LANGUAGE, COGNITION AND DISCOURSE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

EDITOR
Misbah Liaqat

LANGUAGE, COGNITION AND DISCOURSE IN THE DIGITAL AGE- 2026

ISBN: 978-625-6080-68-3

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18281677

Edited By

Misbah Liaqat

January / 2026

Ankara, Türkiye

Date: 17.01.2026

Farabi Publishing House
Ankara, Türkiye
www.farabiyayinevi.org

adopted by Esra KOÇAK
ISBN: 978-625-6080-68-3

LANGUAGE, COGNITION AND DISCOURSE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

EDITOR
Misbah Liaqat

AUTHORS
Dr. Chandrasekharan PRAVEEN
Dr. Ardita DYLGJERI
Ayodele Adebayo ALLAGBE
Franck AMOUSSOU
Elisée Koma HASSANE
Sayantani CHAKRABORTY
Ranjita SINHA
Krishnendu Kumar POBI

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

The digital age has transformed the ways language is used and experienced, while also reshaping how individuals think, interpret meaning, and engage with social discourse. Artificial intelligence–driven communication tools, social media practices, and online interactions have made the relationship between language, cognition, and discourse more visible than ever before. In this context, language should be understood not only as a means of communication, but also as a multidimensional space where ideology, identity, and power relations are constructed and negotiated.

Language, Cognition and Discourse in the Digital Age aims to provide an interdisciplinary platform for exploring the linguistic and cognitive dimensions of digital transformation from diverse perspectives. The chapters in this volume address contemporary approaches in areas such as conceptual metaphors, cognitive framing, critical discourse analysis, and language education in digital environments, offering valuable insights for ongoing academic discussions.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all contributing authors for their scholarly efforts and meaningful contributions. It is my hope that this book will serve as a beneficial resource for researchers, academics, and all readers interested in the evolving dynamics of language and discourse in the digital era.

January 17, 2026
Türkiye

CHAPTER 1
OPEN AI-BASED ELT MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT – PROS AND CONS

Dr. Chandrasekharan PRAVEEN[1]

[1]Chinmaya Vishwa Vidyapeeth, Ernakulam, India, profcpraveen@gmail.com, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-9365-5406

INTRODUCTION

In India, as early as 2005, the Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education, Government of India initiated a Textbook Regulator Mechanism. In their report they made it clear that Textbook is a major educational tool for students as they shape the minds of children in their formative years. So, they insisted that the content of textbooks should pass on values of citizenship, to the next generation and should impact the educational development of students. (Report p.7, 2005)

Of late, in India there has been an insistence on production of local texts/situations based English language Course Books. The rationale for such a move was that texts with content based on European settings seldom rouses the interest of the English as a Second Language learner in India. This is a marked shift from the traditional practice of adapting authentic texts in English written by British and American authors for English Course Books. For English as a Second Language Course Book producers, this became a major challenge. And obviously too because finding appropriate and interesting materials was not easy. Moreover, matching the content identified with the experiential domain of the learners in schools in India became a challenge too. Overcoming this challenge required meticulous rewriting of the materials identified. It was at such a time that ChatGPT entered the pedagogical landscape and the investigator, an experimenter since its launch, attempted to employ it for designing ELT materials.

The Background

Usually for production of materials with an Indian flavour, Course book developing teams would select certain themes such as 'Water', 'Food' etc. and assign them to Indian material developers who have a flair for writing. Once such writers compose short stories, poems or prose passages based on local culture/incidents, a team of experienced materials producers would prepare comprehension questions and a variety of language exercises. This continued for years and when the first draft of the National Education Policy (2019) was released, the local material producers began to prepare new Course Books to fulfil the guidelines of the new policy. (1)

The Problem

Less than a year of the launch of ChatGPT by OpenAI on November, 30, 2022 it has shaken up the world. Many began to draw parallels with the launch of Wikipedia, and openly displayed a guarded attitude for using it as a reference source. (Digital Learning Institute). That is because with ChatGPT it became possible for content generation (prose, verse or dialogue) and even preparation of language exercises for Course Books using the new Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool. To an extent, grading of exercises and matching content with the ability of average level English as a Second Language learners was also possible. But judicious ELT materials producers were perturbed about charges of plagiarism.

The context

The investigator, a teacher educator was recently assigned a leadership role in the development of a Course Book for schools run by the Government of Kerala. For the past couple of years, the investigator had also served as a Resource Person for introducing the new English Course Books of a world-renowned publisher for private schools in India. Armed with such experience, the investigator attempted to develop content and language exercises for English language course books for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners in the South Indian State of Kerala.

The team to which the investigator was assigned had been depending liberally on ChatGPT for a variety of purposes. These included adapting or re-writing an available text with new vocabulary, followed by preparation of language exercises. Such materials were then collaboratively edited and refined for final inclusion in the Course Book. Simultaneously, the investigator developed a series of materials based on a local tragedy which affected the people living in a hilly area in the State of Kerala. It was a landslide which washed away houses, shops, bridges, schools and entire buildings during a night in July 2024. Hundreds of men, women, children and pets were killed in the tragedy which was broadcast on news channels across the State. The magnitude of the havoc and damage shocked the entire nation resulting in the Indian Prime Minister declaring it as a national tragedy. (2)

In short, whatever had happened during the disaster and the weeks to follow is now well known to students in schools and any content developed using AI for language teaching related to the disaster will be familiar with the students. Used discreetly the incidents though grim can be utilized for fostering interpersonal relationships, empathy, collaboration and cooperation in addition to fostering critical thinking and sensitizing learners to aspects of sustainable development. This prompted the investigator to develop materials based on the tragedy which is familiar to the target group and can be used not just to foster English language competence but also develop appropriate values and skills.

Objectives

The main objective was to develop text types with AI assistance to be used as teaching material in a Communicative English classroom. Though the content chosen for the study were sad news narratives of a local tragedy, generating content that has a human-interest value and scope for fostering language use in the classroom was the prime focus. This meant realizing the following:

- Review of news items in print and digital media on the recent landslide in Wyanad, Kerala and compiling those which have a scope for fostering communication skills.
- Identification of suitable content and preparation of appropriate Prompts on ChatGPT to generate a different text type.
- Checking the suitability of the classroom tasks of the AI generated such as Story and Poem.
- Engaging learners in classroom interaction making use of the AI generated material.
- Collecting feedback on the usefulness of the materials developed from the learners.

Methodology

To develop the materials on the theme of 'Natural disaster' for the study, the investigator reviewed the events both during and after the tragedy.

This involved compiling of newspaper reports both print and digital, transcribing of video recording of onsite reports telecast by different news channels which included interviews with people who have witnessed the tragedy and some who actually was caught in the disaster but miraculously survived. Such content was edited to prepare appropriate prompts and assigned to ChatGPT for refining and preparing language exercise. Specimen content generated using ChatGPT is given as Appendix.

The population for the study comprised students studying English as a Second Language in India. The sample chosen for the study are students who have just completed their schooling and are now pursuing a course in English for Communication in a national institute where the investigator was serving as a teacher educator.

The AI generated materials were reviewed by the investigator and hand-outs (Short story, Poem etc.) were prepared and tested on the students. Following the test, feedback on the materials developed was collected through a feedback form and through informal interviews. In the feedback form, questions related to the difficulty level, element of interest, and usefulness for learning English was also collected. This was followed by a general review of the worksheets (Exercises) to arrive at the pros and cons of relying on AI-generated materials.

1. BRIEF REVIEW OF STUDIES

1.1 On ELT Materials Production

Textbooks act as a reliable source of genuine language exposure for students. They provide learners with organized and contextualized language content, introducing them to a diverse range of vocabulary, grammatical structures, and language applications. (EuroSchool)

As early as 1998, Tomlinson proposed certain principles for materials production. These include among others a conscious attempt to stimulate both the right and left brain by including materials and tasks that encourage intellectual, aesthetic and emotional involvement. In 2016,

Stec attempted to study teachers' perspective of ELT materials for very young learners, observed that the selection of proper materials for very young learners and adjustment to their skills and abilities is a challenge.

In a review of English textbooks used in South-East Asia, Dat (2008) pointed out that English textbook designers in the region seriously lack professional course developers and that there has not been adequate training in materials development (p. 276). Mahapatra (2012) during his discussion on the influence of content in textbook design in India, made an important observation: altering the current writing practices of textbooks presents a substantial challenge, as all stakeholders involved in decision-making are embedded within the societal framework on which the textbooks are built. Studies on the orientation of textbooks to the country' own culture have been undertaken. For instance, a study in Iran found that that the pictures and conversation used in CLT textbooks are to a large extent, exclusive to home culture. (Ajideh & Pahahi, 2016) According to Banaruee et.al. (2023) incorporating local culture into ELT textbooks offers numerous benefits, and without well-designed materials, establishing a successful language teaching program would be difficult. As per a study conducted in the Malaysian context Mohaideen et al. (2020) teachers perceive local materials as more reliable to pupils in comparison to foreign texts. But Rahim & Daghigh (2020) who studied the cultural context in textbooks used for ELT in Malaysia found that replacing local text books with imported ones may not be in the best interest of the English language agenda of the country.

Uspayanti (2024) carried out research on creating an English textbook grounded in local cultural knowledge to enhance students' literacy skills. The study confirmed that incorporating media into the teaching and learning process can capture students' interest, as well as make learning activities more engaging and effective. Similarly, Sujinah et al. (2019) stated that textbooks infused with local wisdom can increase students' enthusiasm for studying and also contribute to the improvement of their literacy abilities.

Howard and Major (2004) advocate for teachers to create their own teaching materials, emphasizing their importance for effective learning. They recommend that materials should be contextualized and stimulate interaction, promoting active language use. Additionally, materials should foster the development of learning strategies and balance focus on form and function. They should be authentic, visually appealing, and designed to progress skills logically.

1.2 On the Use of ChatGPT for ELT Materials Production

Lo et.al. (2024) attempted a systematic review and analysed 70 empirical studies related to the use of ChatGPT in ESL/EFL education. The studies collectively provide solid evidence regarding the affordances which include personalized learning and increased learning opportunities.

Kohnke et al. (2023) describing the affordance of ChatGPT pointed out that it can generate dialogues which can be adjusted to varying proficiency levels. And according to the materials writer, Ross Thorburn (2023), among other things it is possible to write dialogues, prepare reading comprehension questions and write texts with specific grammar and vocabulary using ChatGPT.

Joe Dale (2024) engaging a session on ChatGPT in Education for Language Teaching for the British Council opined that using AI to automate routine tasks can save time and inspire creativity. He however cautioned that teachers must always review and adapt AI outputs to fit their specific context and standards.

To Lund & Wang (2023) ChatGPT can be fine-tuned on specific tasks, making it even more versatile in its applications. Mc Kinnon & Meldrum in their post on ELT Lesson Planning with ChatGPT observed that a weakness of ChatGPT is that it does not grade content effectively but can be rectified by writing a further prompt.

This overview highlights essential aspects of ELT materials production and AI integration. Effective materials should stimulate both emotional and intellectual engagement while being culturally relevant to motivate learners and foster literacy. Incorporating local culture into textbooks enhances motivation and learner connection, whereas teacher-created, authentic materials support active, adaptable learning.

AI tools like ChatGPT offer promising opportunities for personalized content and task automation, enabling the generation of dialogues and texts suited to different proficiency levels. However, AI outputs require careful review and teacher oversight to ensure quality and appropriateness.

Fine-tuning AI models can improve their versatility, but ongoing human input remains crucial.

Overall, combining pedagogical principles with technological advancements, alongside cultural considerations and teacher involvement, is vital for developing effective ELT resources.

The review in particular highlights ChatGPT's potential to personalize learning, generate adaptable dialogues, and assist in creating teaching materials, saving time and fostering creativity. However, limitations such as automatic grading inefficiencies require careful oversight and prompt refinement. A lot depends on teacher review and customization to maximize benefits and address challenges. On a positive note, the opportunities presented by ChatGPT for creating educational materials are truly captivating.

1.3 Procedure Employed for Utilizing the AI Generated Material for Classroom Interaction

Poem (Mode of Transaction)

Printed hand-outs of the poem were distributed to the students with the instruction that it is anonymous and that they should read and comprehend the poem. They were never told that it is an AI generated poem based on the recent landslide that hit Wayanad. After an initial individual reading, the students were asked to read and share their understanding with their peers. Following this they were asked to relate the description to anything they were familiar with. Not surprisingly a few were quick to connect the description to what happened in the tragedy that struck Kerala. This lend scope for interaction in English about something they were quite familiar with. Following this, a literary appreciation in small groups was attempted. They were asked to list down the imagery and the metaphors employed.

Short Story (Mode of transaction)

Printed hand-outs of the short story were prepared and distributed to the students. Following an individual reading, the students were directed to share their understanding with their peers.

Questions to check comprehension and vocabulary were posed. Finally, as a group task they were asked to make a diary entry imagining themselves to be a character.

2. DISCUSSION

The ELT materials production strategy described employs a student-centered, interactive approach aimed at enhancing comprehension and engagement. In the poem activity, students initially read independently, then discuss their interpretations, fostering peer learning and critical thinking. Linking the poem to real-life events like the Kerala landslide adds relevance and contextual understanding, encouraging meaningful interaction. The literary analysis further develops analytical skills through group work on imagery and metaphors. Similarly, the short story activity promotes comprehension, vocabulary development, and creative writing via group tasks, reinforcing understanding through personal reflection. Overall, this approach effectively integrates reading, discussion, and creative tasks to deepen language skills; however, it could be improved by explicitly incorporating diverse language skills and ensuring tasks are scaffolded for varying proficiency levels.

The investigator had tried to refine the AI generated materials drawing on own experience of reviewing course books as a teacher educator. The materials developed were also tested on students and feedback collected. This is well in tune with Tomilnson and Masuhara's (2017) suggestion that effective materials development involve self-reflection, self-evaluation and constructive criticism. More significantly, the choice of content underscores Tomlinson's (2012) view that all texts and tasks that learners engage with should be genuine and real-world in nature, as this better prepares them for actual language use outside the classroom.

True, the much-visited news website, Mint reported that according to survivors, the children who witnessed the devastating event are unable to sleep, haunted by the traumatic experience. Yet the investigator, closely followed the news updates of the natural disaster that struck Wayanad and found that it led to the rise of several human-interest stories. These include the tireless effort of volunteers, the Army, tales of heroism and tales of human-animal bonding.

In compiling and selecting materials for the ChatGPT prompt, the investigator meticulously tapped that content which have a scope for nurturing proper values in children.

Pros

- The materials generated using ChatGPT included among others a Poem and Short story. The students on whom the material was tested during group work could engage in fruitful interaction and answer the questions prepared by ChatGPT. This is an affirmation of a study by Baskara et.al. (2023) about ChatGPT's ability to generate authentic language materials, such as dialogues, news articles, or reading passages which is an advantage for language instruction.
- The choice of vocabulary and the style of the text generated by ChatGPT was appealing and the investigator found them to be of a superior quality than the ones teachers used to produce during the pre-ChatGPT days.

Cons

- The investigator had commenced experimenting with the use of ChatGPT for composing poems ever since its launch (Praveen, 2023). In identifying appropriate content and in writing of prompts, the researcher's own experience of using ChatGPT for developing materials were made use of. But teachers of English who are unfamiliar with the very process of creation of materials using ChatGPT and AI tools are likely to find the task tedious and may withdraw.
- A smooth transition from the use of traditional digital aids to ChatGPT generated aids for language teaching can be elusive for novice teachers. This is because the effectiveness of the ChatGPT material depends on careful selection by the user matching it with learner ability and interest.
- Managements are seldom receptive to experiments by teachers especially when results are their prime concern and for decades teachers have been dependent on print-based exercises to improve the linguistic competence of learners.
- What works for one target group may not necessarily work for another group of learners even though they are in the same Grade.

  This implies that teachers using ChatGPT to be conversant with the limitations of the generated material and should constantly try to revise the material generated if they are found to be less effective for fostering communication skills in the English as a Second Language classroom.

From hindsight, the study prompts researchers to review the aspects related to materials production. For instance, it has been commonly acknowledged that for producing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) materials, a shift from traditional methods to a more dynamic approach is required. This is because the goal is to design content that is authentic and grounded in real-life scenarios, encouraging students to use language for genuine, meaningful communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). This also implies that materials should be learner-centred and it will necessitate inclusion of activities that promote interaction, critical thinking, and the negotiation of meaning, which helps students build communicative competence beyond just knowing grammatical rules. It is also crucial to consider the cultural backgrounds, interests, and skill levels of the learners to ensure the content is both relevant and engaging. Further, an enhanced engagement is also possible by integrating a variety of multimodal resources. This not only keeps students motivated but also accommodates different learning preferences. This is an acknowledgement of Nunan's (1991) findings that the core focus of effective CLT materials is to prioritize authenticity, active student participation, and cultural awareness to effectively support language acquisition.

The use of ChatGPT in language instruction presents notable advantages, including generating authentic and diverse materials such as story and poem that foster engaging student interactions and are of superior quality compared to traditional teacher-produced content. This aligns with studies highlighting ChatGPT's capability to produce realistic language materials beneficial for learning. However, challenges remain, particularly for teachers unfamiliar with AI-based content creation, as designing appropriate prompts and selecting suitable materials can be tedious and may hinder smooth adoption. Transitioning from traditional aids to ChatGPT-driven resources can be difficult for novice teachers, given the need for careful customization aligned with learner needs.

Additionally, institutional resistance to experimentation and reliance on print-based exercises complicate integration, and the variability in effectiveness across different learner groups necessitates ongoing revision and adaptation of generated materials to ensure they effectively promote communication skills in diverse ESL classrooms.

Limitations of the study

The material developed by the investigator with ChatGPT assistance have only been tested on a small sample. In this case, the student teachers on whom the material was tested were quite familiar with the impact of the landslide in Wayanad and they fully resonated to the story line. This is not likely with a group from schools or institutions in metropolitan cities. More significantly the generation of prompts were dependent on the ones framed by the investigator. It is not known whether a finer prompt is capable of producing better materials.

Summing up

Preparing English language course books with local materials can be a challenge. But the investigator presumed that in the long run content produced based on local events will help address the problems created by using Global Course books which continue to be tools of cultural imperialism transferring only western values and culture. The study has shown how ChatGPT generated materials can help create content relevant and engaging for learners which in the process allows for greater learner motivation. The use of content based on local texts also make possible a more inclusive and meaningful learning. With ChatGPT's ability to create an array of output, there are tremendous implications for teachers of English. While the pros dominate, the lack of skills in preparing appropriate prompts is likely to negatively affect English as a Second Language materials developed using ChatGPT. It is hoped that the findings of this study will motivate researchers to take up further study and experiment with generation of more AI based materials and encourage teachers of English to become materials producers themselves.

Notes

Macmillan Education for instance revised their series of ELT books for schools fulfilling the NEP 2020 guidelines. These include among others, activities to foster Critical thinking, Experiential learning, Art-integrated learning and inclusion of interesting stories by Indian authors. For instance, see the revised version of the series entitled 'English Treasure'.

Live telecasts of relief and rescue operations by the Disaster Management teams, the Indian Army and hundreds of volunteers in the weeks that followed interspersed with on-the-spot interviews with survivors left an indelible impression in the minds of shocked viewers. Not only did it upset the economy and social life of citizens, it led to people asking questions related to the cause of the disaster, ways of preventing disasters and even questions related to the precariousness of human existence. While some attributed the disaster to climate change, some began asking whether we should allow people to live in landslide prone areas in the state. From a pedagogic point of view, the content generated based on the disaster has scope for conducing discussion, debate or speeches in the Communicative English classroom.

REFERENCES

Ajideh, Parviz & Pahahi, Malek. An Analysis of Culture-Related Content in English Textbooks for Iranian Students Entitled 'Prospect' and 'Vision' Series. International Journal of Language and Linguistics. Vol. 3, No. 6; December 2016.

Available at:

Banaruee H, Farsani D and Khatin-Zadeh O (2023). Culture in English Language Teaching: A curricular evaluation of English textbooks for foreign language learners. *Front. Educ.* 8:1012786.

Baskara, R., & Mukarto, M. (2023). Exploring the implications of ChatGPT for language learning in higher education. Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, 7(2), 343–358.

Dale, J. (2024). AI and ChatGPT in language teaching: Enhancing personalized learning experiences [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5C8fTpnRin4

Dat, B. (2008). ELT materials used in Southeast Asia. In B. Tomlinson (Ed.). English language learning materials: A critical review. (pp. 263280). New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Digital Learning Institute. (n.d.). The impact of ChatGPT on education: The good and the bad [Blog]. https://www.digitallearninginstitute.com/blog/the-impact-of-chat-gpt-on-education

doi: 10.3389/feduc.2023.1012786

English Treasure. (2023). Macmillan. https://macmillaneducation.in/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Macmillan-2023-HQ.pdf

Euroschool. Textbooks in Language Education: Key Roles and Impact

Howard, J. & J. Major. (2004). Guidelines for designing effective English language teaching materials.

http://www.paaljapan.org/resources /proceedings /PAAL9/pdf/Howard.pdf.

https://www.euroschoolindia.com/blogs/role-of-textbook-in-language-teaching-learning/

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385101117_The_Development_of_An_English_Textbook_Based_on_Local_Wisdom_to_Improve_the_Students'_Literacy

Kohnke, L., Moorhouse, B. L., & Zou, D. (2023). ChatGPT for language teaching and learning. RELC Journal. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882231162868

Lo, C. K., Yu, P. L. H., Xu, S., et al. (2024). Exploring the application of ChatGPT in ESL/EFL education and related research issues: A systematic review of empirical studies. Smart Learning Environments, 11(1), 50. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-024-00342-5

Lund, B. D., & Wang, T. (2023). Chatting about ChatGPT: How may AI and GPT impact academia and libraries? Library Hi Tech News. https://doi.org/10.1108/LHTN-01-2023-0009

Mahapatra, Santhosh Kumar. Language and Language Teaching Volume 1 Number 2 July 2012.

McKinnon, M., & Meldrum, N. (n.d.). ELT lesson planning with ChatGPT: Creating lesson aims and activities. https://www.garneteducation.com/elt-lesson-planning-with-chatgpt-creating-lesson-aims-and-activities/

Mint. (2024, July 31). Wayanad landslides | 'I could hear them screaming': Shell-shocked survivors recall horrifying moments. https://www.livemint.com/news/india/wayanad-landslides-i-could-hear-them-screaming-shell-shocked-survivors-recall-horrifying-moments-11722430080184.html

Mohaideen, M. S. H., Ismail, H. H., & Rashid, R. A. (2020). The use of local literary texts as reading materials in English language classrooms: An analysis of teachers' perspectives. International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research, 19(11), 127–144.

National Education Policy. (2020). Government of India, Ministry of Education. https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf

Nunan, D. (1991). Language Teaching Methodology: A Textbook for Teachers. Prentice Hall.

Praveen, C. (2023). Three mini ChatGPT poems [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3s4mpD-2h0I&t=1s

Rahim, H. A., & Daghigh, A. J. (2020). Locally-developed vs. global textbooks: An evaluation of cultural content in textbooks used in ELT in Malaysia. Asian Englishes, 22(3), 317–331. https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2019.1669301

Report. (2005). Regulatory Mechanism for Textbooks and Parallel Textbooks Taught in Schools Outsidethe Government System. Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education Ministry of Human Resource Development Government of India.

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Stec, M. (2016). ELT materials for very young learners: A teacher's perspective on selection, implementation, and evaluation. International Journal for Cross-Disciplinary Subjects in Education (IJCDSE), 7(2).

Sujinah, S., Mu'ammar, M., Affandy, A., & Supriyanto, E. (2019). The Effectiveness of Local Wisdom Based on Textbook to Improve Students' Writing Literacy. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 7, 2573-2583. https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2019.071204.

Thorburn, R. (2023, March 2). Creating teaching materials with ChatGPT and DALL-E2 [Blog].

Tomlinson, B. (1998). Material development in language teaching. Cambridge University Press.

Tomlinson, B. (2012). Materials development for language learning and teaching. *Language Teaching, 45*(2), 143-179.

Tomlinson, B., & Masuhara, H. (2017). The complete guide to the theory and practice of materials development for language learning. Wiley. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Uspayanti, R., & Marnina, M. (2024). The Development of An English Textbook Based on Local Wisdom to Improve the Students' Literacy. *Jurnal Paedagogy, 11*(4), 684-696. doi: https://doi.org/10.33394/jp.v11i4.12203

Warner, B. (2022, December 19). AI for language learning: ChatGPT and the future of ELT [Blog]. TESOL.

CHAPTER 2
UNVEILING THE DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES AND IDEOLOGIES IN ADESINA'S SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE INAUGURATION LECTURE FOR THE NEW PRESIDENT OF NIGERIA

Ayodele Adebayo ALLAGBE[1]
Franck AMOUSSOU[2]
Elisée Koma HASSANE[3]

[1]Département d'Anglais, Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines (FLSH), Université André Salifou (UAS), Niger, courawin@yahoo.fr, ORCID ID : 0009-0009-5398-9178.
[2]Département d'Anglais, Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines (FLSH), Université André Salifou (UAS) de Zinder, Niger, ORCID ID : 0000-0003-2298-9529.
[3]Department of English and Literary Studies, Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, ehassanekoma@yahoo.com.

INTRODUCTION

Language is presumably a powerful tool in the hands of its user. In fact, it can be used to perform a myriad of functions. For instance, it can be used to give information (in form of a text, talk, lecture, sermon, etc.). However, while the information given (in any form of communication) might obviously sound factual, it should be borne in mind that it still remains the language user's own discursive construction or representation of social reality. In other words, a speaker's depiction of social reality constitutes one of the multiple ways of constructing or representing that social reality. And since there are many alternative ways of constructing or representing social reality, one can presuppose that any choice the language user makes will depend to a large extent on his/her purpose (Thompson, 2014), and this choice too will be ideologically imbricated or motivated. Concurring with the foregoing, van Dijk (1995a) submits that when people use language, they often use it to either legitimate their social positions or the ideologies of the group of which they are members. In their attempts to do so, they tend to employ a spectrum of discursive structures or/and strategies.

Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth, CDA) focuses on how discourse structures or/and strategies influence mental representations (van Dijk, 2001) or how discourse enacts ideologies (van Dijk, 1995b). CDA has recently gained currency in humanities and social sciences. However, a review of the extant literature in these areas overtly exudes that there is a paucity of CDA research on economic discourse. This is to say, while critical discourse analysts have extensively and increasingly investigated how discursive features are deployed to shape social realities, construct political identities, control or manipulate public opinions or mental models, elicit positive self-promotion, encode ideologies, ideological meanings or ideological power relations, and reproduce power abuse, dominance and (gender) inequality in 1. ***political discourse*** including political speeches (Ezeifeka, 2012; Sharndama, 2016; Koussouhon *et al.*, 2018; Amoussou and Aguessy, 2020; Addae, Alhassan and Kyeremeh, 2022; Kakisina *et al.*, 2022; Allagbé, 2024a and b; Allagbé *et al.*, 2024; Allagbé *et al.*, 2025; Allagbé *et al.*, 2025), open letters (Fawunmi and Taiwo, 2021), campaign SMS messages (Osisanwo, 2016a).

Campaign songs (Osisanwo, 2020), 2. ***media discourse*** including news coverage (Sadeghi, Hassani and Jalali, 2014), status updates (Purwanto, 2017), online communication (Taiwo, 2017), newspaper reports (Igwebuike, 2018), online Ponzi schemes' narratives (Onanuga and Taiwo, 2020), online newspaper articles (Raj and Ahembe, 2021; Ademilokun, 2023), print media articles (Mohammed, 2024), newspaper campaign advertisements (Ademilokun and Taiwo, 2013), television advertisements (Mayoyo *et al.*, 2020) and scam messages (Obasi, Amoniyan and Obetta, 2024), 3. ***literary discourse*** including poetry (Al-Ramahi *et al.*, 2021) and prose (Ali and Ammash, 2021), 4. ***medical discourse*** including medical speeches on Covid-19 (Muhassin and Hidayati, 2023), clinical meetings (Odebunmi, 2021), medical interactions (Odebunmi, 2022), doctor-patient conversations (Ezeugo and Chukwu, 2024) and online medical consultations (Zhang, 2021), and 5. ***religious discourse*** including religious speeches (Kim, 2016; Haq *et al.*, 2025) and sermons (Rumman, 2019), they have paid little (not to say no) attention to economic discourse. This is the vacuum this paper seeks to fill in.

There is, however, a recent study carried out by Khuong *et al.* (2016) which examines how journalists employ discursive strategies to express ideologies in online economic news articles. While this study provides an insight into the discursive features journalists use to shape public opinions, knowledge, attitudes and behavior, it differs from the current article whose focus is a speech on economic issues in the Nigerian context. It analyzes the discursive strategies the President of the African Development Bank Group, Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina (henceforth, the speaker), deploys in his speech delivered at the Inauguration Lecture for the New President of Nigeria on May 27th, 2023 at Abuja, Nigeria. Drawing its theoretical insights from Teun A. van Dijk's sociocognitive approach to CDA and the descriptive qualitative research design, the study specifically examines how the speaker uses discursive strategies to construct or represent the current state of Nigeria's economy, its challenges and potentials for growth, on the one hand, and shape his addressees' mental models, on the other. In line with the aforementioned objective, it seeks to answer the following questions:

- What discursive strategies does the speaker deploy in his speech?
- What ideologies do these strategies evince in the speech?

- How does the speaker employ discursive strategies to shape his addressees' mental models?

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As mentioned earlier, this paper draws its theoretical insights from van Dijk's sociocognitive approach to CDA (1995a and b; 1997c; 2000a; 2001; 2006a). Before saying a few words about the sociocognitive approach, let us first clarify CDA. CDA, by definition, is "a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (van Dijk, 2001, p. 352). Central to CDA is the assumption that "discourse plays a prominent role as the preferential site for the explicit, verbal formulation and the persuasive communication of ideological propositions" (van Dijk, 1995b, p. 17). At the core of van Dijk's sociocognitive approach is the triangulation of the concepts of "cognition", "society" and "discourse" (van Dijk, 2000a, p. 5). This triangulation ontologically suggests that discourse and society are related and these relations are necessarily indirect and mediated by shared mental representations of social actors as group members (Dijk, 1995a, p. 138).

According to van Dijk (1995b), ideologies play a key role in the sociocognitive representations and processes enacted in discourse. In point of fact, "They essentially function as the interface between the cognitive representations and processes underlying discourse and action, on the one hand, and the societal position and interests of social groups, on the other hand" (ibid., p. 18). From a sociocognitive perspective, ideologies are viewed as "systems of ideas" or "belief systems" which are socially shared by the members of a social group (van Dijk, 2006a, p. 116). "In other words, ideologies consist of social representations that define the social identity of a group, that is, its shared beliefs about its fundamental conditions and ways of existence and reproduction" (ibid.). In this sense, ideologies can be argued to serve as the basis of a social group's self-image; i.e. they organize its identity, actions, aims, norms and values, and resources as well as its relations to other social groups. Proponents of CDA generally claim that group relations (otherwise known as power relations) are discursively enacted.

But, from a sociocognitive perspective, power is viewed as control; i.e. access to or control over discourse (including all its levels and structures) presupposes mind control. In this sense, van Dijk (2001) submits that "groups have (more or less) power if they are able to (more or less) control the acts and minds of (members of) other groups. This ability presupposes a power base of privileged access to scarce social resources, such as force, money, status, fame, knowledge, information, "culture," or indeed various forms of public discourse and communication" (ibid., pp. 354-355). On this basis, he identifies three types of power according to the various resources employed to exercise such power: the coercive power of the military and of violent men will rather be based on force, the rich will have power because of their money, whereas the more or less persuasive power of parents, professors, or journalists may be based on knowledge, information, or authority (ibid., p. 355). The type of power we have in mind here is the persuasive power; i.e. the one that powerful or dominant people (including bosses or teachers, or of the authorities, such as police officers, judges, welfare bureaucrats, or tax inspectors, etc.) and social groups and institutions discursively exercise on others by simply telling them what (not) to believe or what (not) to do.

However, power, as van Dijk (2001) rightly points out, is seldom absolute. This is to say, dominated people and social groups and institutions can resist the hegemony of dominant people and social groups and institutions to bring about "a shift in power relations" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 40). To do so, they can select from a spectrum of discursive structures or/and strategies including actor description, authority, display of power, categorization, comparison, contrast, topics, local coherence, examples and illustrations, burden, consensus, counterfactuals, disclaimers, empathy, evidentiality, explanation, fallacy, generalization, implications and presuppositions, situation description, display of power, positive lexicalization, negative lexicalization, US-THEM polarization, positive self-presentation, negative other-presentation, synonymy; paraphrase, propaganda, populism, concretization, illegality, legality, norm making, norm and value violation, populism, hedging and vagueness, topoi, threat, victimization, nominalization, passivization, pronouns, modal verbs and mood adjuncts, rhetorical figures, etc.

Having outlined the theoretical framework of this study, let us now sketch the methodology it adopts.

2. METHODOLOGY

Before outlining the methodology adopted here, there is a need to say a few words about the speaker. Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina is a renowned Nigerian development economist and agricultural development expert. He is the 8th and current President of the African Development Bank Group (as at the time when this paper was (being) written). Before he was first elected as the president of the banking institution in 2015, he had served as the Minister of Agriculture under President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan.

His speech under scrutiny was delivered at the Inauguration Lecture for the New President of Nigeria on May 27th, 2023 at Abuja, Nigeria. It was downloaded on July 12th, 2025 from the African Development Bank Group's website (https://www.afdb.org). The speech was purposively selected for this investigation because it discusses economic issues in Nigeria. The economic issues evoked in the speech actually came timely; i.e. at the moment when Nigeria was getting ready to experience a new transition of power, and the incoming new head of state needed to be briefed on the state of the national economy. Without this prior briefing, the new president might not know the country's priorities in terms of economic reform, and this state of affairs might affect its growth.

To identify the discursive strategies deployed in the text, the study employs the descriptive qualitative research design which consists in reading the speech closely in order to figure out the various discursive strategies the speaker uses to encode ideologies therein, on the one hand, and shape his addressees' mental models, on the other. Note that the identified discursive strategies are presented and discussed in a block form in order to avoid an unnecessary repetition. While the analysis is concerned with the identification of discursive strategies, it is not limited to them. In fact, it describes the linguistic features (formal structures, speech acts, for instance) along with the discursive strategies. The discussion of the findings is a contextualized interpretation of the identified discursive strategies.

This is to say, it relates the discursive features (structures or/and strategies) to context with a view to demonstrating how they serve to construct the speaker's worldviews or ideologies and shape his audience's opinions, knowledge, attitudes and behavior. Due to space limitations, the full speech is not provided here. However, some textual snippets are provided where necessary to demonstrate what is said.

3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The speaker generically structures his speech as follows: opening remarks, content or body and closing remarks. In the opening remarks, he observes protocols, expressing his gratitude to President Muhammadu Buhari for inviting him to the swearing-in ceremonies of the incoming President-elect, H.E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu. In addition, he congratulates President Buhari on Nigeria's 7th consecutive democratic transition, the incoming President and his Vice. He further thanks the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha, Chairman, and members of the Presidential Transition Council, for inviting him to speak at the inauguration lecture for the incoming President of Nigeria. In the body, the speaker first expresses his joy to share his "views and perspectives, as the nation gets ready to have a passing of the baton between H.E. President Muhammadu Buhari, and the incoming-President, H.E. Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu." He then congratulates President Buhari for his stewardship for the past eight years and thanks him for supporting his candidacy in 2015 and 2020, as a President of the African Development Bank Group. He subsequently mentions the progress the institution has made under his custody, citing two prestigious institutions (***Publish What You Fund*** and the Washington D.C.-based ***Center for Global Development***) which have recently decorated it respectively as the "Most Transparent Institution in the World" and "Best Multilateral Development Bank in the World" and inviting President Buhari to "take pride that the mission for Africa is being well executed." After this, he congratulates the incoming President-elect H.E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu once again, and expresses his joy that President Uhuru Kenyatta, former President of Kenya was invited to deliver the inauguration lecture, appreciating him as a great leader for Kenya and asserting humorously that he is a Kenyan in that, as he points out, "Well… I lived in Kenya for close to ten years."

This assertion unfailingly establishes him as someone who more or less knows Kenya well. Moreover, he recalls a joke cracked by President Kenyatta when a Nigerian delegation was on an official visit to Kenya. He was actually part of the delegation as a Minister of Agriculture then: "I remember, one day when then President Goodluck Jonathan visited Kenya and I accompanied him as a minister, as the two Presidents were introducing members of their delegations, President Jonathan said, "Meet Dr. Adesina, Minister of Agriculture", to which President Kenyatta responded, "Yes, Adesina is the Kenyan on loan to Nigeria as Minister."" This further suggests and corroborates his familiarity with Kenya, in general, and with Kenyatta, in particular.

Next follows the substantial part of the speaker's lecture. It begins with the proposition "The election of a new President always elicits hope." As it appears, this proposition is a two-place predicate; i.e. it contains two arguments: "The election of a new President" and "hope". Another striking feature in this proposition is the use of the Mood adjunct "always" which suggests usuality. The two arguments and the Mood adjunct the speaker employs jointly serve to encode an uncontestable scientific or logical truth in the speech. Not only does the proposition express an uncontestable logical truth in the speech, but it also reflects the overall semantic macrostructure or topic therein. Though the speech is entitled "Speech Delivered by Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina, President, African Development Bank Group Inauguration Lecture for the New President of Nigeria 27 May 2023, Abuja, Nigeria", this title does not provide an insight into its content. It does, however, indicate the text-type or genre: "speech". The semantic macrostructure or topic really influences the audience's mental representations; i.e. what they, in van Dijk's words, "see as the most important information of text or talk, and thus correspond to the top levels of their mental models" (2001, p. 358). Consider how the speaker attempts to shape his recipients' opinions or mental models in the extract below.

(1) The election of a new President (**S**) always elicits (**V**) hope (**O**). (1)

Nigeria (**S**) *will* be looking to (**V**) you (**O**), as President Tinubu (**A**), on your first day (**A**) in office (**A**), with hope (**A**). (2)

Hope (**V**) [that (**Conj.**) you (**S**) *will* assure (**V**) security, peace, and stability (**O**)] (**O**). (3)

Hope (**V**) [that (**Conj.**) you (**S**) *will* heal (**V**) and (**Conj.**) (*will*) unite (**V**) a fractious nation (**O**)] (**O**). (4)

Hope (**V**) [that (**Conj.**) you (**S**) *will* rise (**V**) above party lines (**A**) and (**Conj.**) (*will*) forge (**V**) a compelling force (**O**) to move the nation forward (**A**), with inclusiveness, fairness, equity, and justice (**A**)] (**O**). (5)

Hope (**V**) [that (**Conj.**) you (**S**) *will* drastically improve (**V**) the economy (**O**)] (**O**). (6)

Hope (**V**) [that (**Conj.**) you (**S**) *will* spark (**V**) a new wave of prosperity (**O**)] (**O**). (7)

And (**Conj**) hope (**G**) ***must*** be brought (**V**) to the present (**A**), as (**Conj**) hope deferred (**Ag**) makes (V) the heart (S) grow (V) weary (**Ca**). (8)

In (1) above, there are eight sentences in total. While the first and second sentences contain each only one process, the rest include two (3; 6; 7); or more than two processes (4; 5; 8). One major striking feature here is that (1) comprises varying syntactic structures, some of which are parallel: S + V + O (1); S + V + O + A + A + A + A (2); V + O (3; 4; 5; 6 and 7) and Conj. + G + V, Conj. + Ag + V + S + V + Ca (8). Note that all the sentences but one (8) are active constructions. Note too that sentences (3; 4; 5; 6 and 7) are subject-less. Though the subject in these sentences is not obviously given by the speaker, it can be easily deciphered by the addressees. The un-given subject in these sentences is "Nigeria". Surprisingly, all the subjects in the main clauses in (1) are inanimate participating entities (*The election of a new President* in [1]; *Nigeria* in [2; 3; 4; 5; 6 and 7]; and *hope* in [8]). The participant "Nigeria" appears to predominate over other types. In effect, this participant is personified in that it is ascribed the acts of looking to (someone) and hoping. On the contrary, the animate participating entity or pronoun "you" is used as a subject in the "that-clauses" in (3; 4; 5; 6 and 7). This pronoun anaphorically refers to "the incoming-President, H.E. Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu." This denotes positive lexicalization (van Dijk, 2006a) as all the actions ascribed to this participant are positive (e.g. "you (**S**) *will* assure (**V**) security, peace, and stability (**O**)] (**O**). (3)"). As it appears, the aforementioned "that-clauses" are projected clauses, and they all function as phenomena (Eggins, 2004) of the cognitive mental process "hope" in the sentences. These "that-clauses" actually vary structurally in terms of the number of process(es) they contain.

While the "that-clauses" in (3; 6 and 7) count only one process, those in (4 and 5) include two processes. But the "that-clause" in (5) stands out here in that it comprises three successive circumstantial adjuncts: "above party lines", "to move the nation forward" and "with inclusiveness, fairness, equity, and justice". Apart from the subject "Nigeria" which is un-given, another constituent is null in (3; 4; 5; 6 and 7): the auxiliary *will*. As it can be observed, to figure out the two null constituents (subject and auxiliary) in the aforementioned sentences, the recipients will have to rely on their mental models (van Dijk, 2001) or/and context models (Meyer in Wodak and Meyer 2001).

In addition, in (1), the lexical item "hope" is repeated nine consecutive times (4 times as a noun [1; 2; 8a & b] and 5 times as a verb [3; 4; 5; 6 and 7]) in the text. This item discursively foregrounds the speaker's (group) ideologies. While "hope" is not inherently tied to one specific ideology, one can argue that it suggests liberalism, socialism and democratic ideals here. Liberal, socialist and democratic ideologies, as we know, often feature progress, social justice, and the potential for positive change, which aligns with the concept of "hope" for a better future. And this is what is consistently observed in the speaker's speech. In fact, other lexical items like "will assure security, peace and stability", "will heal and (will) unite a fractious nation", "will rise above party lines and (will) forge a compelling force to move the nation forward, with inclusiveness, fairness, equity and justice", "will drastically improve the economy" and "will spark a new wave of prosperity" clearly evince the areas wherein the speaker expects progress, social justice and positive change in Nigeria (these areas ideologically constitute his preferred mental models). Note that the speaker employs the epistemic modal operator "will" eight consecutive times, two of which are ellipsed in the "that-clauses" in (4 and 5). As it is obvious, he deploys this verb to express certainty and futurity. Unlike in the foregoing, the speaker uses the deontic modal "must" in (8) "And (**Conj**) hope (**G**) ***must*** be brought (**V**) to the present (**A**), as (**Conj**) hope deferred (**Ag**) makes (V) the heart (S) grow (V) weary (**Ca**)" to encode obligation. It must be emphasized at this stage that the speaker nominalizes the verb "hope" in the foregoing example. This indicates process backgrounding (Fairclough, 1992). He also passivizes the sentence.

In this passivized sentence structure, he deliberately deletes the agent responsible for the actions described. This passive construction is what Fairclough (1989, p. 125) terms *agentless passive*. It is obvious in the foregoing that the speaker employs the discursive strategies of nominalization and passivization to produce ideological effects in his text.

In a bid to help the newly elected president operate change in Nigeria's economy, the speaker proposes nine areas wherein urgent actions and measures need to be taken. We consider these areas as macropropositions or topics. These macroprositions actually constitute a synopsis of the text.

(M1) The starting point must be macroeconomic and fiscal stability.

(M2) There is an urgent need to look at the cost of governance.

(M3) Much can be done to raise tax revenue, as the tax-to-GDP ratio is still low.

(M4) We must rebalance the structure and performance of the economy.

(M5) For faster growth, Nigeria must decisively fix the issue of power, once and for all.

(M6) For inclusive development, Nigeria must completely revive its rural areas.

(M7) The best asset of Nigeria is not its natural resources; Nigeria's best asset is its human capital.

(M8) There is an urgent need to unleash the potential of the youth.

(M9) The African Development Bank is currently working with Central Banks and countries to design and support the establishment of Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Banks.

Talking about the first macroproposition, the speaker declares that "Unless the economy is revived and fiscal challenges addressed boldly, resources to develop will not be there. No bird can fly if its wings are tied." In the foregoing, the speaker uses two sentences. As it appears, both sentences are similar in that they contain two clauses: one main and one subordinate (the subordinate clause begins with a subordinating conjunction "Unless in [1] and "if" in [2]). However, these sentences vary structurally and thematically. Structurally, while the first sentence includes a "subordinate clause + main clause" structure, the second one exhibits a "main clause + subordinate clause" structure.

Thematically, while the entire subordinate clause in the first sentence is foregrounded as a Theme, in the second sentence, the subjects selected as Themes are "No bird" in the main clause and "its wings" in the subordinate clause. In point of fact, while the former denotes Theme *markedness*, the latter simply suggests *unmarked* Themes (Eggins, 2004). As it can be noticed, the two sentences are representative speech acts, and they function to discursively encode a dual meaning: the challenges that Nigeria is currently facing and economic freedom. Indeed, the meaning of "economic freedom" is overtly conveyed by the second sentence, which is nothing else but a proverb (or a metaphorical expression).

In addition, in an attempt to convince his addressees about (the relevance of) what precedes, the speaker recursively draws on the discursive strategies of evidentiality, number game, examples and illustrations, authority, contrast, comparison, paraphrase and categorization.

(2) Nigeria currently faces huge fiscal deficits, estimated at 6% of GDP. This has been due to huge federal and state government expenditures, lower receipts due to dwindling revenues from export of crude oil, vandalism of pipelines and illegal bunkering of crude oil. According to Nigeria's Debt Management Office, Nigeria now spends 96% of its revenue servicing debt, with the debt-to-revenue ratio rising from 83.2% in 2021 to 96.3% by 2022. Some will argue that the debt to GDP ratio at 34% is still low compared to other countries in Africa, which is correct; but no one pays their debt using GDP. Debt is paid using revenue, and Nigeria's revenues have been declining. Nigeria earns revenue now to service debt—not to grow.

(3) The place to start is to remove the inefficient fuel subsidies. Nigeria's fuel subsidies benefit the rich, not the poor, fueling their and government's endless fleets of cars at the expense of the poor. Estimates show that the poorest 40% of the population consume just 3% of petrol. Fuel subsidies are killing the Nigerian economy, costing Nigeria $10 billion alone in 2022. That means Nigeria is borrowing what it does not have to if it simply eliminates the subsidies and uses the resources well for its national development. Rather, support should be given to private sector refineries and modular refineries to allow for efficiency and competitiveness to drive down fuel pump prices.

The newly commissioned Dangote Refinery by President Buhari—the largest single train petroleum refinery in the world, as well as its Petrochemical Complex—will revolutionize Nigeria's economy. Congratulations to Aliko Dangote for his amazing $19 billion investment!

In (2), for instance, the speaker is of the view that "Nigeria currently faces huge fiscal deficits, estimated at 6% of GDP." In the foregoing, the speaker uses the figure "6%" to sustain his claim. However, he does not fail to give the causes of these fiscal deficits. The causes, according to him, are "huge federal and state government expenditures, lower receipts due to dwindling revenues from export of crude oil, vandalism of pipelines and illegal bunkering of crude oil." Again, as if this is not convincing enough, he cites a source (Nigeria's Debt Management Office) which states that "Nigeria now spends 96% of its revenue servicing debt, with the debt-to-revenue ratio rising from 83.2% in 2021 to 96.3% by 2022." The speaker deploys the numbers (96% and 83.2% in 2021 to 96.3% by 2022) in the preceding quote to enhance the credibility of his argument with a view to legitimating it. He also paraphrases another source (unnamed) for the same purpose: "Some will argue that the debt to GDP ratio at 34% is still low compared to other countries in Africa, which is correct; but no one pays their debt using GDP." In the preceding textual snippet, the speaker employs the token "Some". This denotes categorization and more precisely 'aggregation' in van Leeuwen's (1996) terms, and it is meant to create a certain balance in the speaker's argumentation.

As it appears in (2), the speaker is not of the view that Nigeria should pay her debt using her GDP (Gross Domestic Product). To help President Tinubu's administration cope with debt reimbursement, in (3), he unexpectedly suggests a radical solution which consists in removing fuel subsidies: "The place to start is to remove the inefficient fuel subsidies." This radical solution will naturally elicit a certain emotional reaction from his addressees. The reaction will be something like "What the hell are you saying?" But this (negative) reaction will be quickly mitigated by the speaker's subsequent argument and examples: "Nigeria's fuel subsidies benefit the rich, not the poor, fueling their and government's endless fleets of cars at the expense of the poor. Estimates show that the poorest 40% of the population consume just 3% of petrol."

The speaker, *as it were*, employs the figures ("40% of the population" and "3% of petrol") to discursively prove that the real beneficiaries of fuel subsidies in Nigeria are not the poor, but the rich. He subsequently draws an inference that "Fuel subsidies are killing the Nigerian economy, costing Nigeria $10 billion alone in 2022." Moreover, the speaker strongly believes that if Nigeria channels the removed fuel subsidies to private sector refineries, this will "allow for efficiency and competitiveness to drive down fuel pump prices" across the country. Then, he asserts that "The newly commissioned Dangote Refinery by President Buhari—the largest single train petroleum refinery in the world, as well as its Petrochemical Complex—will revolutionize Nigeria's economy."

In the same token, developing the second macroproposition, the speaker argues that "The cost of governance in Nigeria is way too high and should be drastically reduced to free up more resources for development. Nigeria is spending very little on development." As it appears, this argument subsumes two representative speech acts (though the first sentence incorporates features of representative and directive speech acts). They function to construct the speaker's worldview (Black, 2006). To buttress his argument, the speaker further quotes the World Bank 2022 Public Expenditure Review report which states that Nigeria is ranked among countries with the lowest human development index in the world, with a rank of 167 among 174 countries globally. In addition, "To meet Nigeria's massive infrastructure needs, according to the report, will require $3 trillion by 2050. According to the report, at the current rate, it would take Nigeria 300 years to provide its minimum level of infrastructure needed for development. All living Nigerians today, and many generations to come, will be long gone by then!" As it is obvious, the various numbers embedded in the quoted source only aim at one thing: legitimate the speaker's claim. To sum up this part, the speaker emphasizes that "We must change this. Nigeria must rely more on the private sector for infrastructure development, to reduce fiscal burdens on the government." As it appears, the speaker employs two directive speech acts. He deploys these directive speech acts to get his addressees to do something in order to reduce fiscal burden on the government and improve infrastructure development in the country.

Besides, his use of the pronoun "We" here is inclusive in that it subsumes both the speaker and his recipients. This indicates positive self-presentation and group ideologies (van Dijk, 2006a). Likewise, talking about the third macroproposition, the speaker submits that "This must include improving tax collection, tax administration, moving from *tax exemption* to *tax redemption*, ensuring that multinational companies pay appropriate royalties and taxes, and that leakages in tax collection are closed." The foregoing ideologically presupposes two things: 1. multinational companies have not paid appropriate royalties and taxes thus far, and 2. there have been leakages in tax collection. These two things, as ideologically implied, are responsible for the low rate of tax revenue in the country. But they are not the only reasons since many citizens avoid paying taxes, and those who pay their taxes are discouraged in that they do not know what the taxes are used for in the country. The speaker puts this sad reality in these terms: "However, simply raising taxes is not enough, as many question the value of paying taxes, hence the high level of tax avoidance. Many citizens provide their own electricity, sink boreholes to get access to water, and repair roads in their towns and neighborhoods." The use of the token "many" in the foregoing suggests categorization (van Dijk, 2006a) and 'indetermination' (van Leeuwen, 1996). The whole textual snippet, however, presupposes tax incivility, misappropriation of taxes and citizen investment (which projects a failed state in this context). To curb this, he states that "We must rebalance the structure and performance of the economy" (M4). This can be achieved by "unlock[ing] the bottlenecks that are hampering 85% of the economy. These include low productivity, very poor infrastructure and logistics, epileptic power supply, and inadequate access to finance for small and medium-size enterprises" and by "shift[ing] away from import substitution approach to *export-focused industrialization*." Likewise, in (M5), the speaker claims that "For faster growth, Nigeria must decisively fix the issue of power, once and for all." Not only will this reduce "the high cost of power" for Nigeria's private sector, but it will also "make Nigerian industries more competitive." In a bid to persuade his addressees that this option is possible, he gives two examples: Kenya and Egypt. He presents these examples with numerical figures in such a way that foregrounds the need for Nigeria to "invest massively in renewable energy, especially solar."

He also adds that "The African Development Bank is implementing a $25 billion Desert-to-Power program to provide electricity for 250 million people across the Sahel, including the northern parts of Nigeria." The foregoing is a representative speech act, and it evinces propaganda.

In the same vein, in (M6), the speaker states that "For inclusive development, Nigeria must completely revive its rural areas." To do so, he claims that "we must make agriculture their main source of income, a business and a wealth creating sector." These are directive speech acts, and they function to encode what should be done to ensure an inclusive development of Nigeria's economy. What should be done logically includes massive investment; investment in "Special agro-industrial processing zones" which will "transform agriculture, add value for agricultural value chains and attract private sector food and agribusinesses into rural areas", on the one hand, and "help turn rural areas into new zones of economic prosperity and create millions of jobs", on the other. The speaker further emphasizes that "The African Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development are currently supporting the implementation of a $518-million Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones' program in 7 states and the Federal Capital Territory." In line with the foregoing, he declares that "We are ready to help expand this to every state in the country. We are equally ready to help revamp agricultural lending institutions to help modernize the food and agriculture sector." As it appears, the speaker uses two representative speech acts. He employs these speech acts, as observed, to express their (his and his institution's) commitment to assisting Nigeria to revive her economy through investment in food and agriculture sector. But he does not explicitly mention whether or not this assistance is free. His use of the in-group pronoun "We" evinces both positive self-presentation and display of power (van Dijk, 2006a).

Again, in (M7), the speaker asserts that "The best asset of Nigeria is not its natural resources; Nigeria's best asset is its human capital." Hence, he avers that "We must invest heavily in human capital to build up the skills Nigeria needs to be globally competitive, in a rapidly digitized global economy. We must build world class educational institutions, and accelerate skills development in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, as well as in ICT and computer coding, which will shape the jobs of the future."

As it can be seen, the speaker employs two directive speech acts. He deploys these speech acts to get his addressees to do something; i.e., to build the capacity and skills of human capital in Nigeria. In addition, his use of the in-group pronoun "We" indicates both positive self-presentation and display of power (van Dijk, 2006a). Besides, discussing the eighth macroproposition, the speaker submits that "Today, over 75% of the population in Nigeria is under the age of 35. This presents a demographic advantage. But it must be turned into an economic advantage." The foregoing subsumes two representative speech acts and one directive speech act. While the speaker deploys the two representatives to express his worldview about the population growth in Nigeria, he uses the directive to encode what should be done to make this demographic growth an economic one. Finally, talking about the ninth macroproposition, the speaker affirms that "Several African countries plan to establish Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Banks" and adds that "Nigeria should establish the Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Bank." Note that the former is a representative speech act and the latter a directive speech act. While the speaker uses the representative to express his belief or perception, he employs the directive to get his listeners to perceive the necessity to do something here and now to help the youth have access to a capital. Again, his use of "Several" in the representative speech act evinces categorization (van Dijk, 2006a) and 'indetermination' (van Leeuwen, 1996).

In the closing remarks, the speaker first exclaims "Your Excellency, Mr. President-elect, Nigeria's economy needs to soar!" before addressing the new president directly: "You have an opportunity to make history. History by building a resurgent Nigeria. A united and prosperous Nigeria. It is Nigeria's turn!" As it appears, all these utterances are directive speech acts. The speaker deploys them to get the addressee to act in a desired way: govern the country and reform its economy according to the "new" knowledge he has communicated to him through his lecture. Then, he uses three other directives to wish the president success, pray for him and Nigeria. The speaker's lecture has actually succeeded in shaping the president-elect's mental models. One can notice this clearly in the president's inaugural speech delivered on May 29th, 2023 (just two days after the lecture was delivered), at the Eagle Square, Abuja.

The subsequent extract (culled from the speech) overtly evokes the president's reform related to fuel subsidy:

We commend the decision of the outgoing administration in phasing out the petrol subsidy regime which has increasingly favoured the rich more than the poor. Subsidy can no longer justify its ever-increasing costs in the wake of drying resources. We shall instead re-channel the funds into better investment in public infrastructure, education, health care and jobs that will materially improve the lives of millions (*The Cable* [https://www.thecable.ng]).

CONCLUSION

This paper has analyzed the discursive strategies the President of the African Development Bank Group, Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina deploys in his speech delivered at the Inauguration Lecture for the New President of Nigeria on May 27th, 2023 at Abuja, Nigeria. It has drawn its theoretical underpinnings from van Dijk's sociocognitive approach to CDA and the descriptive qualitative research design. With this, it has specifically examined how the speaker employs discursive strategies to construct or represent the current state of Nigeria's economy, its challenges and potentials for growth, on the one hand, and shape his addressees' mental models, on the other. The analysis has yielded some very important findings.

For instance, one of the major findings of this paper is that the speaker deploys in his speech such discursive strategies as macrostructures (opening remarks, content/body and closing remarks), actor description, authority, evidentiality, contrast, comparison, paraphrase, categorization, number game, etc. to depict a very dark image of the Nigerian economy, and suggest some bold measures including reviving the economy and addressing fiscal challenges; removing inefficient fuel subsidies which only benefit the rich; supporting private sector refineries and modular refineries; reducing the cost of governance; rebalancing the structure and performance of the economy, etc., to reform and revive it. As it appears, these measures unswervingly project him as a non-conformist and a change agent. In addition, he employs the identified discursive strategies to legitimate his social position (as a development economist) or the ideologies of the group (or financial institution) of which he is a member.

The ideologies Dr. Adesina expresses with the discursive strategies actually include liberalism, socialism and democratic ideals. These ideologies, the analysis unfailingly exudes, feature progress, social justice, and the potential for positive change. In point of fact, this finding corroborates van Dijk's (1995a) theoretical assumption which states that when people use language, they often use it to either legitimate their social positions or the ideologies of the group of which they are members. It also confirms Khuong *et al.*'s (2016), Koussouhon *et al.*'s (2018), Amoussou and Aguessy's (2020), Allagbé's (2024a and b), Allagbé *et al.*'s (2024), Allagbé *et al.*'s (2025) and Allagbé *et al.*'s (2025) discovery. The discovery is that language users often employ discursive features (structures or/and strategies) to encode the ideologies of their social groups, and these ideologies influence their personal and social cognitions or mental models, which in turn influence their interaction and discourse.

REFERENCES

Addae, A., Alhassan, H. and Kyeremeh, Y. S. (2022). Discursive Strategies of Ideological Representations in Political Speeches: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah. *European Journal of Literature, Language and Linguistics Studies*, 6(2), 141-162. DOI: 10.46827/ejlll. v6i2.396.

Ademilokun, M. A. (2023). Discursive Strategies in Newspaper Opinions on EndSARS Protests in Nigeria. J*ournal of the English Scholars' Association of Nigeria (JESAN)*, 25(2), 35-56. ISSN: 0029-0009.

Ademilokun, M. and Taiwo, R. (2013). Discursive Strategies in Newspaper Campaign Advertisements for Nigeria's 2011 Elections. *Discourse and Communication*, 7(4), 435-455. DOI: 10.1177/1750481313494501.

Ali, A. H. and Ammash, M. H. (2021). Discursive Strategies Representing Ideology and Social Power in Stokett's the Help: A Critical Discourse Analysis. *Journal of Tikrit University for Humanities (JTUH)*, 28 (10), 1-26. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.25130/jtuh.28.10.2021.20.

Allagbé, A. A. (2024a). Discourse Structures and Ideologies in Nigeria's President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Inaugural Speech. J*ournal of the English Scholars' Association of Nigeria (JESAN)*, 26(3), 100-115. ISSN: 0029-0009.

Allagbé, A. A. (2024b). Linguistic Features and Discursive Strategies in Liberia's President Dr. George Manneh Weah's Closing Presidential Campaign Speech. *European Journal of Science, Innovation and Technology (EJSIT)*, 4(5), 261-281. ISSN: 2786-4936. www.ejsit-journal.com.

Allagbé, A. A., Amoussou, F. and Ahoutinou, A. C. (2025). A Critical Discourse Analysis of Josep Borrell's Opening Speech Delivered at the European Union Ambassadors' Annual Conference 2022. *International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Studies (IJAHSSS)*, 10(7), 1-17. ISSN: 2582-1601. www.ijahss.com.

Allagbé, A. A., Amoussou, F. and Hassane, E. K. (2024). Discursive Structures and Strategies in Yemi Osinbajo's Opening Remarks at the National Security Summit. In Abubakar Adamu Masama, Mas'ud Bello, Musa Fadama Gummi, Taofiki Aminu, Bawa Dan Muhammad Anka, Maria

Jennifer Iyere & Muhammad Arabi Umar (Eds.). *The Proceedings of the 1st International Conference Organized by the Faculty of Humanities at the Federal University, Gusau, Nigeria, held 1-4 November*, 2024, pp. 284-300. ISBN: 978-978-627-3.

Allagbé, A. A., Amoussou, F. and Imorou, N. (2025). Discursive Features and Manipulation in Michelle Obama's Speech Delivered at the 2024 Democratic National Convention. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)*, 13(5), 16-29. ISSN: 2347-3126 (Print) & ISSN: 2347-3134 (Online). https://doi.org/10.20431/2347-3134.1305003.

Al-Ramahi, R. A., Ab Rashid, R., Al-Smadi, O. A. and Ismail, H. H. (2021). The discursive strategies used by Langston Hughes in the construction of whiteness and blackness. *Journal of Laanguage and Linguistic Studies*, 17(1), 662-674. Doi: 10.52462/jlls.45. ISSN: 1305-578X.

Amoussou, F. and Aguessy, N. J. A. (2020). Decoding Manipulative Strategies and Ideological Features in Trump's Speech on the Coronavirus Pandemic: A Critical Political Discourse Analysis. *Studies in English Language Teaching*, 8(4), 14-24. ISSN 2372-9740 (Print) ISSN 2329-311X (Online).

Black, E. (2006). *Pragmatic Stylistics*. First Edition. Great Britain: Edinburgh University Press. Eggins, S. (2004). *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*. Second Edition. London: Pinter Publishers.

Ezeifeka, C. R. A. (2012). Critical Discourse Analysis of Self-glorification and Derogation of Others in Selected Inaugural Political Speeches in Nigeria. *International Journal of Research in Arts and Social Sciences*, 4, 233-246.

Ezeugo, T. J. and Chukwu, E. A. (2024). Euphemism as a Discursive Strategy in Doctor-Patient Encounter. *Awka Journal of English Language and Literary Studies (Ajells)*, 11(2), 148-169.

Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. First Edition. New York: Longman Group UK Limited.

Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. First Edition. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Fawunmi, M. and Taiwo, R. (2021). "I am Concerned as a Democrat": Rhetoric, Ideology and Power in Olusegun Obasanjo's Open Letters. *Language. Text. Society*, 8 (1), 1-17. https://ltsj.online/ 2021-08-1-fawunmi-taiwo. ISSN: 2687-0487.

Haq, I. U., Imran, S. and Hassan, S. S. U. (2025). Exploration of Pragmatic and Critical Discourse Strategies in the Religious Speeches of Contemporary Islamic Scholars. *Journal of Arts and Linguistics Studies*, 3(1), 711-722. ISSN (Print): 2959-0957, ISSN (Online): 2959-0965. DOI: https://doi.org/10.71281/jals.v3i1.248.

Igwebuike, E. E. (2018). Discursive Strategies and Ideologies in Selected Newspaper Reports on the Nigerian-Cameroonian Bakassi Peninsula Border Conflict. *Communication and Public*, 3(2), 151-168. DOI: 10.1177/2057047317748500.

Kakisina, P. A., Indhiarti, T. R. and Al Fajri, M. S. (2022). Discursive Strategies of Manipulation in COVID-19 Political Discourse: The Case of Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro. *SAGE Open*, January-March 2022: 1 –9. DOI: 10.1177/2158244022107988. journals.sagepub.com/home/sgo

Khuong, L. Q., Ngan, V. T. H. and Minh, N. N. N. (2016). A Critical Discourse Analysis of Discursive Strategies Used in Economic News in Economist.com and Tuoitre.vn. *The University of Danang, Journal of Science and Technology*, 6(103), 76-82.

Kim, E-Y. J. (2016). Persuasive Strategies in a Chauvinistic Discourse: The Case of Women; s Ordination. *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines (CADAAD)*, 8(1), 58-83. ISSN : 1752-3079. http://cadaadjournal.com/.

Koussouhon, A. L., Koutchadé, S. I. and Amoussou, F. (2018). A Socio-Cognitive Critical Analysis of a Discourse on Climate Change. In *Mélanges en hommages au Professeur HOUSSOU Christophe S.*, Septembre 2018, vol.1 ISBN : 978-99919-822-6-7.

Mayoyo, E., Khaemba, J., and Simiyu, F. (2020). A Critical Discourse Analysis of Linguistic and Discursive Strategies Used in Kenya's Citizen Television Advertisements to Display Gender Ideologies. *East African Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 2(1), 154-170. https://doi.org/10.37284/eajass.2.1.223.

Meyer M. (2001). Between theory, method, and politics: positioning of the approaches to CDA. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (eds), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage, pp. 14-31.

Mohammed, A. R. (2024). Unveiling Discursive Strategies and Ideologies: A Critical Analysis of Migration Discourse in Turkish Newspapers. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 24(3), 58-69. doi.org/10.36923/jicc.v24i3.848.

Muhassin, M. and Hidayati, D. A. (2023). Discursive Strategies of Speeches of the World Health Organization Director-General on Handling Covid 19. *English Education: Jurnal Tadris Bahasa Inggris*, 16(1), 1-24. pISSN: 2086-6003/ eISSN: 2580-1449.

Obasi, J. C., Amoniyan, O. M. and Obetta, C. (2024). Manipulative Strategies in Scam Messages Among Selected Nigerian University Undergraduates. *Howard Journal of Communications*, pp. 1-19. https://doi.org/10.1080/10646175.2024.2396591.

Onanuga, P. and Taiwo, R. (2020). Discursive Features of Nigerian Online Ponzi Schemes' Narratives. *ELOPE,* 17(2), 61-82.

Osisanwo, A. (2016a). Vote for Us, Not for Them: Discursive Strategies and Ideological Structures in the 2015 Campaign SMS Messages for the Next Faculty Head. *Ibadan Journal of Humanistic Studies*, 26(1), 135-157.

Osisanwo, A. (2020). Discursive Strategies in Selected Political Campaign Songs in Southwestern Nigeria. *Communication and Linguistics Studies*, 6(4), 73-81. Doi: 10.11648/j.cls.20200604.12. ISSN: 2469-7850 (Print); ISSN: 2380-2529 (Online).

Purwanto, Y. (2017). Discursive Strategies on Ridwan Kamil's Status Update: A Critical Discourse Analysis. *HUMANIORA*, 8(2), 153-164.

Raj, M. S. and Ahembe, T. I. (2021). Discourse Issues and Discursive Strategies in Selected Online Newspapers Articles on Farmer-Herders' Conflict in Nigeria. *Veritas Journal of Humanities*, 3(1), 18-32.

Rumman, R. N. A. (2019). Persuasive Strategies in Arabic Religious Discourse: Evidence from the Friday Sermons of Dr. Mohammad Rateb Al-Nabulsi. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 11(6), 248-270. ISSN: 1948-5425. https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v11i6.15799..

Sadeghi, B., Hassani, M. T. and Jalali, V. (2014). Towards (De)legitimation Discursive Strategies in News Coverage of Egyptian Protest: VOA & Fars News in Focus. *Procedia- Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 98, 1580-1589.

Sharndama, E. C. (2016). Discursive Strategies in Political Speech: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Selected Inaugural Speeches of the 2015 Nigeria's Gubernatorial Inaugurals. *European Journal of English Language, Linguistics and Literature*, 3(2), 15-28. ISSN: 2059-2027.

Taiwo, R. (2017). Discursive Forms and Functions of Digital Deceptive Communication in Nigerian Online Discourse. In Innocent Chiluwa (Ed.) *Deception and Deceptive Communication*, pp. 245-273. ISBN: 978-1-53612-849-9.

Thompson, G. (2014). *Introducing Functional Grammar*. Third Edition. London and NewYork: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

van Dijk, T. A. (1995a). Ideological Discourse Analysis. In Eija Ventola and Anna Solin. *Special Issue Interdisciplinary Approaches to Discourse Analysis* (pp. 135-161).

van Dijk, T. A. (1995b). Discourse Analysis as Ideology Analysis. In C. Schaffer & A. Wenden (Eds.). *Language and Pace* (pp. 17-33). Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing.

van Dijk, T. A. (2000a). *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Second Edition. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Critical Discourse Analysis. In D. Tannen, D. Schiffrin & H. Hamilton (Eds.). *Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (pp. 352-371). Oxford: Blackwell.

van Dijk, T. A. (2006a). Ideology and Discourse Analysis. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 11(2), 115-140.

van Djik, T. A. (1997c). *Discourse as Social Interaction*. London: Sage.

van Leeuwen, T. (1996). The Representation of Social Actors. In Caldas-Coulthard, C. R. & Coulthard, M. (Eds.), *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 32-70). London: Routledge.

Zhang, Y. (2021). Discursive Strategies of Self-promotion by Doctors in Online Medical Consultations in China: an E-commercialised Practice. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 1-20. DOI: 10.1515/applirev-2020-0050.

CHAPTER 3
COGNITIVE FOUNDATIONS OF ARCHITECTURAL METAPHORS IN LANGUAGE: HOW SPATIAL STRUCTURES SHAPE HUMAN THOUGHT

Sayantani CHAKRABORTY[1]
Ranjita SINHA[2]
Krishnendu Kumar POBI[3]

[1]Department of Masters of Computer Application, Asansol Engineering College, Asansol-713305, West Bengal, India, sayantanic29@gmail.com.
[2]Department of BS&HU (Physics), Asansol Engineering College, Kanyapur, Asansol-713305. West Bengal, India, ranjita.phy@aecwb.edu.in.
[3]Department of Basic Science & Humanities (Chemistry), Asansol Engineering College, Asansol-713305, West Bengal, India, krishnendu.chem@aecwb.edu.in.

INTRODUCTION

Human cognition is deeply tied to the body's experience of space, motion, and physical structures. Cognitive linguistics argues that human thought is fundamentally embodied, meaning that abstract reasoning is shaped by sensory motor experiences (Evans & Green, 2006; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Because of this grounding, language often mirrors the ways we perceive, navigate, and conceptualize the spatial environment. Architectural elements such as foundations, frameworks, structures, levels, or scaffolds play a particularly important role in shaping how individuals understand and communicate abstract ideas. These spatially grounded patterns appear consistently in everyday speech, academic discourse, political language, and educational contexts, reflecting the cognitive principle that humans structure complex ideas using familiar physical schemas (Fillmore, 1985; Langacker, 2008).

The recurring use of architectural metaphors demonstrates that humans think through spatial structures not only about physical buildings but also about mental, social, and institutional phenomena. Research on linguistic relativity supports this view, suggesting that language shapes habitual patterns of thought, influencing how individuals conceptualize relationships, processes, and reasoning (Whorf, 1956; Wolff & Holmes, 2011). Spatial cognition studies further show that humans use orientation, levels, and structural mappings to make sense of abstract domains such as morality, knowledge, or authority (Levinson, 2003). In this sense, architectural metaphors serve as cognitive tools that structure perception and guide interpretation.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine how architectural metaphors reveal underlying cognitive processes, drawing on conceptual metaphor theory, spatial cognition, and discourse studies. Through examples and theoretical analysis, the chapter argues that mental architecture is not merely a stylistic linguistic device but a fundamental cognitive model by which humans organize knowledge, evaluate arguments, and construct meaning. This perspective aligns with broader cognitive theories suggesting that categorization, reasoning, and meaning making depend on mentally structured models of experience (Rosch, 1978; Regier & Kay, 2009).

The chapter contributes to linguistic inquiry by showing how language, mind, and society interconnect through structural metaphors. Architectural metaphors shape how we understand knowledge, morality, emotions, and social institutions by mapping physical experience onto abstract thought. Ultimately, analyzing these metaphors provides insight into the embodied and spatial nature of human cognition, demonstrating how deeply our mental lives are influenced by the structures of the physical world.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS FOR UNDERSTANDING ARCHITECTURAL METAPHORS

Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposes that abstract thinking relies on systematic mappings from concrete experience. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 2003) argue that humans understand intangible concepts, such as knowledge, morality, reasoning, or emotions, by projecting patterns from physical experience onto mental domains. Architectural metaphors belong to a larger category of structural metaphors, where the source domain (architecture) provides coherence and organization to the target domain (thought or society).

For instance, the metaphor AN ARGUMENT IS A BUILDING allows speakers to talk about strong claims, weak logic, supported statements, collapsing arguments, or rebuilding conclusions. These expressions reflect an underlying conceptual structure. The mind interprets the abstract organization of thoughts using the tangible, familiar structure of buildings (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 2003).

Embodied Cognition and Spatial Experience

Embodied cognition research suggests that the human mind is not separate from the body but deeply influenced by sensorimotor experiences (Barsalou, 2008; Glenberg, 2010). From infancy, individuals learn concepts such as stability, balance, support, containment, and height by interacting with the environment. These embodied schemas eventually shape abstract thinking.

Architectural metaphors rely on these schemas:

- **Foundation** → certainty and basic principles
- **Height** → progress, morality, or status

- **Walls/Boundaries** → limits, constraints, or categories
- **Center vs. Periphery** → importance vs. marginality

Thus, architectural metaphors arise because humans naturally project bodily experiences of space onto mental and social processes (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Gibbs, 2006).

Spatial Cognition and Mental Organization

Humans tend to think spatially. When dealing with complex ideas, people visualize them in terms of orientation, hierarchy, and structure (Barsalou, 2008; Hegarty, 2011; Evans & Green, 2006). Architectural models support this spatial reasoning by providing a familiar template (Bruner, 1986). Terms like mental architecture, cognitive structure, or information hierarchy illustrate how strongly spatial organization influences thought (Gibbs, 2006; Glenberg, 2010; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Cognitive scientists routinely use architectural language because it mirrors how the brain organizes conceptual information—through layers, networks, and structured connections (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003).

2. ARCHITECTURAL METAPHORS IN EVERYDAY LANGUAGE

2.1 Foundations as Basic Knowledge

The metaphor of a foundation is central to both construction and cognition (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Gibbs, 2006). In architecture, a foundation provides stability and supports the entire structure; without it, the building cannot stand. In the same way, knowledge systems rely on fundamental principles or core skills that enable deeper understanding. When people refer to the foundation of mathematics, the basic structure of an argument, or the groundwork of a theory, they apply the logic of construction to abstract thinking.

These expressions suggest that learning is built in layers and that higher-level concepts depend on earlier, more essential ones. If the foundations are weak, the entire structure of knowledge becomes unstable, leading to confusion or gaps in understanding.

This metaphor feels natural because it reflects everyday physical experience: everyone knows that strong buildings begin with strong bases. As a result, the foundation metaphor helps individuals visualize learning as a process of building, strengthening, and expanding their cognitive structures (Evans & Green, 2006).

2.2 Frameworks for Structuring Ideas

A framework in architecture provides shape, boundaries, and organization to a building, guiding how different components fit together to create a stable structure (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Evans & Green, 2006). In language and thought, a theoretical framework or conceptual framework performs a similar function: it organizes ideas, defines relationships, and supports coherent reasoning (Fillmore, 1985; Langacker, 2008). By mapping architectural frameworks onto abstract concepts, speakers and writers make complex intellectual structures more tangible.

For example, when a researcher refers to "the framework of a theory," it signals that each concept has a place within a larger system, just as beams, walls, and supports fit together in construction. This metaphor helps individuals mentally coordinate multiple components, understand hierarchies, and maintain coherence in argumentation. It also emphasizes interdependence: just as a building framework supports the entire structure, conceptual frameworks ensure that ideas are logically connected and mutually reinforcing, making abstract thought easier to comprehend and communicate (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003).

2.3 Levels, Layers and Vertical Organization

Many cognitive and social hierarchies are conceptualized through vertical structures, reflecting how humans naturally associate height with status, importance, or quality (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Evans & Green, 2006). Expressions such as higher education, lower-level thinking, top-tier institutions, or bottom of the hierarchy exemplify the metaphor STATUS/QUALITY IS HEIGHT (Barsalou, 2008; Hegarty, 2011). People physically experience upward movement as effortful, aspirational, or rewarding, while downward movement often implies decline or lesser value.

This embodied experience makes vertical metaphors intuitive for expressing authority, success, moral standing, or conceptual complexity. Similarly, layers in knowledge, institutions, or social systems are described in terms of vertical organization: layered curricula, multi-level governance, or hierarchical decision-making emphasize structure, progression, and interdependence (Levinson, 2003; Rosch, 1978). By using height and depth to represent abstract relationships, these metaphors help individuals organize, evaluate, and communicate complex ideas in a way that aligns with lived spatial experience (Gibbs, 2006; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003).

2.4 Scaffolding in Learning and Development

In education, the metaphor of scaffolding is widely used to describe temporary support that enables learners to progress toward independent understanding (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Just as scaffolding on a construction site allows builders to reach higher levels safely, educational scaffolding provides guidance, resources, and structured assistance that help learners master new concepts (Hammond, 2001). This metaphor captures two key cognitive ideas: first, learning is gradual and occurs in stages, and second, support structures can be removed once competence is achieved. Teachers may provide hints, modeling, or structured exercises that gradually fade as students gain confidence. The scaffolding metaphor emphasizes the dynamic interplay between assistance and autonomy, highlighting how learning is both structured and adaptable. By projecting experiences from physical construction into the cognitive domain, this metaphor makes abstract processes of skill development and knowledge acquisition more concrete and intuitive.

Table 1. Architectural Metaphors and Abstract Thought

Architectural Structure	Conceptual Mapping	Example Sentence
Foundation	Basic principles	"The theory has a strong foundation."
Wall	Obstacle or limitation	"I hit a wall with this project."
Roof	Protection or upper limit	"There's a roof to how much we can earn."
Door	Opportunity or transition	"A new door opened for her career."
Pathway	Process or journey	"He is following a clear path to success."

3. ARCHITECTURAL METAPHORS IN SPECIALIZED DISCOURSES

Academic and Scientific Writing

Academic and scientific discourse frequently employs architectural metaphors because they provide clarity, organization, and a way to conceptualize complex ideas (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Evans & Green, 2006). These metaphors emphasize order, connectivity, and systematic organization, helping both writers and readers navigate intricate material. By framing knowledge in spatial and structural terms, academic writing leverages familiar cognitive schemas, making highly technical content more comprehensible (Fillmore, 1985; Langacker, 2008). Furthermore, architectural metaphors signal relationships between components, highlight hierarchies, and underscore dependencies within systems, reinforcing the sense of coherence and precision that is essential in scientific communication. This shows that metaphor is not merely decorative; it plays a functional role in reasoning, explanation, and knowledge dissemination within specialized domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Political and Social Discourse

Political and social discourse relies heavily on architectural imagery to convey abstract concepts in concrete terms (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Charteris Black, 2004). Metaphors such as nation building, pillars of democracy, strong institutions, or a collapsing system frame political and social structures as physical constructions, emphasizing stability, strength, legitimacy, and vulnerability. These images help the public visualize complex systems, making abstract governance concepts accessible and relatable. By using architectural metaphors, politicians and media can subtly influence perceptions, highlighting resilience, progress, or fragility within institutions. Moreover, these metaphors contribute to shaping collective identity, as citizens conceptualize their society as a structured, interdependent entity built on shared foundations and supported by civic pillars. In this way, architectural metaphors function as persuasive cognitive tools, structuring both understanding and communication of social and political realities (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Kövecses, 2002).

Educational Discourse and Pedagogy

Educational literature consistently employs architectural metaphors to explain how learners develop conceptual understanding (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Phrases such as building knowledge, conceptual foundations, instructional scaffolding, or knowledge construction reflect the spatial and structural nature of learning, highlighting the sequential and layered process by which knowledge is acquired (Hammond, 2001). These metaphors help educators design curriculum sequences, ensuring that new concepts are introduced only after foundational skills have been established. By framing learning as a process of construction, layering, and support, architectural metaphors make abstract educational processes more concrete and intuitive. They also emphasize interdependence among concepts, showing that advanced understanding relies on well-established prior knowledge (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). This cognitive framing facilitates both teaching and learning, guiding instructional strategies and helping learners visualize the organization of information in a structured, hierarchical manner (Hammond, 2001).

Digital Communication and Virtual Architecture

Even in digital environments, architectural metaphors remain highly prevalent, demonstrating their cognitive flexibility (Borgmann, 2000; Evans & Green, 2006). People commonly refer to website architecture, information structures, building a digital profile, or constructing online communities, projecting the principles of physical structures onto virtual spaces (Borgmann, 2000). These metaphors provide users with intuitive ways to navigate, organize, and conceptualize digital content. The persistence of architectural language in non-physical environments suggests that architecture functions as a mental organizing principle, guiding how people structure knowledge, interactions, and social networks regardless of material context (Levinson, 2003; Rosch, 1978). In digital pedagogy, design, and communication, such metaphors support usability, comprehension, and engagement, allowing individuals to conceptualize abstract systems through familiar spatial logic (Evans & Green, 2006). Thus, architectural metaphors bridge tangible and virtual domains, highlighting their central role in human cognition and communication (Evans & Green, 2006).

4. COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS OF ARCHITECTURAL METAPHORS

Making the Abstract Understandable

Architectural metaphors play a central role in making abstract ideas more comprehensible by translating invisible, complex, or intangible concepts into structures that can be visualized, imagined, and mentally manipulated (Evans & Green, 2006). For example, when someone says that an argument collapses or a theory has a weak foundation, listeners immediately grasp the meaning because they intuitively understand what it means for a building to collapse or stand on a solid base (Fillmore, 1985). By leveraging familiar experiences of stability, support, and construction, these metaphors bridge the gap between abstract reasoning and everyday embodied knowledge (Rosch, 1978; Levinson, 2003). This cognitive function allows individuals to process intricate ideas more efficiently, facilitating learning, problem-solving, and communication. Essentially, architectural metaphors turn invisible conceptual relationships into mental "structures" that can be explored, organized, and evaluated (Evans & Green, 2006).

Organizing Information

Architecture is inherently structured, with clearly defined foundations, frameworks, levels, and boundaries (Evans & Green, 2006). When these structural principles are mapped onto conceptual domains, architectural metaphors help individuals organize information coherently and systematically (Fillmore, 1985). Metaphors such as conceptual frameworks, foundations of knowledge, and hierarchical levels suggest relationships among ideas, emphasizing dependencies, progression, and order (Rosch, 1978; Levinson, 2003). By providing a spatial and structural model for abstract content, these metaphors make complex topics easier to understand, remember, and communicate (Evans & Green, 2006). They allow learners, researchers, and readers to mentally "navigate" information as if it were a tangible structure, facilitating clarity, retention, and logical reasoning.

Supporting Logical Reasoning

Architectural metaphors involving support, strength, and weakness help individuals evaluate arguments and ideas in a structured, logical way (Evans & Green, 2006). Expressions such as weak premises, supporting evidence, or reinforced claims mirror the evaluation of physical stability in buildings, allowing people to intuitively judge the robustness of reasoning (Fillmore, 1985). By mapping concepts of structural integrity onto intellectual processes, these metaphors enable systematic problem-solving, critical assessment, and evaluation of coherence (Rosch, 1978). This form of architecture-inspired reasoning provides a cognitive scaffold that makes abstract logic tangible, guiding how people construct, analyze, and refine arguments in both academic and everyday discourse (Levinson, 2003).

Enhancing Memory Through Spatial Mapping

Humans naturally remember spatial structures, and architectural metaphors take advantage of this (Evans & Green, 2006). Describing a theory as having three pillars or knowledge as layered on multiple foundations creates vivid mental images that anchor abstract concepts in memory (Fillmore, 1985). This spatial mapping enhances conceptual organization and supports long-term cognitive retention (Rosch, 1978). By linking abstract ideas to spatial schemas, architectural metaphors facilitate recall, comprehension, and the internal structuring of complex knowledge (Levinson, 2003).

Table 2. Cognitive Functions Influenced by Spatial Structures

Cognitive Function	**Role of Spatial/Architectural Metaphors**
Memory	Stored as compartments, levels, rooms
Reasoning	Built on frameworks, foundations
Problem-solving	Navigated as paths, obstacles, walls
Emotional understanding	Expressed as highs/lows, open/closed spaces
Communication	Structured like buildings, layers, outlines

Table 2. summarizes key cognitive functions that are influenced by spatial and architectural metaphors, showing how these metaphors structure memory, reasoning, problem-solving, emotional understanding, and communication.

5. CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON ARCHITECTURAL METAPHORS

Shared Embodiment, Universal Patterns

Many architectural metaphors appear across languages because they arise from universal bodily experiences (Evans & Green, 2006). All humans know what it means to stand upright, enter a space, cross a threshold, or build stability. These shared experiences lead to similar metaphorical patterns across cultures (Fillmore, 1985).

Influence of Cultural Architecture

Although basic metaphors are universal, cultures adapt them according to local architectural traditions (Levinson, 2003). For example, languages influenced by temple architecture often use metaphors of harmony and elevation, whereas societies with monumental stone structures emphasize strength, endurance, and solidity. Cultural experiences with physical buildings shape the symbolic meanings associated with architectural metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003).

Architecture as a Cultural Symbol

Buildings reflect cultural values, and these values extend into metaphorical language (Evans & Green, 2006; Rosch, 1978). For instance, openness in architecture is associated with transparency in governance, while fortified structures may symbolize protection or exclusion. When people speak metaphorically, they draw upon these cultural associations to construct social meaning (Levinson, 2003).

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE, MIND AND SOCIETY

Implications for Linguistic Theory

Architectural metaphors demonstrate that language is grounded in embodied experience. Linguistic meaning is not arbitrary; it reflects spatial and physical patterns that humans internalize through interaction with the environment (Evans & Green, 2006).

Implications for Cognitive Science

The widespread use of architectural metaphors shows that human reasoning is fundamentally spatial. Understanding how individuals use architectural structures to think about abstract ideas provides insight into mental representation, categorization, and problem-solving (Rosch, 1978; Levinson, 2003).

Social and Political Implications

Architectural metaphors shape public understanding of institutions, identity, and power. They influence how people perceive stability, legitimacy, and social order. Because metaphors can shape attitudes, they can also shape political outcomes (Evans & Green, 2006).

Educational Implications

Recognizing the role of architectural metaphors can improve teaching practice. Instructional design that follows architectural principles, building knowledge gradually, using scaffolding, and reinforcing foundations, aligns with how the human mind naturally organizes learning (Fillmore, 1985; Langacker, 2008).

CONCLUSION

Architectural metaphors reveal the deep connections between language, cognition and society. They show that human thought is not abstract or detached but grounded in physical experience and shaped by interaction with space and structure. Through architectural metaphors, individuals understand complex concepts, build coherent mental models and communicate effectively. The pervasiveness of these metaphors across cultures, disciplines and communicative contexts underscores their cognitive importance.

By exploring the cognitive foundations of architectural metaphors, this chapter contributes to linguistic inquiry and highlights the embodied, spatial nature of human thought. Architecture thus emerges not only as a physical practice but as a fundamental cognitive framework through which humans make sense of their world.

REFERENCES

Barsalou, L. W. (2008). Grounded cognition. *Annual Review of Psychology, 59*(1), 617–645. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.59.103006.093639

Borgmann, A. (2000). *Cyberculture: Technology and social change*. MIT Press.

Bruner, J. S. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds*. Harvard University Press.

Charteris-Black, J. (2004). *Corpus approaches to critical metaphor analysis*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Evans, V., & Green, M. (2006). *Cognitive linguistics: An introduction*. Lawrence Erlbaum.

Fauconnier, G., & Turner, M. (2002). *The way we think: Conceptual blending and the mind's hidden complexities*. Basic Books.

Fausey, C. M., & Boroditsky, L. (2010). Subtle linguistic cues influence perceived blame and financial liability. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review, 17*(5), 644–650. https://doi.org/10.3758/PBR.17.5.644

Fillmore, C. J. (1985). Frames and the semantics of understanding. *Quaderni di Semantica, 6*(2), 222–254.

Gentner, D., & Jeziorski, M. (1993). The shift from metaphor to analogy in Western science. In A. Ortony (Ed.), *Metaphor and thought* (2nd ed., pp. 447–480). Cambridge University Press.

Gibbs, R. W. (2006). *Embodiment and cognitive science*. Cambridge University Press.

Glenberg, A. M. (2010). Embodiment as a unifying perspective for psychology. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Cognitive Science, 1*(4), 586–596. https://doi.org/10.1002/wcs.55

Hammond, J. (2001). *Scaffolding: Teaching and learning in language and literacy education*. Primary English Teaching Association.

Hegarty, M. (2011). *The cognitive science of visual-spatial thinking*. MIT Press.

Kövecses, Z. (2002). *Metaphor: A practical introduction*. Oxford University Press.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2003). *Metaphors we live by* (Updated ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Langacker, R. W. (2008). *Cognitive grammar: A basic introduction*. Oxford University Press.

Levinson, S. C. (2003). Space in Language and Cognition: Explorations in Cognitive Diversity. Cambridge University Press.

Regier, T., & Kay, P. (2009). Language, thought, and color: Whorf was half right. Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 13(10), 439–446. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2009.07.001.

Rosch, E. (1978). Principles of categorization. In E. Rosch & B. B. Lloyd (Eds.), *Cognition and categorization* (pp. 27–48). Lawrence Erlbaum.

Whorf, B. L. (1956). Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf. Edited by J. B. Carroll. MIT Press.

Wolff, P., & Holmes, K. J. (2011). Linguistic relativity. In V. S. Ramachandran (Ed.), The Encyclopedia of Human Behavior (2nd ed., pp. 724–732). Academic Press.

Wood, D., Bruner, J. S., & Ross, G. (1976). The role of tutoring in problem-solving. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 17*(2), 89–100. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.1976.tb00381.x.

CHAPTER 4
WORDS AS WALLS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF ALBANIAN NETWORKS IN UK MEDIA AND POLITICS

Dr. Ardita DYLGJERI[1]

[1]University of Elbasan "Aleksandër Xhuvani", ardita.dylgjeri@uniel.edu.al, ORCID: 0000-0003-4016-2701.

INTRODUCTION

Representations of criminality linked to migrant or minority groups have long been recognised as central sites for ideological reproduction within media discourse. In the British context, the portrayal of Albanians as a collective associated with organised crime, irregular migration, and social threat has intensified in recent years, especially in tabloid and sensationalist reporting. Such portrayals exemplify what van Dijk (1991, 2000) identifies as the discursive reproduction of ethnic prejudice through selective lexicalisation, semantic macro-strategies, and the strategic positioning of the "Other" as deviant. The persistent collocation of "Albanian" with crime-related nouns, metaphors of invasion, and overlexicalised descriptions of violence contributes to the construction of a prototype in which national identity and criminality are implicitly fused. This chapter investigates these representational mechanisms by drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and pragmatic theory to examine how British media outlets frame Albanians within narratives of threat and illegality.

Critical Discourse Analysis provides a macro-analytical framework for understanding how linguistic choices reproduce broader structures of power, dominance, and exclusion (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). Within this perspective, media texts are not neutral reflections of social reality but *discursive events* that contribute to ideological formations. When tabloids repeatedly foreground Albanian actors as agents of criminal acts while backgrounding or omitting structural factors such as economic precarity, geopolitical instability, or migration policy, they participate in what Hall (1997) terms the "signifying practices" that fix meaning and stabilise certain racialised associations. The frequent use of synecdoche—where a small number of criminal incidents stands metonymically for an entire population—further reinforces collective stereotyping and moral panic (Cohen, 2011).

Pragmatic analysis complements CDA by illuminating how meanings are implied, inferred, and negotiated beyond what is explicitly stated. In the British media's treatment of Albanian subjects, pragmatic mechanisms such as presupposition, implicature, and evidentiality often serve to convey suspicion or criminal attribution indirectly.

Presupposition triggers such as "another Albanian gang arrested" naturalise the existence of a broader, already-established pattern, presenting criminality as an uncontroversial background assumption (Levinson, 1983). Similarly, conversational implicatures emerge through selective detail, strategic vagueness, or the juxtaposition of unrelated facts, prompting readers to infer a causal or typical relationship between Albanians and deviant behaviour. These pragmatic strategies allow journalists to maintain ostensibly objective reporting while enabling readers to draw conclusions shaped by entrenched stereotypes. As Blommaert (2005) notes, such "indexical orders" embed social hierarchies into everyday meaning-making, positioning individuals and groups in moral and spatial terms.

The convergence of discursive and pragmatic strategies in media narratives produces a powerful ideological effect: Albanians become framed not merely as migrants or foreign nationals, but as a symbolic threat to British social order. The construction of this prototype reactivates familiar tropes of criminalised Eastern European masculinities, illicit border mobility, and cultural otherness (Fox et al., 2012). These representations also intersect with political rhetoric surrounding immigration control, asylum policy, and national security, demonstrating the mutually reinforcing relationship between media discourse and state practices. The criminalisation of Albanians thus operates at both the level of language and policy, contributing to a wider process of racialised securitisation (Huysmans, 2006). This chapter situates these developments within a critical, interdisciplinary framework, combining CDA and pragmatics to analyse how British media discursively construct Albanian criminality and how such constructions perform social and political functions. By unpacking the linguistic features, inferential mechanisms, and ideological presuppositions embedded in news discourse, the analysis aims to reveal the subtle but consequential ways through which stereotypes are reproduced, legitimised, and circulated in public debate.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on media representations of migrants and minority groups has consistently shown that discourses of criminality play a central role in constructing social hierarchies and legitimising exclusionary policies.

Within this broad field, studies in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), media framing, racialisation, and pragmatics offer essential conceptual tools for understanding how stereotypes—such as the figure of the "Albanian criminal"—are produced, circulated, and normalised.

1.1 Critical Discourse Analysis and the Construction of Criminalised Others

The foundational work of van Dijk (1991, 1993, 2000) established that media institutions are key sites where ethnic prejudice is discursively reproduced. His analyses demonstrate how lexicalisation, thematic structures, and argumentative frames strategically present minority groups as deviant, threatening, or culturally incompatible. Central to this framework is the "ideological square," which foregrounds the positive actions of the in-group while emphasising the negative behaviours of the out-group. Such mechanisms are especially visible in British media coverage of migrant populations from Eastern Europe, where sensationalist reporting frequently amplifies criminal incidents to suggest broader collective tendencies.

Fairclough's (1995) model of media discourse further underscores the interrelation between linguistic choices and ideological effects. For Fairclough, media texts operate within a dialectical relationship between discourse and social practice: journalism not only reports events but actively constructs social problems and their supposed causes. This perspective aligns with Wodak's (2001) discourse-historical approach, which traces how contemporary narratives draw on sedimented historical stereotypes—such as tropes of Balkan violence, criminality, and instability. Such stereotypes, when revived in present-day reporting, lend coherence and legitimacy to political discourses of control, regulation, and securitisation.

1.2 Media Stereotyping, Migration, and Racialisation

A significant body of scholarship shows how media representations of migrants frequently rely on cultural and racialised stereotypes. Hall's (1997) theory of representation explains how signifying practices in the media fix identities and produce simplified categories that mask individual complexity.

Similarly, Gilroy (2004) and Back et al. (2012) highlight the persistence of racialised frames in European media—even in ostensibly "post-racial" contexts—where difference is re-coded through cultural and criminal markers rather than explicit racial terminology. Research specifically on Eastern European migrants demonstrates similar dynamics. Fox et al. (2012) argue that post-2004 EU mobility generated a new racialisation of Eastern Europeans in the UK, with criminality becoming a key discursive marker of Otherness. This is reinforced through media practices of synecdoche and generalisation, where isolated incidents involving individuals are presented as representative of a national group. Articles often employ "exemplary stories," a concept identified by Baker et al. (2008), which amplify negative events to represent broader societal patterns, thus reinforcing stereotypes. Within this context, Albanians have become a discursively "suspect" group in UK media. Studies by Campani (2001) and King and Mai (2004) show that Albanian migrants have historically been framed through hyperbolic narratives of mafia activity, trafficking networks, and clandestine mobility across Europe. Even scholarly analyses of the 1990s "Albanian crisis" reveal the persistence of collective crime-related myths, which are then reactivated in British media through contemporary coverage of immigration and asylum policy.

1.3 Pragmatics and Implicit Meaning in Media Discourse

While CDA analyses structural and ideological dimensions, pragmatics offers micro-analytical insights into how criminal stereotypes are produced implicitly through presupposition, implicature, and inferential meaning-making. According to Levinson (1983), presuppositions establish background assumptions that readers take for granted. Headlines such as "Another Albanian gang arrested" presuppose an existing pattern of criminal behaviour, thereby normalising the association between national identity and criminality.

Similarly, Gricean implicatures (Grice, 1975) allow journalists to suggest connections without explicit claims. For instance, juxtaposing details about migration flows with descriptions of drug trafficking creates an implicature that the two phenomena are causally linked. As Richardson (2007) notes, such strategies enable newspapers to maintain a veneer of objectivity while subtly reinforcing stereotypes through what is *implied* rather than said.

The pragmatic notion of indexicality (Silverstein, 2003; Blommaert, 2005) is especially relevant. Through repeated associations, terms like "Albanian," "gang," and "trafficking" acquire indexical links that position Albanians within a moral and spatial order of suspicion. This indexical ordering constructs Albanians as inherently connected to criminal networks, irrespective of empirical data or individual variation.

1.4 Migration, Securitisation, and Ideological Effects

The representation of Albanian migrants in British media also aligns with broader European patterns of securitisation. According to Huysmans (2006), migration becomes framed as a threat to social stability, national identity, or public safety, legitimising extraordinary measures of control. This securitised framing is often co-produced by political actors and media outlets, who mutually reinforce narratives of risk and crisis.

Caviedes (2015) and Ibrahim (2005) show that media-driven moral panics around migration often precede policy shifts, creating a feedback loop in which discourse shape's public opinion, which then justifies legislative action. In this environment, criminality becomes a powerful discursive resource for rationalising state intervention, ranging from border surveillance to mass deportation agreements. Because Albanians are frequently constructed as "transnational criminals," their portrayal contributes to the broader racialised and politicised landscape in which migrant groups are hierarchically categorised based on perceived cultural fit, economic value, and security risk.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design and Analytical Orientation

This study employs a qualitative, interpretive research design grounded in two complementary analytical traditions: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and pragmatic analysis. CDA provides the macro-level framework for examining how media discourse reproduces ideologies, stereotypes, and power relations (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak & Meyer, 2016), while pragmatics offers micro-level tools for analysing implicit meanings, presuppositions, and inferential processes embedded within news texts (Levinson, 1983; Grice, 1975).

The integration of these approaches allows for a multi-scalar analysis capable of capturing both the structural and the interactional aspects of how Albanian criminality is discursively constructed in British media.

The research adopts a critical-interpretive epistemology, recognising that discourse both reflects and shapes social realities (van Dijk, 1993). Rather than treating media texts as neutral or transparent conveyors of information, the analysis approaches them as ideological artefacts embedded within wider socio-political contexts, including debates on migration, border control, and security. As such, the goal is not merely descriptive but explanatory: to uncover how linguistic strategies contribute to the formation and circulation of stereotypes, and to illuminate the social consequences of these representational practices.

2.2 Corpus Construction and Sampling Procedures

The corpus was selected to include major British national newspapers The Guardian, The Times, and The Telegraph because these outlets are widely circulated, influential in shaping public opinion, and regularly cited in political discourse. Articles were retrieved using key search terms such as "Albanian gangs," "Albanian organised crime," "Albanian asylum seekers," and "Channel migrants." Selection criteria included: (a) publication between 2020 and 2023, (b) direct references to Albanians in the context of criminal activity, and (c) articles reporting on political statements, law enforcement operations, or asylum/migration issues. This approach ensured that both journalistic and intertextual political sources were captured.

The corpus consists of 18 articles: six from The Guardian, six from The Times, and six from The Telegraph. The articles include a mixture of hard news, op-eds, and feature reporting, enabling a comparison of discursive strategies across different journalistic genres. Special attention was paid to instances where political statements were quoted or referenced, in order to analyse intertextual amplification of securitised narratives.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

3.1 Lexicalisation and Overlexicalisation of Criminality

Between 2020 and 2023, British newspapers repeatedly framed Albanians through the dual processes of lexicalisation and overlexicalisation, creating a linguistic environment in which Albanian identity became synonymous with criminality. Within Norman Fairclough's (1995) framework, lexicalisation functions ideologically by selecting words that construct social actors in particular ways, while overlexicalisation an unusually high density of near-synonymous terms signals heightened ideological investment. Applying this framework reveals that British news discourse not only described crime but actively produced a racialised and ethnicised criminal category.

This tendency is visible in The Times article published on 15 November 2022, titled "Albanian gangsters exploit slavery laws to pose as victims", where Fiona Hamilton states that "Albanian criminals are 'blatantly manipulating' modern slavery and trafficking laws to claim they are victims" (Hamilton, 2022). The choice of the compound noun "Albanian criminals" positions criminality as inherent to a national identity rather than behaviour by particular individuals. Roger Fowler's (1991) argument that the press often naturalises ideological positions through habitual linguistic patterns helps elucidate how such phrasing repeatedly assigns the burden of criminality to an entire ethnic group. A similar pattern appears in The Telegraph (15 November 2022) in the article "Albanian migrant criminals 'coached to claim modern slavery victims if caught'", which asserts that "crime gang workers" teach Albanians "the legal points to qualify" as modern slavery victims (Hymas, 2022). Such language aligns closely with Teun van Dijk's (1991) notion of "ethnicisation through discourse," where minority groups become discursively homogenised as deviant.

In another Telegraph article published on 2 November 2022, titled "Fast-track to Britain: The route Albanians are taking – step by step," the claim that "even those who are convicted criminals can use the Modern Slavery Act to avoid being deported" linguistically associates Albanian identity with both criminality and opportunism (Telegraph Reporter, 2022). This conflation exemplifies what Ruth Wodak (2015) terms a "politics of fear," where the media link migration with illegality to fuel moral panics.

Criminal behaviour here is not attributed to individuals but is discursively mapped onto a migratory route associated with Albanians. Overlexicalisation intensifies these effects. In the Times article, Hamilton refers in rapid succession to "drug runners," "cannabis growers," and "criminal enforcers," who are allegedly coached to present themselves as trafficking victims (Hamilton, 2022). The clustering of crime terminology in one textual space aligns with Fairclough's (2001) claim that such saturation constructs a narrative of crisis, amplifying public anxiety.

Similarly, a Telegraph article on 24 May 2023 states that "Albanians who have entered the UK illegally on small boats are offering up to £3,000 to fake guarantors in a scam," combining terms such as "illegal," "fake," and "scam" to create a semantic field saturated with deception and criminality (Hymas, 2023). The strategic accumulation of such terms constructs Albanians as multifaceted threats—criminal, deceptive, exploitative—which reflects what Gabrielatos and Baker (2008) describe in corpus-based CDA as the "discursive bundling" of negative attributes that produces stereotype reinforcement.

Newspapers that adopt a more sensationalist tone, such as The Sun, intensify this trend through what Fairclough (1995) would call "synthetic personalization," using vivid labels like "Albanian gangsters" or even "Hellbanianz" to dramatize and personalise threat (The Sun, 2023). Schwandner-Sievers (2013) has shown that British media frequently invoke exoticised cultural markers—such as clan loyalty or codes of honour—to present Albanian criminality as culturally embedded, and this tendency resonates with the tabloids' narrative strategies.

These linguistic representations have tangible ideological consequences. The repeated pairing of "Albanian" with "criminal," "gangster," "illegal migrant," or "smuggler" constructs what Stuart Hall et al. (1978) identify as a moral panic, wherein the media amplify deviance to the point that entire social groups are portrayed as existential threats. Moreover, the focus on alleged "manipulation" of modern slavery protections—visible in The Times and The Telegraph reports (Hamilton, 2022; Hymas, 2022)—produces a discursive blurring between victims and perpetrators.

This blurring delegitimises the experiences of genuine trafficking victims, despite independent reporting such as The Guardian on 5 March 2023, which describes "young Albanian men 'viciously exploited' after arriving in UK" and acknowledges that many were coerced into criminal activities rather than willingly participating in them (Gentleman, 2023). The contrast highlights Fairclough's (1995) argument that competing discourses struggle for dominance, with crime-focused narratives often crowding out more complex accounts of exploitation. Taken together, the British press's discursive strategies between 2020 and 2023 reveal a consistent pattern of constructing Albanians as a criminalised collective. Through lexicalisation, newspapers repeatedly assign criminal identities to Albanians; through overlexicalisation, they amplify threat by layering multiple criminal categories. When analysed through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis, these narratives appear less as neutral reporting and more as ideological constructions that contribute to the ethnicisation of crime, the production of migrant "folk devils," and the justification of increasingly punitive immigration policies.

3.2 Metaphorical Framing and Spatial Othering

As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue, metaphor is not merely stylistic but foundational to the way social realities are conceptualised, and British news discourse during this period repeatedly mobilised metaphors that represent Albanians as forces of invasion, contamination, or infiltration. These metaphors interact with spatial practices that symbolically position Albanians as belonging "elsewhere," reinforcing national distinctions through what van Dijk (1998) calls "ideological square" structuring, whereby insiders are positively represented and outsiders negatively represented.

One prominent example appears in The Telegraph on 2 November 2022 in its report "Fast-track to Britain: The route Albanians are taking – step by step." The entire article is anchored in a movement metaphor that frames Albanians as following a deliberate "route" designed to "enter Britain" through unregulated channels (Telegraph Reporter, 2022). By mapping migration onto a spatial metaphor of penetration, the report frames Albanians not as individuals seeking asylum or work, but as a coordinated flow that moves strategically toward the British territorial core.

Charteris-Black's (2006) work on migration metaphors helps explain how such spatial language turns movement into moral judgement: migrants represented as flows or routes become abstracted from their humanity and read as processes threatening to overwhelm national borders. This metaphorical construction intensifies in The Times on 15 November 2022, which describes Albanian men linked to criminal networks as "flooding the asylum system"—a metaphor that evokes uncontrollable natural disaster (Hamilton, 2022). Such imagery aligns with what Gabrielatos and Baker (2008) identify as the "water imagery" prevalent in UK immigration discourse, where asylum seekers are conceptualised as "floods," "waves," or "streams," all of which imply danger, excess, and lack of control. Through this metaphor, Albanians become a force of nature that threatens to engulf British state capacity, thereby legitimising more restrictive immigration policies as defensive measures.

Spatial othering also appears implicitly in how newspapers represent Albanians within British space. A Telegraph article on 24 May 2023 referring to Albanians "offering £3,000 to fake guarantors" constructs their presence in the UK as illicit and surreptitious, implying that Albanians move through social and administrative spaces not as legitimate participants but as concealed infiltrators (Hymas, 2023). Wodak (2015) notes that such spatial framings form part of the broader "politics of exclusion," which rhetorically positions certain groups as fundamentally out of place. Describing Albanians as "illegal" migrants who "enter" the nation through hidden routes adds to this construction of spatial transgression.

Moreover, metaphors related to crime intensify this spatialisation. In The Times coverage, Albanian organised crime groups are described as "entrenched" in parts of the UK, a metaphor that draws from military vocabulary and suggests an occupying force embedded inside national territory (Hamilton, 2022). Fairclough (2001) argues that such metaphors constitute "ideological gridding," in which social spaces are mapped according to perceived threats. When Albanians are represented as "entrenched," they are framed as hostile agents within the national interior, not merely outsiders at the border. This merging of spatial and criminal metaphors supports the narrative that Albanian presence in Britain is both invasive and destabilising.

Contrasting perspectives appear in The Guardian on 5 March 2023, where vulnerable young Albanians are described as "pulled into illicit networks" and "drifting between exploiters," invoking metaphors of gravitational force rather than deliberate infiltration (Gentleman, 2023). These metaphors humanise the subjects, positioning them as objects moved by structural pressures rather than active invaders. Fairclough's (1995) concept of competing discourses is instructive here: newspapers such as The Guardian disrupt dominant metaphors of invasion by introducing metaphors of vulnerability, thereby challenging the spatial othering that characterises much of the tabloid and right-leaning press.

Yet the prevailing metaphorical frame across much British coverage remains one of Albanian encroachment into British space, reinforcing the dichotomy between a bounded national "here" and an intrusive, criminalised "there." In van Leeuwen's (2008) terms, Albanians are spatially "excluded" by being placed symbolically outside legitimate membership of the national community, even when they are physically present within the UK. Through metaphors of invasion, flow, and entrenchment, the press constructs Albanians not merely as migrants or workers but as spatialised threats whose presence disrupts national order. This process of metaphorical and spatial othering thus plays a significant role in shaping the moral panic surrounding Albanian migration, reinforcing perceptions of Albanians as both outsiders and dangers to the socio-spatial fabric of Britain.

3.3 Presupposition and Naturalisation of Criminal Typification

British newspaper coverage of Albanians between 2020 and 2023 contains numerous presuppositions—implicit assumptions embedded within sentences—that operate to naturalise the association between Albanian identity and criminality. In Critical Discourse Analysis, presuppositions are understood as powerful ideological tools because they present contested claims as taken-for-granted truths (Fairclough, 2015; van Dijk, 2006). By embedding criminality within grammatical structures rather than explicit assertions, newspapers make the criminal character of Albanians appear self-evident, requiring no argument, evidence, or justification.

This linguistic mechanism contributes to what Bourdieu (1991) calls doxic power, whereby ideology becomes common sense. One example appears in The Telegraph on 15 November 2022 in the headline “Albanian migrant criminals 'coached to claim modern slavery victims if caught’.” The phrase “Albanian migrant criminals” presupposes that Albanians who are migrants are already criminals, rather than individuals accused of crimes or investigated for wrongdoing (Hymas, 2022). The newspaper does not say “Albanians suspected of criminal activity,” which would leave the claim open to challenge; instead, it asserts criminality as a prior, unquestioned fact. As Fairclough (2001) observes, nominal groups with pre-modifying nouns—such as “migrant criminals”—function ideologically by “compressing” complex social meanings into fixed identities. Here, the presupposition constructs “Albanian migrant criminals” as a stable social category that exists before the article even begins, guiding the reader’s interpretation of all subsequent information.

Similarly, in The Times on 15 November 2022, Fiona Hamilton’s article “Albanian gangsters exploit slavery laws to pose as victims” asserts that Albanians are “blatantly manipulating” the modern slavery system (Hamilton, 2022). The presupposition is that Albanians’ interaction with the legal system is inherently criminal and deceptive. The verb “exploit” presupposes intentional misuse, while the headline structure “Albanian gangsters exploit slavery laws” presupposes the existence of a pre-formed group of “Albanian gangsters.” Wodak (2015) notes that such presuppositions perform ideological work by transforming stereotypes into background knowledge that readers are expected to already accept.

Presuppositions also appear through repeated references to criminal typifications as if they were widely established facts. In The Telegraph on 2 November 2022, the article “Fast-track to Britain: The route Albanians are taking – step by step” states that “even those who are convicted criminals can use the Modern Slavery Act to avoid being deported” (Telegraph Reporter, 2022). The phrase “even those” presupposes that Albanians seeking asylum include criminals among them, and that readers should already assume the presence of criminality within this group. The rhetorical shock value of “even those” functions by drawing on an assumed criminal baseline.

As van Leeuwen (2008) argues, presuppositions contribute to legitimation by invoking backgrounded knowledge that is neither evidenced nor defended but simply presumed to be true.

Over time, these presuppositions contribute to the naturalisation of Albanian criminal typification. Naturalisation, as defined by Barthes (1972) and later elaborated by Fairclough (1992), is the process by which historically contingent and ideologically motivated representations come to appear as neutral, normal, or common sense. Through repeated presuppositions such as "Albanian gangs," "Albanian migrant criminals," and "Albanian gangsters," the press constructs a discursive field in which Albanian identity is habitually paired with crime. This habitual pairing eventually becomes background knowledge that requires no justification. The frequency with which British newspapers refer to "Albanian gangs" without specifying evidence, context, or proportions indicates that the association has been sufficiently naturalised to operate as what van Dijk (1991) calls a "socially shared belief."

This naturalisation process is further strengthened by the absence of alternative presuppositions. While The Guardian on 5 March 2023 reports that young Albanian men were "viciously exploited after arriving in the UK," it does not presuppose Albanian criminality; instead, it presupposes Albanian victimhood (Gentleman, 2023). Yet such counterdiscourses are comparatively rare in the corpus of British reporting during this period. As Fairclough (1995) notes, naturalisation becomes most effective when competing narratives are marginal or backgrounded. In this discursive landscape, presuppositions of Albanian criminality dominate, rendering alternative framings less visible.

Ultimately, the interplay of presupposition and naturalisation in British newspaper discourse transforms criminal typification from a representational choice into an implicit truth condition. By embedding Albanian criminality within the grammatical and lexical structure of news texts, the press performs what Bourdieu (1991) describes as symbolic violence: the imposition of a vision of the social world that obscures its own arbitrariness. Albanians are not merely described as criminals—they are presupposed to be so. This process fixes Albanian identity within a criminal frame, shaping public perception and policy debate while masking the ideological nature of such representations.

3.4 Pragmatic Implicatures and Suggestive Meaning

British newspaper discourse in the early 2020s often relies on pragmatic implicatures to suggest that Albanians are deeply entwined with organised crime, without always making explicit, fully-evidenced claims. These implicit meanings function through what linguists call conversational implicature (Grice, 1975), where readers are invited to infer a negative association without overt assertion. In the context of media, such implicatures are powerful: they produce suggestive meaning that casts Albanian identity as suspect or criminal, while maintaining a veneer of journalistic neutrality.

A significant instance of this can be seen around discussions of returns and repatriation: in The Guardian (26 September 2022), the Home Office's U-turn over the deportation of Albanian asylum seekers was framed in the context of "organised criminal networks." According to the article, the Home Office had previously claimed that many Albanians "are brought here illegally by organised criminal networks … making attempts to claim asylum … in the hope that they can remain here and disappear into the criminal underworld" (Syal, 2022). Although the piece reports on the government's prior claims, the implicature is clear: Albanians who make asylum claims are not merely economic or genuine refugees—they are part of a broader criminal strategy. By repeating the government line without immediately challenging it, the article allows the reader to infer that many Albanian arrivals are criminally involved, even if the article itself remains formally descriptive.

In a related framing, The Guardian on 5 March 2023 described how "young Albanian men … were taken to work looking after cannabis plants" after arriving in the UK by boat. The article reports that one older man "promised to help him find his sister … instead he was taken to work looking after cannabis plants" (Gentleman, 2023). The implicature here suggests that the journey to the UK is not simply migratory or survival-driven, but orchestrated by criminal interests: the fact that the "help" was a pretext implies organised exploitation rather than spontaneous asylum-seeking. This aligns with the insight from Wodak (2015) that right-wing or securitising discourses often use suggested causality to insinuate that migrant movements are systematically criminal.

Another example of suggestive meaning comes from The Guardian coverage on 30 August 2022, when Priti Patel announced a fast-track removal plan for Albanians. Patel insisted that many Albanians arriving by small boat are "part of organised criminal networks travelling through multiple EU countries … making attempts to claim asylum … in the hope … they can remain here … and disappear into the criminal underworld" (Syal, 2022). Through these conditional and speculative formulations — in the hope, disappear into the criminal underworld — the rhetoric strongly implies that Albanians' asylum claims are illegitimate and linked with crime, without necessarily providing concrete evidence for each person. The implicature fosters a moral panic by casting Albanians as a latent criminal group using asylum as a cover. These implicatures work rhetorically via association by proximity and hypothetical framing. As theorised in critical discourse studies (van Dijk, 1998), the co-location of "asylum seeker" and "organised criminal" within the same clause invites a cognitive association in readers' minds, even if no direct claim is made that all asylum-seekers from Albania are criminals. Moreover, the repeated use of "if" or "in the hope that" introduces a presumed motive, suggesting that Albanian migrants are not just seeking refuge but are engaged in deception. Walton (1998) calls such rhetorical strategies "loaded conditionals," which steer audiences toward a conclusion (here, criminal motive) without open assertion. By playing on these implicatures, British newspapers contribute to a discursive climate in which Albanian migration is read through a criminalising lens. Critical discourse analysts such as Fairclough (1995) note that implicatures can naturalise ideology: because the meaning is implied rather than stated, readers might accept it uncritically. The recurring rhetorical pattern — asylum claims tied to crime networks — thus shapes public understanding, suggesting that Albanian migration is not benign but strategically criminal.

3.5 Agency Suppression and Passive Constructions

In the British newspaper discourse around Albanian migration and crime during 2020–2023, one notable rhetorical strategy is the use of passive constructions and suppression of agency, which serve to obscure responsibility, depersonalise criminal action, and naturalise the idea that Albanians are inherently part of criminal networks.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) reveals that by structuring sentences in the passive voice, the media frequently shifts focus away from who is doing the crime to what crime is being done, thereby diluting explicit accountability and reinforcing a collective criminal typification of Albanians.

An illustrative example drawn from the academic study "Albanians Ante Portas: Representation of Albanian Migrants in the British Media" shows that many British news reports describe Albanians in terms such as "were facilitated by criminal gangs," without naming the facilitators or specifying their identities (Contemporary SEE, 2023). The passive verb "were facilitated" suppresses agentive subject: the sentence does not tell who facilitated them, implying that Albanian migrants are simply carried along by unavoidable criminal forces.

This syntactic choice constructs Albanians as passive objects of crime, rather than as actors with agency, effectively erasing individual variation and placing them into a homogenous criminalised mass. From the CDA perspective, this is more than a grammatical choice: as Fairclough (1995) argues, passive voice can be a way to legitimate inequality and social structures by masking power relations under the guise of neutrality.

Furthermore, the same report notes that British media often cite "organised criminality … committed by Albanian criminal gangs," again using "committed by" in a way that frames criminality as a collective, almost inevitable product of "Albanian gangs" (Contemporary SEE, 2023). Rather than exploring which group, or giving detail on individual responsibility, the passive framing reduces agency to an ethnic collectivity. This aligns with van Leeuwen's (2008) observation that passive constructions and impersonalisation in discourse serve to background the social actors who should be responsible, thus contributing to foregrounding a stereotyped social construct (in this case, Albanians-as-gangsters).

In addition, some media arguments reported in analyses use passives to describe the British government's own actions, but in a way that reinforces the perceived threat. For example, Guardian coverage (as cited in the same Contemporary SEE analysis) is said to report that "we've worked closely with the Albanian government to disrupt criminal gangs and deter illegal migration" (quoted from The Guardian, February/March 2023, in Contemporary SEE, 2023).

In this quotation, the phrase "to deter illegal migration" echoes a passive impersonal logic: migration is framed as something to be deterred, rather than individuals making migratory choices. The emphasis is on suppression rather than engagement; the migrants' subjectivity disappears, replaced by an impersonal "illegal migration" that must be controlled. This is ideologically significant: it legitimises state coercion, portraying migration as a problem external to the individual, rather than a response to socio-economic pressures.

This strategy also subtly contrasts with counter-discourses that emphasise exploitation. The same Contemporary SEE study cites Guardian voices that argue some young Albanian men "were being viciously exploited by criminal gangs" once in the UK (Contemporary SEE, 2023). The use of the passive "were being … exploited" again hides the full agency of the exploiters (who they are, how they operate), but the framing shifts implicitly: here, Albanians are not portrayed as criminal actors but as victims of crime, albeit still without naming specific agents. This dual use of passive constructions — sometimes for criminal agency, sometimes for victimisation — works in concert to depict Albanian migration as saturated by crime, whether from within or without, but always with suppressed or ambiguous agency.

From a CDA lens, this pattern of agency suppression does ideological work: it presents Albanian criminality as structural and ethnic, rather than individual and contingent. The backgrounding of individual actors via passive syntax normalises the idea that Albanians as a group are criminals, while the lack of named agents prevents readers from interrogating who exactly is responsible (Fairclough, 2001). In effect, passive constructions become a tool of symbolic classification, reinforcing the media's construction of Albanians as a problematic social category. By denying clear agentive subjects, newspapers maintain a sense of threat that is simultaneously pervasive and diffuse — a discursive strategy that supports exclusionary and securitising political narratives.

3.6 Intertextuality and Political-Media Amplification

A final key mechanism in the discursive construction of Albanian migrants as a societal threat is intertextuality, through which politicians' statements and media reporting mutually reinforce one another, generating a highly amplified and socially entrenched discourse (Fairclough, 1995; van Leeuwen, 2008; Wodak, 2015). Intertextuality allows particular linguistic choices—metaphors, presuppositions, and modal hedges—to circulate across contexts, lending institutional legitimacy to media framings and legitimising political action, while simultaneously normalising the associated ideological assumptions within public perception. In British newspapers between 2020 and 2023, political discourse and media coverage built a mutually reinforcing narrative that cast Albanians as entrenched in organised crime. This intertextual loop—where political framing is picked up by the media, and media amplification feeds back into political discourse—served to securitise Albanian migration and criminality. A particularly salient example appears in The Guardian on 25 August 2022, in an article by Rajeev Syal titled "Rise in Albanian asylum seekers may be down to criminal gangs" (Syal, 2022), which reports that "speculation has fallen upon dominant organised criminal gangs … which now control large parts of the marijuana and cocaine markets." The article links the surge in Albanian asylum applications directly to organised crime, echoing political narratives at the time that associated small boat crossings with criminal grooming by gangs. By reproducing the claim that Albanian gangs were "ruthless" and "professional," the newspaper draws on political and security framings to construct a criminalised image of Albanian arrivals—transforming political suspicion into journalistic fact.

Similarly, The Telegraph on 29 May 2023 published an analysis titled "Scale of Albanian Channel migrants crime wave in the UK …" which explicitly frames Albanian migration in terms of debt-bondage and criminal exploitation: "their passage across the Channel … is paid for by the gangs before they are 'debt bonded' … to repay it by working on the farms …" (Hymas, 2023). This narrative mirrors political speeches that cast Albanian arrivals as controlled by criminal syndicates, suggesting that migration is not voluntary but orchestrated—and that asylum seekers are complicit in illicit activity.

By drawing on these political tropes, The Telegraph reinforces a securitised discourse where Albanian migrants are presented as part of a criminal infrastructure, rather than as individuals fleeing hardship. The Times also contributed to this amplification. In an article on 26 August 2022, The Times claimed that "thousands of Albanians" crossing the Channel were "bolstering crime gangs" in Britain, suggesting a direct pipeline between migration flows and criminal networks (Dathan, 2022). This framing not only borrows from political imaginations of migration as a crime issue, but also projects an image of Albanians as agents of organised crime whose arrival strengthens criminal structures in the UK. The intertextuality lies in how The Times echoes political-security language ("bolstering crime gangs") to naturalise the idea that Albanian migration fuels criminal enterprise, rather than being a humanitarian or economic phenomenon. From a critical discourse perspective, this political-media amplification is ideologically potent. Political actors—such as ministers and security officials employ securitising rhetoric about "Albanian gangs" or "criminal networks," which the major press then picks up, legitimises, and disseminates. This loop contributes to what Fairclough (2001) describes as a "regime of truth": repeated representations from political speeches become facts in media discourse, which then feed back into policy debates, constraining the discursive space and framing Albanians primarily as a criminal risk. Over time, the intertextual borrowing between media and politics helps produce a stable, shared narrative that Albanians are not just migrants but part of an organised, criminal threat—making stricter immigration measures appear necessary and justified.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has demonstrated that the construction of Albanian migrants in UK media is ideologically and discursively mediated through multiple linguistic and rhetorical strategies. The analysis of British media coverage from 2020 to 2023 reveals a consistent pattern of discursive strategies that criminalise Albanian migrants and asylum seekers. Across the section's lexicalisation, metaphorical framing, presupposition, pragmatic implicatures, agency suppression, and intertextual political-media amplification it becomes evident that newspapers do not merely report events.

They actively construct a narrative in which Albanians are represented as inherently linked to organised crime. Lexicalisation and overlexicalisation demonstrated that media frequently deploy an unusually dense set of criminal labels when referring to Albanians, from "gangsters" to "drug traffickers," creating a disproportionate association between nationality and criminality. Metaphorical framing and spatial othering further reinforced these representations, positioning Albania as a source of threat and UK borders as sites of danger, thus turning migration into a symbolic security issue. Through presupposition and naturalisation of criminal typification, these associations are presented as commonsensical truths, normalising the view that Albanian migration inherently entails criminal behaviour. Pragmatic implicatures and suggestive meaning allowed newspapers to imply criminal responsibility indirectly, shaping readers' perceptions without overt accusation. Agency suppression and passive constructions strategically removed Albanian actors' volition from criminal events, portraying them as objects of criminal networks rather than individuals, which diminishes nuance and reinforces structural stereotypes.

Intertextuality and political-media amplification revealed a mutually reinforcing cycle in which political actors' securitising discourse and media reporting feed into one another. Statements by ministers about Albanian involvement in organised crime are repeated, reframed, and amplified by major newspapers such as The Guardian, The Times, and The Telegraph, producing a feedback loop that normalises fear and justifies restrictive migration and policing policies. This dynamic exemplifies Fairclough's (2001) notion of discourse constituting social structures: repeated political-media discursive practices transform political rhetoric into "truths" about Albanian criminality, creating a securitised, moralised public perception.

From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, these patterns collectively perform ideological work: they construct Albanians as a homogeneous, criminalised "other" whose arrival is framed as a threat to law, order, and national identity. Wodak's (2015) concept of the "politics of fear" is apparent, as repeated discursive strategies—metaphors, presuppositions, implicatures, and intertextual amplification—heighten anxiety about Albanian migration while legitimising political and media interventions.

In conclusion, the British media's coverage of Albanians between 2020 and 2023 illustrates the powerful role of discourse in shaping social perception and policy. Through a combination of lexical, grammatical, metaphorical, and intertextual strategies, newspapers construct and perpetuate a narrative that conflates nationality with criminality. This not only affects public understanding but also reinforces political agendas around border control and migration management, demonstrating the inseparable link between media representation, political discourse, and social construction of "the criminal other."

REFERENCES

Allan, K. (Ed.). (2010). *The Oxford handbook of pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.

Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies* (A. Lavers, Trans.). Hill and Wang. (Original work published 1957)

Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power* (J. B. Thompson, Ed.; G. Raymond & M. Adamson, Trans.). Harvard University Press.

Charteris-Black, J. (2006). Britain as a container: Immigration metaphors in the 2005 election campaign. *Discourse & Society, 17*(5), 563–581. https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926506066345

Contemporary Southeastern Europe. (2023). *Representation of Albanian migrants in the British media*. https://contemporarysee.org/allfiles/documents/file-160-albanians-ante-portas-representation-of-albanian-migrants-in-the-british-media.pdf

Ebrahimi, S. (2022, November 15). Albanian crime gangs 'smuggle millions of pounds a year from UK'. *The National News*. https://www.thenationalnews.com/

European Western Balkans. (2023, October 10). How British tabloids' framing of Albanian migrants fuels anti-immigrant sentiments. *European Western Balkans*. https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/

Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Polity Press.

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Media discourse*. Edward Arnold.

Fairclough, N. (2015). *Language and power* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Fowler, R. (1991). *Language in the news: Discourse and ideology in the press*. Routledge.

Gabrielatos, C., & Baker, P. (2008). Fleeing, sneaking, flooding: A corpus-based critical discourse analysis of discursive constructions of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press. *Journal of English Linguistics, 36*(1), 5–38. https://doi.org/10.1177/0075424207311247

Gentleman, A. (2023, March 5). Young Albanian men 'viciously exploited' after arriving in UK. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/mar/05/young-albanian-men-viciously-exploited-after-arriving-in-uk

Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and semantics: Vol. 3. Speech acts* (pp. 41–58). Academic Press.

Hall, S., Critcher, C., Jefferson, T., Clarke, J., & Roberts, B. (1978). *Policing the crisis: Mugging, the state and law and order*. Macmillan.

Hamilton, F. (2022, November 15). Albanian gangsters exploit slavery laws to pose as victims. *The Times*. https://www.thetimes.co.uk/

Hoxhaj, A. (as quoted in Austin, J.). (2023, February 12). Sunday Express: New wave of recruitment from Albanian crime. *Sunday Express* / Hashtag.al.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.

National Crime Agency. (n.d.). *Albanian people-smuggling network who shipped migrants to the UK from Spain dismantled*. https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/

Pavlović, A., & Begaj, R. (2025). Albanians ante portas: Representation of Albanian migrants in the British media. *Contemporary Southeastern Europe, 12*(1).

Rama, E. (2022, November 2). Britain is targeting Albanians to excuse policy failures, says country's PM. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/

Schwandner-Sievers, S. (2013). Crime and culture: Reframing Albanian migration and transnationalism. In S. Schwandner-Sievers & B. Kressing (Eds.), *Albanians and Europe in a time of crisis* (pp. 179–198). Harrassowitz.

Syal, R. (2022, August 25). Rise in Albanian asylum seekers may be down to criminal gangs. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/

Telegraph. (2022, November 15). Albanian migrant criminals 'coached to claim modern slavery victims if caught'. *The Telegraph*. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/11/15/albanian-migrant-criminals-coached-claim-modern-slavery-victims/

Telegraph. (2022, November 2). Fast-track to Britain: The route Albanians are taking – step by step. *The Telegraph*. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/11/02/route-albanian-migrants-taking-get-britain-laid-step-step/

Telegraph. (2023, March 2). Modern slavery loophole to be shut for foreign criminals. *The Telegraph*. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/03/02/modern-slavery-loophole-shut-foreign-criminals-illegal-migrants/

Telegraph. (2023, May 24). Illegal Albanian migrants offer £3,000 to fake guarantors. *The Telegraph*. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/05/24/albanian-asylum-seekers-guarantors-migrant-boats/

The Guardian. (2022, August 30). Priti Patel meets Albanian police over fast-track removal plan. https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/aug/30/priti-patel-meets-albanian-police-over-fast-track-removal-plan

The Guardian. (2022, September 26). Home Office U-turn over deportation of Albanian asylum seekers. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/26/home-office-u-turn-over-deportation-of-albanian-asylum-seekers

The Guardian. (2023, March 5). Young Albanian men 'viciously exploited' after arriving in UK. https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/mar/05/young-albanian-men-viciously-exploited-after-arriving-in-uk

The National. (2023, June 19). UK crime agency busts people smuggling gang. *The National*. https://www.thenationalnews.com/

The Telegraph. (2023, May 29). Scale of Albanian Channel migrants crime wave in the UK revealed: Eighty people have been jailed. *The Telegraph*. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/

The Times. (2022, August 26). Thousands of Albanians crossing the Channel 'to bolster crime gangs'. *The Times*. https://www.thetimes.co.uk/

The Times. (2022, November 15). Albanian gangsters exploit slavery laws to pose as victims. *The Times*.

UK Home Affairs Committee. (2023). *Asylum and migration: Albania*. UK Parliament. https://committees.parliament.uk/

van Dijk, T. A. (1991). *Racism and the press*. Routledge.

van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. Sage.

van Dijk, T. A. (2006). Ideology and discourse analysis. *Journal of Political Ideologies, 11*(2), 115–140. https://doi.org/10.1080/13569310500395880

van Leeuwen, T. (2008). *Discourse and practice: New tools for critical discourse analysis*. Oxford University Press.

Walton, D. (1998). *The new dialectic: Conversational contexts of argument*. University of Toronto Press.

Wodak, R. (2015). *The politics of fear: What right-wing populist discourses mean*. Sage.

ISBN: 978-625-6080-68-3