



## A Lexical Semantic Analysis of Political Risk Lexis in BBC News: "Trump's Confidence Is Undimmed-But Every Iran Option Comes with Risk

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**Abstract.** *This study aims to analyze political risk lexis in the BBC News article entitled “Trump's Confidence Is Undimmed – But Every Iran Option Comes with Risk.” The focus of this research is to identify the lexical items related to political risk and examine their meanings using a lexical semantic approach. This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design, as it seeks to interpret the meanings of words within their context rather than to quantify data. The data are taken from a BBC News article and collected using a documentation technique by identifying words and phrases that represent political risk. The analysis reveals that several key lexical items, such as risk, threat, danger, uncertainty, and escalation, are used to construct the concept of political risk in the text. These lexical items are analyzed based on their denotative, connotative, and contextual meanings. The findings show that risk is the most dominant lexical item, supported by other related words that emphasize different dimensions of political instability. Furthermore, the study finds that these lexical items function not only to describe events but also to emphasize uncertainty, construct a perception of danger, and influence readers' interpretations of the political situation. In addition, the study demonstrates that lexical choices play a crucial role in media discourse, particularly in framing political issues. The use of political risk lexis in the article contributes to constructing a narrative of instability and complexity in the United States–Iran conflict. Therefore, this study highlights the importance of lexical semantic analysis in understanding how language is used to shape meaning and influence public perception in media texts.*

**Keywords:** *lexical semantics, political risk, media discourse, BBC News, lexical analysis.*

**Abstrak.** *Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis lexis risiko politik dalam artikel BBC News yang berjudul “Trump's Confidence Is Undimmed – But Every Iran Option Comes with Risk.” Fokus penelitian ini adalah mengidentifikasi item leksikal yang berkaitan dengan risiko politik dan menelaah maknanya menggunakan pendekatan semantik leksikal. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif deskriptif, karena bertujuan untuk menafsirkan makna kata dalam konteksnya, bukan untuk mengkuantifikasi data. Data diambil dari artikel BBC News dan dikumpulkan menggunakan teknik dokumentasi dengan mengidentifikasi kata dan frasa yang merepresentasikan risiko politik. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa beberapa item leksikal kunci, seperti risk, threat, danger, uncertainty, dan escalation, digunakan untuk membangun konsep risiko politik dalam teks. Item leksikal ini dianalisis berdasarkan makna denotatif, konotatif, dan kontekstualnya. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa risk merupakan item leksikal yang paling dominan, didukung oleh kata-kata lain yang menekankan berbagai dimensi ketidakstabilan politik. Selanjutnya, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa item leksikal tersebut berfungsi tidak hanya untuk mendeskripsikan peristiwa, tetapi juga untuk menekankan ketidakpastian, membangun persepsi bahaya, dan memengaruhi interpretasi pembaca terhadap situasi politik. Selain itu, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pilihan leksikal memiliki peran penting dalam wacana media, terutama dalam membingkai isu politik. Penggunaan lexis risiko politik dalam artikel tersebut berkontribusi dalam membangun narasi ketidakstabilan dan kompleksitas dalam konflik Amerika Serikat–Iran. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini menyoroti pentingnya analisis semantik leksikal dalam memahami bagaimana bahasa digunakan untuk membentuk makna dan memengaruhi persepsi publik dalam teks media.*

**Kata kunci:** *semantik leksikal, risiko politik, wacana media, BBC News, analisis leksikal.*

## **INTRODUCTION.**

Language plays a crucial role in shaping human interactions, particularly in political communication. In contemporary society, news media has become one of the most influential institutions in shaping public understanding of political events (Fairclough, 1995). Media discourse not only reports facts but can actively frame reality through the strategic use of language, influencing how audiences interpret political actors and global issues (Baker et al., 2021). Therefore, analyzing language in political news is crucial, aiming to uncover the meanings, ideologies, and perspectives contained within (Wodak, 2021).

From a linguistic perspective, meaning is studied within the field of semantics, which focuses on how language conveys meaning in context. Meaning is not fixed but can vary depending on how it is used and interpreted in different contexts (Yule, 2010). One important subfield of semantics is Lexical Semantics, which specifically examines the meanings of words and their relationships. Lexical semantics examines how words convey meaning and how these meanings can change depending on their use in context. Words are not neutral units, but they carry meanings that are influenced by social context and communicative purposes (Yule, 2010; Halliday, 1994).

Furthermore, recent linguistic perspectives argue that lexical meaning is closely related to cognitive and cultural interpretations. Nick Riemer (2020) explains that lexical meaning involves conceptual structure and contextual use, making it crucial to understand how meaning is negotiated in discourse. Words can carry both denotative and connotative meanings, allowing them to function as tools of evaluation and persuasion (Allan, 2021). In media texts, language is often used strategically to frame events and shape audience perceptions (Fairclough, 1995; Fowler, 1991).

The relevance of lexical semantics becomes even clearer when applied to political discourse. Political language is inherently persuasive and ideological, as it is used to influence public opinion and construct social reality (Hart, 2020). As Teun A. van Dijk (2020) notes, political discourse reflects power relations and ideological structures, where language serves as a tool to establish certain perspectives while disempowering others. Through discourse, political actors and media institutions can emphasize certain viewpoints while marginalizing alternative opinions (Wodak, 2021). This suggests that

lexical choices in political texts are rarely neutral but instead reflect underlying ideological intentions.

The news media, as primary producers of political discourse, play a crucial role in shaping global understanding of political issues. International news organizations such as BBC News are often considered credible sources; however, their reporting still involves linguistic choices that influence interpretation (Fairclough, 1995). Representations of international conflict, diplomatic relations, and policy decisions often rely on carefully selected vocabulary that carries implicit meanings and reflects particular perspectives (Fowler, 1991). Words like threat, crisis, conflict, and risk are commonly used in political reporting to construct specific narratives and evoke specific responses from audiences (Wodak, 2021).

In the context of international relations, tensions between the United States and Iran have received extensive coverage in the global media, often framed through language that emphasizes uncertainty and potential consequences (Zinn, 2020). Discussions of military strategy, diplomatic negotiations, and geopolitical risks frequently involve lexical choices that highlight danger and uncertainty (Aven, 2021). The use of the term "risk" in these reports is particularly significant, reflecting how the media constructs and communicates the likely outcomes of political decisions (Hart, 2020). Therefore, examining the lexical semantics of risk provides valuable insights into how political narratives are shaped and conveyed.

This study focuses on a news article published by BBC News entitled "*Trump's Confidence Is Undimmed – But Every Iran Option Comes with Risk.*" The article discusses former US President Donald Trump and his stance on Iran policy. The contrast between confidence and risk in the title reflects the complex interplay between certainty and uncertainty in political decision-making (Knight, 1921; Beck, 1992). This makes the article highly relevant for lexical semantic analysis, especially in examining how the term *risk* and its related lexical items function in political discourse (Yule, 2010; Halliday, 1994).

The aim of this study is to analyze the lexical semantics of political risk lexis in the selected BBC News article. Specifically, this research seeks to identify the meanings of the word *risk*, examine its semantic relations, and explore how it operates within the broader context of political discourse. By doing so, the study contributes to a deeper

understanding of how lexical choices influence interpretation and reflect ideological perspectives in media texts (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1998).

Ultimately, this research is expected to provide insights into the role of language in political communication, particularly in contemporary news discourse. It also emphasizes the importance of critical reading, as audiences must be aware of how language shapes their understanding of political realities (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Through a lexical semantic approach, this study highlights that even a single word, such as *risk*, can carry complex, context-dependent meanings that play a significant role in constructing political narratives.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Lexical Semantics.**

Lexical semantics examines the meanings of words and how these meanings contribute to the overall interpretation of utterances in natural language. The lexicon can be understood as a component of grammar that not only provides the information necessary for syntactic composition but also supports various levels and types of semantic interpretation. Lexical entries are complex and structured units that function as triggers for semantic processes, as well as indicators of entailment and implicature within broader discourse contexts. Since semantic interpretation depends on knowledge about words, the lexicon must offer a systematic and efficient way to organize and represent the information associated with words in a language (James, 2014).

The denotative meaning of a word is its meaning, not including the feelings and ideas that people may connect with that word (Cambridge dictionary). In the study of Lexical Semantics, understanding the distinction between denotative and connotative meaning is essential for analyzing how words function in discourse. These two types of meaning explain how a single lexical item can convey both literal and implied interpretations depending on its context.

Denotative meaning refers to the literal, primary, and objective meaning of a word as commonly found in dictionaries. It represents the direct relationship between a word and the concept it denotes, without any emotional or evaluative associations. According to Nick Riemer (2020), denotation is the core meaning of a lexical item that remains

relatively stable across different contexts. For example, the word *risk* in its denotative sense refers to the possibility of danger, loss, or negative outcomes. This meaning is generally fixed and widely understood, making it the foundation for further semantic interpretation.

In contrast, connotative meaning refers to the additional, implied, or associative meanings that a word carries beyond its literal definition. These meanings are often influenced by cultural, social, and contextual factors. As explained by Keith Allan (2021), connotation involves the emotional and evaluative aspects of meaning that reflect speakers' attitudes and perspectives. Unlike denotative meaning, connotative meaning is not fixed and can vary depending on how a word is used in discourse.

In media and political discourse, connotative meaning plays a significant role in shaping audience perception. Words are often chosen not only for their literal meanings but also for the associations they evoke. For instance, the word *risk* may carry different connotations depending on its context. In a political news article, *risk* can imply fear, uncertainty, threat, or instability, especially when used in relation to international conflict. These connotations can influence how readers interpret a situation, making it appear more dangerous or urgent than its denotative meaning alone would suggest.

Furthermore, the interaction between denotative and connotative meanings allows lexical items to function as powerful tools in discourse. While the denotative meaning provides the basic definition, the connotative meaning adds depth and nuance, enabling writers to convey subtle ideological messages. This is particularly relevant in news media, where lexical choices are carefully selected to frame events and guide audience interpretation.

Therefore, analyzing both denotative and connotative meanings is crucial in this study, as it helps reveal how political risk lexis is used in the BBC News article to construct meaning and influence readers' perceptions. By examining these two dimensions of meaning, this research aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the word *risk* and its related lexical items operate within political discourse.

## **2. Political Discourse.**

Political discourse has become an important focus on various types of discourse study. In recent years, it has received significant attention in the field of linguistics but

also from political discourse attracts scholars not only from linguistics but also from political science, sociology, cultural studies, and psychology. This multidisciplinary of the nature of political discourse, allowing it to be examined from multiple viewpoints and providing a more comprehensive interpretation of the phenomenon (Petrosyan et al.,2022).

According to (Habiburahman & Abdul, 2024), language plays a crucial role in politics. It described that language has multifaceted role in politics, it emphasized that political actors use language differently to persuade, manipulate, and mobilize citizens.

From a critical perspective, language functions as a tool of power because it allows certain groups such as governments, institutions, and media organization to control information, shape public opinion, and legitimize authority. According to Norman Fairclough, power operates in discourse through the control of meaning, where dominant groups influence how events, identities, and relationships are represented. This control is often subtle and indirect, making it seem natural or unquestionable to audiences. As a results, language becomes a medium through which power is exercised without coercion, but through persuasion and normalization.

Closely related to power is the concept of ideology, which refers to the systems of beliefs and values that shape how individuals perceive reality. Teun A. van Dijk argues that ideology is embedded in discourse and is often reproduced through everyday such as vocabulary, grammar, and discourse structure can carry ideological meanings that influence interpretation. In particular perspective. Words are not neutral labels; rather, they are loaded with connotations that reflect particular viewpoints and interests.

In conclusion, language functions as both a tool of power and a vehicle of ideology. It shapes how reality is represented, influences how audience interpret events, and contributes to the maintenance of social and political structures. Understanding this relationships is crucial in analyzing political discourse, as it reveals that meaning is not simply conveyed, but actively constructed through language.

### **3. Media Language and Ideology.**

Media language plays a crucial role in shaping how social and political reality is constructed and understood. In modern communication, media are not merely passive channels for conveying information; rather. They actively participate in interpreting and

farming events through specific linguistics choices. Within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, media language is viewed as a form of discourse that reflects and reproduces ideological meanings embedded in society.

Ideology in media language refers to the ways in which beliefs, values, and power relations are encoded in texts, often implicitly. According to Teun A. van Dijk, media discourse plays a crucial role in shaping public cognition by controlling not only what information is structured and interpreted. This means that the language used in news reporting is never completely neutral; rather, it carries a particular perspective that influences audience understanding.

One of the primary ways ideology operates in media discourse is through lexical choices. As Roger Fowler emphasizes, word choice in news texts reflects ideological positions, as different lexical items can present the same event in different ways. For example, describing a situation as a “crisis”, “conflict”, or “risk” carries different connotations that shape how readers understand the severity and implications of the problem. These choices are not arbitrary, but are influenced by institutional practices, cultural norms, and political contexts.

Furthermore, Norman Fairclough argues that media discourse functions as a site where power and ideology intersect. Media institutions, such as BBC News, wield significant authority in constructing global narratives. Through processes of selection, emphasis, and framing, they influence how events are represented and understood by audiences worldwide. This process often leads to the appear objective or reasonable, even though they are actually ideologically shaped.

In relation to this study, the concept of media language and ideology is highly relevant. The use of risk-related lexical items such as “risk”, “threat,” and “uncertainty” in the selected news article does not simply describe the political situations but actively frames it. These words construct a narrative of calculated danger and strategic uncertainty, particularly in the context of the United States-Iran relations during the presidency of Donald Trump.

By employing such lexical choices, the media shapes how readers interpret the situation, potentially influencing their perception of political decisions and international relations. Therefore, analyzing political risk lexis through a lexical semantic approach allows this study to uncover how ideological meanings are embedded in media language.

It demonstrates that news discourse is not purely informational but is also a strategic practice that constructs reality, guides interpretation, and reflects underlying ideological perspectives.

#### **4. Political Risk Lexis.**

According to James Chen (2025), Political risk is the risk an investment's could suffer as a result of political changes or instability in a country. Political risk is also known as "geopolitical risk", and becomes more of a factor as the time horizon of investment gets longer. They are considered a type of jurisdiction risk. It means political risk is the probability that a business or investment could lose money because of changes or instability in a country's politics.

The concept of *risk* in political discourse refers to the possibility of adverse outcomes resulting from political decisions, actions, or conditions. According to Ulrich Beck (1992), risk is a central element of modern society, particularly in situations characterized by uncertainty and unpredictability. In the context of international relations, political risk emerges from factors such as conflict, policy changes, and geopolitical instability, which may significantly affect global security and decision-making processes. Furthermore, Frank Knight (1921) distinguishes between risk and uncertainty, where risk involves measurable probabilities, while uncertainty refers to unpredictable and unquantifiable outcomes. This distinction is essential in understanding how political events are represented in media discourse.

In media texts, particularly in BBC News, political risk is not only expressed explicitly through the term *risk* itself but is also constructed implicitly through various lexical choices. From a linguistic perspective, M.A.K. Halliday (1994) emphasizes that language functions as a system of meaning-making in which lexical selection plays a crucial role in representing experience. In line with this, Norman Fairclough (1995) argues that language in media discourse is never neutral, but rather shaped by ideological and social influences. Therefore, the selection of specific lexical items related to political risk contributes to the construction of particular narratives and perspectives.

In this study, several key lexical items are identified as representing political risk, including *threat*, *danger*, *escalation*, and *uncertainty*. The term *threat* refers to a potential source of harm and is often used to signal possible future conflict or tension. Meanwhile,

*danger* conveys a stronger and more immediate sense of harm, emphasizing the seriousness of the situation. The word *escalation* indicates an increase in the intensity of conflict, suggesting that a situation may worsen over time. In contrast, *uncertainty* highlights the unpredictable nature of political outcomes, which, as suggested by Knight (1921), forms the basis for the emergence of risk. These lexical items are interconnected and form a semantic progression in which uncertainty leads to risk, which may develop into threat, intensify into danger, and ultimately result in escalation.

Furthermore, the use of political risk lexis in BBC News reflects the ideological function of language in media discourse. Fairclough (1995) states that media language plays a significant role in shaping public perception by framing social and political realities. Through the strategic selection of words such as *threat* and *escalation*, the media constructs a narrative of tension and instability, particularly in the context of the United States–Iran conflict. This lexical framing influences how readers interpret the situation, often emphasizing the potential negative consequences of political actions. In the article entitled “Trump's Confidence Is Undimmed – But Every Iran Option Comes with Risk,” the term *risk* suggests that all available political options carry unavoidable consequences, indicating the absence of a completely safe or stable solution. Therefore, political risk lexis serves not only as a linguistic feature but also as a tool for framing political reality and shaping public perception.

## **5. Previous Studies.**

Previous studies have widely explored the use of language in media, particularly through semantic analysis and political discourse studies. A number of researchers have focused on how lexical meanings are constructed within news texts and how these meanings may shift depending on context and communicative purpose. Studies on semantic analysis in media have shown that lexical items are not merely used to convey information, but also to construct particular interpretations of events. In political contexts, semantic choices often reflect underlying intentions, where certain words are selected to emphasize specific aspects of reality while downplaying others. This indicates that meaning in media discourse is shaped not only by linguistic structures but also by social and political contexts.

In addition, previous research on political language in media highlights that political discourse is inherently persuasive and ideological. Language in news reporting is often

used to influence public perception, frame political events, and legitimize certain viewpoints. Through the strategic use of lexical choices, media outlets can subtly guide readers' understanding of political situations. Words related to conflict, risk, and instability are frequently employed to construct narratives that emphasize tension and uncertainty. Therefore, lexical choice becomes a crucial element in revealing how media represents political realities and conveys implicit meanings to the audience.

Furthermore, many of these studies have applied approaches such as lexical-semantic analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the relationship between language and ideology in media texts. These approaches enable researchers to uncover both explicit and implicit meanings embedded in political discourse, particularly in identifying how language reflects power relations and ideological positions. However, despite the extensive research in this area, most studies tend to focus on general political discourse, media bias, or semantic shifts without specifically addressing the concept of political risk through lexical analysis.

Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by focusing specifically on political risk lexis in BBC News, particularly in the article "Trump's Confidence Is Undimmed – But Every Iran Option Comes with Risk." This research aims to analyze how lexical items such as *risk*, *threat*, *danger*, *escalation*, and *uncertainty* are used to construct meanings of political risk and to shape readers' understanding of international political conflict. To achieve this objective, this study employs a qualitative descriptive method with a lexical-semantic approach. The data are collected from the selected BBC News article and analyzed by identifying and categorizing political risk-related lexical items, followed by interpreting their meanings within the context of the discourse. This method allows the researcher to examine how language is used to represent political risk and how such representations contribute to the construction of meaning in media texts.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design. A qualitative approach is considered appropriate because the objective of this research is to analyze and interpret the meanings of lexical items related to political risk rather than to measure them numerically. The descriptive method is used to provide a detailed explanation of

how political risk lexis is constructed and represented in media discourse. Through this approach, the researcher focuses on understanding the semantic meanings of words and their functions within the context of political news. Therefore, this design allows for an in-depth exploration of how language is used to convey meaning and shape readers' perceptions in the selected text.

The data of this study are taken from an online news article published by BBC News entitled "*Trump's Confidence Is Undimmed – But Every Iran Option Comes with Risk.*" The article is accessed online and used as the primary data source for analysis. This article is selected because it contains various lexical items related to political risk, particularly in the context of the United States–Iran conflict. As an international media outlet, BBC News is known for its influential role in shaping global public opinion, making it a relevant and credible source for analyzing political discourse. The article provides rich linguistic data that reflect how political risk is represented through specific lexical choices.

The data in this study are collected using the documentation technique. This technique involves collecting written data from the selected news article and examining it carefully. The researcher reads the article thoroughly and identifies words and phrases that contain meanings related to political risk, such as *risk*, *threat*, *danger*, *escalation*, and *uncertainty*. These lexical items are then noted and compiled as the primary data of the study. The documentation technique is suitable for this research because it allows the researcher to systematically gather relevant linguistic data from authentic media texts.

The data are analyzed through several steps. First, data reduction is conducted by selecting only the lexical items that are relevant to political risk, while excluding unrelated words. Second, the selected lexical items are classified into categories based on their semantic characteristics, such as words indicating threat, uncertainty, or conflict intensity. Third, the meanings of these lexical items are analyzed both denotatively and connotatively to understand their literal and implied meanings. Finally, the researcher interprets the findings within the context of political discourse to explain how these lexical choices contribute to the representation of political risk in the news article. Through these steps, the analysis reveals how language is used not only to describe events but also to construct particular perspectives on political issues.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table. 1 presents the lexical semantic analysis of political risk lexis found in the BBC News article. In addition to denotative, connotative, and contextual meanings, the table also highlights the function or usage of each lexical item in the text. The analysis shows that these lexical items are not only used to describe the situation but also to emphasize risk, construct a sense of danger, and shape readers' perceptions of the political conflict.

**Table 1.** Lexical Semantic Analysis of Political Risk Lexis

NO	Lexical Item	Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning	Contextual Meaning (Based on Text)	Function / Usage in the Text
1.	Risk	Possibility of loss or negative outcome	Implies unavoidable consequences and difficult choices.	"Every option comes with risk" → all US decisions in the Iran war have negative consequences	To emphasize that no political option is completely safe and to frame decision-making as difficult
2.	Danger	Possibility of harm or injury	Suggests serious and immediate harm.	"put US forces in greater danger" → troops are at direct risk	To intensify the seriousness of military action and highlight immediate consequences
3.	Threat	Potential source of harm	Creates fear and anticipation	"pose a threat to shipping" → Iran may disrupt global oil routes	To construct a sense of ongoing risk and justify concern over Iran's actions
4.	Uncertainty	State of unpredictability	Reflects lack of control and anxiety	"could stretch for weeks or even longer" → unclear war duration	To show unpredictability and reinforce the complexity of political decisions
5.	Escalation (implied)	Increase in intensity	Suggests worsening conflict	"expand US operations" → possibility of wider war	To indicate that the conflict may grow and

					become more severe
6.	Crisis (implied)	Critical unstable situation	Implies urgency and tension	Overall US-Iran war situation	To frame the situation as serious and requiring urgent attention
7.	War	Armed conflict	Conveys seriousness and high stakes	“war of choice... spiralling”	To highlight the gravity of the situation and its impact on leadership
8.	Spiralling	Moving out of control	Suggests chaos and escalation	“spiralling in ways he can't control”	To depict the conflict as unpredictable and difficult to manage
9.	Threat (economic)	Potential harm	Implies indirect danger	“political threat... energy prices”	To connect military conflict with economic consequences
10.	Danger (strategic)	Harmful condition	Indicates fragile situation	“all it takes is one” → small action can cause major impact	To stress vulnerability and high sensitivity of the situation

The analysis of the lexical semantic features presented in Table 1 reveals several important patterns. The lexical item *risk* appears as the most dominant term, particularly as it is emphasized in the title of the article. This word is supported by other related lexical items such as *threat*, *danger*, *uncertainty*, and *escalation*, which together form a semantic network representing different aspects of political risk. These lexical items are interconnected, with *uncertainty* reflecting unpredictability, *threat* indicating potential harm, and *danger* emphasizing immediate consequences.

Furthermore, the findings show that these lexical items collectively construct a representation of political instability and complexity. The repeated use of such terms suggests that the situation is not only risky but also difficult to control and predict. This creates an overall meaning that all political decisions made in the context of the United States-Iran conflict involve significant challenges and potential negative outcomes.

In addition, the use of political risk lexis serves important functions within the text. These lexical choices emphasize the seriousness of the situation, highlight the dangers involved, and reinforce the uncertainty surrounding the conflict. As a result, readers are influenced to perceive the situation as highly unstable and risky. This demonstrates that language in media discourse is not neutral, but plays an active role in shaping public understanding.

Finally, the findings also indicate that the lexical choices contribute to media framing. The BBC article constructs a narrative in which the conflict is presented as complex and full of risks, with no clear or safe solution. Through this framing, the media shapes how readers interpret the political situation and the decisions made by political leaders.

## CONCLUSION

This study has examined the use of political risk lexis in the BBC News article entitled "*Trump's Confidence Is Undimmed – But Every Iran Option Comes with Risk*" through a lexical semantic approach. The findings reveal that several key lexical items, such as *risk*, *threat*, *danger*, *uncertainty*, and *escalation*, are used to represent different dimensions of political risk. Among these, *risk* appears as the most dominant term, particularly as it is emphasized in the title, indicating that all political options involve potential negative consequences. These lexical items are interconnected and form a semantic network that reflects the complexity, instability, and unpredictability of the United States–Iran conflict.

Furthermore, the study highlights the important role of lexical choice in constructing meaning within media discourse. The identified lexical items are not only used according to their literal meanings but also carry connotative and contextual meanings that strengthen the representation of danger, uncertainty, and tension. Words such as *danger* and *threat* emphasize the seriousness of the situation, while *uncertainty* and *escalation* indicate the unpredictable and dynamic nature of the conflict. In addition, the use of expressions like *spiralling* further reinforces the idea that the situation may worsen and become difficult to control. Therefore, lexical items function as powerful tools in shaping how political events are described and understood.

Finally, this study implies that language plays a significant role in media representation and the construction of political reality. The use of political risk lexis contributes to framing the conflict as complex and high-risk, influencing readers' perceptions of international political situations. This finding is important for the study of language and media, as it demonstrates that lexical choices are not neutral but are closely related to ideological and communicative purposes. Thus, lexical semantic analysis can be an effective approach to uncover how meaning is constructed in media texts and how it affects public understanding of political issues.

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