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A Multidimensional Analysis of U.S. Diplomatic Discourse on the Israel-Palestine Conflict: Textual and Emotional Dimensions Using Plutchik's Wheel

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore the dimensions of textual and sentiment variations in U.S. diplomatic discourse within the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Following Biber's (1988) research framework, our Principal Factor Analysis (PFA) uncovered five textual dimensions across the 11 sub-registers of U.S. diplomatic texts. Emotion analysis based on Plutchik's wheel shows that the positive emotion 'trust' predominates across all subgenres, followed by the negative emotions 'fear' and 'anger.' The correlation matrix of emotions and dimensions reveals that 'trust' is positively associated with Dimension 4, while both 'fear' and 'anger' correlate with Dimension 3.

Keywords: Multidimensional Analysis; Plutchik wheel; US diplomatic discourse; Israel-Palestine conflict

1. Introduction

As globalization accelerates, soft power has become a crucial element in shaping a nation's influence on the world stage. Soft power, complementing economic and military strength, forms the

foundation of a nation's diplomatic effectiveness, primarily constructed through diplomatic discourse. Diplomatic discourse is often regarded as the 'communication of communication,' transcending cultural boundaries by conveying globally acceptable ideas, regardless of language barriers. The strategic use of diplomatic discourse has, in turn, become pivotal in strengthening a nation's soft power. However, the language of diplomacy has increasingly shifted toward promoting conflict and confrontation rather than civility and shared ideals in the context of global conflicts (Jaber, 1997; Afzaal et al., 2022).

Over the past century, regional security issues, such as the expansion of Israeli settlements in Palestine, have escalated into global crises, threatening the peace process worldwide. Throughout the history of the Israel-Palestinian conflict, the diplomatic decisions of U.S. political leaders have always been directly correlated with the progress of peace-making efforts between the two states. Therefore, the U.S. stance on this issue remains at the forefront of discussion. Although U.S. support for Israel, largely

influenced by domestic evangelical Christians, has rarely been challenged by political analysts or experts, the stance taken by each U.S. president and the approaches employed in mediating the conflict have fluctuated.

According to Mohamad (2019), the U.S. approach to Israel and Palestine is marked by the well-worn double-standard policy that contradicts international law. He examined presidential involvement in Israeli-Palestinian relations, with particular attention to Presidents George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump. During the Bush and Obama administrations, the endorsement of a two-state solution in response to Israeli settlement expansion reflected U.S. efforts to gain support from Arab states while maintaining the 'strategic alliance' with Israel. However, such mediation efforts under the two-state solution were undermined during Trump's presidency. By recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and relocating the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, Trump further hindered the peace process and effectively ended prospects for a two-state solution.

Among all U.S. presidents, Trump's

1.1 Literature Review

Starting from 1990s, diplomatic discourse has been extensively studied under the scope of linguistics particularly focusing on the explicit or implicit linguistic features and metaphors. (Hu and Li, 2018; Chilton & Lakoff, 2005). For instance, the stylistic feature manifest in diplomatic discourse is invariably a research topic that has been examined under a wide range of theoretical

alignment with Israel exhibited the clearest bias, where Palestinians' opportunities to seek peace and receive humanitarian aid were almost entirely disregarded. Furthermore, Trump's nationalist doctrine permeated global discourse, catalyzing radical nationalist movements among Jewish Zionists. The political annexation with Arab states and the proposal to construct an 'Arab NATO' also underscore the U.S.'s decisive role in Middle Eastern political affairs. As President Sadat of Egypt famously stated, the U.S. holds '99% of the cards' in the Middle East (Siniver, 2022; Afzaal et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). Therefore, it is essential to critically examine U.S. diplomacy in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Against this background, this study provides a comprehensive analysis of U.S. diplomatic discourse on the Israel-Palestine conflict through an integrated framework of multidimensional analysis and emotional analysis, aiming to unravel the nuanced U.S. stance toward the intractable conflict. This stance is reflected in various types of diplomatic texts and the emotions associated with different diplomatic subgenres.

frameworks. For instance, Donahue & Prosser (1997) applied rhetorical analysis, contrastive discourse analysis and functional analysis to various global and regional political issues such as north and south Korean conflict and Israeli-Palestine issue and pointed out that linguistic polysemy is one of the major contributors to the diplomatic misinterpretation. Under Biber's Multidimensional (MD) model, Li (2014)

delves into more complex sentence structures, attributive adjectives and prepositional phrase, etc. Taking materials from Chinese and American government websites, Zhang et al. (2023) investigated into the dimensional differences between two countries under Biber's Multidimensional model. The result of this study indicates that national position and national interest have a significant impact on the linguistic features of diplomatic discourse as China's diplomatic discourse is of "learned exposition" while American diplomatic discourse is of "involved persuasion".

Sentiments, emotions, appraisals and the key terms alike forms a key part of in the field affective computing (Hakak et al., 2017). It utilizes various natural language processing techniques to extract the underlying emotions from the level of document, sentence, word and aspect. The concrete statistical methods used for emotion analysis are similar to that for sentiment analysis. Hakak et al. (2017) summarized these methods as follows in Figure 2. Emotion is distinct from sentiment as it has a theoretical origin in psychology (Dixon, 2012). It is defined as a complicated state of feeling that contributes to switches in thoughts, actions, behavior and personality. Therefore, emotion analysis is not restricted to the identification of the basic psychological condition but to formulate a 6-scale or 8-scale emotion model

(Nandwani & Verma, 2021). There are various frameworks in demarcating the basic categories of emotions, including SemEval, Stanford Sentiment Treebank, international survey of emotional antecedents and reactions (ISEAR). Nandwani & Verma (2021) summarized the emotion model into categorical and dimensional category through which the emotions are represented by distinct parameters. In the dimensional emotion model, the emotions are measured along three axis (valence, arousal and power). The valence indicates the polarity of emotion while arousal measures the extent of excitement of certain feeling. "Power" in dimensional model positions the psychological states in 2D space and restricts the emotions in a continual scale. In the categorical emotion model, emotions are categorized into discrete such as happiness, anger, sadness and fear. Researchers often uses 6-8 emotional categories in their model. Seminal researches concerning the emotion models is seen in literature review in Nandwani & Verma (2021). They provided a brief summary on the mainstream emotion model of these two categories as well as the dataset used for emotion analysis (see in Table 3 and Table 4). The present dissertation utilizes the dimensional Plutchik model for emotional analysis along with the Stanford Sentiment Treebank in the measurement of sentiments.

Table 1 Review of the mainstream emotion model (Nandwani & Verma,2021)

Emotion model	Type of model	No. of states	Psychological states	Representations	Discussion
Ekman model (Ekman 1992)	Categorical	6	Anger, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, surprise	–	Ekman's model consisted of six emotions, which act as a base for other emotion models like Plutchik model
Plutchik Wheel of Emotions (Plutchik 1982)	Dimensional	–	Joy, pensiveness, ecstasy, acceptance, sadness, fear, interest, rage, admiration, amazement, anger, vigilance boredom, annoyance, submission, serenity, apprehension, contempt, surprise, disapproval, distraction, grief, loathing, love, optimism, aggressiveness, remorse, anticipation, awe, terror, trust, disgust	Wheel	Plutchik considered two types of emotions: basic (Ekman model + Trust + Anticipation) and mixed emotions (made from the combination of basic emotions). Plutchik represented emotions on a colored wheel
Izard model (Izard 1992)	–	10	Anger, contempt, disgust, anxiety, fear, guilt, interest, joy, shame, surprise	–	–
Shaver model (Shaver et al. 1987)	Categorical	6	Sadness, joy, anger, fear, love, surprise	Tree	Shaver represented the primary, secondary and tertiary emotions in a hierarchical manner. The top-level of the tree presents these six emotions
Russell's circumplex model (Russell 1980)	Dimensional	–	Sad, satisfied, Afraid, alarmed, frustrated, angry, happy, gloomy, annoyed, tired, relaxed, glad, aroused, astonished, at ease, tense, miserable, content, bored, calm, delighted, excited, depressed, distressed, serene, droopy, pleased, sleepy	–	Emotions are presented over the circumplex model
Tomkins model (Tomkins and McCarter 1964)	Categorical	9	Disgust, surprise-Startle, anger-rage, anxiety, fear-terror, contempt, joy, shame, interest-Excitement	–	Tomkins identified nine different emotions out of which six emotions are negative. Most of the emotions are defined as a pair
Lövheim Model (Lövheim 2012)	Dimensional	–	Anger, contempt, distress, enjoyment, terror, excitement, humiliation, startle	Cube	Lövheim arranged the emotions according to the amount of three substances (Noradrenaline, dopamine and Serotonin) on a 3-D cube

Table 2 Review of the mainstream dataset used for emotion/ sentiment analysis

Dataset	Data size	Sentiment/emotion analysis	Sentiments/emotions	Range	Domain
Stanford Sentiment Treebank (Chen et al. 2017)	118,55 reviews in SST-1	Sentiment analysis	Very positive, positive, negative, very negative and neutral.	5	Movie reviews
SemEval Tasks (Ma et al. 2019; Ahmad et al. 2020)	9613 reviews in SST-2	Sentiment analysis	Positive and negative	2	Movie reviews
	SemEval- 2014 (Task 4): 5936 reviews for training and 1758 reviews for testing	Sentiment analysis	Positive, negative and neutral	3	Laptop and Restaurant reviews
	SemEval-2018 (Affects in dataset Task): 7102 tweets in Emotion and Intensity for ordinal classification (EI-oc)	Emotion analysis	Anger, Joy, sad and fear	4	Tweets
Thai fairy tales (Pasupa and Ayut-thaya 2019)	1964 sentences	Sentiment analysis	Positive, negative and neutral	3	Children tales
SS-Tweet (Symeonidis et al. 2018)	4242	Sentiment Analysis	Positive strength and Negative strength	1 to 5 for positive and –1 to –5 for negative	Tweets
EmoBank (Buechel and Hahn 2017)	10,548	Emotion analysis	Valence, Arousal Dominance model (VAD)	–	News, blogs, fictions, letters etc.
International Survey of Emotional Antecedents and Reactions (ISEAR) (Seal et al. 2020)	Around 7500 sentences	Emotion analysis	Guilt, Joy, Shame, Fear, sadness, disgust	7	Incident reports.
Alm gold standard data set (Agrawal and An 2012)	1207 sentences	Emotion analysis	happy, fearful, sad, surprised and angry-disgust(combined)	5	Fairy tales
EmoTex (Hasan et al. 2014)	134,100 sentences	Emotion analysis	Circumplex model	–	Twitter
Text Affect (Chaffar and Inkpen 2011)	1250 sentences	Emotion analysis	Ekman	6	Google news
Neviarouskaya Dataset (Alsawidan and Menai 2020)	Dataset 1: 1000 sentences and Dataset 2: 700 sentences	Emotion analysis	Izard	10	Stories and blogs
Aman's dataset (Hosseini 2017)	1890 sentences	Emotion analysis	Ekman with neutral class	7	Blogs

1.2 Data and Methodology

1.2.1 Data

The corpus of this study (Corpus of US Diplomatic Discourse concerning Israel-Palestine Conflict, CUSDD-IPC) comprises diplomatic discourses of US both at UN and at diplomacy from the period of Oct 1st, 2023- June 1st, 2024. The data of the corpus is extracted from the official website of US Department of State “Israel-Hamas conflict” column (<https://www.state.gov/israel-hamas-conflict-latest-updates>), employing python web-scraping. In the first step, the program browses across pages in the

website to scrape the meta-data, including title, categorization (sub-genre), url address linked to the content. Subsequently, the program iterates all the urls from the meta-data and extract the expected postings in textual forms. Then the data was manually checked for missing columns and formatting issues. The ultimate form of data is presented in Table 1.

In the final step, all the texts are read from the excel repository into load folders and coded according to publication date and sub-genre (i.e.

1_2024_5_15_Readout.txt, 3_2024_5_13_Readout.txt). As summarize in Table 1, the final corpus contained 11 sub-genres, with a total of 227 texts and 185,866 tokens. The 11-subgenres are of different textual forms and average text length, serving various diplomatic purposes.

Specifically, FPC briefing is a special column in the U.S. Department of State website issued by the Foreign Press Center on Israel-Hamas conflict. The interviews are mostly realtime recording and transcription of the conversations between Secretary Blinken and the interviewer. Joint statements, also form of official document, are used by the foreign governments to publicly announce shared positions, agreements, commitments and cooperate efforts on Israel-Hamas conflict. The releases are

taken from other section such as U.S Department of Defense and White House that representing the stance of key decision-makers. Readout, in this corpus, is the governmental summary and a report on the key spokesmen (Anthony. J. Blinken, Mathew Miller)’s speeches, events, meeting, etc., to inform the public about major decision and agreements. On average, the text length of FPC briefing and U.S Department Releases are substantially shorter than other sub-genres. A closer look at the interview reveals that Interview, Remarks and Remark to the Press share similar styles as most of them take the form of conversation. The homogeneity of linguistic forms across the three sub-genres is due to the fact that they are realtime-generated texts with loose structures compared with briefings.

Table 3 Corpus Description

Sub-genres	Number of texts	Number of tokens	Average Text Length
FPC briefing	3	186	62
Interview	20	32626	1631.30
Joint Statement	3	985	328.33
Media Note	8	4388	548.50
Press Statement	23	5586	242.87
Readout	94	29727	316.24
Remarks	52	81988	1576.60
Remarks to the Press	8	9701	1212.63
Special Briefing	4	15429	3857.25
U.S Department to Defense Release	1	61	61
White House Release	11	5189	471.72
Total	227	185866	818.79

1.2.2 Methodology

This study adopts a two-ponged approach which connects Biber’s Multidimensional analysis with the

emotion analysis, to explore the uniqueness of register-internal variation of US diplomatic discourse as well as the stance and emotions represented in US

diplomacy towards Israel-Palestine conflict. Principal factor analysis (PFA) is used to extract the optimal number of textual dimensions from the CUSDD-IPC corpus. These factors are then interpreted according to the communicative purposes/ pragmatic functions that are associated with the included linguistic features.

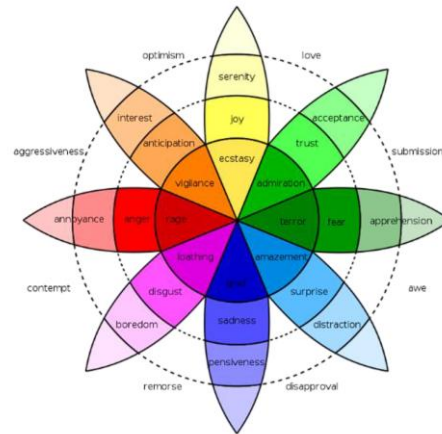


Figure 1 Plutchik's wheel of emotions

Subsequently, we use Plutchik's wheel of emotions for identification and analysis of emotions from texts. NRCLex is employed for the annotation of 8 basic emotions. Pyplutchik, a python library that integrates Plutchik wheel into the data visualization library matplotlib, is used to plot out these emotions. Ultimately, the emotion terms are correlated with the identified dimensions in order to check their interrelationship.

2. Results

2.1 Dimensions of diplomatic sub-

Dimension 1 comprises of 33 features, only 2 of which are with negative loadings. Total other nouns (NN) and phrasal coordination (PHC) both indicate high information density. But the negative loading on PHC is smaller than all the other loadings in terms of its absolute value. The occurrence of PHC with nouns usually occur in structures like Secretary Blinken and President Elsisi discussed... to coordinate the Arabian partners, ...has an obligation to distinguish between terrorists and civilians to indicate "us vs them" or political counterparts. For instance, text

1.3 Research Questions

- (1) Does U.S. diplomatic discourse show register-internal multidimensionality? If yes, what is the distribution of sub-registers along these dimensions?
- (2) How is the U.S. stance toward the Israel-Palestine conflict represented in the emotions in each subgenre?
- (3) How are emotions correlated with the identified textual dimensions in U.S. diplomatic discourse?

registers

1 demonstrates a consecutive use of phrasal coordination in the Remark article to pack highly homogeneous information in one sentential unit. The co-occurrence of nouns and phrasal coordination on the negative axis shows that texts are neatly packed with information. On the positive side, all 31 features have significant loadings larger than 0.5. In particular, contractions, present tense, demonstrative pronouns and first person pronouns have the positive loadings greater than 0.8. Instances like what's, there're are common cases of form reduction

(contraction). The use of contraction reduces the extent of information certainty and results in “homogenous, generalized, uncertain” content (Biber,1988). Another feature that is associated reduction of form on the positive side is pro-verb do. It substitutes the verb phrases in a contextually recognizable position with a simplified form “do” and is usually used in colloquial/ casual discourses. Demonstrative pronouns such as “this” “that” are usually detached from its original referent thus carrying more uncertainty and less information focus. Analytic negation (XX0) and be as main verb (BEMA) also have heavy loadings on Dimension 1. Analytic negation “not” and be as main verb indicates high fragmentation, thus contributing to less information density. They often co-occur with discourse particles such as anyway, well that serve as loosen structure of coherence.

Text	1	Remark
(101_2023_11_4_Remarks)		
Palestinians and Israelis deserve to live in peace with dignity, with security and freedom from occupation and freedom from fear.		
Text	2	Readout
(128_2022_10_20_Readout)		
What’s happening in Israel and Gaza is what we’re handling around-the-clock.		
The subordination features that are		

considered to be characteristic of spoken discourses also cluster with high loadings in this dimension (Biber, 1988; Poole & Field, 1976). Causative subordinator, conditional subordinator, wh-clauses form a typically involved and context-restricted group. These subordinators often come along with authors’ stance-taking as well as elaboration under different constraints. The elaboration under the restriction of context serves functional and affective functions instead of informational. The complementary distribution of these involved/ affectional features with informational features evinces the fundamental and ubiquitous oral/literature contrast (Connor-Linton & Amoroso, 2014). Other features like amplifiers, private verbs, emphatics, present tense also occur in Biber (1988)’s framework, demonstrating “heightened feeling” and heavy interpersonal touch. However, the exception on our dimension 1 that is distinct from Biber’s dimension 1 lies in the occurrence of downtoners, possibility modal, that adjective/verb complements and that relative clauses on objective positions. The overall distribution of linguistic features in Dimension 1 highly overlaps with exploratory investigation of Biber (1988). It suggests that the contrast of “informational vs involved” still applies to the sub-genres of US diplomatic texts even though they are considered institutional.

Table 4 Features with loadings on Dimension 1

Dimension1		Feature	Loadings
AMP		Amplifier	0.588
ANDC	Independent Clause Coordinati	on	0.572

CAUS	Causative Subordinator	0.716
COND	Conditional Subordinator	0.649
DEMO	Demonstratives	0.557
DEMP	Demonstrative Pronouns	0.841
DPAR	Discourse Particles	0.700
DWNT	Downtoner	0.595
EMPH	Emphatics	0.596
EX	Existential There	0.817
FPP1	First Person Pronouns	0.812
POMD	Possibility Modals	0.603
SPP2	Second Person Pronouns	0.746
THAC	That adjective complements	0.505
THVC	That Verb Complement	0.682
TOBJ	That relative clauses on Object Positions	0.567
VPRT	Present tense	0.847
XX0	Analytic Negation	0.750
[BEMA]	BE as a main verb	0.741
[CONT]	Contraction	0.929
[PRIV]	Private Verbs	0.667
[PROD]	Pro-verb do	0.723
[STPR]	Stranded Preposition	0.650
[THATD]	Subordinator that deletion	0.614
[WHCL]	WH Clause	0.689
[WHQU]	WH Questions	0.583
NN	Total other nouns	-0.515
PHC	Phrasal Coordination	-0.357

Dimension 2 shows the cluster of 3 linguistics features, all with significant positive factor loadings that are larger than 0.8. The largest loading is on agentless passives. Unlike by passives that reveals the agent at non-subject position, agentless passives are used on the occasion where less focus is given to the agent while more given to the patient or entity that is been acted upon (Biber 1988). It is usually used in the procedural discourse when the texts are with repetitive but non-significant or publicly-acknowledged agents. The use of passives along with adverbs indicates higher extent of abstractness as well as focus on complicated logical

representations. Infinitives [TO] is a necessary part of verb complement, which is used to formulate the basic stance of the speaker and highlight the opinion of the speak. The heavy bearings on both markers of abstractness and persuasion is surprising if individualized from the context of diplomatic conflicts. This could be summarized as a style diplomatic persuasion when the actions of agents (usually diplomats) are implicit and attitude interwoven with intense logical reasoning. Most intended actions on the conflict, in this case, are abstracted away from the listeners or recipient as diplomat's acts of persuasion does not rely on concrete and practical methods.

Table 5 Features with loadings on Dimension 2

Dimension2	Features	Loadings
TO	Infinitives	0.906
[PASS]	Agentless Passives	1.004
RB	Adverbs	0.830

The 3 features on Dimension 3 have moderate factor loadings ranging from 0.5 to 0.76. Average word length, with the positive loading of 0.754, falls into the category of lexical specificity. Unlike the common pattern of co-occurrence, it is not grouped with other features under this category such as type-token ratio. But its high loading indicates this dimension is featured with high information exactness. Such feature occurs in well-curated texts

such as statements and official releases in the case of diplomatic discourse. Prepositional phrase and attributive adjective are the markers of high integration, that is, the way profuse information is wrapped into few words. Texts with frequent occurrence of prepositional phrases as well as high word length have compact information structure.

Table 6 Features on Dimension 3 with loadings

Dimensi on3	Features	Loadin gs
AWL	Word Length	0.754
JJ	Attributive Adjective	0.597
PIN	Total Prepositional Phrases	0.522

Dimension 4 and Dimension 5 is characterized by 8 lexico-grammatical features with positive loadings around 0.5. Present participial WHIZ deletions and Wh relative clauses on subject position are often used with nouns and nominalization for information elaboration. While present participial WHIZ deletions extends the previous information in adding new descriptive information, Wh relative clauses on subject positive adds further specification on the referent. The perfect aspect occurs more in the description of past events. The features that cluster in Dimension 4

demonstrate high specificity and concreteness. Dimension 5 has four loadings from opposite sides of the axis. Split auxiliaries and Predicative modals co-occur on the positive side while past tense time adverbials group on the negative side. The feature co-occurrence on the positive side is reminiscent of the Biber's general MD analysis on speech and writing as well. On the negative pole, past tense and time adverbial cluster with less significant loadings. The complementary distribution of predictive modal with past tense indicates the strategic maneuvering of events in the

diplomat’s discourse.

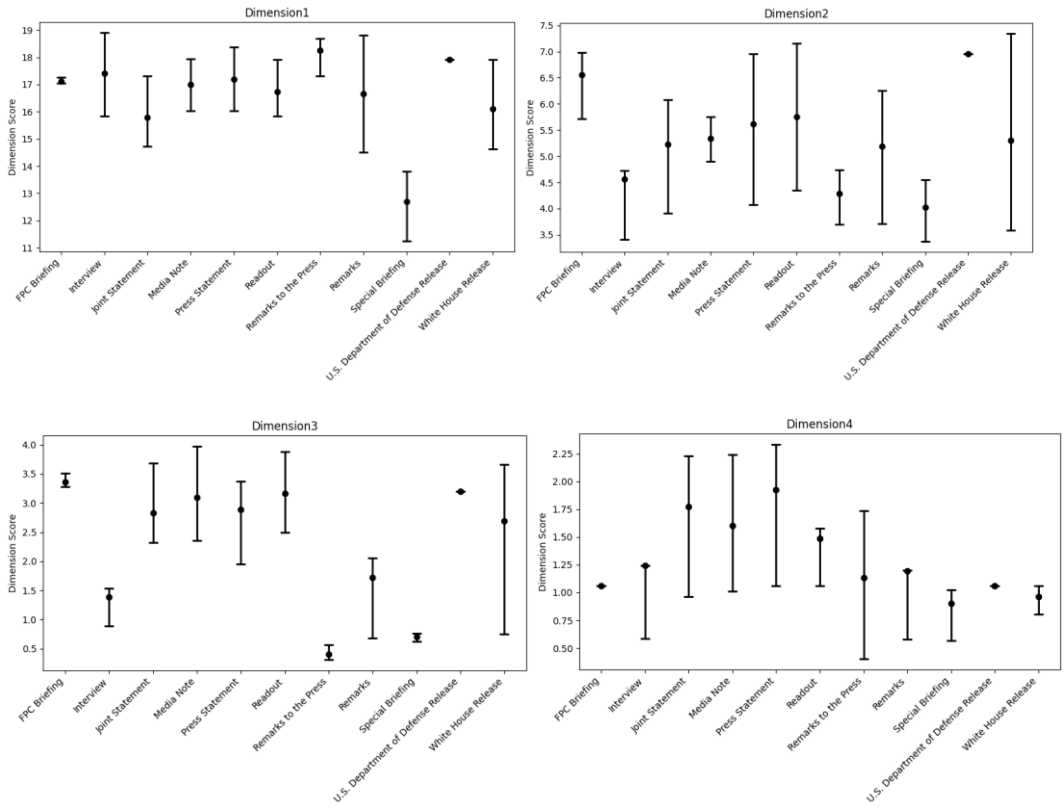
Table 7 Features on Dimension 4 with loadings

Dimension4	Features	Loadings
[WZPRES]	Present participial WHIZ deletion relatives	0.594
[WHSUB]	WH relative clauses on subject position	0.508
[PEAS]	Perfect Aspect	0.486
[NOMZ]	Nominalization	0.410

Table 8 Features on Dimension 5 with loadings

Dimension5	Feature	Loadings
[SPAU]	Split auxiliaries	0.577
PRMD	Predictive modals	0.692
VBD	Past tense	-0.684
TIME	Time adverbial	-0.370

Figure 2 shows the dimensional distribution of all diplomatic sub-genres.



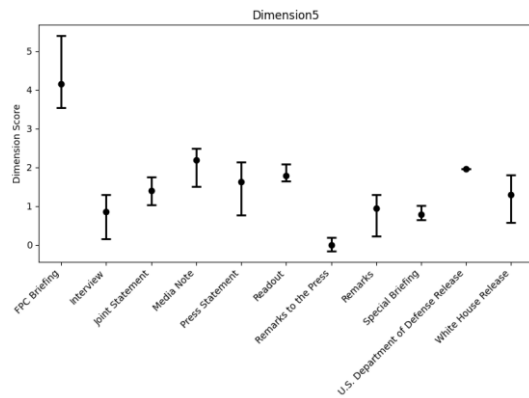


Figure 2 Variation of dimension scores in Sub-registers

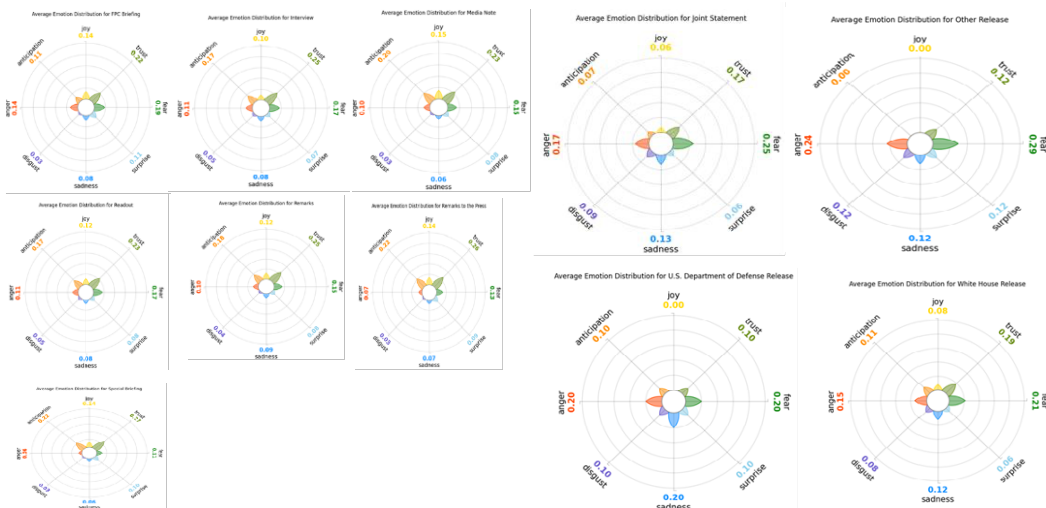
Table 9 ANOVA on the dimension scores across sub-genres

	Sum of Squares	df	F	P	η^2
Dimension1	102.12	10.0	1.90	0.046	0.081
Residual	1151.46	214			
Dimension2	50.70	10.0	1.28	0.24	0.056
Residual	847.22	214			
Dimension3	146.58	10.0	7.19	0.000	0.252
Residual	435.98	214			
Dimension4	14.47	10.0	1.76	0.068	0.076
Residual	175.48	214			
Dimension5	73.82	10.0	8.59	0.000	0.28
Residual	183.84	214			

2.2 Emotion analysis based on Plutchik wheel

Figure 3 demonstrates the distribution of

8 basic emotions in the diplomatic sub-genres.



(a) Emotions wheel dominated by "trust" (b) Emotion wheel dominated by "fear/anger"

Figure 3 8 basic emotion components



Figure 4 Correlation matrix between Dimensions and Emotions

Conclusion

This study offers multidimensional insights on the discourses of U.S. diplomatic discourse regarding the Israel-Palestine issue, emphasizing the importance of textual and emotional elements. Utilizing Biber's (1988) paradigm and Principal Factor Analysis, the study highlights five textual dimensions inside several sub-registers of U.S. diplomatic writings. The results of the study indicate that Dimension 1 significantly groups subordination characteristics linked to spoken discourse, including causal and conditional subordinators, wh-clauses, and additional traits that signify engagement and contextual limitation. Furthermore, our emotional study utilizing Plutchik's wheel reveals a predominance of 'trust,' accompanied by notable instances of 'fear' and 'anger,' corresponding to Dimension 4 and Dimension 3, respectively. This suggests that 'trust' promotes a favorable diplomatic position, whereas 'fear' and 'anger' expose points of tension and conflict within the dialogue.

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