

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, research question, purposes of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, and state of the art

1.1 Background of Study

In modern history, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the longest and most complex conflicts. It is characterised by competing nationalisms, territorial disputes and deep historical resentments. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the roots of this conflict emerged alongside the rise of Zionism and Palestinian Arab nationalism, which developed in parallel with the decline of the Ottoman Empire. After the First World War, the region was placed under the British Mandate, where tensions increased with the rise of Jewish immigration and both nations claiming political rights over the same territory. These early disputes laid the groundwork for the conflict that was to come (Rich & Goodwin, 2024).

Various diplomatic initiatives have been attempted to resolve the conflict. The Oslo Accords (1993–1995) represented the first major attempt to establish a framework for peace, including mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). However, unresolved issues such as the status of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, Israeli settlements, borders, and security continued to hamper the process. Sporadic peace negotiations also took place in the 2000s, alongside recurring cycles of violence in Gaza and the West Bank, further highlighting the fragility of the process.

One of the recent diplomatic efforts related to the Israel-Palestine issue was a joint press conference between Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu's 'Eternal Middle East Peace' on 29 September 2025. During the conference, both Trump and Netanyahu discussed a comprehensive approach to ending the conflict in Gaza and developing a broader framework for regional peace. The plan included several key components: the release of hostages, the disarmament of terrorist organisations, the demilitarisation of Gaza, and the development of a transitional government system supported by foreign actors. When proposing the idea, both leaders emphasised the possibility of achieving long-term stability and described the move as a step towards 'eternal peace' in the Middle East (Mangan, Dan ; Doherty, 2025)

Given the complexity and sensitivity of this conflict, the way political leaders communicate peace initiatives through language is an important factor that needs to be examined. Political leaders often deliver statements not only to convey information, but also to emphasize certain perspectives through the words they use, especially in the press conference conflict resolution between Israel and Palestine.

In semantics, language is a system of meaning produced through multiple layers of interpretation, such as conceptual meaning, connotative meaning, affective meaning, social meaning, collocative meaning, reflected meaning, and thematic meaning. Linguistic studies emphasize that meaning is produced through lexical selection, semantic relations, and contextual interpretation, making language a system of meaning construction rather than a simple code of communication (Cruse, 2019). Thus, each lexical choice carries meaning that shapes how a message is interpreted.

Within political communication, the information delivered by the speaker often carries multiple layers of meaning that extend beyond literal definitions. Political speeches employ associative meaning, evaluative expressions, and emotional language to emphasize messages. In addition, Political texts and speeches may utilize semantic strategies such as semantic vagueness, ambiguity, euphemism, and evaluative lexis to construct meanings that remain interpretable yet flexible across audiences (Huang, 2017; Allan, 2018). These strategies allow meaning to be communicated indirectly while still guiding interpretation.

From a semantic perspective, meaning is also shaped through lexical relations (such as synonymy, hyponymy, and antonymy), semantic prosody, and collocational patterns, which affect how listeners perceive concepts cognitively (Riemer, 2010). This shows that meaning in language is constructed through systematic semantic structures within discourse rather than primarily at the word level.

Press conferences and political speeches can be treated as communication texts in which interpretation is greatly influenced by word choice. In language, semantic meaning encompasses not only the literal meaning of words, but also the way words are chosen, integrated, and organised to achieve communication goals and express intentions. Political language, according to (Aba et al., 2025) emphasises how political actors use semantic techniques such as ambiguity, euphemisms, and metaphors to engage audiences and create compelling messages in sensitive political situations.

Based on this view, examining the various types of meaning used in political speeches can reveal that political messages are conveyed through language. The meaning

behind this type of speech, whether conceptual, connotative, affective, or thematic, can help us understand how politicians communicate their messages. Therefore, analysing concrete political events, such as press conferences where leaders openly express their positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is a valuable method for understanding how types of meaning construct political messages about peace.

In delivering the messages, press conferences are one of the most regulated and visible ways to communicate about politics. Unlike interviews or debates, press conferences give political leaders the opportunity to deliver a message. Press conferences are a tool for affecting international opinion, controlling diplomatic tensions, and defending political actions to audiences around the world in conflict situations such as the Israeli-Palestinian dispute.

The 'Eternal Middle East Peace' press conference was used as the main corpus in this study because every word choice, sentence structure, and rhetorical device used by Benjamin Netanyahu and Donald Trump can be interpreted for political purposes. The main focus of this study is on these linguistic aspects. By analysing the statements of both leaders through the types of meaning according to (Leech, 1981). This study investigates how layers of meaning, conceptual, connotative, social, affective, reflected, collocative, and thematic, are used to achieve political goals. Rather than viewing press conferences as neutral exchanges of information, this study views them as performances by two political figures in achieving their political missions, where language, specifically the types of meaning, becomes a strategy to construct the meaning of "peace initiative" within the press conference.

To support this analysis, the writer has collected five previous studies that discuss the use of Leech's types of meaning in political discourse and how language is used to construct meaning.

The first relevant study, (Hoshan, 2022) "A Semantic Analysis of Affective Meaning in Joe Biden's Inauguration Speech." This research analyses the use of affective or emotional meaning in Joe Biden's 2021 inauguration speech. Through affective meaning, the language used tends to express emotions and evoke certain feelings, thus playing a crucial role in this context. According to the study, Biden consistently used affective meaning related to resilience, determination, empathy, unity, and hope. This linguistic decision was found to be an essential element in his persuasive strategy, which aimed to elicit sympathy, interest, and support from his audience by describing the country's future in positive terms and advocating shared responsibility. The study also mentions that affective meaning increases the impact of political messages by building emotional bonds between the speaker and the audience. This research expands our understanding of how political agendas are supported by emotional language.

The second study, (Martinius, A., 2023), entitled "The Analysis of Semantic Meaning Found in Emma Watson's Speech," focuses on identifying the types of semantic meaning contained in Emma Watson's famous speech delivered at the United Nations for the HeForShe campaign on gender equality. Researchers analysed various types of meaning based on established semantic theory, revealing that Emma used connotative and affective meanings to strengthen her argument. This study emphasises how Emma's semantic choices were deliberately designed to highlight gender inequality, encourage solidarity, and involve both men and women as active participants in the movement.

These findings show that semantic meaning in advocacy speeches not only conveys information but also serves to shape ideological frameworks, trigger emotional responses, and call for action. This study is relevant because it shows how semantic meaning functions in speeches aimed at social change, providing a useful comparison for analysing political communication.

The third study, (Givano A, 2023) titled “The Semantic Analysis of Joko Widodo’s Speech on YouTube,” analyses semantic meaning in the words and expressions used in Joko Widodo’s (Jokowi) speeches on YouTube, which examines how semantic structures reflect the president’s communication style and political intentions. Findings show that Jokowi frequently uses conceptual meaning to convey the goal in the minds of the audience. This research is important because it demonstrates how a political leader’s linguistic choices help establish credibility and relatability. Moreover, analysing YouTube speeches provides insight into how political discourse functions across digital platforms, where clarity, accessibility, and audience engagement become increasingly essential.

The fourth study (Butarbutar et al., 2023), “Analysis of the Connotative Meaning of Jokowi’s Speech About RAPBN 2022,” focuses specifically on the connotative meaning in Joko Widodo’s speech regarding Indonesia’s 2022 State Budget (RAPBN 2022). The authors observe that connotative meaning, which goes beyond literal interpretation, is an important component in understanding political discourse and its persuasive power. Connotative language in budget announcements helps shape the government's agenda, economic expectations, and public confidence. This study finds that Jokowi's speeches contain connotative terms (positive, negative, and neutral) that highlight stability, growth, fiscal policy, budget policy, and bankruptcy. It also shows how

connotative meaning can influence public perceptions of economic policy by inserting ideological signals into seemingly neutral financial discourse. This study adds to broader concerns about how political leaders exploit semantic differences to shape public views on policy decisions.

The fifth study, (Harahap et al., 2019) titled “Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s Speech ‘The Role of the Military in Changing the World’: Semantic Analysis,” examines the types of associative meaning found in a speech delivered by Indonesia’s former president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY). The purpose of this study is to identify types of associative meanings, describe how these meanings are realised in speech, and analyse the reasons behind their use. Associative meanings consist of connotative, stylistic, affective, reflective, and collocative meanings, all of which contribute to the speaker's intent beyond the literal meaning. This study found that SBY used various associative meanings to emphasise the global influence of the military, the importance of international cooperation, and Indonesia's commitment to maintaining peace. The use of associative meanings in speeches helps to build a sense of authority, dignity, and diplomatic leadership. The researchers concluded that the semantic choices in SBY's speeches were closely related to his political goals, namely to project Indonesia as a responsible actor in the international arena. This study is important because it highlights how semantic meaning contributes to the formation of national image and foreign policy positions

These five studies demonstrate the importance of semantic meaning in public and political discourse. Speakers use specific types of meaning, such as affective, connotative, or associative meaning, to influence public perception of political events and persuade

audiences. Although these studies provide in-depth information, most of them analyze speeches from a single speaker discussing broad political issues. In addition, political discourse is often analyzed using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which focuses on the dynamics of power, ideology, and social structures. This leaves a gap in understanding political discourse from a linguistic perspective, especially in terms of how each word, phrase, and sentence contributes to the formation of meaning in political events involving multiple speakers. Moreover, previous research focused primarily on the kinds of meaning employed in political discourse, but did not explore semantic patterns through types of meanings are combined to construct a peace message. Thus, there is still a lack of research that explores the contribution of patterns of meaning to the construction of peace in political discourse from the semantic perspective.

To bridge this gap, this study focuses on the various meanings that can be found in the press conference held by Donald J. Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu on 'Eternal Middle East Peace.' This press conference discussed a highly sensitive and well-known conflict, making it an important political moment in delivering information. Due to the joint participation of Trump and Netanyahu, this study is able to analyse how types of meaning are used to construct messages about peace in the press conference on conflict resolution.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, the problems of the study are identified as follows:

1. What types of meaning, according to Leech's semantic framework, are found in Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu's speeches during the "Eternal Middle East Peace" press conference?
2. How do the identified types of meaning construct messages about peace in Donald Trump's and Benjamin Netanyahu's speeches during the press conference?

1.3 Purposes of the Study

According to the research questions above, the objectives of this research are:

1. To identify and classify the types of meaning found in the "Eternal Middle East Peace" press conference using Leech's theory of meaning.
2. To examine how types of meaning are used to construct messages about peace in the speeches delivered by Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu during the press conference

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study analyses seven types of meaning proposed by Geoffrey Leech (1981), such as conceptual, connotative, social, affective, reflective, collocative, and thematic meanings found in the official transcript of Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu's press conference entitled 'Eternal Middle East Peace'. This analysis is limited to the

linguistic data contained in the transcripts and does not include the video press conference, media interpretations, and public responses.

Within this framework, the study focuses on how each type of meaning contributes to the construction of political messages about peace. The main emphasis is on how semantic choices in the press conference text construct the meaning

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to a better understanding of how political discourse functions semantically, especially in the context of conflict and peace negotiations. This study has academic value because it shows how Leech's semantic framework can be applied to current political events. It also reveals how political leaders strategically use language to construct political messages about peace. In practice, this study can assist students, researchers, and practitioners interested in semantics, political communication, and discourse analysis studies by providing detailed examples of how meaning is constructed and interpreted in high-stakes political communication.

1.6 State of The Art

In several previous research studies tend to focus on speeches delivered by a single political figure and usually examine general political topics such as leadership, inauguration, gender equality, and national policy. In addition, many political discourse studies are conducted using approaches such as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which primarily emphasises power relations, ideology, and social structures rather than focusing on the semantic layers of meaning within the language itself.

Based on this gap, the present study aims to analyze the types of meaning proposed by Leech (1981) in the press conference entitled “Eternal Middle East Peace” delivered by Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu (multiple speakers) and the pattern of meaning construction build message about peace. Moreover, this press conference discussed a highly sensitive and well-known conflict, making it an important political moment in delivering information.

