

Self-Framing and Other-(Re)framing in Institutional Political Discourse: The Case of Donald Trump's Final Speech Before the UN

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Abstract—The goal of this study is to provide a sociocognitive critical discourse analysis of Donald Trump's 75th UNGA (The UN General Assembly) speech 2020 to demonstrate how Trump (re)framed America and other political actors. The study's methodology has been divided into three stages: (a) identifying the speech's macrostructures (major themes) embodying the speech's global meanings, (b) analyzing the speech's explicit and implicit local meanings, and (c) laying out Trump's subjective context model. Findings revealed that (1) the semantic (cognitive) structure and textual arrangement of Trump's speech are meant to draw attention to two ideologically opposed discourse worlds with skewed, hegemonic intergroup and outgroup representations; (2) a polarized context model, based on the WE/THEY schema, has motivated and controlled Trump's speech for the purposes of persuading the audience, stigmatizing other social actors, and managing opinion formation; and (3) Trump's context model has been shown to control the production of specific microstructures that correspond with a variety of discursive strategies.

Index Terms—context model, discursive strategies, ideology, sociocognitive approach, Trump

I. INTRODUCTION

Before being the 45th US president who occupied several headlines over four years from 2017 to 2021, Donald Trump had a long history as a businessman, a media celebrity, and a Republican politician. Over four years, Trump's speeches, tweets, and debates sparked endless controversies and analyses everywhere and earned him unprecedented media coverage. Once elected in 2016 as the 45th US president, Trump attacked different countries, ethnicities, and ideologies. For instance, he described Mexican immigrants as '*violent drug traffickers*', stated that '*Islam hates us*', and named COVID-19 as a '*China virus*.' Such blunt statements brought prejudicial discourse to the fore and caused Trump to be envisaged by media reporters and political analysts as being xenophobic, and even racist. In an attempt to defend his political stances and actions regarding variant world events, Trump, on 22 September 2020, delivered a speech in the 75th session of the UN General Assembly (henceforth, the 75th UNGA speech) where the American achievements under his administration were the major theme. He presumably sought to flatter the image of the Americans and to provoke strong resentment against other political actors, and simultaneously to persuade all political actors supporting him and his in-group.

Arguably, when flattering the American self-image and attacking others, Trump consciously manipulated self and other representation strategies (US versus THEM) that explicitly or implicitly conform to his cognitive set (*i.e.*, his knowledge, attitudes, opinions, motivations, values, and ideologies) (Van Dijk, 1980, p. 201). Perhaps, Trump, in terms of his repertoire of personal and shared knowledge, selected particular facts, reformulated preferred meanings, formed attitudes, and reproduced events as politicians habitually do "especially for complex or important, institutional discourse" (Van Dijk, 2009a, p. 43). The information that Trump has selected in the 75th UNGA speech is hypothetically meant to configure the overall communicative situation under analysis. The properties of this situation are presumed to help Trump design provisional fragmentary mental representations whereby he took decisions about the information to be stated, entailed, or concealed. Simultaneously, the audience would actively construct meanings, form opinions, and attitudes, and either accept or defy communicated ideologies. Further to this, the audience, upon receiving any information, would activate an epistemic vigilance to avoid the risk of being misinformed (Padilla Cruz, 2014). As a politician, Trump presumably tried to defeat such an epistemic vigilance to be more persuasive.

As will be further demonstrated, none of the studies that addressed Trump's language have provided a full-blown sociocognitive critical discourse analysis of his speeches. Therefore, the present study seeks to offer a sociocognitive account of the respective speech with particular emphasis on its major themes (*macrostructure*), semantic structure, local and global contexts, and Trump's mental representations of the event and speech participants (*context model*). In view of this research gap and assumptions, the study's basic questions are as follows: (a) what are the

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macropropositions contextualizing Trump's 75th UNGA speech? and (b) what is Trump's subjective context model underlying this speech? Answers to these questions fulfill three main objectives: (a) identifying the macropropositions that contextualized Trump's speech, (b) detecting the speech's explicit and implicit local meanings, and (c) outlining the context model that Trump has drawn upon when preformulating and monitoring the speech's semantic structure. Therefore, the present study methodologically follows the framework of Van Dijk's sociocognitive approach (Van Dijk, 2009a,b) as it accounts for the interrelationships among the textual, social, and cognitive dimensions of discourse production and comprehension.

The rest of the article is structured as follows. Section 2 discusses related studies. Section 3 sets out the tenets of the sociocognitive approach. Section 4 offers the study methodology in terms of data description and procedure of analysis. Section 5 analyzes the data. Section 6 summarizes the findings and shares suggestions for future research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The sociocognitive critical discourse analytic approach has proved to be reliable in analyzing how presidents' mental representations of diverse events and states control the production and comprehension of their speeches (e.g., Van Dijk, 2009a; Salama, 2011; Sowińska, 2013; Abidi, 2015; Ghachem, 2015). As far as Trump's language is concerned, many methodologically diverse studies have addressed his idiolect, style, and rhetoric (e.g., Sclafani, 2017; Wang & Liu, 2018; Chichon, 2019, among others). However, relatively few studies have focused on the critical socio-cognitive dimension of Trump's speeches (Chilton, 2017; Quinonez, 2018; Vidrio, 2019; Gil-Bonilla, 2020; Khan et al., 2020; Pradiptha et al., 2020).

Following the procedure of the image schema theory, Chilton (2017) explored how Trump's mental representation of immigration is influenced by the geographical and historical location of his speech. Based on the image schema of containment, immigrants were represented as insiders, and therefore a source of danger and threat. Similarly, Quinonez (2018) addressed Trump's speeches before and after the 2016 US presidential elections. By synergizing critical discourse approaches and corpus-based tools, Quinonez's findings have shown that Trump demagogically framed immigrants as parasitic and dangerous insiders, and stoked anti-immigrant sentiment.

Vidrio (2019) analyzed four speeches delivered by Trump in 2015-2016 with the purpose of explaining the way American public opinion is emotionally structured as far as the issue of immigrants is concerned. Findings showed that Trump used two main strategies to represent immigrants negatively. The first was creating an emotional atmosphere through which the consequences of illegal immigration are intensified, while the second was emotional anchoring through which illegal immigration is emotionally anchored in feelings of resentment. Furthermore, Gil-Bonilla (2020) synergized the sociocognitive approach with conceptual metaphor theories to explore how Trump's social cognitions influenced the way he represented immigrants before (as a businessman) and after being elected (as president). As a businessman, Trump viewed immigrants as an asset. Conversely, as a president, he perceived them as intruders.

Ivana and Suprayogi (2020) explored Trump's mental representation of Iran in a YouTube-based speech delivered after the assassination of Soleimani, one of the Iranian commanders in Iraq. The speech was analyzed on the textual, sociocognitive, and social levels. Findings showed that Iran was represented as the head of terrorism in the world due to its illegal nuclear ambitions.

Khan et al. (2020) applied Van Dijk's ideological square framework to the computer-assisted analysis of Trump's speech at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee during the 2016 US presidential elections. The study aimed at exploring the discursive strategies and local semantic moves that Trump used to legitimize the self and delegitimize the other. Findings showed that this speech was underlain by an Islamophobic ideology as Islam and Muslims were otherized through the polarizing macro strategy of 'us' versus 'them'. Finally, Pradiptha et al. (2020) analyzed the sociocognitive tenets motivating Trump's speech declaring Jerusalem as the capital city of Israel. The data analysis showed that Trump's direct language sought to motivate an emotional involvement with Israel, marking his declaration as a prerequisite to initiating peace in the Middle East.

Based on this literature review, it is crucial to affirm that Trump's representations of other social actors, be they allies or not, vary depending on many different factors, including the situation where speeches are delivered, the time span, and the addressees. Nevertheless, it could be said that no previous study offered a full-blown sociocognitive analysis of Trump's UN speeches in terms of macrostructural analysis, local meanings, and underlying context model. Also, in terms of topicality, most of the previous studies focused on particular topics (e.g., immigration) and social actors (e.g., Iran and Israel). Hence, the present study would hopefully fill in this research gap by offering a critical discourse analysis of Trump's last official speech before the UN General Assembly (75th UNGA speech) on the social, cognitive, semantic, and discursive levels.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) forms an interesting research enterprise that includes a myriad of rigorous approaches and theoretical perspectives concerned with the discursive reproduction of power, ideology, and inequality. One of the most influential CDA approaches that triangulate discourse, society, and cognition to solve sociopolitical problems is Van Dijk's sociocognitive approach that could be traced in his writings between 1980 and 2015 (Van Dijk,

1980, 1981, 1997, 2008, 2009a, b, 2015). Such a multidisciplinary approach operates at the interface of discourse linguistics, social sciences, and cognitive science shifting between the descriptive, interpretative, and explanatory levels of investigation. It gives an account of how complex information in texts is semantically structured, cognitively processed, and discursively represented. Methodologically, it analyzes discourse in terms of its macrostructure (*i.e.*, major topics), microstructure (*i.e.*, local meanings), and the discourse producer's context model (*i.e.*, his subjective mental representations of the events and states included in discourse). Given the study questions raised above, two main issues will be discussed in this framework: (a) *macrostructures, macropropositions, and microstructure*, and (b) *context model*.

A. *Macrostructures, Macropropositions, and Microstructure*

If text is the material product of discourse that signifies a conditionally-related linear sequence of events or states, discourse is the process describing the interaction between text and context (Brown & Yule, 1983). The semantic structures defining texts are known as 'propositions', and the sequence of propositions that forms the discourse is referred to as 'textbase'. A proposition conceptually represents the minimal information unit in discourse. The sequence of locally coherent cognitive representations of an event, action, or state of affairs in a text is referred to as a 'macroproposition'. In a text, sequences of relevant, functional, and non-stereotypical propositions are known as 'episodes' that are represented in mental models stored in episodic memory (Van Dijk, 1981). Episodes show the organization of textual sequences of propositions, outline macropropositions, perform cognitive functions, and highlight coherence relations among propositions. Therefore, a macroproposition is regarded as an empirical test for the "global coherence of a text" (Van Dijk, 1980, p. 43). Though a macroproposition is a property of local meaning represented on the sentential level, not all sentences in a text are counted as topical or thematic.

Relatedly, the linearly-coherent sequences of macropropositions are referred to as 'macrostructures.' They are global semantic structures accounting for the global meaning of discourse. Though macrostructures are constructed based on local textual information, they have a cognitive basis as they depend on "a language user's cognitive set" commonly geared toward achieving a major goal (Van Dijk, 2009b, p. 42). Regarding the functions of macrostructures in a discourse, they are found to restructure textual data in a simpler manner and keep it parallel to reduce complex information by representing more relevant and important information, allow the adequate use of such information through recalling, paraphrasing, summarizing, *etc.*, and define the global meanings of discourse (Van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). Accordingly, a text producer, through the conscious selections of a particular macrostructure, might influence the audience's mental representations regarding a particular event. That is, the text producer non-coercively controls the audience's access to particular stories and representations. However, it is noteworthy that macrostructures are not textually explicit, and therefore they are derived from the text's microstructure that represents the semantic (surface) structure of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences (Van Dijk, 1980).

Therefore, by correlating macrostructures with microstructure, discourse can be accounted for on both the micro- and macro-levels (Van Dijk, 1980; Van Dijk, 2009a, b). On the micro-level, discourse is partially comprehended through analyzing and synthesizing microstructure by tracing different linguistic textual properties, including lexicalization, nominalization, verb tense, deictic expressions, clause structure, and rhetorical devices. Among other things, these linguistic properties that are stored in the text producer's short-term memory reflect the text producer's cognitive set (stored in semantic memory), highlight the dimensions of the social context, and call special attention to specific meanings (Kress, 1985). On the macro level, a text's major topics are clarified and semantically linked to highlight the global coherence of discourse.

Just as the same communicative event triggers different mental processing and representations, any discourse is said to be motivated by social cognition that is subjectively mediated through the text producer's mental representations referred to as the 'context model'.

B. *Context Model*

A context, in the sense of a communicative situation, refers to the *social situation* of language use in general, or the *specific situation* of a given text or talk (Van Dijk, 2009a). In a communicative social situation, Van Dijk (1997) deposits, context is canonically structured in terms of key schematic categories, including *setting* (time and place), *participants*, *action/event*, and *circumstances* (previous acts and social situation), *goals* (participant's perspectives, knowledge, and opinions), *current and global relations between participants*, and *group membership* (ingroups and outgroups). Brown and Fraser (1979) and Van Dijk (1997) claim that these discursively relevant properties of the social situation, in addition to participants' cognitive set, influence the production and comprehension of discourse. However, they are not "*directly*" related to the cognitive processes of discourse production and comprehension (Van Dijk, 2009a, p. 4). Rather, the discourse participants' subjective interpretation of the physical context is what "constrains discourse production, structuration, and understanding" (Van Dijk, 1999, p. 124). To account for a language user's subjective dynamic cognitive mental representation of the communicative situation, Van Dijk (1997) proposed the concept of the '*context model*' which is an extended version of the '*situation model*' (*cf.* Van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983).

Context models are regarded as "the cognitive interface between text and context" (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 38). They are subjectively constructed to link personal experiences with shared group experiences, individual opinions with social attitudes, and individual text and talk with the discourse of a group or institution. Context models are built around

language users' mental models that signify their subjective mental representations of experiences and events, opinion structures, and processed knowledge. However, unlike mental models, context models are more 'dynamic' as they are strategically preformulated and then tuned and updated ongoingly during discourse processing for more appropriate and competent interaction (Van Dijk, 1997).

Furthermore, context models are constructed based on language users' "shared sociocultural knowledge about language and interaction" as well as "ad hoc situational personal properties" (Van Dijk, 2009a, p. 10) such as goals, interests, attitudes, values, inferences, motivations, intentions, ideologies, and purpose. In discourse, context models serve to "monitor the transformation of information" into discourse meanings (Van Dijk, 1999, p. 134) as they specify which relevant information to be stated, implied, or concealed. Moreover, discourse models highlight the relationship between semantic macrostructures, macropropositions, and microstructures, control the level of information description and completeness, and define the ways language users socially self-define themselves and other participants in the present communicative situation (Van Dijk, 1997).

When constructing a context model, participants "find an ongoing process of Self and Other perception, categorization and judgment of all participants" (Van Dijk, 2009a, p. 71). This cognitive categorization is always ideologically motivated, especially when sensitive themes are addressed, *e.g.*, racism, ethnic bias, etc. (Van Dijk, 1998; Hart, 2014). Ideological opposites in discourse (*Self* versus *Other*) form what Van Dijk (1998) called '*the ideological square*' that underlies polarized discourses manifested through various strategies including positive self and negative other representation, stereotyping, argumentation, overgeneralization, *etc.* Such strategies are geared towards foregrounding the positive attributes *Self* and negative attributes of *Other*, and backgrounding the negative attributes of *Self* and positive attributes of *Other* while denying prejudice. Furthermore, on a textual level, these discursive semantic strategies are supported by a set of strategic local semantic moves, including disclaimers (*e.g.*, *We are very tolerant toward minorities, but ...*), comparison/contrast (*e.g.*, *Here, we, unlike others, develop very rapidly*), reversing/counter-accusation (*e.g.*, *Blacks are not the victims of discrimination, We are*), mitigation (*e.g.*, *This is never a clash, it's a sort of misunderstanding*), and exaggeration (*e.g.*, *This is the most aggressive actions that humans have ever known*).

To recap, context models reflect language users' social cognitions and perspectivization of the physical context properties. Therefore, there is always a reciprocal influence between context models and discourse structures, although context models are deemed much richer in information than any discourse.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Data

The data used in the present study is a web-based script of Trump's 75th UNGA speech delivered on 22 September 2020, at the UN Headquarters, New York City. It can be found online at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-75th-session-united-nations-general-assembly/>. As transcribed on the official White House website, the speech consists of six paragraphs with around one thousand words. It represents a subgenre of institutional political discourse that is commonly manipulated to exercise power, represents other political actors, offers interpretative frames, allocates roles, and communicates ideologies (*cf.* Wodak, 1989; Van Dijk, 1993; Beard, 2000; Charteris-Black, 2011). These functions are performed by means of a myriad of stylistic features and rhetorical appeals such as the strategic use of deictic expressions, metaphors, metonymies, irony, parallel structures, *etc.*

The rationale behind the selection of this particular speech is that it came during such a critical period in Trump's term, particularly after his administration has been accused of not taking considerable measures to control the COVID-19 pandemic causing thousands of Americans to lose their lives. Also, it came after Trump had been nominated (on August 24, 2020) by the Republican Party to enter the 2020 US presidential elections against the Democrat Joe Biden. In such a politically crucial time, Trump was expected to defend himself and his administration, justify his policies and draw reliable action plans.

B. Procedure

Based on the theoretical framework outlined in Section 3, data analysis methodologically operates at three stages. Firstly, key macropropositions (global meanings) contextualizing Trump's speech will be identified and discussed in terms of the speech's key thematic sentences. Each macroproposition will be marked with a capital (hereinafter, *M*) plus the number of the macropropositions (*e.g.*, M1, M2, *etc.*), and italicized within square brackets. Secondly, the local meanings of the speech (microstructure) will be simultaneously analyzed in terms of lexical choice, syntactic features, and rhetorical devices (*e.g.*, metaphor, metonymy, personification, hyperbole, *etc.*) since these dimensions are inseparable. Extracts from the speech will be italicized and marked with single quotes. Thirdly and finally, Trump's subjective cognitive context model will be framed to show how it controlled the macropropositional content and semantic features of the speech in terms of dominant discursive semantic strategies. To put the textual data analyzed in this paper (*i.e.*, Trump's 75th UNGA speech) into a wider context, key thematic issues will be discussed with reference to Trump's other speeches.

V. ANALYSIS

A. A Semantic Macrostructural Analysis

A close reading of Trump's 75th UNGA speech shows that it involves seven non-reducible macropropositions forming its global meanings. These macropropositions are as follows:

M1: Trump expresses honor to address the UN that used to face great global struggles;

M2: China is in charge of variant worldwide problems in the area of human rights, health, economics, and environment;

M3: America took considerable measures to defeat the China virus;

M4: America is a leading peacemaker;

M5: Trump calls upon the UN to address real global problems related to human rights;

M6: America is a matchless military power;

M7: Trump expresses confidence about the end of the virus and having a brighter future.

Though Trump's speech incorporates diverse subthemes or complex micro topics, they are semantically coherent as they are subsidiary to the speech's macrotheme. Such subthemes are presented in the following order: (1) global problems and America's efforts, (2) China as a trouble-maker, (3) measures taken to confront the COVID-19 virus pandemic, (4) peace-making efforts, (5) the helpless World Health Organization, (6) America's military power, and (7) future opportunities. Taken together, these macropropositions explain the speech's overall coherence and summarize how Trump perspectivizes diverse global issues. As will be demonstrated below, the assignment of these topics influences the event model underlying Trump's speech.

M1 [*Trump expresses honor to address the UN that used to face great global struggles*] marks the socio-political, spatio-temporal context of Trump's speech that happened at the UN Headquarters '75 years after the end of World War II'. At the outset, Trump shows solidarity with the UN members who are always engaged in diverse global struggles. By representing the subtheme of the China virus, M2 [*China is in charge of variant worldwide problems in the area of human rights, health, economics, and environment*] resolves the ambiguity of the word 'struggle'. The significance of M2 hinges on its relation to the most recurrent political actor in the speech: *China*. Trump represented China as a trouble-maker, one on the top of the outgroup, whose negatives are emphasized. That is, China as a heavy-weight political actor is negatively represented as being in charge of diverse global problems such as polluting oceans, overfishing, destroying coral reefs, admitting matchless quantities of toxic mercury into the atmosphere, increasing carbon emissions, abusing world trade laws, and influencing the declarations of the WHO regarding the spread of the Corona virus. Trump's negative representation of China affirms the historical unrest between the US and China (cf. Li & Gao, 2023).

Indeed, there is a strong thematic link between WHO and the UN. The WHO is UN-based organization that is responsible for taking measures to confront any health hazards around the world. Yet, from Trump's perspective, the UN represented by the WHO did not take the required measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 and launched sanctions against China which is thought to be responsible for the virus. Interestingly, Trump strategically made a split between the UN as a successful institution with which he showed solidarity at the beginning of his speech (a member of the ingroup), and the WHO that spread misinformation on the COVID-19 virus (dubbed by Trump as 'China virus'), thereby driving the whole world to a mess and therefore listed as a member of the outgroup. Such a negative representation of the WHO augments his negative stance toward China. In other words, if the WHO wants to become again a member of the ingroup, it must clearly state that China created the virus and spread it across the globe. Keeping the same positive self-representation strategy, Trump affirmed that unlike China and the WHO that disclosed serious information on the virus, America was more courageous. Hence, M3 [*America took considerable measures to defeat the China virus*] comes as a strategic move to highlight the American measures to confront the pandemic, including the mass production of ventilators and the manufacturing of vaccines.

Furthermore, M4 [*America is a leading peacemaker*] represents America as a leading peacemaker that aspires to settle struggles and guarantee security worldwide. To Trump, the basis of such security and freedom is America's prosperity. To make peace, America revitalized the NATO alliance, imposed sanctions on Iran, achieved a peace deal between Serbia and Kosovo, sponsored peace deals in the Middle East, and brought its troops from Afghanistan. Conversely, the UN had little to do with all previous problems. Therefore, M5 [*Trump calls upon the UN to address real global problems related to human rights*] represents the UN as a non-effective organization due to its non-satisfactory performance in many human rights issues such as religious liberty, human trafficking, women's rights, and intellectual property.

Much of America's power and dominance is attributed to its military troops. In M6 [*America is a matchless military power*], Trump demonstrates America's military magnitude in terms of size, expenditure, and armament. Still, America would never launch a war against any country unless extrinsically urged to behave as such. Finally, in M7 [*Trump expresses confidence about the end of the virus and having a brighter future*], Trump, recalls the setting of the social event in terms of place (the UN) and circumstances (having an online meeting amid the COVID-19 pandemic) as he wishes more prosperous years to come.

Having outlined the macrostructure of Trump's speech, the next subsection analyzes the decisions that Trump made on the micro-level to get his social cognition textually manifested.

B. A Microstructural Analysis

The microstructure (local meanings) of Trump's speech analyzed in this section is the result of selections made by Trump in terms of his mental model and socially shared knowledge and beliefs. Through these local meanings, Trump seeks to influence the audience's opinions and attitudes regarding the topics explained earlier. From a cognitive perspective, the whole speech is strategically and ideologically built on positive *Self* (ingroup) and negative *Other* (outgroup) representations. The active voice used throughout the speech marks key political actors or agents. The ingroup includes the UN, America, and other allies, whereas the outgroup includes China, Iran, hardliners, and oppressive regimes. Another textual manifestation of this opposition is the use of pronouns. To show solidarity with the *Self* team, Trump repeated the first-person plural pronoun 'we' 37 times in return for six times for 'they'. Meanwhile, the first-person singular pronoun 'I' is used seven times to mark personal achievements. Also, at the beginning of the speech, Trump described the struggles facing the UN members as 'global' to stress the norms and values of cooperation and coordination governing the UN policies.

The actions of the *Other* team are defined in negative evaluative terms, implying the abuse of the UN laws. Based on the conceptual domain of war, Trump offered his evaluative frame of China and the COVID-19 virus. The China virus is metaphorized as an '*invisible enemy*' (personification), whereas the UN measures to curb the spread of the virus are metaphorized as '*a fierce battle*' that claimed many lives. In terms of this prejudiced lexical choice, China is perceived as a victimizer, the world as a victim, and the virus as China's mass destructive weapon. Describing the virus as '*invisible*' affirms inability to control it, and therefore the increasing fatality rate is justified. Furthermore, the Chinese '*flights*' allowed to travel during the pandemic are metonymically represented as carriers of the infection. That is, passengers, as a part of such flights, acted as a medium for spreading the virus everywhere in the world. Maintaining the same conceptual domain of war, Trump boasted of the action plan set by his administration to confront the virus as America '*launched*' the most '*aggressive mobilization*' to '*defeat*' the virus. However, while war claims lives, Trump's mobilization plan aims to '*reduce fatality rate*' and save partners.

In calling the virus a '*plague*', Trump activates the catastrophic cognitive frame associated with the deadliest pandemic in history: the Black Death. Also, Trump's particular use of the verb '*unleash*' to describe the spread of the virus entails that China created and spread the virus intentionally. To complex the situation and derive a global reaction against China, Trump framed China's environmental activities as worse '*than any country, anywhere in the world*'. For this reason, he used a series of contextually negative qualifiers as manifested in many phrases, such as '*millions and millions of tons of plastic and trash*', '*destroying vast swaths of coral reefs*', '*more toxic mercury*', '*rampant pollution*', and '*its carbon emissions are nearly twice what the US has*'.

For a long time, the subtheme of terrorism is subtly offered as an Islamic property, and therefore eradicating terrorism came as an American strategic move toward peacemaking. In this regard and given the context of the 75th UNGA speech, Trump mentioned two individuals representing two terrorist systems: Al-Baghdadi and Soleimani. The first is Al-Baghdadi who is identified as '*the ISIS caliphate*'. Based on the noun phrase '*caliphate*' which has historical and religious implications, Trump highlighted the ideological background of Al-Baghdadi as a representative of Muslim hardliners incubating terrorists from everywhere. The second persona grounded in Trump's speech as a terrorist is the Iranian military leader Soleimani who is identified as '*the world's top terrorist*' who is eliminated rather than killed. Since Soleimani is a representative of the Iranian regime, Trump calls upon the audience to regard Iran as the '*world's leading state sponsor of terror*'. This argumentative move is strategically manipulated to justify America's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal which is negatively described as '*terrible*', and the imposition of sanctions on Iran. Relatedly, through a subtle reference to Iran's nuclear military aspirations, Trump emphasized the magnitude of the American military.

It goes without saying that Trump's speech is ideological par excellence. When Trump said that America produced a record supply of ventilators to combat the COVID-19 virus and shared them with '*friends and partners*' (the ingroup members), it implied that the *Other* team (the outgroup members) would never benefit from them, a stance unmistakably against humanitarian values. Also, based on Trump's statement that the WHO is '*controlled by China*', the WHO is represented as a biased and unreliable authority. This statement, as presumably thought by Trump, would justify his decision to withdraw from the WHO on 29 May 2020. Furthermore, Trump mildly criticized the UN for being an ineffective organization. In asserting that America supports Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela '*in their righteous struggle for freedom*', it is implied that the political systems in these countries are markedly oppressive. Therefore, the oppressed citizens in these countries are represented as members of America's ingroup that need care and support. Equally important, in stating that he rejected '*the failed approaches of the past*', Trump subtly refers to the Obama administration that he described as failing. Attributing negative characteristics can be viewed as a prejudicial discourse practice to damage Obama's image and devalue his achievements as a Democrat.

The Middle East is textually represented in relation to Israel. Remarkably, Trump described the peace deals between Israel, the UAE, and Bahrain in a series of positive terms: '*a landmark breakthrough*', '*a historic peace agreement*', and '*the dawn of the new Middle East*'. To Trump, such peace deals guarantee no more bloodshed in the region. Perhaps, he concealed the agent responsible for previous wars in the Middle East as he

reconciliatorily stated that *'There is no blood in the sand. Those days are hopefully over'*. Based on the conceptual domain of building, it is entailed that Israel's security is the bedrock of peace in the Middle East just as America's prosperity is the *'bedrock'* of security all over the world.

The absence of passive syntactic structures in Trump's speech underlies his assertive tone. His speech style is typically formal as represented by the collective *'we'* which again highlights the ingroup members. The Active voice relates actions with their agents, and therefore Trump's statements were intended to be perceived as facts organized in cause-consequence relations. China's negative actions are used to justify Trump's request to hold it accountable. Iran's negative actions are used to justify Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal. Equally important, Al-Baghdadi and Soleimani's terroristic actions are used to justify killing them. Equally important, to increase the credibility of his statements, Trump was keen on using numerical values. For instance, he mentioned that the virus claimed countless lives in *'188 countries'* and that the US-manufactured vaccines reduced fatality rates *'85% since April'*. To stress China's negative image in the area of environment protection, Trump stated that China dumps *'millions and millions'* of tons of plastic and trash into the oceans. To manifest the unprecedented US military expenditures, Trump said that the US spent *'\$2.5 trillion'* during his term. This use of numerical values was perhaps meant by Trump to assure that his stances and attitudes have a pretext rather than being biased or prejudicial.

To represent himself as a man of action, Trump relied excessively on action verbs with contextually positive connotations. Most of these verbs are used in the past tense which grammatically encodes reporting actions that constituted the semantic structure of the speech, *e.g., waged, launched, forged, produced, increased, etc.* The future tense is employed to mark future plans, actions, and wishes, *e.g., will distribute, will defeat, etc.*

The next subsection discusses how such local meanings and formal textual features are geared towards the construction of Trump's context model.

C. Trump's Context Model

A language user's context model controls most of the properties of discourse production and comprehension. The context model underlying Trump's speech is organized by the schematic categories of domain, type of event, setting, social actors, roles, political affiliation, political ideology, and purpose. The key domain of Trump's speech is politics in its general sense, *i.e.*, the politics governing social, political, economic, environmental, and financial issues. The speech took place on Tuesday, 22 September 2020, at the United Nations Headquarters, New York City, US, under the macrotheme of *'The Future We Want, the UN We Need: Reaffirming our Collective Commitment to Multilateralism'*. The agenda of the event (available online at <https://www.un.org/en/ga/>) is aimed at having a global action and charting a future course regarding many crucial themes, including economic growth, sustainable development, international peace, human rights, humanitarian assistance efforts, drug control, disarmament, and racism. Comparing the findings of the macrostructure (*i.e.*, key topics) analyzed in section [A] with the themes constructing the event agenda, it is obvious that there is a great resemblance as they are based on socially shared knowledge.

As the speech is structurally monologic, Trump is the only active social actor as the American president and a UN member. Other passive social actors in the speech include *states* (*e.g.*, China, Iran, Israel, and Afghanistan), *world organizations* (the WHO), and *individuals* (Al-Baghdadi and Soleimani). In terms of his cognitive set, Trump ascribed specific social roles to those social actors. China is represented as a global perennial enemy. Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Serbia, and Kosovo are represented as America's allies. Though it might be argued that Trump used to represent Mexico negatively due to the business of smuggling migrants to the US, here it could be argued that Trump is keen on showing Solidarity with most of all UN members and therefore it could be entailed that Trump's problem is not with the Mexican government, but with the illegal migrants crossing the US borders. Consider the following excerpt from Time Magazine (2015):

When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.

Conversely, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela are represented as strugglers for freedom. Iran is represented as a sponsor of terrorism. Israel, the UAE, and Bahrain are represented as partners engaged in unprecedented peace deals. Afghanistan, which was once an enemy, is recontextualized as a participant in peace deals after a long time of war. The WHO is represented as an incompetent organization. Al-Baghdadi is represented as the ISIS caliphate, while Soleimani is represented as the world's top terrorist.

It is noteworthy that Trump is a Republican whose dominant ideology is conservatism that falls on the right-wing axis of political beliefs and values. Republicans support, among other things, free trade, economic liberty, restrictions on immigration, increasing military spending, environment protection, strong alliance with Israel, war on terrorism, peace in the Middle East, defending allies (mostly NATO members), women rights, and, regulating carbon emissions (Levinson et al., 2016). Most of these ideologically motivated core values are consistent with the themes formulating the semantic structure of Trump's speech. Therefore, Trump purposefully sought to highlight all the achievements that have been fulfilled during his presidential term both locally and globally. He sought to show solidarity with the UN action plans, flatter the image of America, and marginalize particular social actors. Indeed, Trump's representation of America as the most powerful and most domineering country manifests a side of his paternalistic mental model that underlies conservative policies. Conservatism corresponds with the Lakoffian notion of the Strict Father Model that

conceptually metaphorizes the nation as a family and the government as a parent (Lakoff, 1996). That is, Trump sought to be perceived as a father who is in charge of the well-being of the family members. In return, those family members are expected to be obedient.

Again, Trump sought to save his self-image as America's president, reestablish the image of America as a leading power, show solidarity with *Self*, threaten the image of *Other*, and manipulate the audience to motivate, create, and maintain shared attitudes and opinions.

Accordingly, it can be figured out that Trump represented two ideologically opposed discourse worlds based on an ideologically motivated clash between an ingroup (*Self*) and an outgroup (*Other*). The positive ingroup attributes and the negative outgroup attributes are emphasized, whereas the negative ingroup attributes and the positive outgroup attributes are de-emphasized. Taking into consideration the dichotomy of *the positive Self* (WE) and *negative Other* (THEY), Trump's context model could be claimed as a *polarized context model*.

Trump's polarized context model, based on the WE-THEY schema, is manifested through a set of discursive strategies. The most explicit strategy is positive *Self* and negative *Other* representation. On the macro-level, Trump highlighted positive information (and concealed negative information) about the ingroup members, and negative (and even denigrating) information about the outgroup members. The ingroup-outgroup polarization is further maintained on the micro level through the use of positive qualifiers with the former and negative qualifiers with the latter.

Trump legitimized almost all the American policies and decisions, and delegitimized the actions conducted by the outgroup members. First, he defended the claims that his administration was not doing well regarding the control of the COVID-19 pandemic. He accused China of spreading the virus, praised America's mobilization plan, highlighted the surplus of ventilators, approved the manufacturing of vaccines, doubted the relationship between China and the WHO, and criticized the false declarations of the WHO and China. Second, for the sake of criminalizing China, Trump listed many reasons for holding China accountable for its actions, and held comparisons in favor of America to inferiorize China. Third, Trump legitimized the killing Al-Baghdadi and Soleimani by describing them as terrorists. Also, he legitimized America's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal and the imposition of sanctions on Iran for being the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism. Finally, Trump argued for peace deals between Israel, the UAE, and Bahrain. Accordingly, the ingroup and the outgroup are stereotyped as follows: the ingroup members respect human rights, engage in peace deals, have a super environmental record, and cooperate to find solutions to global problems; conversely, the outgroup members violate human rights, defy peace deals, disrespect the environment, and cause global problems.

The already discussed discursive strategies of categorization, stereotypification, victimization, and (de)legitimization are realized through a set of local semantic moves. One crucial semantic move used by Trump is holding comparisons. Through such comparisons (based on comparative and superlative adjectives), the positive and negative attributes of the ingroup and outgroup are manifested. Another local semantic move is the use of disclaimers in the form of apparent admission. Trump admitted that America is fulfilling its destiny as a peacemaker. Apparent disclaimers are "functional moves in an overall strategy of face-keeping, positive self-presentation, and social impression management" (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 259). Trump also resorted to reversing or counter-accusation to reverse the charges to the outgroup members. For instance, when asserting China's aggressive actions against the environment, Trump stated that '*those who attack America's exceptional environmental record while ignoring China's rampant pollution are not interested in the environment*', i.e., those attackers are whom to be blamed.

VI. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In this study, the sociocognitive approach has been applied to the analysis of Trump's 75th UNGA speech 2020 with the main objective of resolving the complexity of the discursive, textual, social, and cognitive strategies involved in the explanation and interpretation of the speech. The analysis focused on the macropropositions contextualizing the speech and the context model that Trump has drawn upon when preformulating and delivering his speech. On the macro-level, the analysis showed that Trump created two ideologically opposed discourse worlds represented on the micro-level by the pronouns '*WE*' (*Self*) and '*THEY*' (*Other*). The speech featured seven coherent macropropositions covering seven topics: (1) global problems and America's efforts, (2) China as a trouble-maker, (3) measures taken to confront the COVID-19 virus pandemic, (4) peace-making, (5) the helpless WHO, (6) America's military power, and (7) future opportunities.

The order of the previous topics proved to be systematic as it reflects how Trump perspectivized them in terms of significance and relevance to the event macrotheme and context. Put simply, Trump followed the inverted pyramid style (Scanlan, 2003) which presents information in a descending order of significance. That is, given the setting of the speech, more important and newer topics (the lead) are mentioned first, namely global problems and the US's efforts, China, and the COVID-19 virus. In so doing Trump strategically intended to let the audience to focus on the most significant issues and to continue listening to him as such topics grab their attention and interest. Moreover, as far as the levels of completeness and descriptions are concerned, the macrostructural analysis showed that certain subtopics were muchly detailed (e.g., the China virus, and the Middle East peace deals), while other topics were mentioned in passing (e.g., the Iran nuclear deal, and previous administration). The particularly selected topics in Trump's speech were found to echo his political ideology as a conservative Republican as conservatives support human rights,

increasing military spending, environment protection, strong alliance with Israel, war on terrorism, peace in the Middle East, and defending allies.

The oppositional discourse worlds are further textually manifested through the speech's local meanings. That is, the *Self* team is always associated with positive qualifiers, while the *Other* team is always associated with negative qualifiers. The peculiar lexical choices made by Trump helped to infer a great deal of the implicit information about the two teams. It not only communicates information but also codes Trump's (personal or socially shared) opinions, and attitudes towards different events and social actors that were always clear due to the dominant active voice. Furthermore, the informational structure of the speech proved to be shared as common knowledge. This also justified Trump's overuse of generic statements. The numerical values supported Trump's credibility. The speech's global and local meanings have been proven to be controlled by Trump's mental representation of the event as a whole.

Based on Van Dijk's notion of the ideological square, Trump's speech is underlain by a polarized context model built on the ideological polarization of an ingroup (WE/US) and an outgroup (THEY/THEM). Wilson (1990) asserts that the WE-THEY schema is the most characteristic discursive manifestation of social, political, and cultural differences. Throughout the speech, the ingroup members are positively represented, while the outgroup members are negatively represented. Positive terms were stylistically and rhetorically manipulated for face-saving functions, e.g., self-glorification and self-defense, while negative terms were manipulated for face-threatening functions. This polarization is also manifested through a set of discursive strategies (categorization, victimization, stereotyping, and (de)legitimization) that were manipulated to provide information, persuade the audience, show conformity to norms and values, gain consensus, and manage impressions.

Further studies are recommended to investigate further the rhetorical devices used by Trump to persuasively construct a positive image of America in front of an audience with various (and even opposing) ideologies, norms, and values. Also, the same discourse analytic approach used in this study could be used to address oppositional discourses and conflicting context models underlying the major themes addressed in Trump's speeches.

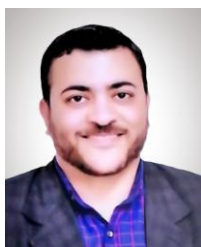
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors extend their appreciation to Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University for funding this research work through the project number (PSAU/2023/02/24837).

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