

## KEY ISSUES AND RESEARCH AREAS IN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: A METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the methodical frameworks in textual, political, and critical discourse analysis by three case studies: the continuity of sense in wartime, local coherence in political communiqué and formal properties of literary language. As master's theses defended at Jerash University, Jordan in 2022/2023. These master's theses sought to handle the key issues in the related studies. They also evaluated the efficacy of the corpus - based approaches in analyzing discursive phenomena and in real-world language patterns to understand how context influences meaning. The study utilizes a qualitative case-study method to explore essential subjects in DA along with their sampling frames and instrumental designs. By examining of linguistic corpora from such fields as literature, politics and intercultural debates, the efficacy of well-structured methods in enabling detailed analyses and revealing new insights is illustrated. Zelensky's (2022) *Addresses in Ukraine's Crisis*, Obama's (2020) *A Promised Land* and Hosseini's (2007) *A Thousand Splendid Suns* represent these research areas. The results emphasize the potential of corpus-based methods to provide crucial insights and vital resources for persuasion, diplomacy and interpretation, carrying values for related areas like translation studies, semiotics, political communication and pragmatics.

**Keywords:** Discourse analysis, coherence, formal properties, corpora, CDA

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Discourse analysis (DA) examines the comprehensive meanings expressed by language within various contexts, including social, cultural, political, and/or historical dimensions. The goal is to explore the methods by which knowledge is generated across various discourses and the performances, language styles, and rhetorical techniques (Snape & Spencer, 2003) as "respondents utilize varying repertoires" based on diverse interpretations (Jankowicz, 2005, p. 229). Consequently, DA examines the actual use of language by genuine speakers in authentic contexts (Dijk, 1997), and its primary benefit is to question "the assumed nature of language" (Sitz, 2008). As for the nature of discourse, Fairclough & Wodak (1997) emphasize

that "discourse is produced with context and cannot be comprehended without considering context" (p. 277); it refers to "a social activity that shapes social identities, social relationships, and the knowledge and meaning frameworks of the social realm..." (Nielson & Nørreklit, 2009; p 204). As it happens, discourses are connected to ones produced previously, synchronically or subsequently, and DA uses the language presented in a corpus or body of data to draw meaning.

In discourse analysis, key concerns include the continuity of meanings, local coherence, and the formal characteristics of language. The subjects of three MA theses presented at Jerash University in Jordan are as follows. They utilized Volodymyr Zelensky's (2022) *Addresses in Ukraine's Crisis*, Barack Obama's (2020) *A Promised Land*, and Khaled Hosseini's (2007) *A Thousand Splendid Suns* as their research samples. A continuous sense connects cohesion with the Schemata theory, where a memoir reflects on leadership and the potential for healing national divides; additionally, language practices, events, and texts in an Eastern society are ideologically shaped by power dynamics, presenting DA-related subjects that investigate language via a text corpus (Meyer, 2023, p. 4), and a reliable analysis of a language can be more attainable with collected corpora (cf. Hunston, 2006). The current study is crucial because methodological framework provides a base for clear and reliable discourse analysis. Also, this study is important since the Corpus-based approaches show the benefits of using systematic investigation of authentic language and the value of adopting these approaches as reliable tools in applied linguistics. Discourse not only echoes social reality in political communities and literary narrative but also it shapes public opinion and ideology. These values show significance of this study for both academic study and practical applications.

This study utilizes three master's theses to examine the dependability of corpus-based analyses in pragmatic research, focusing on the consistency of meanings in war discourse, local coherence in political communication, and the formal characteristics of literary language, as well as identifying the major procedures that affect the methodological framework(s) in discourse analysis (DA) and the extent to which these case studies can be corpus-based in DA-related research.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

DA encompasses the examination of language beyond the sentence as a research approach for analyzing written, spoken, or signed language use, along with any significant semiotic event or events. To gain a clearer understanding of "how knowledge is created across various discourses" (Snape & Spencer, 2003, p. 200) or participants utilize various sources, it analyzes "the performances, language styles, and rhetorical techniques employed in particular narratives." Discourse analysts examine the consistency of more extensive texts. Thus, when two phrases are viewed as one discourse, they can possess different interpretations. A narrative, for example, can be elegantly designed and showcase the effectiveness of coherence in storytelling, significantly influencing the audience. Related to

criticism and described as a cling in a broader sense, CDA is a shared viewpoint on the practice of language, semiotics or discourse analysis (van Dijk, 1993, 133), serving as a genuine connection between sociological and political involvement while fostering a society informed by sociology (Krings et al. 1973). Texts can be analyzed from a new perspective regarding their concealed layers.

## 2.1 Continuity of Senses in Warlike Discourse

Language can serve to endorse peace as well as conflict, and discourse is made more complex by the implications of the ongoing nature of meanings. This implies a link between cohesion and the schemata theory (cf. Bartlett, 1932). Essentially, discourse refers to spoken or written expression that extends beyond a solitary sentence and examines the complete significance communicated by language in its broader context, including social, cultural, political, and/or historical factors (see Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Fairclough & Wodak (1997, p. 277) emphasize that “discourse [...] cannot be comprehended without factoring in context.” Political discussions during wartime can be inconsistent as they often include numerous illogical claims. A broad spectrum of factors must be taken into account: language application in public and private contexts, formal and informal speaking and written and multimedia communication are thoroughly examined (Nordquist, 2020). Regarding the flow of meanings, it suggests a link between unity and the original, along with further considerations for the concept of a text, as well as information collected over time from diverse sources representing common knowledge.

Syntactical elements, logical tense arrangement, and any assumptions tied to common knowledge all play a role in coherence. Halliday & Hasan (1976) claim that a text possesses texture, which sets it apart from non-text entities (p. 2). In terms of wording, there is no distinct separation between grammar and lexicon; the main idea is that grammar conveys broader meanings, whereas the lexicon conveys more specific ones. The cohesive connections align with Halliday & Hasan’s (1976, p. 14) assertion that cohesion is represented through both grammar and lexicon. Cohesion, characterized as a network of lexical, grammatical, and other relationships, is also described by Beaugrande & Dressler (1981) as a means to “provide links between various parts of a text” (p. 73). Regardless, the surface alone is not conclusive; there is an interaction between cohesion and the other textual criteria for effective communication. Ultimately, cohesive text represents the final outcome of either writing or speaking (Neubert & Shreve, 1992, pp. 102-3), with components that mutually connect within a sequence of some kind (Hatim & Mason, 1997, p. 15).

## 2.2 Local Coherence in Political Discourse

In linguistics, local coherence provides a text with its semantic meaning, and various metrics are available to connect sentences and paragraphs (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). It essentially enables analysts to explore how language is utilized to create specific power structures and social ideologies. Through examining the cohesive ties and associations, CDA reveals

how language usage can marginalize specific groups or reinforce prevailing power dynamics. As a result, local coherence is an essential element of CDA since it aids in revealing how language influences our perception of social, political, and cultural matters. CDA is an analytical method that examines language and communication within their social and political settings. Language use is examined through three stages: textual, discursive/interactional, and social (cf. Fairclough, 1989, 1995), as well as considering historical and psycholinguistic factors. It serves as “a valuable instrument for comprehending how media texts aid in the formation of social reality” (Hesmondhalgh, 2006, p. 93) and examines the relationship between language and power, along with the function of discourse in influencing social and political realities (Wodak, 2001, p. 14).

As a sophisticated approach utilized in discourse analysis, CDA examines language as a type of social activity that explores how speech or writing contributes to the formation of social and political authority. Fairclough's method comprises three tiers: a broad tier relating to the text, a medium tier connected to oratory, and a narrow tier dealing with the connection to other texts and discourses. Fairclough's (1989) *Language and Power* presents three phases: description, interpretation, and explanation. The initial stage is further divided into three components: vocabulary, grammar, and structure. The second consists of four sub-stages: the utterance surface, the utterance meaning that encompasses situational context and local coherence, and global coherence, which pertains to the intertextual context. The third includes two sub-stages: social factors arising from historical conflicts and social impacts that could influence the future (cf. Fairclough, 1995). At present, coherence is a key component and is categorized into two types: local and global. The former pertains to the relationships between clauses, whereas the latter pertains to how ideas are linked to the larger societal culture (van Dijk, 2019).

### 2.3 Formal Properties of Literary Language

CDA examines spoken and written texts to identify the discursive foundations of power, inequality, domination, and prejudice. It investigates how a text is replicated within specific social, political, and historical contexts. CDA examines the often perplexing connections among discursive events, practices, and texts as well as social and cultural structures, relationships, and processes (Fairclough, 1993). This model shows how the same principle is true for acquiring additional knowledge about a language. Through three levels of examination, CDA illustrates how authors and speakers manipulate language to meet their personal requirements (Nielson & Nørreklit, 2009, p. 205). Discourse analysis utilizes various qualitative research methods to study language usage within social contexts. To put it differently, the current case study focuses on the textual and analytical methods of discourse analysis. Focusing not just on technical aspects, CDA also investigates how language influences the social and political landscape and how this relationship operates in reverse, as the internal analysis of language merges with the external study of context to see how social connections and practices shape the text.

The three-phase CDA theory introduced by Fairclough in 1989 acts as the fundamental theoretical framework for this area of research. These systematic three phases consist of description, interpretation, and explanation. The initial phase underpinning this research comprises three elements (or formal language characteristics): vocabulary, grammar, and text structure. Vocabulary contributes to enhancing a person's word stock, ensuring speech clarity, and promoting effective interaction. Authors will find it easier to write faster, and readers will experience clearer comprehension as language is evaluated and refined. This involves choosing to create content and assisting in its development based on the social networks of the participants. To create sentences without spelling or grammatical mistakes and to guarantee that the meaning is conveyed accurately and clearly, it is essential to use pronouns, nominalization, active or passive voice, positive or negative constructions, connected phrases, and active or passive verbs. Regarding the third point, organizing text simplifies the process of engaging with it and evaluating its effects in both the short and long term. In 1995, Fairclough formulated the identical hypothesis.

### 3. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative case-study approach to explore key themes in DA as examples of corpus-based research. It begins with a literature review to establish a theoretical foundation regarding the continuity of senses in militaristic discourse, local coherence in political language, and formal features of literary expression. The research selects different master's theses to show The reason for choosing these three theses is because they show different types of discourses: political speeches, a political memoir, and a socio-political novel. This difference among these types provides evidence that it is possible to compare methodical approaches among genres and to reflect how corpus- based analysis can be applied in different contexts. Then the research analyzes these issues in three theses concerning their methods of data collection, thoughtful choices of textual or personal samples (related to the pertinent texts or populations and sample sizes), in addition to the tools that were intended, created, validated, and implemented. Additionally, the techniques for analyzing data were discovered. Crucial components like linguistic corpus/corpora, sampling and instrumentation, and methodology in discourse-analysis investigations are discerned via thematic analysis. The findings are combined to assess the role of linguistic corpora across different pertinent areas, emphasizing their potential for in-depth analyses, creative results, and measurable benefits for both the particular field of study and society. This approach truly provides a deep insight into how corpus-based studies can aid in gaining specific, contextual, and thorough understanding of certain real-world subjects.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 Volodymyr Zelensky's (2022) Addresses

This MA thesis aimed to examine the continuity of meanings in warlike discourse during the Russia-Ukraine crisis, based on the speeches given by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in 2022. As a corpus-based case study in discourse analysis, it explored what kinds of cohesive devices political discourse might include regarding lexical reiteration, the extent to which political speeches during a conflict like the Russia-Ukraine crisis were cohesively collocative, and whether the consistency of meanings in Zelensky's addresses truly relied on the audience's background knowledge (Rabea, 2023). The political/military speeches in question were collected from the presidential website of Ukraine, as presented by Zelenskyy beginning on February 24, 2022. Numerous speeches were located on the website, prompting us to establish a unique sampling frame featuring eight speeches selected over an extensive period of the war. The initial speech was given on the same day the war began (i.e., February 24, 2022), and the subsequent speeches were selected from the very start of the months they were released, concluding with one delivered on August 16 (refer to Table 1 for additional details).

Table 1. Titles, dates and word-counds of the subject addresses (Rabea, 2023)

Sr.	Title of the speech	Date delivered	Word count
1	Address by the President of Ukraine	Feb 24	380
2	Missiles at the Central Square of Kharkiv is Terrorism	Mar 01	341
3	We All Equally Want to Win	Apr 01	685
4	Today We Finally Managed to Start Evacuation	May 01	420
5	Every Person Matters!	Jun 02	500
6	European Integration of Ukraine is a Gurantee	Jul 01	600
7	The Power of the Democratic World is Well-felt	Aug 01	420
8	Russian Troops Must Be Immediately Withdrawn	Aug 15	460

Utilizing a mixed-mode approach, this research's objectives were primarily centered around the cohesive devices in political discourse, concerning lexical reiteration and discursive collocation. Before performing the analysis, the eight speeches were thoroughly examined to address the first and second questions; tables were created, and the datasets were manually extracted and reviewed. The third objective, though, was survey-oriented; a questionnaire made up of four fundamental sections—focused on how much each speech related to the key events of the month, had substantial influence in securing particular ideas and interests, encompassed political realities shaped in and through discourse, and reflected a political will consistently articulated into social action—was conducted. The individuals involved in this survey received eight addresses in English, as well as multiple news articles and announcements in Arabic from both Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian officials, sourced from the Aljazeera channel on Facebook as a supportive translation resource. The survey was given to a group of 15 highly educated individuals. Subsequently, all the responses underwent statistical analysis for

frequencies, percentages, means and medians, standard deviations, and other relevant metrics.

In political war discourse, the ongoing flow of meanings is supported by repetition, which proves to be more advantageous in defensive speeches compared to offensive ones. Repetition took the form of anaphora and epistrophe, while other types of reiterations included synonymy, superordinate, and discourse-organizing. Collocation refers to groups of words that often appear together or repeated phrases, highlighting how words naturally fit together instead of how they are arranged. It is an evident pairing of words that can be seen as both common and uncommon. Moreover, the meaning in martial dialogue like Zelensky's (2022) *Addresses* could be improved by the use of collocations that favor the aggressive ones. Additionally, background knowledge as a key element of coherence in discourse was the reader's understanding of the specific ideas, situations, and matters associated with the terms employed in the text. Thus, the readers had to connect with the key events of the month, wield genuine influence for solidifying concepts and interests, have political realities shaped through discourse, and possess the political drive translated into social action.

#### **4.2 Barack Obama's (2020) *A Promised Land***

The case study aims to explore how local coherence enhances the text's effectiveness. This is an MA thesis in discourse analysis that seeks to understand the mechanisms of local coherence in Barack Obama's (2020) *A Promised Land* and how it is influenced by larger societal and linguistic contexts. In general, this thesis aims to enhance our comprehension of the function of local coherence in generating meaning and organization within written discourse (Almustafa, 2022). It focused on the formal characteristics that primarily lead to local coherence, examining how effectively this supports both the meaning of utterances and the structure of the text, as well as the degree to which broader structures like power dynamics and linguistic functions contribute to it in a politician's memoir. The text in question was a recently released book by the first African American to hold the presidency of the United States. He possessed a law degree from Harvard University and received the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in global diplomacy and collaboration.

Since the book in question comprised 751 pages divided into twenty-seven chapters, this study's sample size was represented by Chapter 18 from the fifth section called "The World As It Is," which offers a general summary of the book's content, focusing on Obama's humanitarian initiatives. For the research instrument, a content-related tool was utilized in the format of a series of brief questions (refer to Figure 1). Utilizing Fairclough's (1989, 1995) CDA framework, the work was evaluated by several experts in applied linguistics until it was determined to be valid and/or reliable to some degree for accomplishing the overarching aim of the study: investigating the formal or linguistic characteristics that might foster local coherence, analyzing the meaning of utterances and text organization, and uncovering the effects of broader structures on local coherence in a chosen portion of Barak Obama's (2020) *A Promised Land*. The datasets were examined using both qualitative

and quantitative approaches, taking into account concepts that could potentially be improved by relevant statistical analyses (if applicable).

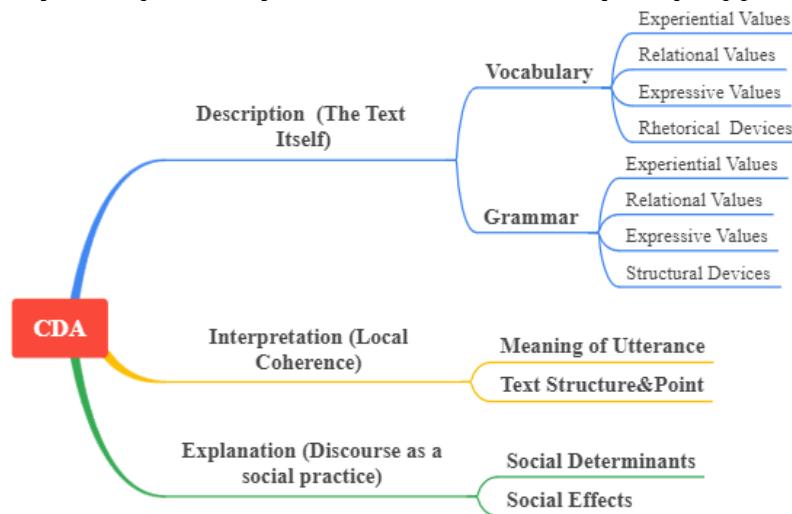


Figure 1. Research instrument of the present thesis (Almustafa, 2022)

Power dynamics existed in Obama's interactions with family, advisors, and adversaries, examining the same to ensure consistency throughout the text. Additionally, he utilizes different linguistic functions (such as anecdotes and rhetorical techniques) to link various sections of his narrative and highlight specific themes. The influence of power dynamics and language roles on local coherence is examined, along with their effects on utterance interpretation and text organization. A critical examination of the local coherence in this narrative may yield various distinct suggestions for future studies and possible consequences. The idea of local coherence can be further explored in various political speeches alongside the linguistic characteristics and textual techniques employed to establish coherence across diverse contexts and genres. Also, a contrastive examination of Obama's speeches throughout his presidency could investigate how his utilization of linguistic elements changed over time and how this influenced his capacity to attain local coherence. This study may also be broadened to encompass a more diverse selection of political leaders or addresses, analyzing how various contexts influence the application of local coherence.

#### 4.3 Khaled Hosseini's (2007) *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

This MA thesis conducted a critical analysis of the formal elements in Khaled Hosseini's (2007) *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, exploring the text's grammatical attributes, lexical characteristics, and broader structural aspects, with the goal of attaining local coherence. As a case study based on a corpus, it employed Fairclough's (1989, 1995) framework to analyze a socio-political literary work (Janem, 2023). Assisting in adding, altering, or removing any theoretical elements, the thesis aimed to enhance the target audience's comprehension of the novel regarding culture and language. Three topics were addressed: sentence types and styles, ideologically disputed words/phrases and their meanings, and the dynamics of power and language roles. The novel portrays a surreal reality instigated by war in an eastern

nation like Afghanistan, characterized by numerous leaders, diverse values, and distinct orientations, leading to a total breakdown of societal structure. Comprising four sections across three hundred and seventy-two pages, the fictional work concludes with a ray of hope, ultimately assuring its audience that love has the power to transform reality and illuminate the shadows.

Every section of the novel consists of parts: fifteen in the first section, eleven in the second, twenty-one in the third, and four in the fourth. The sample was selected to depict the initial section of the second part (i.e. the sixteenth section of Part 2). This research sample underwent a critical analysis based on the initial phase of Fairclough's (1989) CDA theory (i.e. description), focusing on the formal characteristics of the language used. The selected portion of the novel features three consecutive scenes: at home and the route to school, during that day's class, and after school concludes, with Laila as the central character in each (refer to Table 2 for a scene description). To examine the research sample mentioned earlier, a content-oriented research tool was utilized, consisting of minor questions arising from the aforementioned research inquiries (Hawamdeh et al., 2024, p. 19). It was evaluated by several experts until it was determined to be procedurally valid and/or reliable. The datasets were examined both qualitatively and quantitatively by taking into account concepts that could potentially be improved by relevant statistical analyses.

Sr.	Title of the Scene	Description	Equality
1	In the house and the way to school	This scene start as Laila gets up for her school and the way to school on her father's motorcycle.	Semi-equal
2	In class that day	This scene represent an unequal conversation between Laila and her teacher Khala Ranmal.	Unequal
3	When school let out	This is an equal scene of some personal chats between Laila and her classmates Giti and Hasina.	Equal

Table 2. Description of the chosen segment of the novel in three scenes (Janem, 2023)

Demonstrating the strong organization of Afghan society, Hosseini's (2007) *A Thousand Splendid Suns* upholds the familial structures that remain largely intact despite the numerous conflicts and struggles faced. The predominant type of sentence identified was emotive, active, and declarative. The most common kind of complex sentences identified was logical, active, and declarative. It likewise helps understand the characteristics of the norms and traditions of Afghan society. The social ideology was sentimental, familial, intellectual, gender-oriented, and conventional. For the religious and political fields, two sub-fields of each were identified religiously (i.e. traditional and strategic) and another two were identified politically (i.e. social and intellectual). The book discusses social events more explicitly, with the familial sub-type the most common. Understanding the power/equality allowed us to improve the critical analysis of the subject discourse. Equality was categorized into equal, semi-equal, and unequal, along with participants, power dynamics, and subject matter. The equal conversational instances were observed to occur more often than the other semi-equal and unequal

types. The language functions were categorized into descriptive, informative, instructive, and persuasive.

## 5. Discussion

In the analysis of the three theses, it is found that the study applied consistently four procedures; data sampling to define the scope of analysis, a theoretical framework to guide interpretation, instruments of coding tools to support systematic examination, and analytical methods to ensure that findings were reliable and replicable. It can be said that these procedures together shape the essence of the methodological framework in the field of discourse analysis.

The three theses applied corpus-based approaches in different ways that matched its material. Zelensky's speeches were analyzed by political discourses corpus, Obama's memoir was analyzed as a textual corpus, and Hossein's novel was studied as socio-literary corpus. In each thesis, the textual corpus approved that it is possible to follow cohesion, coherence, and other formal features. This can be an indicator that corpus approaches can be adapted to different genres with providing a systematic foundation for analysis.

Viewing the three cases together, it shows that discourse analysis depends on a clear methodological framework. They also reflect that corpus-based approaches can be applied across political, autobiographical, and literary texts. Thus, these findings show that corpus approaches are not only flexible but also dependable, providing useful perceptions for research and practice such as translation and political communication.

In reconciling the results of the three case studies, it is clear that discourse analysis relies on a small set of shared procedures: sampling relevant data, using theory to steer interpretation, constructing tools for analysis, and implementing systematic methods. It is found that each thesis gave different value to these procedures, and they show a coherent structure that reinforce discourse analysis as methodological practice. Also, this reconciliation shows that corpus-based approaches are not isolated instruments but part of a broader framework that confirms consistency and shows a meaningful connection across studies.

## 6. Conclusions

Every significant topic or case study mentioned in this article represented examples of methodological frameworks in corpus-based discourse analysis research. A condition where all elements or concepts connect and create a cohesive entirety indicates that a text gains meaning via the arrangement of its material, which includes both apparent and hidden relationships. In a conflict-driven political environment like the Russia-Ukraine crisis, the flow of meaning is ensured through a precise organization of sentences and paragraphs. The audience of this political discussion should identify the recurring theme in each wartime address, influenced by several factors. Local coherence is another essential linguistic idea examined in Obama's memoir, facilitating clear and effective communication. By delivering a uniform message through speeches, interviews, and other communication methods, Obama succeeded in cultivating a devoted and steadfast following among his supporters. He acknowledges the value of linguistic diversity and the difficulties of engaging with various communities. Diverse linguistic functions create a unified story and lead the reader through an intricate narrative while preserving a sense of consistency.

Seeking to expose hidden biases and ideologies while highlighting how language upholds current power dynamics, CDA examines various communication methods. A variety of analytical instruments are utilized (e.g. trends in language usage, social settings where language is applied, and methods through which language depicts social groups). In this context, the CDA theory regarding the formal features of a literary (socio-political) language can also be reinforced. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* may illustrate how language selections aid in forming and expressing the Afghan identity through the use of the text's language. Innovative concepts can expand numerous limits of understanding. Another crucial implication of this is the significance of acknowledging how discourse influences political narratives. Hosseini's deliberate choice of language illustrates how discourse can shape public opinion and validate political behaviors. The same acts as a strong instrument for molding actual images and real circumstances. All of these systematic inquiries could be conducted more effectively through corpus-based research that utilizes both qualitative and quantitative examinations of identified concepts and statistical data.

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