stance influences the strategic calculations of neighbouring countries, prompting them to rethink their relationship with Iran. Similarly, this rhetoric might encourage regional allies to align strongly with Israel's regional allies. Thus, the speech's implications extend beyond Israel as it shapes global perceptions regarding the Middle East conflict and International relations.

On the other hand, Masoud Pezeshkian's speech highlights Iran's aspiration for a constructive role in global politics. He presents Iran as a nation eager to embark on diplomatic relations. He frames sovereignty and regional interests as highly prestigious and imperative. Moreover, he offers a counter-criticism in response to opponents who declare Iran a destabilising force. He portrays Iran as a mediator and contributor to global stability. Keeping in view its historical defiance, Iran tries to restore balance by expressing its inclination to initiate dialogues. He shifts the established perspectives regarding his nation by redefining its global image, paving the way for international diplomacy.

Pezeshkian promotes Iran's commitment to peace and stability. This aligns particularly with the theme of justice and resistance to the oppressive forces. He presents Iran as the defender of oppressed and marginalised people. He proposes peaceful solutions to advocate for Iran's reputation. These adversaries are Israel and Western powers who accuse Iran of perpetuating instability and global conflict. He contradicts and problematizes the military interventions and support for oppressive regimes.

Pezeshkian highlights the destabilising effects of foreign interference. He provides implicit references to the United States' involvement in various nations, including Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq. His appraisal serves two purposes. First, it challenges the Western narratives regarding Iran's role in conflict and regional instability. Second, it highlights the need for taking precautionary measures and implementing solutions to regional problems. Thus, Pezeshkian advocates for the nations to liberate themselves from external domination and oppression.

Pezeshkian criticises military actions taken by Israel against Gaza and Lebanon. He condemns Israel as a nation that sheds blood. He portrays Israel as an oppressor and aggressor who violates human laws and treats human lives as worthless. He frames Israel's actions as massacres to capture the attention of the global audience towards the suffering of thousands of Palestinians and Lebanese civilians. Thusly, He presents the double standards of Western powers and rationalises the need for international condemnation of Israel. He argues that these nations that always talk about human rights and conflict resolution have failed to advocate their agenda in terms of Israel. They remain silent or complicit when Israel kills thousands of innocent people. Hence, by accusing them of hypocrisy, Pezeshkian aims to undermine the role of Western power in shaping the global so-called stability, especially in terms of the United States, which is a staunch ally of Israel.

Nonetheless, Pezeshkian defines Iran's solidarity with Palestinians. He positions his nation as a defender of those nations that are marginalised by global powers. Iran portrays itself as a champion of the Muslim world through this narrative. It strengthens Iran's leadership within the Muslim world. Moreover, it evokes empathy for the Palestinian cause across borders. This approach attracts those who understand the rationale behind this cause. It advocates the alliances of those nations that are against Israel or other Western powers. Therefore, Pezeshkian's speech shapes the global narrative about peace, justice, conflict, and instability.

He positions Iran as a champion for international peace and stability by unmasking the hypocrisies of the powerful nations.

The corpus analysis of both speeches is presented below as empirical evidence to illustrate how the politicians navigate their ideas regarding war and peace. The study discusses their contribution in shaping global perceptions regarding their conceptions:

In Netanyahu's speech, several words are used to serve multiple rhetorical and strategic purposes, actively shaping the themes and objectives of his speech. These words are identified through a Word list and then analysed through the Keyword Analysis in Context (KWIC) tool. The N-Gram and Cluster tool is used to clarify ambiguous geopolitical terms that are used strategically in specific contexts. These words include "Israel", "Iran", " Hamas", "terror", "war", "Hezbollah", "murdered", "security", and "terrorists".

Figure 1: show the Frequency of Word “Israel” in Netanyahu’s speech

KWIC		Plot	File View	Cluster	N-Gram	Collocate	Word	Keyword	Wordcloud	ChatAI
Total Hits: 76		Page Size	100 hits		1 to 76 of 76 hits					
	File	Left Context					Hit	Right Context		
1	netanyahu_spe...	the world should not let go by. Ladies and gentlemen,					Israel	has made its choice. We seek to move forward		
2	netanyahu_spe...	s the truth: Israel seeks peace. Israel yearns for peace.					Israel	has made peace and will make peace again. Yet		
3	netanyahu_spe...	which Iran and its proxies spread carnage and chaos everywhere?					Israel	has already made its choice. We've decided to		
4	netanyahu_spe...	they would tolerate it even for a single day. Yet					Israel	has been tolerating this intolerable situation for nearly a		
5	netanyahu_spe...	of different countries, dragging them into the dungeons of Gaza.					Israel	has brought home 154 of these hostages, including 117 who returned		
6	netanyahu_spe...	chooses the path of war, Israel has no choice. And					Israel	has every right to remove this threat and return		
7	netanyahu_spe...	ours. As long as Hezbollah chooses the path of war,					Israel	has no choice. And Israel has every right to		
8	netanyahu_spe...	get paid. And he still wages unrelenting diplomatic warfare against					Israel'	s right to exist and against Israel's right		
9	netanyahu_spe...	diplomatic warfare against Israel's right to exist and against					Israel'	s right to defend itself. And by the way,		
10	netanyahu_spe...	it from me. I first spoke from this podium as					Israel'	s ambassador to the UN in 1984. That's exactly 40		
11	netanyahu_spe...	Abrahamic alliance, and that alliance would include the United States,					Israel'	s current Arab peace partners, Saudi Arabia, and others		
12	netanyahu_spe...	affiliated organs, is considering issuing arrest warrants against me and					Israel'	s defense minister, the democratically elected leaders of the		
13	netanyahu_spe...	Middle East. Far from being lambs led to the slaughter,					Israel'	s soldiers have fought back with incredible courage and		
14	netanyahu_spe...	s about Israel. It's always been about Israel. About					Israel'	s very existence. And I say to you, until		
15	netanyahu_spe...	The eternity of" " לֹא יִשְׁקַר					Israel	will not falter". 10 In the Jewish people's epic		
16	netanyahu_spe...	for all time. To borrow a great poet's phrase:					Israel	will not go gently into that good night. We		
17	netanyahu_spe...	we must not let that happen. And I assure you,					Israel	will do everything in its power to make sure		
Search Query		☒ Words	☐ Case	☐ Regex	Results Set	All hits	Context Size	10 token(s)		

Netanyahu uses "Israel" mainly to demonstrate its existential threats. By using the phrases "Israel has already made its choice" (figure 1) and "Israel has no choice" (figure 1), he plays a victim card in front of a global audience to make them understand that Israel is no longer going to tolerate the attitude demonstrated by genocidal groups. It leaves Israel with no choice but to respond to them in the same manner. By portraying his nation under attack, he seeks to evoke empathy that justifies the genocidal measures against the opposite groups. For reference, examples include the mention of rocket attacks from Gaza and threats posed by Hezbollah and Iran. The word "this battle" is used to declare that Israel is going to win "this battle". He portrays this battle as good versus evil and civilization versus chaos. Similarly, he tries to demonstrate through his words that the invasion in Gaza resulted in a 40,00 terrorists army that aimed for a genocidal attack. At the same time, he refuses to condemn the horrific measures. He underscores his nation’s moral superiority by contrasting "Israel" with its adversaries, and portraying it as a champion of peace and life. Hence, the collocation and N-Gram analysis suggests that the word "Israel" is used to justifying its actions, demonstrating its relation with Saudi Arabia, and yearning for peace.

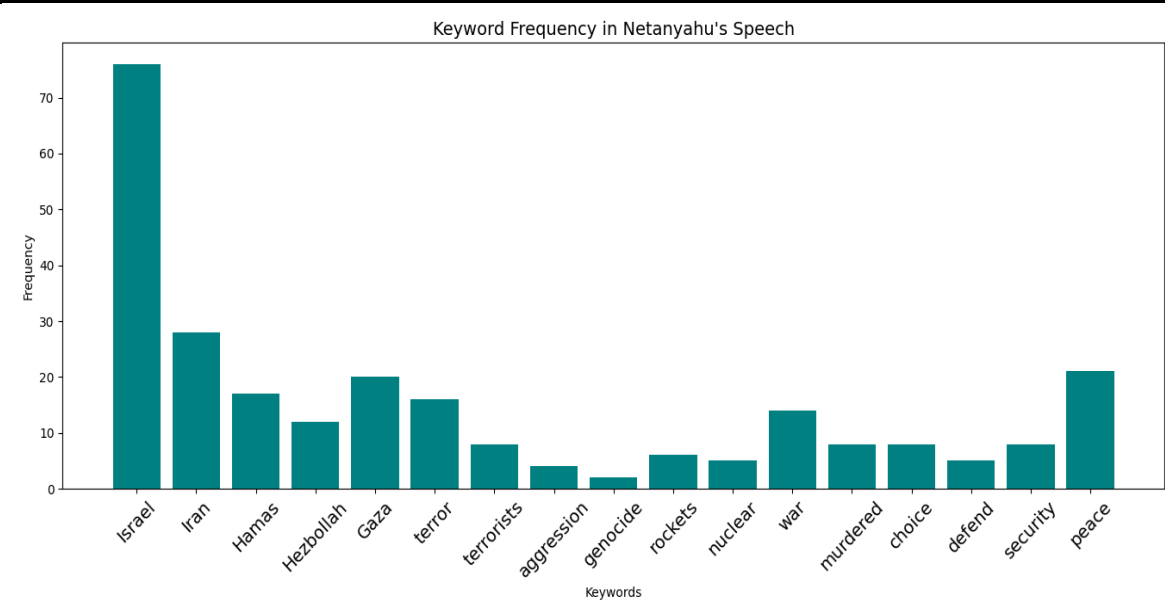
Figure 2: Shows the frequency of Word “Iran” in Netanyahu’s speech

KWIC		Plot	File View	Cluster	N-Gram	Collocate	Word	Keyword	Wordcloud	ChatAI		
Total Hits: 28		Page Size	100 hits		1 to 28 of 28 hits							
	File	Left Context					Hit	Right Context				
1	netanyahu_spe...	Responsible governments should not only support Israel in rolling back					Iran'	s aggression, but they should join Israel. They should				
2	netanyahu_spe...	a curse for Israel, then you should think again. Because					Iran'	s aggression, if it's not checked, will endanger				
3	netanyahu_spe...	weapons. For decades, I've been warning the world against					Iran'	s nuclear program. Our actions delayed this program by				
4	netanyahu_spe...	they should join Israel. They should join Israel in stopping					Iran'	s nuclear weapons program. In this body and the				
5	netanyahu_spe...	large percentages of Hezbollah's rockets, which were built with					Iran'	s funding for three decades. We took out senior				
6	netanyahu_spe...	created and imposed from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean.					Iran'	s malignant arc has shut down international waterways. It				
7	netanyahu_spe...	That's why one of the best ways to foil					Iran'	s nefarious designs is to achieve the peace. 7 Such				
8	netanyahu_spe...	of 250 such attacks, including one yesterday aimed at Tel Aviv.					Iran'	s Shiite militias in Syria and Iraq have targeted				
9	netanyahu_spe...	that is the choice we face today: the curse of					Iran'	s unrelenting aggression or the blessing of a historic				
10	netanyahu_spe...	the world? Or will it be the curse in which					Iran	and its proxies spread carnage and chaos everywhere? Israel				
11	netanyahu_spe...	move forward to a bright age of prosperity and peace.					Iran	and its proxies have also made their choice. They				
12	netanyahu_spe...	Jerusalem. While Israel is committed to achieving such a peace,					Iran	and its terror proxies are committed to scuttling it.				
13	netanyahu_spe...	stand with democracy and peace? Or will you stand with					Iran,	a brutal dictatorship that subjugates its own people and				
14	netanyahu_spe...	at our civilians, at our children. Two weeks later, the					Iran-	backed Houthis in Yemen launched drones and missiles at				
15	netanyahu_spe...	Security Council to snap back UN Security Council sanctions against					Iran	because we must all do everything in our power				
16	netanyahu_spe...	throughout Israel. And last April, for the first time ever,					Iran	directly attacked Israel from its own territory. Firing 300 drones,				
17	netanyahu_spe...	progressives. According to the U.S. Director of National Intelligence,					Iran	funds and fuels many of the protesters against Israel.				
Search Query		☒ Words	☐ Case	☐ Regex	Results Set	All hits	Context Size	10 token(s)				

One of the primary contexts in which the word "Iran" is used is the threats perceived as the "greatest danger" not only to Israel but to the broader Middle East. The KWIC proves that "Iran" is linked with the military groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah. This association suggests Iran as the driving force behind Israel’s military actions against Iran. By presenting the firing of 300 drones, Netanyahu provides a record of how Israel has been attacked from Iran's territory. He frames Iran as a brutal dictatorship that subjugates and marginalizes its nation. He mentions how Iran backed the missiles and drones launched in Yemen. Netanyahu seeks allies to stop Iran from weaponizing its nuclear program and to ensure “Iran never gets nuclear weapons”. By doing so, he evokes the fear and urgency in the global audience and calls for an action to alienate and abandon Iran. So that, he can divest Iran from his global alliances. Netanyahu's speech was strategically designed to delegitimize his rival states by framing them as ignorant, barbaric, and tyrannical. He stripped them of any moral legitimacy by portraying them as uncivilized forces. This dehumanization justifies the military actions against them. During his speech, he also criticizes the International actors and organizations for their failure to oppose terrorism firmly that his nation is facing. The purpose of this action is to gain support. He uses certain rhetorical devices and expressions to highlight the threats posed by groups like Hamas and Hezbollah and aims to secure continued support of the United States. On that account, he emphasizes the shared values and interests to deepen its ties with the US. Netanyahu appeals to European nations to act against extremism. He frames Iranian influence by considering its impact on religious extremist groups. He crafts a narrative that Israel shares common views regarding Iran on the global front. He reluctantly argues that Israel can never support de-escalation measures against Iran. This rigidness may create tensions among those nations that are trying to seek balance in both the Israel and Iran relationship. For instance, countries such as Turkey, Qatar, and Bahrain which act as intermediaries may find it difficult to negotiate their relationships and peace talks for regional stability. The NATO members, the proponents for peace talks could not maintain the balance between the polarized landscapes.

This solidifies the existing Iranian oppositional bloc and garners allies regarding the framed vision of defense and security.

Figure 3: Shows Keyword frequency in Netanyahu’s Speech at UNGA 2024



The figure 3 provides a quantitative overview of the dominant lexical choices used by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in his address to the United Nations General Assembly on September 27, 2024. This visualization directly supports the investigation into framing war and peace narratives, as it foregrounds the strategic use of keywords related to both conflict and resolution. It shows (a) Dominance of War-Related Terms: The word “Israel” appears with the highest frequency (over 75 mentions), suggesting a strong nationalistic frame where the country positions itself as central to the discourse. Words such as “Iran” (28), “Hamas” (17), “Hezbollah” (12), “Gaza” (20), “terror” (16), “terrorists” (8), “aggression” (4), “genocide” (2), “rockets” (6), and “war” (14) reflect a highly securitized narrative. These lexical choices indicate an effort to frame external actors (particularly Iran and its affiliates) as existential threats to Israel, thus legitimizing the state’s defensive or military stance. (b) Security and Victimization Frames: Terms like “murdered” (8), “defend” (5), “security” (8) reinforce a victimhood and defense narrative, portraying Israel as under constant threat and justifying protective measures or retaliatory action. (c) Peace Narrative as Secondary: The term “peace” appears 21 times, which, while notable, is still significantly less than war-associated keywords. This suggests that peace is acknowledged but perhaps framed as conditional or aspirational, contingent upon the cessation of threats from adversaries. (d) Narrative Strategy: The juxtaposition of high-frequency war-related terms with the presence (but lower frequency) of peace-oriented vocabulary points to a “war-to-peace conditional narrative.” Netanyahu appears to be constructing a discourse in which peace is desirable but obstructed by the actions of hostile forces. (e) Corpus-Based Framing Insight: From a corpus linguistic perspective, this graph reveals a thematic polarization—Netanyahu frames the Israeli state as a rational actor in pursuit of peace, while casting opponents as irrational or violent, hence unworthy of trust or diplomatic engagement. The language choices align with strategic discourse framing—a common rhetorical tactic used to sway international opinion and justify foreign policy decisions.

Pezeshkian's Speech Analysis

Figure 4: The frequency of word “Israel” in Pezeshkian's speech

KWIC	Plot	File View	Cluster	N-Gram	Collocate	Word	Keyword	Wordcloud	ChatAI
Total Hits: 3 Page Size 100 hits 1 to 3 of 3 hits									
File	Left Context				Hit	Right Context			
1 Masoud ...	in Lebanon, before it engulfs the region and the world.				Israel	has been defeated in Gaza and no amount of			
2 Masoud ...	Gaza and bring an end to the desperate barbarism of				Israel	in Lebanon, before it engulfs the region and the			
3 Masoud ...	decades of occupation and humiliation, as "terrorists". It is				Israel	that has assassinated our scientists, diplomats, and even			

Pezeshkian repeatedly refers to "Israel" by denoting its military actions. Labeling these actions as "massacres", he builds the narrative regarding Israel as an inhumane and oppressive state. He mentions not only the Palestinians' murders, but also argues that Israel is involved in killing Iran's population as well: "It is Israel that has assassinated our scientist". This framing suggests that Israel's interest lies in targeting vulnerable populations. Furthermore, it alludes to the larger imperialist agenda that is funded and supported by the United States. It depicts Israel as an independent actor who perpetuates injustice and brutal force on behalf of the Western allies.

Figure 5: Frequency of Key word “Iran” in Pezeshkian’s speech

KWIC	Plot	File View	Cluster	N-Gram	Collocate	Word	Keyword	Wordcloud	ChatAI
Total Hits: 21 Page Size 100 hits 1 to 21 of 21 hits									
File	Left Context				Hit	Right Context			
1 Masoud ...	I want to address the American people: 5 It is not				Iran	that has established military bases along your borders. It			
2 Masoud ...	has established military bases along your borders. It is not				Iran	that has imposed sanctions on your country and obstructed			
3 Masoud ...	Iran that prevents you from accessing medicine. It is not				Iran	that has restricted your access to the global banking			
4 Masoud ...	obstructed your trade relations with the world. It is not				Iran	that prevents you from accessing medicine. It is not			
5 Masoud ...	for more constructive agreements. I hope that this message from				Iran	is carefully heard. Thank You Mr. President			
6 Masoud ...	on equal footing. The appropriate response to this message from				Iran	is not to impose more sanctions, but to fulfil			
7 Masoud ...	My message to all states pursuing a counterproductive strategy towards				Iran	is to learn from history. We have the opportunity			
8 Masoud ...	and apartheid. Excellencies, Examine the contemporary history of the region:				Iran	has never initiated a war; it has only			
9 Masoud ...	against external aggression, causing the aggressors to regret their actions.				Iran	has never occupied the territory of any nation. It			
10 Masoud ...	military leaders; rather, it is the United States that assassinated				Iran'	s most revered military commander at Baghdad airport. My			
11 Masoud ...	new era. This era will commence with the acknowledgment of				Iran'	s security concerns and cooperation on mutual challenges. Sanctions			
12 Masoud ...	addressing you as the President of the Islamic Republic of				Iran,	a position I assumed after the Iranian people voted			
13 Masoud ...	deal in 2015 through that fresh outlook, based on shared opportunities.				Iran	agreed to the highest, unprecedented level of nuclear oversight			
14 Masoud ...	an engagement approach, we can find fresh opportunities for cooperation.				Iran	and global powers achieved a historic nuclear deal in 2015			
15 Masoud ...	Excellency, Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, President of the Islamic Republic of				Iran	At the 79th Session of the United Nations			
16 Masoud ...	and supported - both covertly and overtly - terrorist groups like ISIS. 3				Iran,	in contrast, has supported popular liberation movements of people			
17 Masoud ...	the people of Ukraine and Russia. The Islamic Republic of				Iran	opposes war and emphasizes the urgent need to end			

Similarly, Pezeshkian uses "Iran" as a nation that unwaveringly resists oppression and foreign domination. He advocates a notion of resilience for the country that faced pressures of sanctions, military threats, and criticisms. The word "Iran" is frequently used to impart the idea that Iran is the defender not the orchestrator of war. He stresses "Iran opposes the war" to emphasize the urgent need to end war. He aims to mediate the conflict and promote regional stability. In terms of security, he asks the international audience that his nation seeks to safeguard itself against Israel's aggression. The speech promotes Iran's role as a key factor in stabilizing the Middle East. The above demonstrated statements reinforce the division of the Middle East as well. Some Arab nations

such as Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq are aligned with Iran but Saudi Arabia and the UAE are supporting Israel. This could polarize them further. It also affirms Iran's role within the anti-Israel bloc where other nations can collaborate with Iran to put an end to the genocidal regime of Israel.

Figure 6: Shows Keyword frequency in Pezeshkian's Speech at UNGA 2024

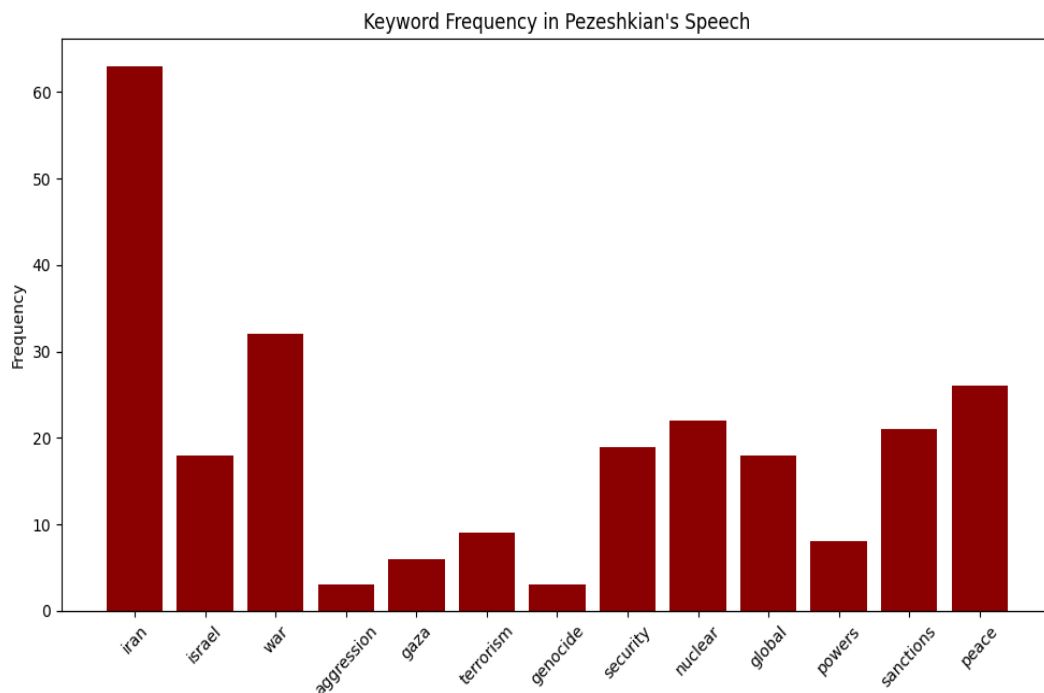


Figure 6 presents the distribution of key terms in Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's address at the United Nations General Assembly (September 2024). (a) Dominant Focus on National Identity and Victimization: The most frequent word is "Iran" (63 times), underscoring the national lens through which Pezeshkian frames his argument. The high mention of "war" (32) alongside "Israel" (18) suggests a positioning of Iran as both a central actor and a state reacting to or commenting on conflict. (b) Condemnation and Critical Framing of Conflict: Pezeshkian uses keywords such as "aggression" (3), "terrorism" (9), "genocide" (3), "sanctions" (21), and "powers" (8) to construct a critical narrative about the global and Western-led system. Terms like "global" (18) and "powers" show an attempt to shift blame or moral responsibility toward hegemonic actors, likely Western nations or Israel, framing them as aggressors or destabilizers. (c) Balanced Emphasis on Peace and Security: The word "peace" appears 26 times, making it one of the most frequently used terms. This suggests Pezeshkian's speech attempts to project Iran as a peace-seeking nation, positioning itself in contrast to the violence it claims to endure. Frequent use of "security" (19) and "nuclear" (22) reflects concerns with sovereignty, deterrence, and defense — framing Iran's nuclear agenda as a security necessity rather than aggression. (d) Strategic Discourse and Moral Framing: The presence of both peace-promoting terms and conflict-charged language indicates a strategic framing: Iran is a peaceful nation wrongfully targeted by war, aggression, and sanctions. This allows Pezeshkian to reverse the dominant Western-Israeli narrative, reframing Iran not as the aggressor but as the aggrieved.

Comparative Framing Analysis

Table 1: Shows comparative Framing insight Netanyahu vs. Pezeshkian

Aspect	Netanyahu	Pezeshkian
Dominant actor	Israel	Iran
Framed adversary	Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah	Israel, global powers
War narrative	Framed as defense	Framed as externally imposed
Peace narrative	Conditional and secondary	Repeated and central
Emotional appeal	Victimhood + security justification	Victimhood + call for justice

Table 1 demonstrates a comparative framing analysis that provides insights into Netanyahu and Pezeshkian's political speeches and their thematic implications for framing War and peace narratives: (1) *Dominant actor*: Netanyahu projects **Israel** as the central and rational actor, positioned as a protector of democratic values and global security. On the other hand, Pezeshkian constructs Iran as the focal point of the discourse, aiming to establish its profile as a sovereign, peace-seeking nation. (2) *Framed adversary*: Netanyahu names Iran, Hamas, and Hezbollah as existential threats, using terms like "terror," "terrorists," and "genocide" to frame them as aggressors. However, Pezeshkian positions Israel and global powers (likely the U.S. and Western allies) as oppressors, invoking terms such as "sanctions," "aggression," and "genocide" to highlight structural and military injustices (3). *War narrative*: Netanyahu frames War as a defensive necessity. Netanyahu emphasises Israel's right to self-defence, framing military action as a rational response to terrorism and existential threats. On the contrary, Pezeshkian frames War as imposed by external powers. Pezeshkian depicts Iran as the victim of unjust wars, sanctions, and interventions, positioning his country as a target rather than an initiator. (4) *Peace narrative*: on Netanyahu's side, the concept of Peace is mentioned, but conditional—Israel wants Peace, but only after threats are neutralised. Thus, Peace is presented as secondary and contingent. While on Pezeshkian's side, Peace is a central theme—frequently referenced and positioned as a core desire. Pezeshkian presents Iran as advocating dialogue, diplomacy, and peaceful coexistence. (5) *Emotional appeal*: Netanyahu evokes fear and victimhood, emphasising Israeli casualties, threats, and security concerns to justify preemptive or retaliatory actions. Pezeshkian appeals to moral injustice and collective suffering, invoking international sympathy by highlighting sanctions, displacement, and inequality, while also making a plea for justice.

This comparison highlights two competing narrative frameworks: (a) Netanyahu's narrative constructs a security-driven discourse, grounded in fear, deterrence, and military legitimacy, with war framed as necessary for Peace. (b) Pezeshkian's narrative, in contrast, frames Iran as a morally principled victim, emphasising injustice, diplomacy, and global double standards, where Peace is the default aspiration disrupted by others.

Findings

The analysis indicates that Netanyahu's UN speech is predominantly framed around war, threat, and self-defence, with Peace positioned rhetorically but subordinated in frequency and framing. This visualisation serves as a critical piece of evidence that illustrates how language is employed to construct competing realities of war and peace, particularly in geopolitical conflicts. Comparing this with Pezeshkian's speech will offer a compelling contrast in narrative strategies.

The analysis reflects how Pezeshkian's discourse is structured to frame Iran as a peace-seeking nation unjustly subjected to war, sanctions, and aggression, in contrast to Netanyahu's securitised and defensive framing. The frequency of words like "peace," "security," and "sanctions" plays a key role in constructing a resistance narrative against perceived global

injustice — a typical rhetorical pattern in Iranian diplomatic discourse. This supports the overall argument of the present study that language in political speeches is not neutral; instead, it is deliberately framed to construct contrasting narratives of war and Peace within geopolitical conflicts.

The comparative framing analysis underscores how discourse is used as a geopolitical tool. Both leaders employ strategic language to shape international perception, legitimise national policies, and appeal to global audiences. The use of specific lexical choices—such as "defend," "terror," or "sanctions"—reflects broader ideological stances and aligns with their respective foreign policy goals. This corpus-based study effectively reveals that war and peace are not merely political realities, but also discursive constructions shaped and reshaped through strategic rhetoric on global platforms, such as the UNGA.

Conclusion

Netanyahu and Pezeshkian present contrasting views that are deeply rooted in their political and ideological perspectives. The corpus analysis provides a data-driven approach that offers insights into textual analysis. The speeches reveal how both speakers strategically use linguistic patterns that justify their aims. The initiative of war is blamed on the opposing country, while the notion of Peace is associated with the speaker's nation. It also highlights the hidden agenda and motivation behind their diplomacy and the shaping of global alliances. Both countries are presenting themselves as victims of the brutality faced by the other nation. Hence, they appeal to the international audience to understand their motives as moral and defensive for their nations. This research contributes to the study of international conflicts, helping us understand how leaders use language to construct narratives that portray their nations in a negative light on a global platform. However, this research excludes non-verbal cues, the transformation of dominant narratives by media, and their influence on public opinion. Therefore, future research could expand these ideas by analysing how non-verbal cues, media representation, and public opinion can construct opposing narratives in politics.

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