

Discursive Constructions of Authority: A Comparative Analysis of Tone and Context in King Abdullah II's Speeches Within a Translation Framework

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Abstract—This study investigates the discursive construction of political authority in Jordanian King Abdullah II's international speeches, using a qualitative methodological framework that combines thematic analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which is based on Fairclough's three-dimensional model. The study examines how linguistic and rhetorical techniques are used to project diplomatic influence and assert legitimacy in a variety of geopolitical contexts, focusing on two speeches—one given before the US Congress in 2007 and the other at the UN General Assembly in 2024. The findings of the study revealed that King Abdullah II positions Jordan as a morally upright player in international affairs by mainly using appeals to universal moral principles like justice, peace, and human dignity to establish his authority. The intentional modulation of modality and tone allows for adaptive audience engagement, while intertextual references to historical, religious, and legal sources reinforce political claims and bolster Jordan's symbolic capital. Additionally, by balancing moral clarity with diplomatic prudence, the King's speech consistently presents Jordan as a neutral and reasonable mediator in regional disputes through selective emphasis and omission. Despite having few material resources, Jordan is able to maintain credibility in international diplomacy and exercise soft power thanks to these rhetorical techniques. This study adds to a wider understanding of authority, identity, and legitimation in international political communication by emphasizing the performative and ideologically embedded nature of political discourse, especially as it is used by smaller states in multilateral settings.

Index Terms—discursive construction, rhetorical techniques, geopolitical contexts, adaptive audience

I. INTRODUCTION

Political leaders can influence public opinion, negotiate power dynamics, and justify their stances by using the discursive construction of authority (Fairclough, 1995; Chilton, 2004). Successful leaders purposefully use language to reach a variety of audiences, establish relationships, and project authority. This entails creating messages that appeal to their audience, utilizing rhetorical strategies to motivate and convince them, and modifying their language and tone to fit various situations. An effective leader is adept at utilizing language to sway their audience. Certain leaders have audiences who are keenly interested in their speeches, actively listen, and dissect their words to grasp the intended message.

Jordan's King Abdullah II and other Middle Eastern rulers employ language strategies to achieve these goals. Because of the region's complex history, peculiarities, and political settings, leaders must handle delicate circumstances, balance competing interests, and maintain delicate diplomatic ties. King Abdullah II's speeches in particular offer a unique perspective on how language influences power and leadership in the Middle East.

Various studies have investigated the role of language in political discourse, highlighting its importance in shaping public opinion and negotiating power dynamics (van Dijk, 1997; Chilton, 2004). There is, however, limited research on how tone and context differ in monarchic speeches, particularly in the Middle East. Because of the region's intricate political systems and subtle cultural differences, there is a big knowledge gap regarding language and leadership. This study explores the convergence of tone and context in King Abdullah II's speeches to enhance the comprehension of how language influences leadership and authority.

The current study addresses this gap by investigating the correlation between context and tone in the speeches of King Abdullah II. The objective of this study is to elucidate the impact of language on the establishment of leadership and authority in the Middle Eastern context by analyzing the discursive dynamics that are evident in his speeches.

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How does King Abdullah II utilize tone and language to construct authority in his speeches?
2. What role does context play in shaping the tone and language used by King Abdullah II in addressing diverse audiences?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Rhetorical Context of King Abdullah II's Speeches: A Historical Perspective*

King Abdullah II's speech has attracted the attention of many academic researchers and readers worldwide because of its unique interactive style, which uses a clear and fluent language, as well as linguistic repetition and balance. It uses language repetition to reinforce core values and principles, and balance to create balanced and harmonious sentences. It also uses suggestive language by using phrases and sentences with multiple meanings. The use of metaphors and parables to illustrate ideas and concepts is also prominent.

His Majesty the King's remarks, which are said to be firmly anchored in the political and historical fabric of the area, have played a significant role in influencing how people in the region and around the world view the Jordanian monarchy. Among the many difficulties His Majesty has encountered since taking the throne in 1999 are calls for political reform, regional strife, and economic uncertainty. But in handling these difficulties, his remarks have been essential, solidifying Jordan's standing as a moderate and stable state in the Middle East's politically and economically unstable region.

A knowledge of Jordan's contemporary history and royal heritage is necessary to comprehend the rhetorical background of King Abdullah II's remarks. The Hashemite monarchy has maintained and stabilized political power by relying on the fundamental principles of guardianship, nationality, and religious legitimacy, as argued by Milton-Edwards and Hinchcliffe (2009). His Majesty still uses a speech that frequently brings up issues of solidarity, change, and national fortitude. In addition to reflecting his personal attempt to strike a balance between continuity and the demands of modernization and reform, his speech also captures the legacy of his father, King Hussein (Brand, 1994).

During the Arab Spring, a challenging time for Jordan and the Arab world, the King's speeches became increasingly significant due to their insightful nature. His Majesty's addresses during this era emphasized political reform and a broad national dialogue, often employing inclusive language to respond to the needs and demands of citizens, while also reinforcing the monarchy's stability and legitimacy (Ryan, 2008). Al-Momani (2014) notes that these speeches were crucial in strengthening the regime's image as responsive and focused on reform, all while maintaining substantial political authority.

It is crucial to keep in mind that His Majesty's global standing influences his remarks. His Majesty highlights Jordan's capacity to mediate regional disputes and serve as a voice of wisdom and moderation in Islamic discourse in his book *Our Last Best Chance* (2011). His speeches at international conferences place a strong emphasis on the necessity of interfaith communication, global cooperation, coordinated action, and the struggle against terrorism, which puts everyone in peril. These are in line with broader foreign policy objectives and seek to strengthen Jordan's strategic connections with Western countries (Faris, 2010).

Wodak (2009) argues that examining political speeches involves understanding both their substance and their social and political roles. It can be asserted that the King's address helps create an image of Jordan as a stable, reform-oriented monarchy, a character that is embraced locally and promoted globally.

B. *Tone and Context in Political Speech*

His Majesty adeptly modifies his tone to align with the context and the audience. When he speaks to his citizens in Arabic, especially during legislative addresses or discussions on national reform, his tone is calm, intentional, inclusive, and repetitive. He highlights critical issues that resonate with the Jordanian populace. By invoking common values, national pride, and the necessity for reform, the use of pronouns such as "we" and "us" cultivates a sense of unity (Haider et al., 2023). These linguistic choices emphasize his appeals for justice, accountability, and democratic engagement through the techniques of reiteration and escalation (Saffah Kareem, 2024).

In global platforms, his vocal style resembles that of his addresses at the United Nations and Western political events, characterized by a more moderate and diplomatic tone. His Majesty utilizes metaphors to convey his messages effectively. The King's speeches in international venues attract significant attention due to his use of balanced diplomatic language that supports the battle against extremism and the quest for lasting and inclusive peace. These rhetorical devices reinforce

his moral position and demonstrate Jordan's alignment with global political discussions (El-Sharif & Owais, 2019; Bataineh, 2019).

Deixis establishes a sense of shared identity in both domestic and foreign settings, particularly via the intentional use of first-person plural pronouns. Such language brings Jordan closer to foreign actors and shared goals in international forums while simultaneously promoting national unity at home. His speeches demonstrate careful rhetorical preparation, employing intertextual references, modality, and metaphorical framing to enhance their persuasive effect and maintain their political validity across a wide range of circumstances.

Fairclough's notion that discourse both shapes and reflects power connections is a key element of the methodological underpinnings of this study, which is based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). In contrast to his English-language speeches, which are distinguished by a cosmopolitan and solution-oriented approach that intentionally promotes Jordan's position in the world, King's Arabic speeches are full of appeals to historical memory and communal identity (Bataineh, 2019).

C. *King Abdullah II's Strategic Use of Language*

In order to establish authority and engage a variety of audiences, King Abdullah II's rhetorical style is described in this section as a deftly balanced combination of intertextuality, pragmatic deixis, hedging, and metaphorical framing. Making use of metaphor is essential. The King regularly uses conceptual motifs such as "journeys," "paths," or "wars" to give abstract ideas of change a powerful and tangible manifestation. He could, for example, describe difficulties as disagreements that must be resolved by all parties or present reform as a way to accomplish a common goal. His audience experiences emotional and cognitive resonance as a result of his use of metaphorical language (El-Sharif, 2015; Bataineh, 2019; Almaani, 2018).

To promote unity and cohesion, some deictic terms, such as "we," "us," and "you," are purposefully used. On a local level, they seek to promote inclusivity and communal solidarity; on a global scale, they broaden the scope of inclusion to encompass global actors, placing Jordan in a larger collective narrative (Bataineh, 2019; Almahasees & Mahmoud, 2022). Additionally, neutral pronouns soften the tone of authority and reduce hierarchical distance (Saffah Karim, 2024).

His rhetorical style also includes hedging and circumlocution. By softening potentially contentious statements and maintaining diplomatic propriety, the use of modal verbs like "can" and phrases like "we hope to..." assists in portraying openness, civility, and flexibility (El Sharif, 2015; Ghaleb & Abu Rumman, 2015). Circumlocution is commonly employed to handle delicate subjects tactfully, avoiding direct conflict while maintaining the clarity of the message (Almahasees & Abu Rayyash, 2023).

His legitimacy is increased through intertextuality, which refers to historical writings, religious traditions, or global frameworks. His statements have both emotional weight and normative power because they invoke universal values (like peace or human rights) or shared cultural memories (like the Hashemite legacy) (El Sharif, 2018; Saffah Kareem, 2024). His manner is rounded up with politeness techniques, especially in formal international contexts. While negative politeness, which uses indirectness and hedged phrases, maintains diplomatic etiquette, positive politeness, which emphasizes unity, respect, and collective identity, is used to promote goodwill (Habib et al., 2024).

It is possible to say that his rhetorical style demonstrates a dynamic interplay of intertextuality, hedging, expression, and metaphor. While keeping a tactful diplomatic tone overseas, this approach enables him to convey warmth and sympathy to audiences back home. His dual roles as a global statesman and a leader of national reform are strengthened by this stylistic adaptability, which also increases his power in a variety of settings.

D. *Review of Recent Studies on Tone and Contextual Construction in King Abdullah II's Speeches*

Recent studies show that the way King Abdullah II shapes his tone and word choice does much more than assert power; it also carves out a distinct Hashemite identity. Almahasees and Mahmoud (2022) use Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis to examine seven major speeches he gave between 2007 and 2021 at venues like the UN and the Arab League. They find that images such as fragile peace and Israel must embrace peace turn complicated geopolitical issues into urgent dramas, while echoes of past leaders help persuade listeners worldwide. By carefully sprinkling neutral pronouns we, our, and you throughout the text, the King melds his individual voice with a broader Jordanian chorus, creating a smooth but powerful version of royal authority.

Using CDA in combination with a stylistic lens, Kareem (2024) analyzes similar speeches across regional and global contexts. She identifies rhetorical strategies that are used to emotionally connect audiences, reaffirm beliefs, and communicate effectively.

Building on this, Kareem (2024) integrates a stylistic lens with CDA to examine similar speeches in international and regional settings. Her analysis identifies metaphorical imagery, subtle allusions, circumlocution, and intertextuality as core rhetorical devices used to emotionally engage audiences, reinforce convictions, and craft a positive image of leadership. The connection between tone (such as pathos-rich metaphors) and persuasive intent is expressed explicitly by Kareem by joining stylistic scrutiny with discourse analysis. El Sharif (2023) examines the construction of identity, highlighting the inherent Hashemite narrative embedded in the speeches of the King. By employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to scrutinize lexical and thematic selections, he reveals how recurring motifs—historical and religious legitimacy, modernity, and innovative reforms—serve to validate Hashemite authority and foster consensus in Jordan. These

sociocultural portrayals create a more complex narrative surrounding the discourse of power, rooting it not only in policy matters but also in heritage, identity, and a vision for future leadership.

The collective analyses reinforce and augment the conclusions drawn from "Discursive Constructions of Authority," illustrating that the authority of King Abdullah II is a composite construct encompassing strategic identity representation, contextual adaptability, and rhetorical methodologies, rather than merely a singular declaration. In his discourses, authority is simultaneously performed and narratively substantiated, as evidenced by the convergence of stylistic variance, identity-focused rhetoric, and the application of metaphorical and intertextual strategies. This intricate interplay is manifest in the current landscape of political discourse.

III. METHODOLOGY

In this study, we used a qualitative research methodology, integrating aspects of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and thematic analysis to examine the discursive construction of authority in King Abdullah II's speeches. A thorough examination of the King's language and content strategies for establishing authority in global political discourse was made possible by this methodological integration. Two speeches given by King Abdullah II at significant international gatherings make up the dataset. He presented his first speech before the US Congress on March 7, 2007, stressing the value of international cooperation and Jordan's dedication to advancing peace and stability in the Middle East (<https://kingabdullah.jo/en/speeches/members-us-congress>). On September 24, 2024, at the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, the king gave his second speech. Addressing world leaders, the King's speech focused on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (<https://kingabdullah.jo/en/speeches/speech-his-majesty-king-abdullah-ii-79th-session-general-assembly-united-nations>).

Because of their geopolitical importance and different audiences, these speeches were chosen to allow for a comparative analysis of the ways in which authority is established in various international contexts, supporting these themes, specifically using Fairclough's model to analyze the rhetorical construction of authority, power dynamics, and ideological positioning.

A hybrid analytical framework was used, combining Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA (1995) with thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). This combination allowed for a more thorough examination of how language creates and reflects authority as well as the discovery of recurrent themes throughout the texts. In order to find patterns pertaining to the ideological stance, diplomatic tone, and authority projection, the transcripts were read several times as part of an inductive thematic analysis. The linguistic and rhetorical construction of these themes within the social and political contexts of each speech was further examined using CDA.

Through the use of Fairclough's model, the study was able to analyze the speeches' textual elements, such as tone, modality, and rhetorical devices; their discursive practices, such as audience positioning and intertextual references; and the larger social practices that shaped the discourse, such as international diplomatic relations and regional geopolitics. There was no need for ethical approval because the analysis was based on publicly available data and did not use human subjects. However, the study treated the content with respect for the speaker's communication goals and with academic rigor.

IV. FINDINGS

This section examines the discursive constructions of authority in the speeches of King Abdullah II, with a focus on tone and contextual framing. The analysis is presented thematically, offering an in-depth examination of verbatim extracts to elucidate the rhetorical strategies employed by the Jordanian monarch. Particular attention is given to how tone and context work together to reinforce his position of authority across different political and diplomatic settings.

Theme 1: Diplomatic Authority Through Moral Legitimacy

The construction of diplomatic authority through moral legitimacy in King Abdullah II's discourse represents a sophisticated engagement with ethical universals that transcend conventional paradigms of political power. Central to understanding this phenomenon is Weber's (1978) typology of authority, especially his conceptualization of charismatic authority—a form of legitimacy derived from the perceived exceptional qualities of a leader, often linked to moral vision and symbolic resonance. Although Weber originally associated charismatic authority primarily with revolutionary or transformational figures, contemporary interpretations (Barker, 2001) have expanded this category to include political leaders who maintain legitimacy by appealing to shared ethical values and universal moral principles rather than relying solely on coercive or institutional power.

King Abdullah II's speeches exemplify this expanded notion of charismatic authority by foregrounding themes of justice, peace, and human dignity—values that possess broad transcultural and interfaith significance. Through rhetorical appeals to these universally resonant ideals, the King cultivates a form of moral leadership that positions Jordan as a principled actor on the global stage. This strategic framing allows Jordan to claim authority not on the basis of military or economic might, but through a discourse rooted in ethical responsibility and humanitarian concern, thereby reinforcing the country's image as a credible and morally grounded interlocutor in international affairs.

To analyze how this moral legitimacy is discursively constructed, Fairclough's (1992, 2003) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) offers a valuable framework. CDA foregrounds the constitutive role of language in producing and

reproducing social power relations. Within King Abdullah's discourse, the frequent use of morally charged imperatives such as "we must act" and inclusive pronouns like "we" and "our" serve as linguistic mechanisms of what Fairclough terms moral evaluation. These discursive strategies function to weave ethical norms into the fabric of political obligation, thereby linking the collective identity of Jordan—and its international partners—to a shared sense of moral responsibility. Such linguistic choices are not neutral; they perform the active work of legitimizing political actions and positions by appealing to widely accepted ethical standards, enhancing the persuasive impact of the King's diplomatic communication.

Further theoretical insight is gained through Bourdieu's (1991) concept of symbolic power, which describes the capacity to define and impose legitimate meanings and social realities that are accepted as self-evident. By consistently framing Jordan as a nation grounded in principles of justice and humanitarianism, King Abdullah accrues symbolic capital—a form of non-material power derived from recognized moral authority and prestige. This symbolic capital enables Jordan to assert influence in international forums through ethical discourse, circumventing the limitations imposed by its relatively modest geopolitical and military capabilities. The King's rhetorical construction of moral legitimacy thus facilitates a form of leadership that transcends conventional power metrics, articulating a vision of Jordan not merely as a nation-state but as a moral actor with a global mandate.

In sum, King Abdullah II's diplomatic authority emerges from a complex interplay of charismatic appeal, discursive moral evaluation, and the accumulation of symbolic capital. His rhetorical emphasis on universal values of justice, peace, and human dignity functions as a strategic resource that legitimizes Jordan's role in international affairs. This form of moral leadership enables the King to navigate the complexities of regional geopolitics while projecting a principled identity that resonates with diverse audiences—secular and religious, regional and global alike. Through this lens, diplomatic authority is understood not solely as a function of material power but as a performative accomplishment grounded in ethically infused discourse.

Theme 2: Strategic Modality and Tone in Audience Positioning

The strategic deployment of modality and tone in King Abdullah II's rhetoric exemplifies a nuanced exercise in audience adaptation, a concept central to Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as developed by Halliday (1994). Modality, within SFL, represents the speaker's stance toward the truth or necessity of a proposition. By modulating between medium modality (e.g., "should," "can") and high modality (e.g., "must," "need to"), the King enacts varying degrees of authorial assertiveness in accordance with audience expectations.

This rhetorical flexibility also aligns with Bell's (1984) Audience Design Theory, which posits that speakers continuously adjust their language based on their audience's social positioning. In addressing the U.S. Congress, the King emphasizes shared values and mutual interests, aligning with American diplomatic norms. At the UN, he employs stronger imperatives to appeal to collective moral urgency—illustrating his awareness of audience-specific rhetorical norms.

Furthermore, the King's tonal adjustments can be interpreted through Goffman's (1981) notion of "footing", referring to shifts in the speaker's interactional role. Through these shifts, King Abdullah moves between peer, advocate, and moral witness, reconfiguring his discursive authority in response to the institutional and cultural setting. This dynamic positioning foregrounds the performative nature of diplomatic speech, wherein legitimacy is enacted through context-sensitive linguistic choices.

Theme 3: Intertextuality and Historical Referencing as Legitimization Strategies

King Abdullah II's strategic use of intertextuality—manifested through explicit religious, historical, and legal references—functions as a critical legitimization mechanism within his diplomatic discourse. The theoretical foundation for understanding this practice lies in Kristeva's (1980) seminal concept of intertextuality, which posits that texts are inherently interconnected, drawing upon, responding to, and reshaping other texts to produce meaning. This notion is further operationalized in Fairclough's (1992) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, which highlights how intertextuality operates as a resource for constructing social realities and legitimizing power relations. In King Abdullah's rhetoric, manifest intertextuality—the explicit citation or allusion to authoritative texts—serves to anchor his political claims in widely recognized and respected discursive traditions.

Central to this discursive strategy is the invocation of the Abrahamic religious tradition, through which King Abdullah situates Jordan as the guardian of Jerusalem and a moral steward within a spiritually significant lineage. This religious intertextuality not only reinforces Jordan's historic and cultural ties to the city but also enhances the moral authority of his diplomatic appeals. By referencing sacred texts and religious symbolism, the King transcends mere political rhetoric, instead positioning Jordan within a broader transnational and transcultural narrative that resonates with diverse audiences in the Middle East and beyond. This aligns with Fairclough's assertion that intertextual references are not decorative but performative, actively constituting social identities and legitimizing political positions.

The discursive power of these references is further explicated through van Leeuwen's (2007) model of legitimation strategies, which categorizes linguistic mechanisms that speakers use to justify and naturalize their authority. King Abdullah's rhetoric exemplifies two key strategies: authorization and moral evaluation. Authorization involves legitimizing claims by citing recognized authorities—such as UN resolutions, international peace agreements, or religious scriptures—thereby transferring their institutional credibility onto his discourse. Moral evaluation, on the other hand, frames Jordan's diplomatic actions as ethically justified and consistent with historical precedent and universal values. Together, these strategies function to transform the King's discourse from a primarily national narrative into a

transnational and universally resonant claim, thereby extending Jordan's symbolic influence beyond its geopolitical size or military capacity.

Bourdieu's (1991) concept of symbolic capital offers an additional lens to understand the impact of these intertextual and legitimizing practices. Symbolic capital refers to the resources a social agent accumulates through recognition, prestige, and the ability to confer legitimacy. By weaving references to institutionally validated texts and traditions into his rhetoric, King Abdullah accrues symbolic capital that bolsters Jordan's reputation as a custodian of moral, religious, and legal order. This accrued symbolic capital functions as a form of soft power, enabling Jordan to wield diplomatic influence disproportionate to its material capabilities. It allows the King to construct a rhetorical ethos of Jordan as a principled and authoritative actor, capable of mediating complex regional disputes while commanding respect on the international stage.

Theme 4: Constructing a Mediating Identity in Geopolitical Tensions

King Abdullah II's rhetorical construction of Jordan as a neutral mediator amid regional and international geopolitical tensions reflects a sophisticated deployment of identity-building strategies that resonate with key theoretical frameworks in International Relations and discourse studies. This portrayal of Jordan as a principled bridge-builder is not simply a descriptive characterization but a deliberate act of identity construction that shapes both domestic and international perceptions, consistent with the core tenets of Constructivist International Relations Theory.

Wendt's (1992) constructivist framework underscores that state identities are not fixed or predetermined but are continuously (re)constructed through social interaction, communication, and shared meanings. Within this paradigm, King Abdullah's persistent emphasis on dialogue, moderation, and stability functions as a constitutive narrative that actively produces and reproduces Jordan's identity in the international arena. By articulating Jordan's diplomatic stance through such normative terms, the King shapes a collective understanding of the state's role as a rational, peace-seeking actor, thereby enabling Jordan to differentiate itself from more polarized, confrontational, or militarized regional players.

This discursive construction is further elucidated through Positioning Theory (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999), which examines how social actors use language to assign roles and rights to themselves and others within communicative contexts. King Abdullah strategically positions Jordan as the mediating interlocutor, implicitly contrasting its measured and conciliatory approach with the extremism, partisanship, or unilateralism that often characterizes other actors in the Middle East. Through this contrastive positioning, Jordan's identity as a neutral facilitator of dialogue is reinforced, casting the nation—and by extension the King himself—as embodying rationality, moderation, and pragmatic leadership. This role assignment functions discursively to elevate Jordan's moral and diplomatic authority, enabling it to occupy a unique niche in a region frequently marked by instability and conflict.

Complementing this identity work, Role Theory in Foreign Policy Analysis (Holsti, 1970; Thies, 2009) offers a valuable explanatory lens for understanding how states enact and sustain particular foreign policy roles based on both internal narratives and external expectations. According to Role Theory, states do not act randomly but perform social roles that reflect their self-conceptions as well as the roles attributed to them by other international actors. King Abdullah's repeated articulation of Jordan's mediating role in multilateral forums—such as the United Nations and bilateral diplomatic engagements—serves as a form of role enactment that both reflects and reinforces Jordan's position as a diplomatic intermediary. This consistent discursive performance enables Jordan to consolidate a soft power identity that compensates for its limited material and military capacities, thereby expanding its influence through normative and reputational capital.

Moreover, this mediating identity carries important practical and symbolic implications. Practically, it enables Jordan to navigate complex geopolitical fault lines by maintaining working relations with a broad spectrum of regional and global actors, including Israel, Palestine, the United States, and various Arab states. Symbolically, the construction of Jordan as a trusted mediator projects an image of stability and reliability, which is essential not only for external diplomacy but also for internal political cohesion in a region often fraught with conflict spillover. The King's rhetorical emphasis on common ground, shared interests, and peaceful resolution reiterates this identity, positioning Jordan as a voice of reason and moderation amid competing and often antagonistic regional discourses.

Theme 5: Ideological Positioning Through Selective Emphasis and Omission

The theme of ideological positioning through selective emphasis and omission highlights the nuanced rhetorical strategies employed by King Abdullah II to articulate a diplomatic stance that is at once morally clear yet politically circumspect. This subtle maneuvering aligns closely with Fairclough's (1992) concept of "covert ideological positioning," wherein ideological commitments are enacted not only through what is said but significantly through what is left unsaid or backgrounded. By strategically emphasizing universal moral values—such as justice, human dignity, and peace—while simultaneously abstracting or depersonalizing agency in conflict narratives, King Abdullah crafts a critique that sidesteps direct confrontation with powerful actors. This approach facilitates diplomatic ambiguity, allowing the King to maintain a posture of normative clarity and ethical authority without jeopardizing crucial political relationships.

This discursive strategy can be fruitfully situated within the broader framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which interrogates how power and ideology manifest through language (Fairclough, 2003). Fairclough emphasizes that the suppression or selective inclusion of information is a key mechanism through which discourse aligns with, reproduces, or challenges dominant power structures. In the King's speeches, the omission of explicit references to certain powerful states or actors—particularly those implicated in regional conflicts—signals a form of implicit critique. By foregrounding

international law, humanitarian principles, and collective responsibility, the discourse indirectly addresses issues of geopolitical inaction, complicity, or imbalance of power without breaching the diplomatic conventions of decorum or risking alienation of influential stakeholders. This calculated silence functions as a discursive safeguard, allowing Jordan to assert moral positions while preserving the delicate equilibrium of international relations.

Moreover, this strategic use of selective emphasis and omission resonates with Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical model of self-presentation, which conceptualizes social interaction as a carefully managed performance wherein actors manipulate impressions to achieve desired outcomes. King Abdullah's linguistic restraint can thus be interpreted as a discursive balancing act or performance, whereby he simultaneously appeals to Arab and Muslim publics through explicit alignment with themes of justice, resistance, and peace, while maintaining credibility and trustworthiness with Western powers through measured rhetoric and diplomatic tact. This dual audience orientation requires careful curation of speech content, tone, and thematic focus, allowing the King to inhabit a hybrid ideological position—one that navigates the competing demands and expectations of multiple constituencies.

This hybridity is significant because it enables Jordan to assert a form of ideological agency that transcends simplistic binaries of opposition or acquiescence. Through selective emphasis and omission, King Abdullah manages to articulate a normative vision that is critical yet constructive, principled yet pragmatic. This discursive practice bolsters Jordan's role as a moderator and moral interlocutor in regional and international affairs, enabling it to maintain influence and legitimacy amid complex and often contradictory power dynamics.

Collectively, these themes demonstrate that King Abdullah II constructs authority not through formal power alone, but through ethically grounded and strategically calibrated discourse. His appeals to moderation, diplomacy, and humanitarian values function as tools for legitimizing Jordan's international role. The integration of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis highlights how linguistic choices—such as tone, modality, and intertextuality—reinforce ideological positioning and power relations. Complementarily, thematic analysis reveals consistent rhetorical patterns that construct a moral and mediating identity. Together, these methods illustrate how authority is discursively performed, allowing a small state like Jordan to exert influence through rhetorical agency rather than geopolitical dominance.

V. DISCUSSION

Through a complex interplay of linguistic, ideological, and symbolic strategies, the current study demonstrates how King Abdullah II's diplomatic discourse is meticulously constructed to establish authority, shape identity, and traverse challenging geopolitical terrains. Together, the five themes found in the analysis highlight the critical role that discourse plays in international diplomacy, especially for small states like Jordan that depend on soft power to gain legitimacy and influence in international affairs. This conversation highlights the theoretical and empirical ramifications of these findings by placing them within larger academic discussions in discourse studies, international relations theory, and political communication.

The findings of Theme 1 show that in order to establish diplomatic authority, King Abdullah II's rhetoric mainly depends on the expression of universal moral principles like justice, peace, and human dignity. Based on Bourdieu's (1991) concept of symbolic capital and Weber's (1978) expanded idea of charismatic authority, the analysis demonstrates that the King's legitimacy comes from his capacity to establish Jordan as a morally sound player in world politics rather than just institutional power. Jordan is positioned as a principled voice in a region that is frequently marked by conflict and instability thanks to these appeals to universal ethical principles.

Fairclough's (2003) conceptualization of moral evaluation in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which links normative values with political imperatives through language, is consistent with this deliberate invocation of moral legitimacy. A common sense of duty and responsibility is created for Jordan and the global community by the King's frequent use of collective pronouns and deontic modality. By redefining legitimacy as a discursively produced and morally anchored phenomenon, these linguistic choices reveal a performative construction of leadership that goes beyond conventional ideas of sovereignty.

This analysis is expanded upon in Theme 2, which focuses on King Abdullah's rhetorical adaptability in varying his tone and modality in various diplomatic settings. Using Halliday's (1994) Systemic Functional Linguistics framework, the study emphasizes how modal verb variations (such as "should," "must," and "can") serve to calibrate degrees of assertiveness and obligation, allowing the King to modify his discourse to meet the expectations and sensitivities of various audiences.

Bell's (1984) Audience Design Theory, which holds that speakers constantly modify their linguistic choices depending on their relationship to the audience, sheds more light on this audience-centric approach. King Abdullah deliberately highlights common values and presents Jordan's diplomatic role as an adjunct to the liberal international order when speaking to Western audiences, especially the US Congress or international fora like the UN. On the other hand, his discourse uses transcendent principles and moral urgency to bolster Jordan's ethical stance when speaking to regional or religiously affiliated audiences. The way that these changes in tone and posture enable the King to move between several speaker roles-peer.

The third theme examines how intertextuality functions in the King's discourse as a potent legitimation tool. King Abdullah grounds his political claims in established institutional and symbolic frameworks by making clear allusions to religious texts, historical precedents, and international legal instruments. This technique, which was conceptualized by

Kristeva (1980) and put into practice by Fairclough (1992) using his CDA model, demonstrates how intertextual references are constituents of political discourse's meaning-making processes rather than merely rhetorical devices.

These references can be interpreted through the lens of Van Leeuwen's (2007) taxonomy of legitimation strategies, which focuses on authorization and moral evaluation. By referencing reputable sources like UN resolutions or religious texts, the King appropriates the institutional legitimacy of other countries to support his own foreign policy stances. Concurrently, he conducts a moral assessment that upholds the state's standing as a reliable and moral actor by portraying Jordan's actions as morally sound and historically based. Through these discursive strategies, Jordan is able to present a transnational identity that is based on its symbolic capital as a defender of moral and legal order rather than on material power.

The development of Jordan's identity as an impartial and logical mediator is examined in Theme 4 via the prisms of positional theory, role theory, and constructivist international relations theory. According to Wendt (1992), state identities are socially constructed rather than materially fixed, and the results show that King Abdullah's emphasis on moderation, dialogue, and balance serves as a form of discursive identity construction.

The Positioning Theory of Harré and van Langenhove (1999) is especially helpful in shedding light on how the King places Jordan in relation to more partisan or aggressive regional actors. Jordan's soft power and diplomatic relevance are increased by its ability to assert a special role in conflict mediation through this contrastive positioning. Additionally, the study demonstrates that this identity is not only projected but is consistently enacted through repeated rhetorical performances in international forums, drawing on Holsti's (1970) and Thies's (2009) Role Theory. Jordan's reputation as a reliable mediator who can heal divisions in a fractured regional landscape is strengthened by the discursive replication of its mediator role.

The last theme discusses the subtle ideological work that is done by omitting and emphasizing certain points. King Abdullah creates a discourse that preserves normative clarity without direct confrontation by emphasizing universal values while obscuring or abstracting agency in conflict descriptions. This is consistent with the idea of covert ideological positioning put forth by Fairclough (1992, 2003), according to which what is left out of discourse can have just as much political weight as what is included.

Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical model of self-presentation, in which speakers control impressions through meticulously planned performances, also sheds light on this rhetorical restraint. A strategic ambiguity that serves two purposes—affirming moral principles for regional audiences and avoiding alienating influential Western actors—is reflected in the King's omission of explicit criticisms of powerful states. Jordan is able to manage conflicting international expectations thanks to its dual positioning, upholding ideological coherence without jeopardizing diplomatic ties.

When combined, the five themes highlight how important discourse is to the development of political legitimacy, identity, and authority in international relations. King Abdullah II's rhetorical techniques serve as an example of how small states can make up for material constraints by using audience-sensitive framing, symbolic allusions, and moral language. This has wider ramifications for comprehending the function of discursive agency and soft power in international politics, especially in a multipolar world where moral and symbolic capital frequently complement or even replace economic and military might.

The study theoretically illustrates the value of incorporating discourse analysis into frameworks for international relations in order to capture the ideological and performative aspects of statecraft. It demonstrates empirically how King Abdullah's speech serves as a foreign policy tool that helps Jordan stay relevant, influence others, and forge a moral identity in a changing geopolitical landscape.

VI. CONCLUSION

The strategic interaction of tone, context, and ideological positioning has been used in this study to analyze how King Abdullah II of Jordan discursively constructs authority in a variety of diplomatic contexts. By combining theories from political communication and international relations, such as audience design (Bell, 1984), constructivist foreign policy (Wendt, 1992; Holsti, 1970), symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1991), and Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1992, 2003) with Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1994), the study demonstrates the complex nature of leadership as a rhetorical and performative act. The King's speeches highlight how authority is carefully constructed through language choices that reflect moral commitments, cultural sensitivity, and strategic diplomacy, rather than just being asserted.

The findings demonstrate how King Abdullah II develops a diplomatic image based on principled neutrality, moderate mediation, and moral legitimacy. In order to increase credibility and appeal to a wide range of international audiences, his rhetoric makes extensive use of intertextual references and symbolic language, as well as universal values like justice, peace, and human dignity. By using this moral framework, Jordan is able to gain soft power and symbolic capital on the international scene, surpassing its comparatively small military and geopolitical might. Specifically, the King is positioned as a pragmatic statesman and a moral witness through the use of intertextual legitimization techniques, inclusive pronouns, and modality (Kristeva, 1980; van Leeuwen, 2007).

The study also shows how the King can play a variety of discursive roles, including that of an advocate, peer, and intermediary, by adapting his tone and modality to suit particular audiences. This flexibility emphasizes how crucial audience awareness and rhetorical flexibility are to the establishment of political power. Notably, the King navigates the

intricate demands of regional and international diplomacy with remarkable rhetorical finesse by strategically using selective emphasis and omission to maintain diplomatic tact without sacrificing ideological clarity.

These findings have wider ramifications for international relations and discourse studies. They contend that rather than relying solely on institutional or coercive power, authority in modern political leadership is increasingly formed through language that performs, persuades, and positions. Discursive strategies become essential tools for small states like Jordan to assert relevance, influence outcomes, and maintain legitimacy in areas like the Middle East that are characterized by conflict and conflicting narratives.

Lastly, this study contributes to our understanding of the ways in which language mediates power in global politics. It serves as an example that being a leader is more than just saying things; it also entails knowing what to say, when to say it, and to whom. King Abdullah II's speeches are excellent illustrations of how a leader can use discourse not only to inform and persuade but also to establish moral authority, establish a credible international role, and shape national identity. Future research could compare the rhetorical tactics of other regional leaders or examine how target audiences react to such discourse in order to better understand the discursive construction of authority in Middle Eastern and global contexts.

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