International Political Stances towards the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Linguistic Analysis of Stancetaking

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Abstract

Language is part and parcel of exercising politics. The Israeli-Palestinian war which broke out on October 7, 2023 prompted diverse pronouncements from world leaders who addressed the international community, expressing their different political stances towards the war, supporting one of the conflicting parties and condemning the other. The speeches delivered by US President Joe Biden (in Israel) and the Irish politician Matt Carthy (at the Irish Parliament) are cases in point. Using the categories of stance proposed by Du Bois (2007) and the lexico-grammatical stance markers proposed by Biber (2006) and Biber et al. (2021), the present paper aims to analyze stancetaking in both speeches in an attempt to understand the stances adopted by the two speakers (and their countries). The analysis reveals contrasting stances towards the conflicting parties; while the US president supports Israel unconditionally and demonizes the Palestinian party Hamas, the Irish politician shows full support for the Palestinians and condemns Israel. Since stance is consequential, such stances have political implications in reality.

المواقف السياسية الدولية تجاه الصراع الإسرائيلي الفلسطيني:
تحليل لغوي لبناء المواقف

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ملخص

إن اللغة جزء لا يتجزأ من ممارسة السياسية، وقد أثارت الحرب التي اندلعت بين إسرائيل والفلسطينيين في السابع من أكتوبر عام ٢٠٢٣ ردود فعل عالمية، فقد ألقى العديد من قادة الدول خطابات موجهة إلى المجتمع الدولي، عبروا فيها عن مواقفهم السياسية المختلفة تجاه الحرب، وقد أعرب كل منهم عن مساندته لأحد الفريقين المتنازعين وتنديده بالآخر، ومن أمثلة تلك الخطابات الخطاب الذي ألقاه الرئيس الأمريكي جو بايدن في إسرائيل والخطاب الذي ألقاه السياسي الأيرلندي مات كارثي في البرلمان الأيرلندي. وتهدف هذه الورقة البحثية إلى تحليل الخطابين باستخدام الإطار النظري الذي يهدف إلى تحليل عناصر الموقف والذي يقدمه ديبوا (٢٠٠٧)، بالإضافة إلى التراكيب اللفظية والنحوية المستخدمة لبناء المواقف التي يقدمها بايبر (٢٠٠٦) وبايبر وآخرون (٢٠٢١). ويبين تحليل الخطابين أن كلا من المتحدثيْن يتخذ موقفًا سياسيًا مختلفًا تمامًا عن موقف المتحدث الآخر، فبينما يهاجم الرئيس الأمريكي حركة حماس ويؤكد على دعمه لإسرائيل بلا قيد أو شرط، يندد الدبلوماسي الأيرلندي بوحشية إسرائيل، ويؤكد على دعمه التام للفلسطينيين، ولكل من الموقفين تداعياته على أرض الواقع.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

الموقف، اتخاذ الموقف، التقييم، التولّي، التحيز لطرف/ضد طرف، التراكيب اللفظية والنحوية، الصراع الإسرائيلي–الفلسطيني.

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1. Introduction:

Politics and language are inseparable. Even though political activity involves other forms of behaviour (e.g., physical coercion), it cannot exist without the use of language for "the doing of politics is predominantly constituted in language" (Chilton & Schäffner, 2002, p. 3). One of the main political activities in which language plays a significant role is stancetaking.

Stancetaking is a key aspect of communication. Over the past few decades, it has become accepted that the role of language is not limited to expressing propositional content; in fact, every linguistic utterance also expresses a speaker's stance (i.e., point of view, feelings, attitudes) towards a certain proposition, other discourse participants or the implications of the utterances of others (Field, 1997, p. 800; Keizer, 2020, p. 2). Jaffe (2009) argues that the importance of stancetaking stems from the fact that speaker positionality is an integral part of the act of communication for "there is no such thing as a completely neutral position vis-à-vis one's linguistic productions, because neutrality is itself a stance" (p. 3). Through the process of stancetaking, language users can assign values to objects, position themselves with respect to those objects, (dis)align with other stancetakers and invoke presupposed systems of sociocultural value (Du Bois, 2007, p. 139). Hence, stancetaking is both a linguistic and a social act, and stance "can be approached as a linguistically articulated form of social action" (Du Bois, 2007, p. 139).

Stancetaking had a strong presence worldwide in the wake of the Israeli-Palestinian war that broke out on October 7, 2023. Many world leaders delivered speeches in which they expressed their own and/or their countries' stances towards the war and the conflicting parties. A number of speeches were delivered in support of the Palestinians (e.g., the speeches delivered by Turkish Presidents Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi) while

others were delivered in support of Israel (e.g., the speeches delivered by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak). The speeches delivered by US President Joe Biden on October 10, 2023, in Israel, and Matt Carthy, an Irish politician and Sinn Féin spokesperson on foreign affairs and defense, on October 18, 2023, at Dáil Éireann, the lower house of the Oireachtas (the Irish parliament), are also cases in point. In these speeches, the US president expresses ardent support for Israel and vows to support it in every possible way while the Irish politician stresses the Palestinians' right to self-defense and calls upon the world to take action to stop the Israeli aggression against the Palestinians. The present paper aims to present an analysis of stancetaking in these two particular speeches for two reasons. Firstly, the two speeches present two completely contrasting stances towards the war and the two conflicting parties and hence have political implications and consequences. Secondly, the categories of stance feature significantly in both speeches. Since stance is consequential, for "taking a stance leads to real life consequences for the persons or institutions involved" (Englebreston, 2007, pp. 6-7), this study presents an analysis of the two speeches, using the frameworks proposed by Du Bois (2007), Biber (2006b) and Biber et al. (2021), in an attempt to answer the following questions:

1- What are the stance markers employed by the speakers in both speeches?
2- How do these stance markers reflect the speakers' stances towards the war and the conflicting parties?
3- What kind of consequences do the stances adopted by both speakers have in reality?

2. Theoretical Background:
2.1. The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict:

"Al-Aqsa Flood Operation" was a military operation launched by Hamas on October 7, 2023, and part of the long conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict dates back to the fall of the Ottoman Empire which ruled Palestine for four centuries before Palestine fell under the British Mandate. At that time, Palestine was inhabited by a majority of Arabs and a minority of Jews

(Ghamry, 2023). In 1917, the Balfour Declaration promised the Jews a "national home" in Palestine (Ahmed, 1989, p. 4; Peteet, 2005, p. 2). During the 1920s and the 1940s, waves of Jews flooded Palestine, and violence between the Jews and Arabs escalated. In 1947, the UN adopted Resolution 181, also known as the "Partition Plan", which dictated the division of Palestine into an Arab state and a Jewish one (Ghamry, 2023; Global Conflict Tracker, 2024). Israel was declared a state on May 14, 1948, which sparked the first Arab-Israeli war. The war ended in 1949 with Israel's victory, the displacement of more than 750,000 Palestinians who became refugees, confiscating more than 500 Palestinian villages and emptying them of their inhabitants, imposing Israeli citizenship on the remaining Palestinians (around 150,000) and the division of Palestine into three parts: Israel, the West Bank (of the Jordan River) and the Gaza Strip (Peteet, 2005, p. 3; Collins, 2011, p. 170; Ghamry, 2023; Global Conflict Tracker, 2024).

Even though he Camp David Accords (1979), following the Israeli-Egyptian Yom Kippur War (1973), improved the relations between Israel and its neighbours, it did not resolve the question of the Palestinians' right to self-determination and self-governance, which led in 1987 to the eruption of the first Palestinian uprising where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians rose up against Israel. In 1993, the Oslo Accords I set a framework for the Palestinians to govern themselves in the West Bank and Gaza and called for mutual recognition between the Israeli government and the newly established Palestinian authority. In 1995, the Oslo Accords II added provisions mandating the complete Israeli withdrawal from 6 cities and 450 towns in the West Bank (Ghamry, 2023; Global Conflict Tracker, 2024).

The second Palestinian uprising erupted in 2000, after US President Bill Clinton failed to broker a peace deal between Israel and the Palestinian Authority at Camp David (McGreal, 2023), due to Palestinian anger over Israeli control of the West bank, a stagnant peace process and the then Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's visit to Al-Aqsa Mosque in September of the same year. The uprising led to the Israeli construction of a barrier wall around the West Bank in

2002 despite opposition from the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court (Global Conflict Tracker, 2024).

Hamas, a political and militant movement inspired by the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood and founded by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin in 1987 (McGreal, 2023), won the Palestinian Authority's parliamentary elections in 2006. Hamas was not acknowledged by some countries, including the United States and the European Union, for it had been declared a terrorist organization since the late 1990s. Violence broke out between Hamas and Fatah, a longtime majority party, for years until Fatah entered a unity government with Hamas in 2014, the year in which a major military confrontation broke out between Israel and Hamas until a ceasefire deal was brokered by Egypt in August (McGreal, 2023; Global Conflict Tracker, 2024).

In 2018, the Palestinians organized weekly demonstrations in memory of the Nakba (an Arabic word meaning "a catastrophe" that is used to refer to the establishment of Israel and the loss of Palestine). Confrontations erupted again between Hamas and Israel, which led to the killing of 183 Palestinians and the wounding of more than 6000 others (Ghamry, 2023; Global Conflict Tracker, 2024).

In 2021, Palestinian protests erupted after an Israeli court ruled in favour of the eviction of Palestinian families from El-Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in East Jerusalem. Violence erupted between Hamas and Israel for several days until both agreed to a ceasefire after 11 days as a result of Egypt's interference. The fighting led to the killing of more than 250 Palestinians and at least 13 Israelis, the wounding of almost 2,000 others and the displacement of 72,000 Palestinians (Ghamry, 2023; Global Conflict Tracker, 2024).

The year 2022 witnessed the formation of Israel's most far-right government, led by Benjamin Netanyahu and his Likud Party, which endorsed the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank (Global Conflict Tracker, 2024). As a result, violence between the Israelis and Palestinians escalated unprecedently during that year, and the death toll was the highest since 2015 (Ghamry, 2023).

Al-Aqsa Flood Operation was conducted on October 7, 2023, 50 years after the Yom Kippur War, when Hamas "launched a land, sea, and air assault on Israel from the Gaza Strip" (Britannica Online Encyclopedia, 2024). Hamas fighters fired rockets into Israeli cities, killing more than 1300 Israelis, injuring 3300 others and taking

hundreds as hostages (Ghamry, 2023; Britannica Online Encyclopedia, 2024; Global Conflict Tracker, 2024). The following day, Israel launched retaliatory attacks and carried out a complete siege of Gaza. Israel's intense military operations led to the killing of thousands of Palestinians and the wrecking of 60% of the homes in Gaza. In addition, Israel cut off all supplies to Gaza, including food, water, electricity, fuel and medicine (Amnesty International, n.d.). The October 7 War is "the most significant escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in several decades (Global Conflict Tracker, 2024).

2.2. Stancetaking:

Over the past few decades, linguists have been interested in the linguistic means through which speakers convey their emotions, attitudes and assessments. Such categories have been studied under different labels like "evaluation", "intensity", "affect", "evidentiality", "hedging", "attitude", "view" and "stance" (Kockelman, 2004, p. 130; Biber, 2006a, pp. 97-98). According to Kiesling (2022), the concepts of stance and stancetaking have mostly been used in the fields of sociolinguistics, linguistics and anthropology in order to refer to how people "position themselves in conversation in terms of politeness, certainty, and affect/emotion" (p. 410). Du Bois (2007) defines stance as

> a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means (language, gesture, and other symbolic forms), through which social actors simultaneously evaluate objects, position subjects (themselves and others), and align with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of value in the sociocultural field (p. 169).

Hence, an act of stancetaking involves three components: the object evaluated, the stancetaker and a stance that the stancetaker is responding to (agreeing or disagreeing with). The three components form what Du Bois refers to as "the stance triangle" (Figure 1) which

is an attempt to "shed light on the realization, interpretation, and consequences of stance in interaction" (Du Bois, 2007, p. 141).
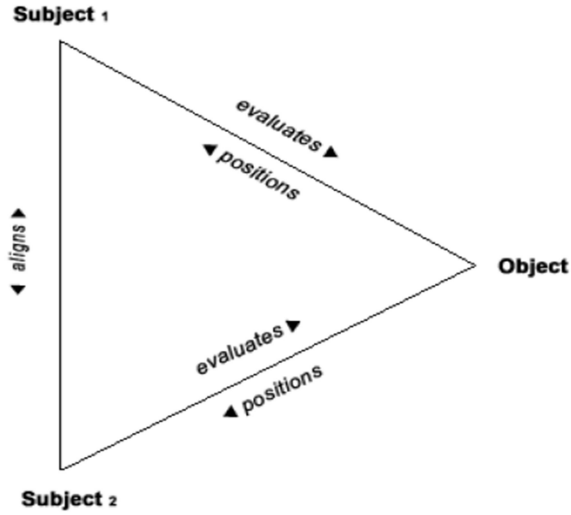

Figure 1. The stance triangle

Du Bois (2007) holds that stancetaking is closely related to the concepts of dialogicality and intersubjectivity. On the one hand, stancetaking as a process is dialogic since stancetakers engage with what has been said before by other stancetakers whether within the same current exchange or in a prior text. On the other hand, the term "intersubjectivity" presupposes subjectivity, and stancetaking is an intersubjective process since it involves a relationship between one actor's subjectivity and another's (p. 140). Similarly, Keisling (2022) argues that stancetaking is both dialogic and intersubjective for when a speaker provides a signal of stance, other speakers may take up or resist such stance in various ways (p. 410).

3. Data:

The data analyzed in this paper comprise two speeches which feature two different political stances towards the October 7 War. The first speech was delivered by US President Joe Biden on October 10,

2023, in Israel, and the second was delivered by Matt Carthy, an Irish politician and Sinn Féin spokesperson on foreign affairs and defense, on October 18, 2023, at Dáil Éireann, the lower house of the Oireachtas (the Irish parliament). The speeches reflect how each of the two speakers sides with one of the conflicting parties and condemns the other. They also shed light on the likely consequences of such stances.

In his speech, President Biden reiterates the US' unconditional support for Israel. For a long time, the US has been Israel's strongest military and diplomatic ally. McGreal (2023) explains that this support goes back to 1948 when the US was the first country to acknowledge Israel as an independent state. During President Johnson's administration, the US started selling weapons to Israel after realizing that the Arabs had allied with the Soviet Camp after the 1967 Six-Day War, hence contributing to building the most powerful military force in the Middle East. Similarly, President Nixon provided Israel with military supplies after the Yom Kippur War, and after President Carter paved the way for a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, President Regan, like President Nixon, was interested in providing Israel with military support, and both countries signed strategic military agreements. Their successors, President Clinton and President George W. Bush, tried to broker peace between Israel and the Palestinians, and President Obama "oversaw the biggest ever package of military aid to Israel" (McGreal, 2023). The relations between both countries witnessed a major turning point when President Trump moved the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, recognizing it as the capital of Israel. The Trump administration also came up with a peace proposal which allowed the Israeli annexation of about 30% of the West Bank. Hence, it could be clearly seen that President Biden's speech is a reflection of the long history of the US support for Israel.

Carthy's speech, on the other hand, shows ardent support for the Palestinians and condemnation of the Israeli aggression against them. The speech reflects Ireland's long-standing position of solidarity with Palestine. Kennedy and McSweeney (2024) explain that this support stems from the fact that both the Palestinian and Irish nations share a history of suffering under occupation. Ireland was occupied by the

British for more than 800 years after the Anglo-Norman invaders seized large parts of land from the native Irish in the 12th century. During the occupation, the Irish people suffered from violence, discriminatory rule and even from starvation after the potato crop repeatedly failed, which forced more than 1 million people to emigrate. Leo Varadkar, an Irish politician and former prime minister of Ireland, comments on the history of shared experiences between the two nations, saying, "We see our history in their eyes. A story of displacement, of dispossession, national identity questioned or denied, forced emigration, discrimination, and now, hunger". In 1980, Ireland was the first European Union member to call for an independent Palestinian state, and it has always criticized Israeli violence against the Palestinians. After the October 7 War, Ireland condemned the heavy-handed Israeli response to Hamas' attacks, which features significantly in Matt Carthy's speech analyzed in this paper.

To investigate stancetaking in the speeches in question, this paper adopts a qualitative approach, making use of two frameworks. The first is proposed by Du Bois (2007) and is concerned with highlighting the categories of stance (evaluation, positioning and alignment) in both speeches in an attempt to investigate the political implications of both speeches based on the stances of the speakers. The second is proposed by Biber (2006b) and Biber et al. (2021) and is concerned with identifying the lexico-grammatical categories employed by the speakers to make their stances visible.

4. Methodology:

This section presents the two frameworks used to analyze the data of the study. The first is proposed by Du Bois (2007) for the analysis of stance with its three categories: evaluation, positioning and alignment. The second is proposed by Biber (2006b) and Biber et al. (2021) for the lexico-grammatical analysis of stance devices.

4.1. Stance as a Tri-Act:

According to Du Bois (2007), stance can be viewed as a "tri-act" for the process of stancetaking involves three main acts: evaluation (of the stance object), positioning (of the stance

subject/stancetaker, usually the self) and alignment (with other stancetakers) (p. 162), the three of which are considered "different facets of the speaker's stance" (p. 144). Du Bois summarizes the process of stancetaking as follows: "*I evaluate something, and thereby position myself, and thereby align with you*" (p. 163). As Kiesling (2022) puts it, the core concept of stance is the relationships that a speaker is trying to indicate to other interactants in a conversation and to the content (i.e., the objects constructed) of their talk (p. 410).

4.1.1. Evaluation:

Bednarek (2006) argues that evaluation is a key aspect of human communication for it is the means through which humans perceive and interact with the world and offer evaluations about it to others (p. 4). Du Bois (2007) defines evaluation as "the process whereby the stancetaker orients to an object of stance and characterizes it as having some specific quality or value" (p. 143). Hence, the object of stance becomes the target of the evaluation process. In examples like "that's *horrible*", "that's *ideal*" and "that's *nasty*", the stance predicates "horrible", "ideal" and "nasty" are used to evaluate the stance object. Jaffe (2009) comments on Du Bois' definition of evaluation, suggesting that "as Du Bois's definition indicates, all acts of evaluation are simultaneously acts of alignment or disalignment (thus positioning) with other subjects" (p. 5). Li et al. (2020) argue that evaluation is part and parcel of the process of communicating information as information is rarely communicated neutrally; in fact, regardless of the kind of genre, speakers and writers often impose their personal attitudes and evaluative judgements on their utterances/writings (pp. 31-32). As Bednarek argues, "it is difficult if not impossible for human beings […] to speak with a completely 'objective' voice, *not* to impose evaluations on one's utterance, and *not* to communicate value judgement" (p. 5). Hence, evaluation is closely related to the notion of subjectivity which can be defined as "being concerned with *self*-expression, i.e., the expression of the speaker's attitudes, beliefs, feelings, emotions, judgement, will, personality, etc." (Bednarek, 2006, p. 20). In fact, Englebreston

(2007) argues that evaluation can be considered "subjectivity with a focus" since subjectivity is about "self-expression" and evaluation is narrowed down to self-expression towards certain entities or propositions (p. 16). Hence, the expression of subjectivity is a "grammaticalization" of the speaker's attitudes and beliefs (Kärkkäinen, 2003, p. 19). Hunston and Thompson (2000) argue that evaluation has three main functions: expressing the speaker's/writer's opinion towards the proposition they make, manipulating the hearer's/reader's attitudes towards such propositions and organizing the discourse by marking boundaries or highlighting significant parts (pp. 6-13).

4.1.2. Positioning:

Positioning can be defined as "the act of situating a social actor with respect to responsibility for stance and for invoking sociocultural value" (Du Bois, 2007, p. 143). Harré and van Langenhove (2010) hold that it is through the position that a speaker takes in a conversation that they are able to convey their moral and personal attributes (p. 108). Du Bois maintains that positioning and subjectivity are closely related for "the act of positioning regularly invokes a dimension of speaker subjectivity" (Du Bois, 2007, p. 152).

Speakers could position themselves along an affective scale (e.g., "I'm glad", "I'm just amazed") or an epistemic scale (e.g., "I know", "I don't know"), with the first-person pronoun "I" indexing the stancetaker in these examples and the predicate signaling the nature of the stancetaker's position, whether affective or epistemic.

A) Epistemic Positioning:

Epistemic stance markers present a comment on the status of information in the speaker's proposition in terms of certainty (or doubt), actuality, precision or limitation (Biber et al., 2021, p. 964), and epistemicity is encoded in terms of certainty by modals and adverbs (Kiesling, 2022, p. 416). Epistemicity also highlights the source of knowledge (whether another participant or the speaker themselves at some point in the past) or the perspective from which the information is given (Field, 1997, pp. 800-801; Biber et al., 2021, p. 964). Hence, epistemicity is related to the notion of evidentiality,

the grammatical category "whose primary meaning is information source" (Aikhenvald, 2004, p. 1). According to Mushin (2001), the term "evidentiality" evokes the notion of evidence: "the sources from which a speaker comes to know something that they want to express in language" (p. 18). Evidentials indicate how a speaker has come to acquire the knowledge they have (i.e., the source of information), and they help speakers indicate that they are not committed to the truth of the propositions they make and hence cannot be accused of being liars should such propositions prove to be untrue (Palmer, 2013, p. 12; Bednarek, 2006, p. 21). Epistemicity, as a concept related to evidentiality, has to do with "the linguistic expression of the state of the speaker's knowledge or […] a relationship between the animator and the assertions in their utterance" (Kiesling, 2022, p. 416).

B) Affective/Attitudinal Positioning:

Besnier (1990) holds that "affect is never absent from an interactional context" (p. 431). The way events unfold in a situation can give rise to emotions which influence the speaker's choice of words (Du Bois & Kärkkäinen, 2012, p. 434). Affective/attitudinal stance markers highlight the speaker's personal emotions (e.g., "happy", "angry") or attitudes (e.g., "ironically", "fortunately") (Field, 1997, p. 800; Biber et al., 2021, p. 966; Kiesling, 2022, p. 416). Kiesling (2022) argues that affective stance encodes a relationship since stance is usually directed towards something or someone; therefore, affect is bound to be directed either to something that is spoken of or to another speaker in the conversation (p. 416). In the process of positioning, the positioned subject is the one which displays their emotions, showing a particular affective orientation towards the object of stance. This is because positioning "often occurs as an indirect consequence of overtly evaluating an object" (Du Bois & Kärkkäinen, 2012, p. 434). As Kiesling (2018) puts it, "stancetaking is a form of affective practice" (p. 198).

4.1.3. Alignment:

Alignment can be defined as "the act of calibrating the relationship between two stances, and by implication between two stancetakers" (Du Bois, 2007, p. 144). In other words, alignment refers to "the degree to which a speaker aligns (agrees) or disaligns (disagrees) with the interlocutor" (Kaltenböck et al., 2020, p. 6). Hence, alignment is a linguistic process through which stances are constructed using lexis, morpho-syntax and prosody in order to show (dis)alignment with other interactants in a conversation (Haddington, 2007, p. 285). Examples like "I *agree*", "I *totally agree*" and "I *agree with you*" show alignment with the addressee for they signal "an endorsement of the addressee's stance" (Du Bois, 2007, p. 150). A stance remains unclear unless its counterstance (i.e., the stance it was formulated in response to) is known for "[p]eople don't agree in the abstract, they agree with someone about something" (Du Bois, 2007, p. 149). In other words, a stance is formulated in response to prior stance content; it is interactional in nature as it is constructed among participants in response to previous stances (Englebreston, 2007, p. 6). Hence, alignment highlights how dialogicality is relevant to stancetaking. Du Bois (2007) explains that subjectivity has to do with a speaker's orientation towards a certain object, and this orientation may extend across multiple stance acts by different speakers. Hence, "the shared stance object becomes the cornerstone of the dialogic construction of intersubjectivity" or "how one speaker's subjectivity reacts to another's subjectivity" in a dialogic exchange (p. 159). This is because "stance is an activity built for two (or more)" (p. 171).

4.2. Lexico-Grammatical Stance Devices:

Speakers and writers tend to express their stances through grammatical and lexical means (i.e., value laden words) (Biber, 2006b, p. 88; Biber et al., 2021, p. 958). Accordingly, researchers are interested in the linguistic devices through which speakers convey their attitudes, emotions, evaluations, assessments, value judgements or degree of commitment towards the propositions they make, that is, how they encode different categories of stance (Biber, 2006a, p. 98; Gray & Biber, 2015, p. 219; Li et al., 2020, p. 33). These linguistic means are of two types: lexical devices and grammatical devices.

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مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

4.2.1. Lexical Stance Devices:

Evaluative or value-laden lexical items can be used to convey stance. Speakers use such lexical items to express their attitudes or emotions (e.g., "happy", "angry") or evaluations ("wonderful", "lovely") (Gray & Biber, 2015, p. 220). In other words, lexical resources can be used as a means of positioning or evaluation. Gray and Biber (2015) hold that this type of stance is "grammatically embedded"; it requires reference to the context so that the addressee would realize that this is the speaker's/writer's attitude towards something (p. 221). Without reference to the context in which an evaluative utterance occurs, stance remains incomplete for there is more to stance than the context-free connotations of a word (Du Bois, 2007, p. 146), and nothing in the grammatical structure of these expressions indicates that they mark stance. In fact, understanding the stance embedded in lexical stance devices depends on the addressee's ability to recognize it (Biber et al., 2021, p. 961). Lexical stance, whether affective or evaluative, involves a single proposition or evaluated entity (Biber, 2006b, p. 89; Gray & Biber, 2015, p. 220; Biber et al., 2021, p. 960), and the stance is inferred from an evaluative lexical item which is usually an adjective, a main verb or a noun (Biber et al., 2021, p. 960). For example, adjectives, whether used predicatively or attributively (e.g., "good", "bad", "important") can be used to attribute certain qualities to a noun/pronoun, and verbs can be used to express emotions and attitudes (e.g., "like", "love", "need", "want") (Biber et al., 2021, pp. 960-961).

4.2.2. Grammatical Stance Devices:

Unlike lexical devices, grammatical stance devices have two components usually realized in two separate sentences or clauses: one that contains a lexical item and presents the stance and another presenting the proposition framed by the lexical item (Gray & Biber, 2015, p. 221; Biber et al., 2021, p. 961). Biber et al. (2021) divide grammatical stance devices into three main categories: epistemic, attitudinal and style of speaking (pp. 964-967).

4.2.2.1.   Grammatical   Devices   Indicating Epistemic Stance:

Epistemic stance markers present comments by the speaker on the status of information in a proposition (Biber et al., 2021, p. 964). Examples include:

(A) Adverbials of certainty (or doubt), actuality, precision or limitation

Biber (2006b) holds that "[s]tance adverbials express the attitude or assessment of the speaker/writer with respect to the proposition contained in the matrix clause" (p. 88). Examples include:
- Single adverb (e.g., definitely)
- Prepositional phrase (e.g., in fact)
- Hedge (e.g., sort of)
- Comment clause (e.g., I think)

(B) Verb/adjective/noun + complement clause
- Verb + complement clause (e.g., I know)
- Adjective + complement clause (e.g., sure that)
- Verb/adjective + extraposed complement clause (e.g., it is possible that)
- Noun + complement clause (e.g., the suggestion that)

(C) Stance noun + prepositional phrase (e.g., a real possibility of)

(D) Modal verb (e.g., might)

Marking the source/perspective of knowledge
- Adverbial (e.g., according to)
- Verb + complement clause (e.g., "claim")
- Noun + prepositional phrase (e.g., the rumour of)

4.2.2.2.   Grammatical   Devices   Indicating Attitudinal/Affective Stance:

These are attitudinal stance markers which indicate a speaker's/writer's attitudes or feelings (Biber et al., 2021, p. 966). Examples include:

A) Adverbials (e.g., sadly)

B) Verb/adjective/noun + complement clause
- Verb + complement clause (e.g., wish)
- Adjective + complement clause (e.g., curious to)
- Verb/adjective + extraposed complement clause (e.g., it is tragic that)
- Noun + complement clause (e.g., an expectation that)

C) Stance noun + prepositional phrase (e.g., a fear of)

D) Modal verbs (e.g., ought to)

4.2.2.3.   Grammatical Devices Indicating Style of Speaking Stance:

These are markers of a speaker's/writer's comments on the communication itself (Biber et al., 2021, p. 967).

A) Adverbial
- Single adverb (e.g., honestly) or adverb phrase (e.g., quite frankly)
- Prepositional phrase (e.g., with all due respect)
- Adverbial clause (e.g., to put it bluntly)

B) Verb + complement clause (e.g., I swear, I shall argue)

4.2.2.4.   Other verbs, adjectives and nouns:

In addition to epistemic, attitudinal/affective and style of speaking stance markers, Biber (2006b) proposes other classes of verbs, adjectives and nouns which mark stance. These include:

- **Speech act and other communication verbs** (e.g., announce)
- **Probability (likelihood) verbs** (e.g., appear)
- **Cognition/perception (likelihood) verbs** (e.g., assume)
- **Desire/intention/decision verbs** (e.g., mean)
- **Verbs of causation/modality/effort** (e.g., allow)
- **Ability or willingness adjectives** (e.g., willing)
- **Ease or difficulty adjectives** (e.g., difficult)
- **Attitude/perspective nouns** (e.g., hope)
- **Communication (non-factual) nouns** (e.g., comment)

Using the frameworks outlined in this section, this paper aims to investigate stancetaking in the two speeches analyzed. The linguistic tools included in these frameworks shall be applied to selected examples from both speeches in an attempt to highlight the stances of both speakers towards the Israeli-Palestinian war and the conflicting parties.

5. Analysis:

This section presents an analysis of the two speeches in question: US President Biden's speech delivered in Israel on October 10, 2023, and the speech delivered by Matt Carthy, an Irish politician, on October 18, 2023, at Dáil Éireann, the lower house of the Oireachtas (the Irish parliament). Using the two frameworks outlined in the previous section, the analysis aims to investigate the political stances conveyed by both speakers, which are also reflecting of the stances of their respective countries, as well as the political implications of such stances.

5.1.   Evaluation:

Since stance can be conveyed through value-laden word choices which indicate a speaker's evaluation of objects and other social actors, evaluation is "a site of political struggle and ideological

contestation" for it is a reflection of the value system of an individual or community (Jaffe, 2009, p. 5). This is evident in the value-laden words used to represent the conflicting parties in the speeches analyzed.

The value-laden words used by President Biden to represent Hamas and their actions serve to demonize the members of the Palestinian party and present them as terrorists. President Biden refers to Hamas as "the terrorist organization Hamas", that is characterized by "brutality" and "bloodthirstiness", its actions as "atrocities" and "evil", and the consequences of such actions as "traumas". The evaluative adjectives he uses are also revealing of his stance towards the Islamist organization. He starts his speech with describing Hamas' actions as "pure" and "unadulterated" evil unleashed on Israel with their "bloody hands", and he describes Hamas' attacks on the Israelis as "horrific", referring to the whole situation as "abhorrent" and "appalling". Such evaluations are indicative of the US president's stance towards the Palestinian organization and the latest conflict, and they serve to present Hamas as the monster that threatens the helpless Israelis.

This horrific depiction of Hamas is intensified by the picture of the poor Israelis who were "just attending a musical festival to celebrate peace" when they were attacked. Biden refers to the Israelis' experience of being attacked by Hamas as "a human tragedy" and "an atrocity". In addition, the lexical choices used to refer to the Israeli "victims" are also carefully chosen in what seems to be an attempt to arouse the world's sympathy towards them. They are referred to as "young people" (who are massacred), "women" (who are raped, assaulted and paraded as trophies) and "Holocaust survivors" (who are abducted and held hostage). These references are indicative of vulnerability and hence contribute to demonizing the members of Hamas who attack such weak people. They also sound like a justification for the US support for Israel. In addition, the evaluative adjectives employed by Biden to describe the Israelis are indicative of his stance. The Israelis, who are vulnerable people who suffer from the brutality of Hamas, suffer from losses which are "heartbreaking" and "unspeakable" and which bring to mind "painful" memories of millennia of antisemitism and genocide of the Jewish people.

Evaluating the Israelis as victims of hatred who have suffered from losses throughout history sounds like a justification for the US stance towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and seems to explain the US' unconditional support for Israel.

Carthy's speech, on the other hand, presents the exact opposite evaluations of both sides of the conflict, depicting the Palestinians as victims and the Israelis as criminals. This is evident in the references he uses for both sides. While Biden refers to the Israeli victims as "women", "young people" and "Holocaust survivors", Carthy refers to the Palestinian victims of the Israeli forces as "the sick", "the disabled" and "the elderly", all of which indicate vulnerability. He also tries to arouse the listeners' sympathy when he refers to "four Palestinian boys playing football on a beach". This contradicts the claim that Israel is defending itself for little boys playing football can never constitute a threat to a state with powerful military forces like Israel. It also arouses sympathy towards those children and anger against the state that targets such little, helpless children. Carthy refers to Israel's crimes against the Palestinians as "genocide", "murder" and "apartheid" and to Gaza under Israeli bombardment as an "open-air prison". Such references highlight the suffering that is inflicted on the Palestinians whom he presents as victims of the ruthless Israeli occupation.

In addition to reference, the Irish politician uses a number of value-laden adjectives to evaluate both parties. He condemns how supplies like food and water are denied to the Palestinians whom he describes as a "besieged" and "civilian" population. Describing the Palestinians as a "civilian" population shows how helpless they are in the face of an oppressive occupation and serves to demonize the Israelis who have such powerless people under siege and deny them their basic needs. Carthy also describes the Palestinian protests against the Israeli blockade as "peaceful", again highlighting the Palestinians' powerlessness. He shows the stark difference between both parties by drawing a comparison between the "peaceful" protests and the military assault with which Israel responds to such peaceful protests, hence highlighting the difference between the helpless Palestinians, with whom he thinks the world should sympathize, and the aggressor which he invites the world to condemn.

The evaluative adjectives which Carthy assigns to Israel and its actions, on the other hand, demonize Israel, presenting it as a ruthless occupation which the world should stand against. He describes the expansion of Israeli settlements as "illegal" as the Israelis annex lands which are defined by international law as Palestinian. He also criticizes the "illegal" blockade which Israel imposes on Gaza and the system which Israel adopts against the Palestinians, describing it as an "apartheid" system. Such descriptions present the Israelis as a usurper of the land of the Palestinians. Moreover, he describes Israel's attacks on the Palestinians as "flagrant" abuses of international law, the adjective "flagrant" showing how Israel makes no secret about attacking the Palestinians since world leaders have declared that "Israel has the right to defend itself". For example, Israel launches "countless" bombings and "countless" offensive attacks on Gaza. So, Israel usurps a land that belongs to another people and then exterminates those people who are the true owners of the land simply because it has military forces which Carthy describes as "the most powerful" military forces in the world which are backed up by "even more powerful military forces" (i.e., the United States). Such evaluations serve to demonize Israel, present the Palestinians as victims of a ruthless occupation and call upon the world to stand by the side of the oppressed Palestinians.

5.2. Positioning:

Through positioning, speakers position themselves in relation to a certain stance object (the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the conflicting parties in the speeches under study). Positioning can be revealed through a variety of linguistic elements, including personal pronouns which point directly to the speaking subject (i.e., the stancetaker) (Du Bois, 2007, p. 152). In the two speeches, it could be noticed that both speakers repeatedly use the inclusive pronoun "we". For example, in his speech, President Biden uses the pronoun "we" (i.e., Americans) several times as in "*[w]e* stand with Israel" (which he repeats twice), "*[w]e* will make sure Israel has what it takes to take care of its citizens, defend itself, and respond to this attack", "*[w]e*'re going to make sure that Israel does not run out of these critical assets"

and "*we*'re with Israel". Hence, after presenting his own evaluation of the situation and presenting Israel and its citizens as victims of Hamas' aggression, Biden, as the president of the United States, declares in these examples his own and his country's stance towards the conflict, positioning himself and his country as supporters of Israel. Similarly, Carthy in his speech uses the inclusive pronoun "we" (i.e., the Irish) several times as in "*[w]e* know colonialism", "*[w]e* know oppression" and "*[we]* know conflict". As mentioned earlier (see section 3), the Irish and the Palestinians have a history of shared experiences, so Carthy, through the pronoun "we", positions himself and his country as supporters of the Palestinians after presenting his evaluation of the conflict and presenting the Palestinians as victims of Israeli aggression. Accordingly, the inclusive pronoun "we" in both speeches serves as a linguistic tool of positioning the speaker and his country as supporters of one of the conflicting parties.

In addition to the inclusive first-person pronoun, both speakers employ a number of lexico-grammatical devices which help them position themselves in relation to the conflict and the conflicting parties both epistemically and affectively/attitudinally.

5.2.1. Epistemic Positioning:
A) Adverbials:

In his speech, President Biden uses a number of epistemic adverbs which reveal his stance and serve to position him as a supporter of Israel. For example, in the sentence "[y]ou all know these traumas *never* go away", the adverb "never" suggests that the US president sympathizes with Israeli families as Hamas' attacks will have an everlasting traumatic effect on them and explains why he positions himself (and his country) as supporters of Israel. This sympathy could be seen as a justification for Biden's view that Israel should defend itself against Hamas' aggression as shown in the sentence "Israel has the right to respond — *indeed* has a duty to respond — to these vicious attacks." The adverb "indeed" reveals that Biden has no doubt that any Israeli attacks on the aggressor are justified and that he and his country support Israel's right to avenge itself on the attackers. In the sentence "[w]e condemn the

indiscriminate evil, just as we've *always* done", the adverb "always" reflects the US' unchanging stance towards "evil" and seems to justify why the US has decided to support Israel: because opposing evil has always been their policy, and Hamas is the evil party in this conflict. It is worth mentioning that the US president uses epistemic adverbials of certainty rather than likelihood. In such a heated situation, there is no place for compromises or possibilities. President Biden makes his stance towards the war very clear and leaves no room for doubt that he and his country position themselves as supporters of the victim of this war (i.e., Israel).

The epistemic adverbials used by Carthy are intended to have the opposite effect: to present the Palestinians as victims and demonize the Israelis. In the sentence "Israel has breached international law not just every day since October the 7th but *virtually* every single day for decades", the adverb "virtually" is an epistemic adverb of likelihood which indicates that the Palestinians have been victimized by the Israeli occupation almost every day, which sounds like an attempt on Carthy's part to arouse the world's sympathy towards the Palestinians. Carthy then poses a question which reflects his anger: "How come we *never* hear the words Palestine has the right to defend itself?" In this question, "never" is an epistemic adverb of certainty which reflects Carthy's fury towards the world for not supporting what he deems Palestine's "right" to defend itself, not even once. Carthy then states that even though self-defense is the Palestinians' right, he would not ask the world to admit it. In the sentence "I'm not asking you to say those words, *in fact* it's just as well you don't because we all know that the people of Palestine can't defend themselves", "in fact" is an epistemic adverbial of certainty which shows that despite Carthy's fury over the world's silence about the Palestinians' right to self-defense, the truth is that the Palestinians are unable to defend themselves since they are the weaker party as everyone knows. The epistemic adverbials employed by Carthy reflect his view of the Palestinians as the victims of Israeli aggression, but at the same time, they reflect his awareness of the reality which is almost impossible to change: Israel is the more powerful party, and the Palestinians are unable to defend themselves.

B) Verb/adjective/noun + complement clause:

Epistemic verbs indicate how certain a speaker is about the truth of the predicate in a sentence and reveal the stance of the grammatical subject, and the verb "know" is a case in point (Field, 1997, p. 804). In the two speeches analyzed, the verb "know" is repeatedly used in relation to previous conflict-related incidents which need to be highlighted as a kind of justification for the stance adopted by each speaker.

In his speech, President Biden makes use of the verb "know" as in the following sentences:

- You all *know* these traumas never go away.
- Americans across the country are praying for all those families that have been ripped apart. A lot of us *know* how it feels.
- We now *know* that American citizens are among those being held by Hamas.

In the first sentence, Biden uses the second person pronoun "you" as the grammatical subject of the verb "know" which is followed by a complement clause "(that) these traumas never go away". This seems to be an attempt on the president's part to win his listeners over for if they "know" that such traumas never go away, then they should sympathize with the Israelis whom the US president presents as victims. In the second and third sentences, the president uses the inclusive pronoun "we" (using the accusative form "us" in the second sentence), and the verb "know" is followed by a complement clause ("how it feels" and "that American citizens are among those being held by Hamas" respectively). Using an inclusive first-person pronoun seems to be an attempt to involve the addressees and win them over, and the verb "know", which is an epistemic verb that indicates certainty about the information in the following clause, seems to justify why the US is supporting Israel against Hamas (for "we know" how ripping families apart feels and "we know" Hamas is holding American citizens). In these examples, Hamas is demonized, and "knowing" the atrocities committed by Hamas indicates that the US will undoubtedly support Israel (the victim) against Hamas (the aggressor). In terms of epistemic nouns, in the sentence "let there be

no doubt: The United States has Israel's back", the noun "doubt", as a stance noun preceded by the negative particle "no", leaves no room for negotiations over the US support for Israel, and the statement is a clear declaration of this support.

Like Biden, Carthy makes use of the verb "know", which is an epistemic verb of certainty, several times but for the opposite purpose. Examples include:

- we all *know* that the people of Palestine can't defend themselves.
- We *know* colonialism.
- We *know* oppression.
- We *know* conflict.
- But we also *know* conflict resolution.
- We *know* peace building.
- We *know* nation building.

In the first sentence, the verb "know" is used to show that the speaker is aware of the power dynamics of the conflict. The epistemic verb shows that there is no space for misunderstanding or assuming that the victims of this conflict can defend themselves, which is all the more reason why the world should sympathize with, and in fact support, the Palestinians. In the following three sentences, the verb "know", followed by the objects "colonialism", "oppression" and "conflict", is a clear reference to the history of shared experiences that both Ireland and Palestine have lived. Such sentences seem to explain the motive behind the Irish support for the Palestinians: because they have been through the suffering that is now inflicted on the Palestinians, and they know how it feels like. The last three sentences include the epistemic verb "know" followed by the objects "conflict resolution", "peace building" and "nation building", the epistemic verb in this case referring to the kind of knowledge that the Irish, who are now independent, are willing to pass on to the Palestinians just as they have both shared the bitter experience of occupation. And for this knowledge to be shared, the world should take a step towards liberating the Palestinians from the aggressor.

In addition to the verb "know", the Irish politician also makes use of the nominalized form "knowledge" in the sentence "Israel has

the right to defend itself, repeated in statement after statement, tweet after tweet, despite the full *knowledge* that those words have become contaminated". The noun "knowledge" is an epistemic noun of certainty, and this certainty is accentuated by the adjective "full" which precedes it. In this sentence, Carthy attributes this full knowledge to himself as an Irish as well as to the rest of the world. If world countries know that Israel is abusing the words "Israel has the right to defend itself", then they should take action and stop its aggression against the Palestinians.

C) Stance noun + prepositional phrase:

In his speech, President Biden uses the two stance nouns "right" and "duty" followed by a prepositional phrase, in the sentence "Israel has the *right* to respond — indeed has a *duty* to respond — to these vicious attacks". In this sentence, the nouns "right" and "duty" are revealing of how President Biden positions himself as a supporter of Israel and what he views as its "right" and "duty" to defend itself for it is the victim of Hamas. Therefore, "let there be *no doubt*: The United States has Israel's back".

D) Modal verbs:

Epistemic modals serve to make judgement about the truth of a proposition (Palmer, 2013, p. 6). In the sentence "[o]ur hearts *may* be broken, but our resolve is clear", President Biden uses the epistemic modal verb "may" which indicates possibility and which seems to be used here to draw a contrast between the broken hearts (of Biden and Israel's supporters) and how determined they are to support Israel against the aggressor (Hamas). It is worth noting that President Biden does not make use of any other epistemic modals and that Carthy does not make use of any epistemic modals. Both speakers resort to attitudinal modals which highlight their attitude towards the conflict and hence make their stance towards the conflicting parties clear to the audience.

5.2.2. Attitudinal/Affective Positioning:

The subjective dimension of stance can be revealed through linguistic elements which reveal the speaker's feelings, "positioning the speaker subjectively along some scale of affective value" (Du Bois, 2007, p. 152). In the speeches analyzed, both speakers use a number of linguistic tools in order to express their feelings and hence position themselves in relation to the conflicting parties on an attitudinal/affective scale.

A) Adverbials:

In President Biden's speech, in the sentence "[b]ut *sadly*, for the Jewish people, it's not new", the adverb "sadly" is an attitudinal adverb which reveals the president's emotions towards one of the conflicting parties (i.e., Israel). He justifies this sadness by stating that the Jewish people have always endured suffering (e.g., the Holocaust), which makes them worthy of pity and support, and explains why he is aligning with Israel. On the other hand, Carthy stresses his view of Israel as an aggressor and the Palestinians as victims of the occupation even though they are the true owners of the land. This view is stressed by the adverb "clearly" in the sentence "…new illegal settlements that are *clearly* defined in international law as part of Palestine". The adverb "clearly" indicates that the Palestinians' ownership of their land is known to the whole world and is, accordingly, non-negotiable. The attitudinal adverbs employed by both speakers, again, serve to highlight two opposing stances towards the conflict.

B) Modal verbs:

In his speech, President Biden makes use of a number of affective/attitudinal modals to highlight his stance. For example, in the sentence "we *must* be crystal clear: We stand with Israel", the modal "must" is a modal of necessity (Biber, 2006b, p. 92), and in this sentence, President Biden is conveying a clear message to the audience so they would make no mistake about his stance as a supporter of Israel. In the sentence "we *will* make sure Israel has what

it needs to take care of its citizens, defend itself, and respond to this attack", "will" is a modal of volition (Biber, 2006b, p. 92). Using this modal, the president makes his stance clear through vowing to stand by Israel's side against the aggressor (i.e., Hamas) by providing every possible support. This support for Israel and its actions is further emphasized in the sentence "I told him [Prime Minister Netanyahu] if the United States experienced what Israel is experiencing, our response *would* be swift, decisive, and overwhelming". The modal "would" is a modal of volition (Biber, 2006b, p. 92), and in this sentence, it seems to indicate that whatever action Israel decides to take against Hamas, the US is determined to have its back since this is exactly how the US would have acted in a similar situation (swiftly, decisively and overwhelmingly). Moreover, the US would not only support Israel's actions but would also provide it with whatever is needed to take such actions as shown in the sentences "[w]e*'re going to* make sure that Israel does not run out of these critical assets to defend its cities and its citizens" and "when Congress returns, we*'re going to* ask them to take urgent action to fund the national security requirements of our critical partners". The semi-modal "be going to" in both sentences indicates volition (Biber, 2006b, p. 92) which represents another vow of standing by Israel's side through providing all the necessary help, which solidifies the US president's stance towards Israel which he considers the victim of the war with Hamas. Towards the very end of his speech, President Biden makes it very clear to the audience that the US has always been, and will always be, a supporter of Israel. This is done through using the modal verb "will" again in the sentence "[w]e *will* make sure the Jewish and democratic State of Israel can defend itself today, tomorrow, as we always have". These examples show how President Biden's stance towards the war and Israel is made very clear through the attitudinal modal verbs which show determination to support Israel not just verbally but also through action.

Carthy too uses a number of attitudinal modals that highlight his stance towards the conflict. In the sentence "we *should* also be very clear: Israel has breached international law", "should" is a modal of necessity (Biber, 2006b, p. 92) which highlights the necessity of putting Israel in its right place as an aggressor that has to be stopped. This stance on Carthy's part is further highlighted in the question

which he poses about the world's silence: "the question that *must* be answered by all of us in political life is this: how does the world respond to flagrant abuses of international law?" The attitudinal modal "must", which is a modal of necessity (Biber, 2006b, p. 92), serves as a call upon the world to stop this silence about Israel's victimization of the Palestinians for it is now a necessity when a whole people is being exterminated while they "*can't* defend themselves". The attitudinal modal "can" is a modal of ability, and "can't" reflects Carthy's view of the Palestinians as unable to defend themselves against the occupation, which is why the world must interfere to stop the genocide. This view is stressed in the sentence "Ireland *should* be one of those countries that leads the way". The modal "should", another modal of necessity, shows how important standing by the side of the Palestinians is from Carthy's viewpoint. It is necessary that Ireland has a role to play in saving the Palestinians since both nations have suffered under occupation, so Ireland knows well how much the Palestinians need support. Finally, in the last sentence of his speech, Carthy uses the modal "must" in "our call tonight *must* be clear and immediate" before he states what the Palestinians need (a ceasefire, peace and independence). The modal "must" highlights the necessity of being very clear about what is needed at this stage in the conflict in order to save the Palestinians who are bombarded around the clock. Hence, it could be seen that the attitudinal modals employed by Carthy revolve around the necessity of saving the Palestinians whom he represents as the victims in their conflict with Israel.

5.2.3. Style of Speaking:

In President Biden's speech, the adverb "literally" in the sentence "there are moments in this life — and I mean this *literally* — when the pure, unadulterated evil is unleashed on this world" serves to convey the president's view of Hamas as the incarnation of pure evil, especially as it is used in combination with the intention verb "mean". The president wants his audience to make no mistake about the brutality of Hamas which is why Israel has the right to defend

itself and to gain the US' total support. Carthy's speech does not include style of speaking stance markers.

5.2.4. Other verbs/adjectives/nouns:

In addition to the epistemic, attitudinal/affective and style of speaking stance markers, both speakers make their stance clear through a number of other stance markers.

In the very first sentence of President Biden's speech "there are moments in this life — and I *mean* this literally — when the pure, unadulterated evil is unleashed on this world", the verb "mean" is a verb of intention (Biber, 2006b, p. 92) which reveals the US president's view of the conflict and hence his determination to support Israel as the victim of evil. Such stance justifies the unlimited support which he offers Israel as the president of the US. In addition, he uses a number of speech act verbs which are revealing of his stance. Examples include:

- My administration has *consulted* closely with the Congress throughout this crisis.
- This is a moment for the United States to come together, to *grieve* with those who are mourning.
- We *condemn* the indiscriminate evil, just as we've always done.

The verbs "consulted", "grieve" and "condemn" are all speech act verbs which are revealing of President Biden's stance. In the first sentence, the verb "consulted" (with the "Congress" as its object") reveals the efforts exerted by Biden and the discussions he has with members of the Congress in his attempt to provide support for Israel. In the second sentence, the verb "grieve" reveals deep sadness for the victims of the attacks who are mourning for their loved ones. In the third sentence, the verb "condemn" shows the president's tough stance against evil (Hamas), which again justifies his support for Israel (the victim).

In his speech, Carthy too uses verbs which indicate his stance. The verb "hear", which is a verb of cognition, is used four times:

- How come we never *hear* the words "Palestine has the right to defend itself"?

- We did not *hear* that when a humanitarian flotilla bringing essential supplies to Gaza was met with a military assault […].
- We do not *hear* that even when Israel targeted and murdered four little Palestinian boys […].
- Not after the countless offensive attacks by Israel against the people of Gaza or the West Bank have we *heard* anybody […] utter the words, "Palestine has the right to defend itself". Why not?

In the four sentences, the verb "hear" is used in negative structures to stress the fact that the world has been keeping silent about the genocide that Israel commits against the Palestinians. Such statements serve to highlight the Irish politician's stance towards the conflict through arousing sympathy towards the Palestinians who are oppressed by Israel in every possible way while the world is turning a blind eye to the massacres they, as well as whoever tries to help them, undergo. However, Carthy makes it clear that he is not requesting the world to say such words and make them heard. The verb "ask" in the sentence "I'm not asking you to say those words" is a speech act verb which is used in a negative structure too; the speaker states that even "asking" the world to acknowledge the Palestinians' right to self-defense is futile since even if the world does, the Palestinians cannot defend themselves in the face of such powerful military forces. The Irish politician's use of these verbs reflects his stance towards the conflict and his support for the Palestinians as victims of the Israeli occupation.

5.3. Alignment:

From the analysis of the category of evaluation and the comparisons made between the Israeli and Palestinian sides in both speeches, it could be seen that each speaker tries to present one side of the conflict as the oppressor and the other as the oppressed. This leads the listeners to infer that each of the two speakers aligns with the oppressed and disaligns with the oppressor (from the speaker's own point of view) for alignment "becomes an integral part of every

act of evaluation" (Du Bois & Kärkkäinen, 2012, p. 441). Alignment is dialogic by nature since it involves agreeing or disagreeing with a previous stance and hence (dis)aligning with the taker of that stance.

In President Biden's speech, he seems to be responding to a previous stance when he says, "There is no justification for terrorism. There is no excuse". Bearing in mind the dialogic nature of stancetaking, Biden's statement sounds like a response to Hamas' view that they have a justification for their attacks on Israel, and this response shows that he disaligns with Hamas (and accordingly aligns with Israel). Also, the sentence "Hamas does not stand for the Palestinian people's right to dignity and self-determination" seems to be a response to another previous stance (that Hamas stands for such rights), so in this statement, Biden disaligns with Hamas and with any voice arguing that Hamas stands for the Palestinians' rights.

Similarly, in his speech, Carthy employs linguistic tools to formulate his stance and counter other previously formed stances. For example, the sentence "[w]orld leaders queued up to say Israel has the right to defend itself" presents the world leaders' previous stance which supports Israel. Carthy disaligns with this stance when he says, "those words have become contaminated" and "Israel has the right to defend itself has now become cover for Israel has the right to commit genocide […]". Hence, in both statements, Carthy disalign with the stance that has been previously formed by world leaders and, accordingly, aligns with the Palestinians and disaligns with Israel.

6. Findings and Discussion:

The analysis of the two speeches delivered by US President Joe Biden and the Irish politician Matt Carthy reveals two contrasting stances towards the Israeli-Palestinian war. Whereas Biden condemns Hamas and vows to support Israel in every possible way, Carthy expresses full support for the Palestinians and calls upon the world to stop the Israeli aggression against them.

Two different stances feature in the analyzed speeches through the linguistic choices made by the speakers. In terms of evaluation, the value-laden words employed by Biden are meant to demonize Hamas, present it as a terrorist organization and arouse sympathy towards the Israelis whom he presents as victims. By contrast, Carthy's value-

laden words are intended to have exactly the opposite effect: to present Israel as an aggressor and usurper of the Palestinians' land and present the Palestinians as victims of the ruthless occupation. In terms of positioning, the US president employs a number of epistemic and affective/attitudinal linguistic items in order to position himself as an ardent supporter of Israel. On the other hand, the epistemic and affective/attitudinal linguistic items used by Carthy serve to clearly position him as a supporter of the Palestinians. Accordingly, it becomes clear that the US president aligns with Israel and disaligns with Hamas while the Irish politician aligns with the Palestinians and disaligns with Israel. Hence, in terms of Du Bois's stance triangle, the Israeli-Palestinian war and its two parties become the stance object, President Biden and Matt Carthy become the stancetakers and each of them responds to a prior stance, hence (dis)aligning with one of the conflicting parties.

It could be seen that each of the two speakers adopts a stance that suits his own agenda. As mentioned earlier (see Section 3), Israel has always been the US' spoiled child. Therefore, presenting Israel as a victim, like in Biden's speech, sounds like a pretext for the US' military support for Israel, which could also be a way of securing the US' interests in the Middle East (e.g., oil) through empowering its number one ally in the region. Since stance is consequential, the US stance towards the war led to the US enacting a legislation "providing at least $12.5 billion in military aid to Israel" (Council on Foreign Relations, 2024). Hammer (2023) explains that the US was committed to sending Israel Iron Dome air-defense missiles, small diameter bombs and JDAM kits, which convert unguided bombs into GPS-guided weapons, after the war broke out in addition to the previously agreed upon advanced weaponry (e.g., F-35 fighter jets, CH-53 heavy-lift helicopters, and KC-46 aerial refueling tankers). On the other hand, the Irish stance was translated into allocating a total of 29 million euros to humanitarian funding for the Palestinians on October 18, 2023 in an attempt to combat the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza (AlJaazeera, 2023). Such actions on the part of the US and Ireland show that stance does have political implications in reality.

7. Conclusion:

Language is part and parcel of practicing politics, and stancetaking is a key aspect of political language use. The Israeli-Palestinian war which broke out on October 7, 2023, triggered various stances worldwide as shown in various texts like the political speeches delivered by many world leaders. This paper presents an analysis of two speeches in which the speakers adopt two contrasting stances towards both sides of the conflict: one that is delivered by Joe Biden, President of the United States, and another that is delivered by Matt Carthy, an Irish politician. Using the stance categories proposed by Du Bois (2007) and the lexico-grammatical stance markers proposed by Biber (2006b) and Biber et al. (2021), both speeches are analyzed in order to investigate the stance adopted by each speaker. The analysis shows that each speaker sides with one of the conflicting parties and condemns the other. The evaluations presented by the US president present Israel as a victim and Hamas as an aggressor whereas the evaluations presented by the Irish politician present the Palestinians as victims and Israel as a usurper of their land. Hence, Biden positions himself as a supporter of Israel, aligning with the Israelis and disaligning with Hamas. On the other hand, Carthy positions himself as a supporter of the Palestinians, hence aligning with them and disaligning with Israel. Stance is consequential and has political implications in reality. This is evident in President Biden's vow to support Israel, which was clear in the military aid that the US sent Israel after the war broke out. This stance could also be considered an attempt on the US' part to secure its interests in the Middle East though empowering its number one ally in the region. On the other hand, Ireland allocated huge funds for aiding the Palestinians in Gaza, and Carthy in his speech calls upon the world to take action against Israel. Hence, through the stance markers employed in both speeches, the speakers are able to highlight their stances, side with one of conflicting parties, stand against the other and justify subsequent actions.

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