Rhetorical and Content Devices for Inviting Collective Applause in Benjamin Netanyahu's Congress Speeches

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Abstract

This study focuses on the rhetorical and content devices used to elicit collective applause in the political discourse of conflict, specifically in two speeches delivered by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Congress in 2015 and 2024. The study's objectives are to identify the devices used, the speaker's motivations for using them, and the variations in applause durations between the devices. 114 instances of collective applause were collected from authorised resources to be investigated. The study finds the content device 'advocacy for certain policy in the future' to be the most frequent in the 2015 speech, while the rhetorical device 'headline-punchline' is the most frequent in the 2024 speech. Additionally, the speaker employs each tool to make certain assertions in order to achieve the primary goal later on, which may include promoting a particular policy in the future, also, the speaker's employed devices are related to his aims, which are correlated to the political context. Further, in the 2015 speech, the highest instances had the greatest total applause. In contrast, in the 2024 speech, the devices with the highest instances did not receive the most total applause duration. This indicates that the content and context of the device have a significant impact on the elicitation of collective applause.

1. BACKGROUND

Political speeches constitute a communicative chance for politicians to interact with the audience and achieve certain communicative aims. For Atkinson (1984a) and Heritage & Greatbatch (1986), political speakers use rhetorical devices in "designing a target message, emphasising the message, signalling an invitation to respond, and providing a clear projectable completion of the message" (Choi & Bull, 2023, p. 52). Further, many scholars (e.g., Atkins & Finlayson, 2014; Harris, 2013; Zakariya et al., 2018) considered *persuasion* as the ultimate goal for political speeches. Anyway, Zakariya et al. (2018, p. 95) considered the absence of rhetorical language in political speeches "approximately impossible." Rhetoric in political discourse has attracted many researchers (e.g., Crines, 2013; Fengjie et al., 2016; Finlayson, 2004; Martin, 2013; Moon, 2013). Anyway, content devices can also invite collective applause. In other words, applause can be induced non-rhetorically according to the content of the message rather than the design of the message.

This article draws on the recent studies on the devices that invite collective applause. As a part of the audience response, applause can be taken as a non-verbal sign of agreement, support, admiration, or other signs of a positive response. The study of rhetorical devices for inviting applause has been considered by scholars like (Bull & Waddle, 2023; Bull & Wells, 2002; Gillick & Bamman, 2018; Heritage & Greatbatch, 1986; O'Gorman & Bull, 2020).

However, the vast majority of researchers considered the electoral campaign frame, while very few researchers considered speeches outside the frame of elections.

Bull (2006) distinguished between invited and uninvited applause in political speeches. In the previous implications for Atkinson's, carried by (Bull, 2002, 2003; Bull & Noordhuizen, 2000). Invited applause is related to rhetorical devices while uninvited applause occurs despite the absence of rhetorical devices and as a response to the content of the speech; in other words, the content of the speech can be related to emotive side of the audience. For (Bull's, 2006, pp. 576–577) re-conceptualization of how applause occurs, uninvited applause is initiated by the audience without having a clear signal by the speaker. Also, the content devices are an integral part of applause inviting.

This article is concerned with political speeches in times of conflict; more precisely, the article considers political speeches by the Israeli prime minister, Benjamen Netanyahu, to Congress in Washington in 2015 and 2024. Benjamin Netanyahu's speech to Congress in Washington on March 3, 2015 has received many criticisms; McGreal (2015) criticised Netanyahu's speech for being part of his election campaign to attract more voters; also, Netanyahu did not provide any alternatives for the political complexities considering Iran's nuclear weapon. Moreover, Connolly (2015) discussed the electoral benefits of Netanyahu and suggested that the White House is considering an interference in the American negotiating policy by Netanyahu. Considering the 2024 speech, a huge media bubble started ahead of the speech and after the delivery of the speech. After the speech, according to Knickmeyer (2024, para 21), former Speaker Nancy Pelosi called Netanyahu's speech "the worst presentation of any foreign dignitary invited and honoured with the privilege of addressing the Congress." Moreover, France 24[1] news agency addressed the boycott of the speech by dozens of Democrats and the thousands of protesters who were outside the Capitol. On the contrary, the *applause* during the speech attracted many considerations; Zengerle and Spetalnick (2024) regarded Netanyahu's speech and asserted his commitment to his far-right coalition even though it goes against Biden's administration policy considering the existence of Palestinian state; further, stressing the alliance between Israel and America was present in addition to the call for an alliance with neighboring Aran countries to stand against Iran.

1.1. Political conflict

According to Sørli et al. (2005, p. 141), "Conflict in the *Middle East* is a recurring feature in international politics, academic literature, and current news coverage." The ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict has an impact on the whole political atmosphere around the globe. This conflict has been going on for over 77 years now and still shows no hope for peace. Further, Anthony et al. (2015, p. 15) added that "For much of the past century, the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians has been a defining feature of the Middle East." The Palestinian-Israeli political conflict exceeded the geographical boundaries of the *Middle East* and constituted a ground for further divisions in other societies around the world. The complexity of a particular conflict starts with: who was there first? Who has the religious right to be there? Who started the conflict? All these questions, followed by an endless strand of answers, religious proofs, and historical proofs, contribute to the complexity of the ongoing conflict.

However, the impact of such conflict would ultimately influence the political speaker as a defender for his or her case, as the voice of truth who tells the absolute truth, or as a peace seeker who cannot make peace because of the other side(s). In other words, a political speaker would be affected by the conflict he or she is a part of, and as a result, the words of the speaker

would be of greater significance since his or her speech constitutes a chance make his\her point. This article aims to find out how conflict affects political speakers considering using rhetorical devices to invite applause.

1.2. Objectives and Questions

This article aims to investigate the rhetorical and content devices employed to invite applause in the political discourse of conflict. The investigation seeks to find the employed rhetorical devices, their frequency of use, the durations of applause, and the difference in durations if any exist. In order to attain the above aims, the following questions will be addressed:

1. What are the rhetorical and content devices used in political discourse of conflict?

2. What is the aim of employing rhetorical and content devices that invite applause in political conflict in the speeches?

3. Is there a difference in the applause durations of the employed devices in the speeches?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The first attempt to understand how applause is invited in communication was attributed to Atkinson (1983, 1984a). The researcher puts forward some of the basics for inviting applause in political speeches. The basic idea of applause is *that it does not happen randomly* but as a response to the speaker's usage of actions. Also, the audience is invited to applause by a restricted number of rhetorical devices. (Atkinson, 1983, 1984a) proposed four rhetorical devices for applause inviting in political speeches: *contrast, three-part list, naming, and gratitude*. Possible criticism of Atkinson's (1984a) work may be accounted for in the analysis of selected extracts. Further, (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1986) followed a comprehensive sampling method with 476 speeches and identified another five rhetorical devices for inviting applause: puzzle–solution, headline–punchline, position taking, combination, and pursuit (Bull, 2006).

In addition, six content devices for inviting applause were introduced by Heritage & Greatbatch (1986, p. 190) and reviewed by other researchers like (Bull, 2000; Bull & Wells, 2002): *external attacks, general statements of support or approval for the speaker's party, internal attacks, advocacy of particular policy positions, commendations of particular individuals within the speaker's party, and combinations* (Dye, 2018). Moreover, *"personal/political accomplishments"* and *"value statements/encouraging promises about future and/or country"* content devices were added by Dye (2018, p. 15).

In the past few decades, there was a growing interest in investigating rhetoric devices for inviting applause; Bull & Feldman (2011) examined 36 speeches delivered during the Japanese general election in 2005. The study investigated applause, laughter, and cheering as affiliative audiences' possible invited responses. *Jokes* and *asking for support* were the most frequent devises, with 24.9% and 20.7%, respectively. Moreover, 58.7% of the audience's responses received applause.

Bull & Miskinis (2014) investigated 11 political speeches by President Barack Obama (Democrat) and Governor Mitt Romney (Republican) in the 2012 presidential elections. The study included 16 rhetorical devices and showed that list was the most used rhetorical device, followed by contrast and compilations, respectively. However, the researchers made a distinction between implicit and explicit devices; implicit devices include lists, combinations, contrasts, position-taking, puzzle-solution, headline-punchline, pursuits, naming, negative naming, and campaign activities. Explicit rhetorical devices include expressing gratitude,

jokes, salutations, asking for support, requesting agreement, and asking for confirmation. The results of the study showed that implicit devices were highly used by candidates (Obama 82%; Romney 81.41%), while explicit devices were less used (Obama 14.43%; Romney 14.82%).

Further, O'Gorman & Bull (2020) studied applause invitations in 14 political speeches by two opposing British party political leaders, Theresa May (TM) and Jeremy Corbyn (JC), in 2016 and during the general election campaign of 2017. Considering Atkinson (1984a), Heritage & Greatbatch (1986), and Bull & Wells (2002), O'Gorman & Bull (2020, pp. 9–12) has made an insightful review on rhetorical devices for inviting applause and introduced 11 rhetorical devices for inviting applause:

1. Contrast: introducing an item with its opposite.
2. List: a three-part list of words, phrases or sentences may signal the audience when to applaud.
3. Puzzle–solution: the speaker provides a problem and then the solution.
4. Headline–punchline: in this device, the speaker begins by expressing his\her desire to make a declaration, pledge, or announcement and then proceed to make it.
5. Position taking: the speaker starts with describing the state of affairs and later takes an evaluative stance with praise or condemnation.
6. Pursuit: this device is used to stimulate applause actively when audience does not show the anticipated response for a certain message.
7. Naming: by naming an individual or a group, the speaker invites audience to show appreciation by applause.
8. Gratitude: this device is usually combined with naming; however, it includes a clear thanking of certain individual or group.
9. Negative naming: the speaker "ridicules or condemns" someone's actions.
10. Joke: the speaker states a joke to invite laughter and applause.
11. Combination: more than one device is used to invite applause.

For Theresa May, the *list* device was used mostly with 19.5%, while *position-taking* was the most frequent device by Jeremy Corbyn with 21.7%. Interestingly, the study shows the average durations of applause and found audience applause length to be random. However, the combination, which includes the use of two devices to invite applause, has a high percentage of occurrences (18.2% for Theresa May and 19.3% for Jeremy Corbyn). Although both politicians seek the same goal, they used different devices to invite collective applause, which signifies the diversity of such devices' use.

3. METHODOLOGY
3.1. Sample

The study includes Israeli former and current Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (BN) as the speaker in two speeches in the American Congress. Video recordings were obtained from YouTube. Speeches were transcribed according to script versions of the speeches; speeches sources are in the appendix. The duration of each applause was determined by specifying the starting time and end time of each applause in the speech. The speeches included 114 instances of applause. The speeches' durations and instances are introduced in Table 1.

Speech \Year	Duration	Number of applauses
Speech 1. March 3, 2015	43:24 minutes	39
Speech 2. July 24, 2024	55:09 minutes	75
Total	98:33 minutes	114

Table 1. *speeches' durations and number of applauses*

The audiences in all of the speeches are the American Congress members. The Congress is a legislative branch that encompasses the House of Representatives and the Senate. 435 members of the House of Representatives serve for two years, while 100 senators serve for six years[2]. The audience in Congress is divided into Democrats and Republicans. Table 1 shows the distribution of Congress members in the occasions of BN speeches[3].

Congress (years)	Democrats	Republicans
114th (2015-2017)	188	247
118th (2023-2025)	213	222

Table 2. *speeches' audience*

3.2. Instrument

This study attempts to examine the rhetorical and content devices that were employed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to invite collective applause in two speeches delivered for the American Congress. We located instances of collective applause alongside the applause-inducing discourse to identify the rhetorical and content devices the speaker used. A qualitative content analysis approach was used to analyse the retrieved discourse; in other words, 114 instances of collective applause were analysed for the employed devices and the applause durations.

3.3. Data collection procedures and data analysis

The data was collected unobtrusively; video recordings were obtained from YouTube. Speeches were transcribed according to script versions of the speeches. The duration of each applause was determined by specifying the starting time and end time of each applause in the speech. The analysis includes the text that precedes each applause to determine the rhetorical or content device used. The analysis included rhetorical and content devices that invite applause in political speeches. The following rhetorical devices in table 3 are included:

	Devices	Description	Reference
1.	Contrast	introducing an item with its opposite.	Atkinson, (1984a)
2.	List	a three-part list of words, phrases or sentences may signal the audience when to applaud.	Atkinson (1984a)
3.	Puzzle–solution	the speaker provides a problem and then the solution.	Heritage & Greatbatch (1986)
4.	Headline–punchline	in this device, the speaker begins by expressing his\her desire to make a declaration, pledge, announcement, or a *proclamation* and then proceed to make it.	Heritage & Greatbatch (1986)

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[2]The data retrieved from https://www.visitthecapitol.gov/explore/about-congress

[3] The data retrieved from https://history.house.gov/Institution/Party-Divisions/Party-Divisions/

5.	Position taking	the speaker starts with describing the state of affairs and later takes an evaluative stance with praise or condemnation.	Heritage & Greatbatch (1986)
6.	Pursuit	this device is used to stimulate applause actively when audience does not show the anticipated response for a certain message.	Heritage & Greatbatch (1986)
7.	Naming	by naming an individual or a group, the speaker invites audience to show appreciation by applause.	Atkinson, (1984a)
8.	Expressing gratitude	this device is usually combined with naming; however, it includes a clear thanking of certain individual or group	Atkinson (1984a)
9.	Expressing Appreciation	Speaker thanks audience for their attendance or support	Bull & Feldman (2011)
10.	Negative naming	the speaker "ridicules or condemns" someone's actions.	Bull & Wells (2002)
11.	Joke	the speaker states a joke to invite laughter and applause.	Bull & Wells (2002)
12.	Combination	more than one device is used to invite applause.	Atkinson, (1984a)
13.	Request for Agreement/Asking for Confirmation	Asking a question to audience	Bull & Feldman (2011)
14.	Asking for Support	Speaker directly asks for support	Bull & Feldman (2011)
15.	Greetings/Salutations	When a speaker introduces himself or others.	Bull & Feldman (2011)
16.	Quoting	Citing others as evidence	Atkins & Finlayson (2014)

Table3. *Rhetorical devices*

Also, table 4 introduces the included Content devices:

	Devices	Description	Reference
1.	External Attacks	Attacking a person or a group.	Bull & Feldman (2011), Heritage & Greatbatch, (1986)
2.	Advocacy of Particular Policy Positions	Supporting certain political stand whether current or in the future.	Bull & Feldman (2011), Heritage & Greatbatch (1986)

3.	Commendations of particular individuals or factions	Praise an individual or a group from the speaker's side or the audience's side	Bull & Feldman, (2011), Heritage & Greatbatch, (1986)
4.	Personal/political accomplishment	Speaker presents his\her personal or his country's *political* or *military* achievements.	Dye (2018)
5.	value statement/encouraging promise about future and/or country	Speaker addresses future acts that audience approves.	Dye (2018)

Table 4. *Content devices*

It is worth noting that those rhetorical and content devices are primarily concerned with electoral activities. Thus, there are differences in the audience, not the speaker's country, the context of political conflict, and the aim of the speaker, which is not to collect votes. Such differences may implicate different results. For example, in rhetorical devices, personal or political accomplishments can be subdivided into political and military accomplishments. Moreover, the headline-punchline device can be used to announce something for the first time, make a pledge, or make a proclamation, which indicates stating something in public in a definite way[4]. Quoting is another rhetorical device by Atkins & Finlayson (2014) is considered. Commendations can be of an individual from the speaker's side or the audience's side; also, advocacy of particular policy positions in discourse of conflict can have different implications as the speaker may advocate a current policy by his side or by another country's side or advocate a future policy by his or another country's side. All of these divisions are considered in the analysis.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section is devoted to introducing the analysis results and carrying out a discussion according to the research's questions.

4.1. First question: What are the rhetorical and content devices used in political discourse of conflict?

The results show that there is a great difference in using rhetorical and content devices for inviting collective applause in the speeches under study. The main difference is located in the use of the content device *advocacy of particular policy positions,* with 28.2% as the most frequent device in 2015 speech, while the rhetorical device headline-punchline was the most frequent in 2024 speech with 17.3%. Also, in the 2015 speech, 8 rhetorical devices and 4 content devices were employed, while in the 2024 speech, 9 rhetorical devices and 5 content devices were employed. Results are introduced in table 5.

	Devices	2015 speech	2024 speech
	Rhetorical devices		
1.	Naming	2 (5.1%)	**8 (10.7%)**
2.	Gratitude	6 (15.4%)	**8 (10.7%)**
3.	Puzzle-solution	1 (2.6%)	**1 (1.3%)**
4.	Headline-punchline	3 (7.7%)	**13 (17.3%)**
5.	Position-taking	3 (7.7%)	**0 (0%)**

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[4] h1ttps://www.britannica.com/dictionary/proclaim

6.	Negative naming	1 (2.6%)	**0 (0%)**
7.	List	1(2.6%)	**2 (2.7%)**
8.	Contrast	1 (2.6%)	**3 (4%)**
9.	Combinations	0 (0%)	**2 (2.7%)**
10.	Quote	0 (0%)	**2 (2.7%)**
11.	Joke\sarcasm	0 (0%)	**1 (1.3%)**
Content devices			
1.	External attack	4 (10.3%)	**5 (6.75)**
2.	Advocacy of Particular Policy Positions	11 (28.2%)	**9 (12%)**
3.	Commendations	3 (7.7%)	**9 (12%)**
4.	accomplishment	1 (2.6%)	**8 (10.7%)**
5.	value statement/encouraging	0 (0%)	**2 (2.7%)**
	Others	2 (5.1%)	**2 (2.7%)**

Table 5. *Percentage of rhetorical and content devices in the speeches*

Both of the most frequent devices are interesting in the sense of their multi-use. Advocacy of particular policy positions can be sub-categorised into advocacy for current policy and advocacy for policy in the future. Among 20 instances of advocacy of particular policy positions, only one advocacy was attributed to a current policy; the rest were categorised as *advocacy of a particular policy in the future*. Such advocacy encounters a call for certain political or military policies or actions in the future. The use of advocacy for a particular policy in the future while addressing Congress as a legislative branch can be seen as a description of how things should go from the speaker's benefit.

Further, the headline-punchline device stands upon the idea of giving the audience a heads-up on the following statement to catch the audience attention and later to attain applause; the speaker used this device 16 times, of which 13 were used to make a pledge. The pledges focused on the current conflict to express the speaker's commitments towards certain policies, whether political or military.

The speaker has made 12 commendations that can be classified into commendations for the speaker's side or commendations for the audience side. Commendations for the audience side can be attributed to the context of the speech, that is, the audience status as Congress members. Although Netanyahu's speech is not part of an electoral race, the speaker mentioned seven accomplishments, six of which are military accomplishments.

All in all, Netanyahu used different devices to invite applause in his speeches. The most frequent device in the 2024 speech is rhetorical, with 54% of the devices in the speech and 43% for content devices. In the 2015 speech, 46% of the devices were rhetorical, and 48% were content devices. However, the source of the controversy can be located in the percentage of applause time, which was about 31% of the total speech time in 2024 and about 20% excluding the closing statement applause.

4.2. Second question: What is the aim of employing rhetorical and content devices that invite applause in political conflict?

The primary distinction between the speeches being discussed and electoral speeches lies in the audience. The language of the speaker is based on the anticipated aims of the audience; in other words, the speaker's aims are related to what he or she can benefit from the audience. Votes are the aim of the electoral discourse, which indicates persuasion as the ultimate goal for using rhetorical and content devices. In the speeches under consideration, the aims of the speaker are related to what the audience, the Congress members, in 2015, there was a conflict

in the Middle East; however, Netanyahu's focus was on the Iran nuclear system and the deal that America has made with Iran. Most of the conflict-related statements addressed how things should be since Netanyahu considered the deal 'bad'. The contexts of the speeches and the employed devices can provide us with a clue on the conflict's impact and the speaker's aims. Connolly (2015) mentioned Netanyahu's interference in the American negotiation policy considering Iran's nuclear weapon; Netanyahu, by adhering to *advocacies in the future*, *gratitude*, and *external attacks*, asserts the wish to make a certain impact. To have a closer look into the speaker's aim, the aim of use in the most frequent devices can be as follows:

4.2.1. Advocacy for certain policy in the future

1. The remarkable alliance between Israel and the United States has always been above politics. *It must always remain* above politics.
2. *We must all stand together* to stop Iran's march of conquest, subjugation and terror."
3. First, *stop its aggression* against its neighbours in the Middle East.
4. Second, *stop supporting terrorism* around the world.
5. And third, *stop threatening to annihilate my country*, Israel, the one and only Jewish state.
6. At the very least they should insist that *Iran change its behaviour* before a deal expires.
7. If Iran doesn't change its behaviour, *the restrictions should not be lifted*.
8. Iran's nuclear program can be rolled back well-beyond the current proposal by insisting on a better deal and *keeping up the pressure on a very vulnerable regime*, especially given the recent collapse in the price of oil.
9. Now we're being told that the only alternative to this bad deal is war. That's just not true. *The alternative to this bad deal is a much better deal*.
10. To defeat ISIS and let Iran get nuclear weapons would be to win the battle, but lose the war. We can't let that happen.

The advocacies of the speaker are obviously aimed at Iran, precisely at the way America is dealing with Iran. The speaker's advocacies, except for the first and last advocacy, is telling the Congress how America should treat Iran from his perspective, which justifies the White House considering Netanyahu's speech as an interference in the American negotiating policy as Connolly (2015) suggested. In other words, the speaker is trying to make an impact on American foreign policy with Iran in a way that benefits his country.

4.2.2. Gratitude

1. I also want to acknowledge *Senator, Democratic Leader Harry Reid.*
2. I want to thank you, *Democrats and Republicans*, for your common support for Israel, year after year, decade after decade.
3. Israel is *grateful* for the support of American -- of *America's people* and of *America's presidents*, from Harry Truman to Barack Obama.
4. We appreciate all that President *Obama* has done for Israel.
5. But I know it, and I will always be *grateful to President Obama* for that support.
6. And *Israel is grateful to you, the American Congress*, for your support, for supporting us in so many ways, especially in generous military assistance and missile defence, including Iron Dome.

Except for the first gratitude, the speaker's gratitude is devoted to the *support* delivered to Israel by different sides.

4.2.3. External attacks

1. My friends, for over a year, we've been told that no deal is better than a bad deal. Well, *this is a bad deal. It's a very bad deal*.
2. If Iran wants to be treated like a normal country, *let it act like a normal country*.

3. We can insist that restrictions on Iran's nuclear program not be lifted for as long as *Iran continues its aggression in the region and in the world*.
4. So, at a time when many hope that Iran will join the community of nations, *Iran is busy gobbling up the nations.*

The external attacks are all for Iran and the deal with Iran. Such focus on Iran shows how the political conflict shapes the speech towards certain issues. The main theme of Netanyahu's 2015 speech is a demonisation of Iran by assuring its regional and international danger. The speaker wishes to impact American policy towards Iran to become more aggressive.

Netanyahu's 2024 speech came after about 10 months of military conflict in Gaza. The speaker adhered to *headline- punchlines, commendations, advocacies, naming, and gratitude*, respectively. In the 2024 speech, the context of the speech is different; a war is going on, Iran's proxies are attacking Israel, according to the speaker, and thousands of protestors are outside the Capitol. Next, we go through the most frequent devices to have a better understanding of the speaker's aims.

4.2.4. headline- punchline (pledge)

1. I met with them again yesterday and I promised them this. *I will not rest until all their loved ones are home. All of them.*
2. Yechiel, please rise so we can honour your son's sacrifice. And *I pledge* to you and to all the bereaved families of Israel, some of whom are in this hall today, *the sacrifice of your loved ones will not be in vain.*
3. It will not be in vain because for Israel, "never again" must never be an empty promise. It must always remain a sacred vow. And after October 7th, "never again" is now.
4. This would enable Hamas to survive another day, and as they vowed, to carry out October 7th again and again and again. Well, *I want to assure you*, no matter what pressure is brought to bear, *I will never allow that to happen.*
5. The ICC is trying to shackle Israel's hands and prevent us from defending ourselves. And if Israel's hands are tied, America is next. I'll tell you what else is next. The ability of all democracies to fight terrorism will be imperilled. That's what's on the line. *So let me assure you,* the hands of the Jewish state will never be shackled. Israel will always defend itself.
6. If you remember one thing, one thing from this speech, *remember this*: Our enemies are your enemies, our fight is your fight, and our victory will be your victory.
7. But let me be clear: *Israel will do whatever it must do to* restore security to our northern border and return our people safely to their homes.
8. All our enemies should know this. *Those who attack Israel will pay a very heavy price.*
9. Today, as Israel fights on the frontline of civilization, I too appeal to America: "*Give us the tools faster, and we'll finish the job faster."*
10. That's *Jerusalem*, our eternal capital never to be divided again.
11. I *promise* you this: no matter how long it takes, no matter how difficult the road ahead, Israel will not relent. Israel *will not* bend. We *will defend* our land. We will defend our people. We will fight until we achieve victory. Victory of liberty over tyranny, victory of life over death, victory of good over evil. That's our solemn commitment.

Although Netanyahu is addressing the Congress, all of his pledges are aimed at the Israeli people. That is, the speaker is making promises that are of Israeli concern: to free the hostages, to defend Israel, etc.

4.2.5. Commendations

1. *President Biden* and I have known each other for over forty years. I want to thank him for half a century of friendship to Israel and for being, as he says, a proud Zionist. *Actually, he says, a proud Irish American Zionist.*
2. My friends, for more than nine months, *Israel's soldiers* have shown boundless courage.

3. Avichail heard the news of Hamas' bloody rampage. He put on his uniform, grabbed his rifle, but he didn't have a car. So, *he ran eight miles to the frontlines of Gaza to defend his people.*

4. Ashraf too killed many terrorists. First, he defended his comrades in the military base, and he then *rushed to defend the neighbouring communities, including the devastated community of Kibbutz Be'eri.*

5. like Ashraf, the Muslim soldiers of the IDF fought alongside their Jewish, Druze, Christian and other comrades in arms with *tremendous bravery.*

6. Asa will soon return to active duty as a commander of a tank company.

7. Jonathan Ben Hamo who lost a leg in Gaza and *continued to fight.*

8. And I wish to salute the *fraternity brothers.* at the University of North Carolina who protected the American flag, *protected the American flag* against these anti-Israel protesters.

The first commendation is related to the American president Biden for his affiliation with Zionism. The last commendation is for fraternity brothers who, according to the speaker, "protected the American flag against these anti-Israel protesters." Such a statement implicitly supports the idea that being anti-Israeli equals being anti-American. However, all of the rest commendations were for Israeli soldiers' bravery and patriotism; such a tendency can be aimed towards the audience as an emotional arousing act. The speaker asserted the unity of Israeli people in the Israeli army. On the contrary, on July 7, 2024, The Times of Israel[5] reported the Israeli Channel 12 and pointed out many disagreements between the Israeli minister of defence and Netanyahu. Such commendations incorporated with the soldiers' heroism in the battle may be part of Netanyahu's attempt to achieve certain *emotional impact* on the audience and to redeem the audience's, in America and Israel, support to continue the war in Gaza, which he supports as part of his plan to retrieve the hostages and make Hamas surrender.

4.2.6. Advocacy for certain policy in the future

1. Whenever and wherever we see the scourge of antisemitism, w*e must unequivocally condemn it* and resolutely fight it, without exception.

2. The war in Gaza could end tomorrow *if Hamas surrenders, disarms and returns all the hostages.*

3. But if they don't, *Israel will fight until we destroy Hamas' military capabilities* and its rule in Gaza and bring all our hostages home.

4. That's what *total victory* means, and we will settle for nothing less.

5. We must *retain overriding security* control there to prevent the resurgence of terror, to ensure that Gaza never again poses a threat to Israel.

6. Gaza *should have a civilian administration* run by Palestinians who do not seek to destroy Israel. That's not too much to ask. It's a fundamental thing that we have a right to demand and to receive.

7. *A new generation of Palestinians must no longer be taught to hate Jews* but rather to live in peace with us.

8. Following our victory, with the help of regional partners, the *demilitarization and deradicalization of Gaza* can also lead to a future of security, prosperity and peace. That's my vision for Gaza.

9. Israel will always remain America's indispensable *ally.*

10. We shall defend our common civilization. Together, we shall secure a brilliant future for both our nations.

The ninth and tenth advocacies are related to the Israeli-American alliance. The first advocacy is related to the way antisemitism should be treated. However, all of the remaining advocacies are dedicated to introducing the speaker's vision for the ongoing war in Gaza; in

other words, the advocacies are employed to define the total victory of Israel from the speaker's perspective.

4.2.7. Naming
1. Many *hostage families* are also here with us today, including *Eliyahu Bibas*.
2. We have with us also the *families of American hostages*. They're here.
3. With us today is *Lieutenant Avichail Reuven*.
4. Another Israeli is with us here today. He's standing right next to Avichail. This is Master Sergeant *Ashraf al Bahiri*.
5. A third hero, *Lieutenant Asa Sofer* is also here with us.
6. Those Accords saw peace forged between Israel and four Arab countries, and they were supported by *Republican and Democrats alike*.
7. I have a name for this new alliance. I think we should call it: *The Abraham Alliance.*

Five of the naming device instances were used to attract applause emotionally; that is, the hostages' families and Israeli soldiers are named to extract applauses. In the 2015 speech, only one case of naming was used in the same way: "With us today is Holocaust survivor and Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel." Using such guaranteed applause inviters can be a clue on the speaker's wish to be applauded a lot as a manifestation for the Congress's support.

4.2.8. Gratitude
1. I want to *thank you* [the Congress] for giving me the profound honour of addressing this great citadel of democracy for the fourth time.
2. *Noa* [the Israeli rescued hostage], we're so thrilled to have you with us today. Thank you.
3. I want to *thank President Biden* for his tireless efforts on behalf of the hostages and for his efforts to the hostage families as well.
4. I thank *President Biden for his heartful support for Israel* after the savage attack on October 7th. He rightly called Hamas "sheer evil." He dispatched two aircraft carriers to the Middle East to deter a wider war. And he came to Israel to stand with us during our darkest hour, a visit that will never be forgotten.
5. And as we defend ourselves on all fronts, I know that America *has our back*. And I thank you for it…. *All sides of the aisle* [the Congress]. *Thank you*.
6. Thank you, *President Biden,* for bringing that coalition together.
7. I want to thank *President Trump* for his leadership in brokering the historic Abraham Accords.
8. also want to thank *President Trump for all the things he did for Israel*, from recognizing Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights, to confronting Iran's aggression, to recognizing Jerusalem as our capital and moving the American embassy there.

The gratitude was attributed to the current President Biden, three times; to the former President Trump, two times; to the Congress, two times; and to one case for the rescued hostage. Anyway, the gratitude is mainly for what was given to Israel.

4.3. Question three: Is there a difference in the applause durations of the employed devices in the speeches?
The analysis of speeches included the sum of applause time for each device in seconds. The analysis showed that the devices with the highest instances had the greatest total applause duration in the 2015 speech. However, in the 2024 speech, the devices with the highest instances do not have the greatest total of applause duration; 9 instances of commendations received more applause than 13 instances of headline-punchline, and 8 instances of accomplishment received more applause than 9 instances of advocacy. The results are introduced in Figure 1.
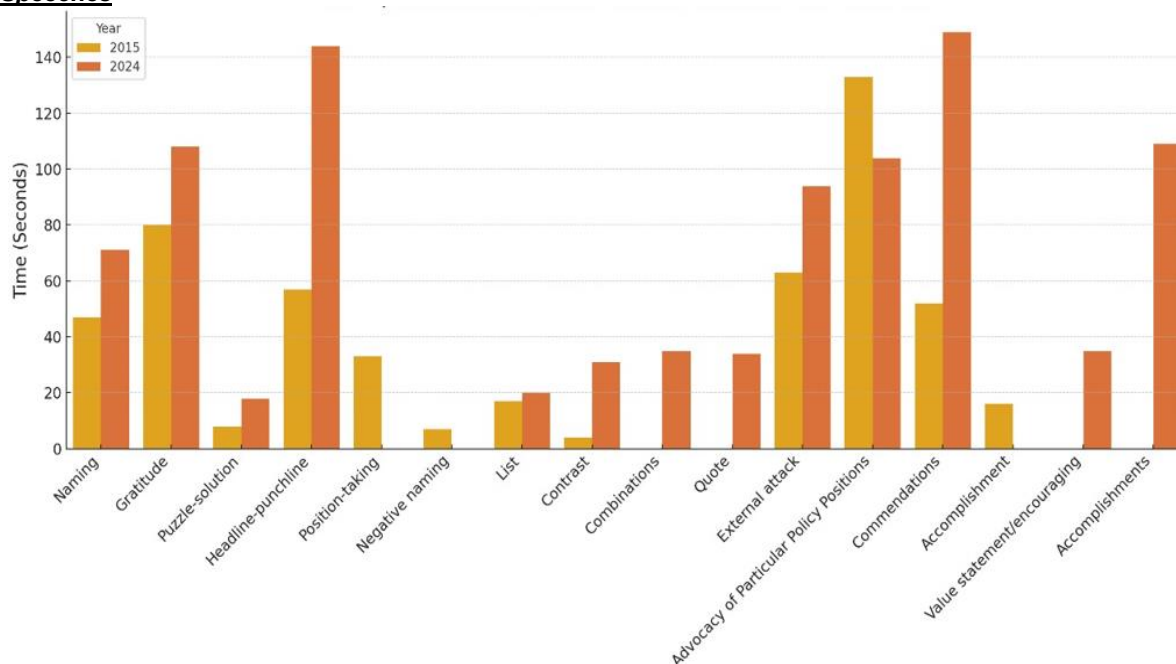
Figure1: *applause durations in 2015 and 2024 speeches*

In addition, in figure 2, the mean time for each device in the 2015 and 2024 speeches is introduced. Although the variety of occurrences and the limited number of instances prevent any general implications, it can be noticed that some devices receive high applause.
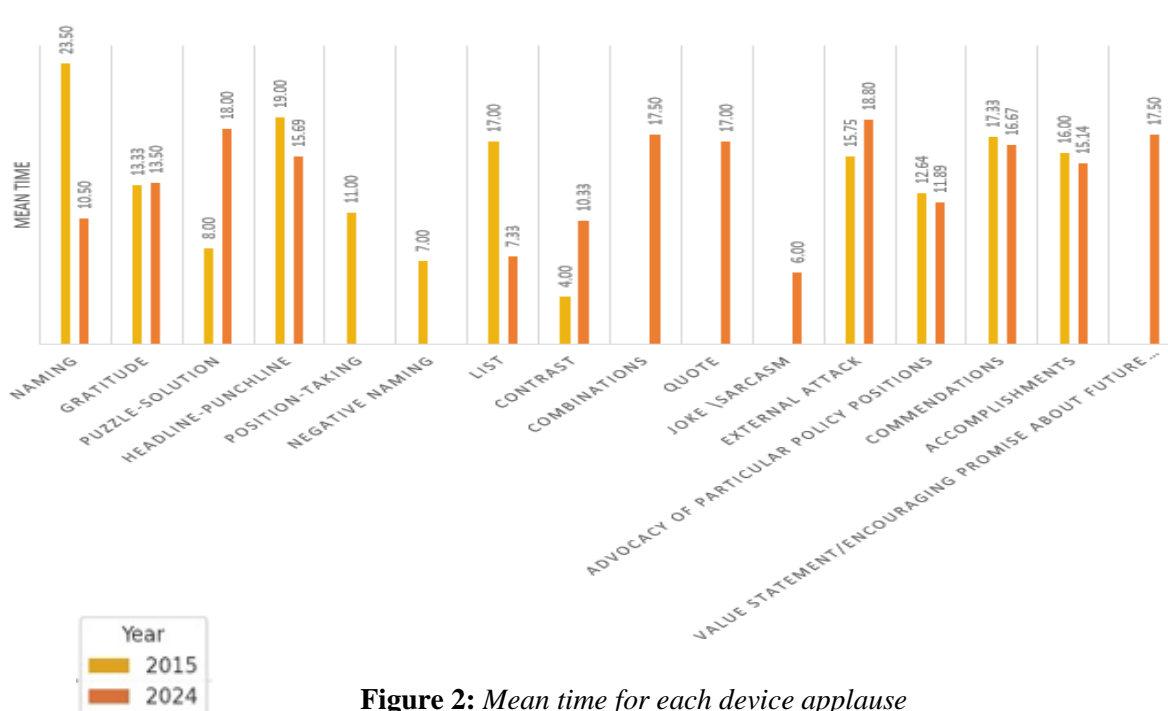

Figure 2: *Mean time for each device applause*

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study aims to investigate rhetorical and content devices that invite collective applause in the political discourse of conflict. The conducted study dealt with the same speaker, the Israeli prime minister Netanyahu, and the Congress members as audience in two speeches. The Mann-Whitney test shows a difference in applause duration between the 2015 speech and 2024 speech. The two speeches in 2015 and 2024 by the Israeli prime minister to the Congress were investigated to find the employed rhetorical and content devices for inviting applause, the speaker's aim of employing devices for inviting applause, and the duration of applauses in the speeches.

The speaker used both rhetorical and content devices to invite collective applause. The speaker employed eight rhetorical devices and four content devices in the 2015 speech; in the 2024 speech, nine rhetorical devices and five content devices were employed. Advocacy of particular policy positions, with 28.2%, was the most frequent device in 2015 speech, while the rhetorical device headline-punchline was the most frequent in 2024 speech, with 17.3%.

The previous studies considered *persuasion* as the ultimate goal of political speeches. In the 2015 speech, the combination of the employed devices signifies the speaker's wish to make a certain impact on the American position of the Iran nuclear deal to change it and have a better deal for the Israeli side. The advocacy for certain policy in the future to have more aggressive policy towards Iran and external attacks towards Iran signifies the speaker's main aim of the speech. However, with the war spilling in Gaza for more than nine months, the 2024 speech would be affected in the sense of the speaker's change in his aim to make different impact. Such impact is attained through making a great number of pledges for Israel's security, gratitude for support, naming Israeli soldiers, commendations for Israeli soldiers' heroism and American support, and advocacy for 'total victory' from the speaker's perspective. The speaker's aims changed according to the change in the political context, which in turn marked changes in the use of rhetorical and content devices.

All in all, it can be concluded that the speaker uses each device for a certain aim in order to push a major goal; in other words, each device has an independent implication, but they serve to attain an ultimate goal, which can be manifested in the advocacy device. The speaker aims to impact American policy towards Israel and have more support, which may include more aggressive acts by America towards Israel's opponents. Also, the speaker aims to impact the conflict solution by introducing his view as the right way to resolve the conflict. Such a conclusion is supported by the status of the audience and the context of conflict.

Further, the study finds that the audience does not applause for the employed devices in the same manner, especially in the 2024 speech. That is, fewer instances of a device may receive more time of applause, which signifies the importance of the device's content and context.

The study recommends further investigation of different political discourse genres to gain deeper insights into the use of rhetorical and content devices for inviting collective applause.

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Appendix

Speech date	Video link	Text link
Speech 1. March 3, 2015	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRf1cdw4IAY	https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/03/03/full-text-netanyahus-address-to-congress/

| Speech 2. July 24, 2024 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKkcstwPd9k&t=1774s | https://www.timesofisrael.com/were-protecting-you-full-text-of-netanyahus-address-to-congress/ |