A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Language in Imran Khan's Speeches to Connect with the Audience

Amna Sana[1]
Ali Hussain Bin Sadiq [2]
Hafiz Raza Razaq [3]

Corresponding Author: awanamna170@gmail.com

Abstract

The study aimed to conduct a critical discourse analysis of Imran Khan's address at the Global Peace and Unity Forum, exploring language's influence on political leaders' ideas. It investigated how politicians employ specific vocabularies to convey their intellectual prowess to an audience. The research concluded with findings and interpretations, emphasizing the significant impact of language on interpersonal communication and the potential for political discourse to elicit both positive and negative reactions. The focus narrowed down to the linguistic choices of Mr. Imran Khan, former Prime Minister of Pakistan, in his political speeches. The qualitative analysis delved into his spoken rhetoric, aiming to interpret the underlying intentions conveyed through language within the political sphere. Undoubtedly, language holds the power to sway individuals towards specific beliefs, ideologies, or actions, and politicians leverage it strategically to assert authority and persuade others.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis, ideology, political speeches, Imran Khan, audience

Introduction

Every language is a complicated system for communication. Words have social, political, racial, and economic connotations across time. The best analysis that can be used to figure out the language's hidden agenda is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). It also assists in our comprehension and analysis of various linguistic forms. This study encourages us to draw attention to the hidden meanings that language demonstrates.

A tool of communication is language. Presenting ideas and thoughts in front of people is beneficial. A person's language reflects their cultural identity. Language has a variety of roles in society, evident in a wide range of contexts, including politics, institutions, religion, and education. It might be challenging to pinpoint all the roles that a language serves in a community because language use is so commonplace. Discourse is the language used in a particular context. It is used to describe language that is more complex than sentences and combines elements from multiple texts. Discourse is a broad phrase with various definitions that "integrate a whole palette of meanings," (Tischer, 2000, p. 42). Sunderland (2002) provides the human element definition, highlighting the fact that discourse is a language usage function that conveys meanings in a specific context in addition to being a supra-sentential aspect. Additionally, the term "discourse" is used to describe the language used in social contexts (such as classroom discourse).

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[1]MPhil Scholar, DLC,UMT Sialkot, Pakistan.
[2]PhD, Assistant Professor, DLC, UMT Sialkot, Pakistan.
[3]MPhil Scholar, DLC,UMT Sialkot, Pakistan.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is primarily concerned with the study of written and spoken text within social contexts. It focuses on understanding the inner structure of texts. In contrast, Halliday proposed a systematic functional linguistics (SFL) approach, which emphasizes that texts should be produced, understood, and situated within a social context. This highlights the significant relationship between language and society. In 1992, Fairclough introduced an approach that combines language study with social theories, called Critical Discourse Analysis. CDA investigates how texts are represented, manipulated, and oppose other powers in political and social contexts, as well as how language implicates social power resist other powers in social and political contexts, as well as how social power is implicated through language. Norman Fairclough's work has been pivotal in CDA, particularly his three-dimensional framework that analyzes how discourse is practiced in a societal context.

The main objective of this investigation is to evaluate the way Imran Khan employs leadership language and rhetorical devices in his spoken texts. Specific objectives can vary based on the context and current events, also discussing government policies, and addressing national issues.

Research Questions

1. What rhetorical devices and vocabularies of authority does Imran Khan employ in his spoken text?
2. How does Imran Khan demonstrate his leadership qualities in his speech?

Literature Review

Critical discourse analysis is used to investigate the ways that language functions in a society. The focus of CDA is mostly on speech and society's citizens. We must be aware of people's identities as well as their behavior's, attitudes, and speech patterns (Taiwo, 2007). Critical theory-derived explanations of the social world are referred to as CDA. According to Dijik (2009), CDA shows how rhetorical objects are preserved and replicated in the context of social, political, and historical processes. The analysis focused on transitivity and modality systems to explore how language functions in forming ideology and power within the speeches. In 2016, Maya Alaei and Saeideh Ahangari from Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran critically analyzed Joseph Conrad's novel "Heart of Darkness." The research aimed to study the development of ideology and the lexicon-grammatical strategies employed by the author in the initial section of the novel to convey ideological meaning. Halliday's systemic functional linguistics approach was utilized, examining the contribution of literature within theoretical accounts of language.

A qualitative approach was employed for the analysis, with Muhammad Bilal suggesting that linguistic features aid in uncovering the intentional meanings behind speakers' utterances, emphasizing the importance of critical text analysis for better understanding. Amna Iqbal, a student at The University of Lahore, analyzed the speeches of prominent politicians in 2015. The research aimed to identify rhetorical devices employed in pre- and post-election speeches by well-known political leaders. A qualitative approach was used to address the research questions, and a quantitative approach was employed to determine the frequency of persuasive devices and their implications before and after elections. The analysis revealed how politicians utilize rhetorical devices to assert their power. Sehrish Naz, an MPhil candidate at the Institute of English and Modern Languages in 2012, conducted a transitivity analysis of the political speeches of Benazir Bhutto. The study demonstrated that Benazir skillfully employed words to align with the circumstances and effectively persuade the Pakistani people towards her ideology.

Shakeel Ahmad from the University of Sargodha (2012) critically analyzed the political speeches of ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Employing a qualitative approach, the researcher revealed the hidden ideology within the ex-PM's speeches using Van Dijk's framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The research explored the reasons behind mass strikes and highlighted the ex-PM's agenda to persuade people to cease the strikes, as they were seen as detrimental to the nation's sovereignty and causing harm to innocent individuals. Language holds a significant role in politics, shaping our society, cognitive development, and identity formation from childhood. The language we use reflects aspects of ourselves, including our background and identity. Just as we are influenced by our surroundings, language can be employed to influence those around us.

Tarigam (2017) conducted a study to investigate the Karonese community's local wisdom by examining their proverbs that pertain to the 'Leadership Model.' The researcher examined the chosen proverbs using a qualitative descriptive design to interpret how the idea of leadership was expressed in them. Tarigan (2017) concluded that the proverbs demonstrated the three attributes of a leader: decision-maker, advisor, and mentor. The ideological use of modals in the political manifestos of Nigerian politicians was critically examined by Ehineni (2014). The researcher used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to determine how politicians used models as ideological instruments for persuasion in addition to language elements. According to the study, politicians deliberately used modalities to promote their beliefs (Ehineni, 2014).Similarly, to this, Michira (2014) used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the ideologies, hidden meanings, and subliminal linguistic persuasive techniques used by Kenya's top politicians in their political discourse during the national election. The study critically examined the rhetorical techniques used by the leading candidates using both primary and secondary data. The study found that politicians can effectively manipulate and sway voters through language. Dehkordi et al. (2017) conducted a critical analysis of Imran Khan's inaugural speech in Parliament. The researcher looked at how Imran Khan used language to identify his social and political group and to convey his views on politics using Fairclough's three-dimensional model. Islamic references were also used by Khan during the speech to convey his vision as Prime Minister of his country. Another study on a similar topic is titled 'A Critical Discourse Analysis of Barack Obama's Speech' by Wang (2010). In this study, the researcher employed a combination of critical discourse analysis and systemic functional linguistics to examine the processes employed in Barack Obama's speech. The aim of studying political discourse is to gain a deeper understanding of the political purposes behind these speeches. Language is wielded by politicians to achieve their desired objectives. Sung's (2013) research focused on investigating the dynamics of language, gender, and leadership within the context of a reality TV show's inaugural season. Specifically, the study analyzed the leadership discourses of two male and two female project managers in same-gender interactions, while also examining the media's role in shaping gendered stereotypes. The findings revealed that the project managers conformed to gender norms and expectations in their exhibited leadership styles. Notably, the male managers received both positive and negative feedback, whereas the leadership displayed by the female managers was predominantly perceived in a negative light. This observation highlights the prevalence of gender-based stereotypical perceptions surrounding leadership styles.

Similarly, Bayram (2010) observed the leadership discourse of politicians and noted their adept utilization of language to assert power and persuade their audience. In Bayram's (2010) study titled "Ideology and Political Discourse: A critical discourse analysis of Erdogan's political speech," the researcher analyzed Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's speech using Fairclough's critical discourse analysis. The research concluded that Erdogan effectively employed language as a potent tool for conveying his ideologies. Another study conducted by America and Craig (2012) aimed to analyze "Leadership Discourse" about culture and corporate ethics. Likewise, Khalil et al. (2013) explored and interpreted Imran Khan's speech using Fairclough's 3-dimensional model of CDA to identify how political leaders represent ideology through deliberate language use. The study revealed that political leaders employ specific linguistic and rhetorical strategies to influence people and promote their hidden agendas and ideologies. Within the realm of socio-political discourse, Sipra and Rashid (2013) analyzed the first part of Martin Luther King's speech, titled "When I Have a Dream," employing Fairclough's 3-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis. The objective of their research was to comprehend how particular stylistic and textual devices were employed during the speech to fulfill its intended purposes. Furthermore, Rahman et al. (2021) utilized Norman Fairclough's discourse analysis model to qualitatively examine the discourse in Bintang Emon's humorous video titled "Accidently (Ga Sengaja)." The aim was to analyze the text using Fairclough's 3-dimensional model of CDA and explore the presence of rhetorical figures employed by Bintang Emon. The researchers concluded that Bintang Emon skillfully utilized rhetorical figures to convey his thoughts humorously. It is common for political leaders to employ rhetorical and persuasive strategies to sway and convince people of their ideologies (ALO, 2012). To gain insight into the use of persuasive and rhetorical language, ALO (2012) analyzed sixteen selected political speeches delivered by prominent contemporary African political leaders. The researcher applied an adaptation of the Aristotelian rhetoric framework along with "Fairclough's socio-semiotic model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)." The research findings indicated that African leaders effectively utilized persuasive strategies in their speeches.

Research Design and Methodology

The groundbreaking research design and methodology of this study go beyond analyzing the speeches on politics that Imran Khan has delivered at various times. This research's qualitative design enables an in-depth investigation of the topic. By adopting the three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model developed by Fairclough and its theoretical foundation the researcher empowers the analysis with this lens. Utilizing a range of analytical tools offered by Fairclough's model, including description, interpretation, explanation, and other captivating CDA tools, the researcher delves into the intricacies of the chosen diction, its repetition, and the authoritative, persuasive, and referential strategies employed. Moreover, this comprehensive analysis meticulously uncovers text's design, deep meanings, and hidden ideologies. Through a meticulous examination of linguistic and rhetorical strategies employed by Imran Khan, including his leadership language, the study aims to captivate and persuade individuals to believe in his exceptional leadership qualities and political ideology.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Text 1 – "Imran Khan's speech at the opening ceremony of Belt and Road Forum in Beijing, 2019.

Imran Khan's powerful speech from the 2019 Belt and Road Forum's second opening ceremony in Beijing is the focus of the text selected for analysis. The "Belt and Road Initiative," as this forum is also called, is a global infrastructure development strategy that the Chinese government has embraced since 2013. Its goal is to invest in multiple nations and international organizations. Pakistan is fortunate to be a partner in this groundbreaking international infrastructure project. Imran Khan graced the opening ceremony with an eloquent speech in which he demonstrated his extraordinary leadership abilities and expressed gratitude towards China through the deft use of language. Imran Khan's astute selection of words in the given speech radiates a resoundingly positive attitude, coupled with a comprehensive overview of Pakistan's achievements, highlighting his remarkable leadership.

Rhetorical Strategies:

a) Greetings: According to ALO (2012), greetings serve as a persuasive strategy to demonstrate solidarity, unity, and a sense of national belonging. In the analyzed text, Imran Khan utilized greetings to express solidarity with other leaders. For instance, he addressed President Xi Jinping as "Excellency President Xi Jinping" and expressed gratitude towards the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. Imran Khan's choice of words and phrases, such as "vision into reality," "hope over despair," and "cooperation over confrontation," conveyed his appreciation for the organization's presence. Throughout the speech, he expressed gratitude to China for its investments in Pakistan. This positive opening reflects Imran Khan's inclusive approach.

b) Use of Pronouns: Imran Khan strategically employed pronouns such as "we," "us," and "our" multiple times in the speech to foster a sense of collectivization. Examples from the text include phrases like "We choose hope over despair" and "Our critical infrastructure gaps are being plugged." By using these pronouns, Imran Khan emphasized the shared responsibility and involvement of both China and Pakistan. This linguistic choice conveys a positive attitude towards the partnership between the two countries.

Word Choices: In his speech, Imran Khan frequently used the pronoun "we" and the adverb "together" to highlight the strong relationship between China and Pakistan. This choice of words signifies inclusivity and a positive stance on partnership. Additionally, at the end of the speech, Imran Khan quoted a famous Chinese proverb, "The Ocean is vast because it rejects no rivers," to further express gratitude towards China. Through a three-dimensional analysis of Imran Khan's speech, it becomes evident that he purposefully utilized language to convey his ideology and persuade the audience.

Extract 2 – "Imran Khan's speech at the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly, 2021."

The context of and Text Description

The second text, as was already mentioned, is about Imran Khan's speech given in 2021 during the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Over a hundred heads of

state participated in this historic event. Imran Khan's speech at the UNGA was able to sway many people due to his exceptional language abilities. We'll look at the strategies he used to convince and sway people with his ideology in this section.

Interpretation and Explanation of the Text

Main Themes

Imran Khan's speech at the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly touched upon several significant themes, as outlined below, concerning the context:

a) World Major Crises (COVID-19, Economic Crisis, and Climate Change) and Pakistan's Role:

A central theme emphasized by Imran Khan during his UNGA speech revolves around the major crises affecting the world. He eloquently articulated that the world is currently facing three significant challenges: the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic crisis, and climate change.

"The world is facing the triple challenge of COVID-19, the accompanying economic crisis, and the threats posed by climate change. The virus does not discriminate between nations and people. Nor do the catastrophes imposed by uncertain weather patterns."

He proceeded to elaborate on Pakistan's proactive role in effectively addressing these challenges. Imran Khan highlighted how Pakistan has implemented a comprehensive strategy, ensured widespread vaccination efforts, and undertook the ambitious goal of planting ten billion trees to preserve the natural habitat. Furthermore, he emphasized that over 15 million people would benefit from the Ehsas financial program, aimed at safeguarding them from the economic crisis. Through his speech, Imran Khan acknowledged the global impact of the triple crisis: COVID-19, economic crisis, and climate change, demonstrating Pakistan's commitment to addressing these pressing issues. Imran Khan emphatically stated that global crises do not discriminate among nations, emphasizing the need for collective action. He went on to provide insights into Pakistan's successful management of the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting measures such as the implementation of a "Smart Lockdown" strategy and the Ehsas program, which provided support to over 15 million families during these challenging times. Furthermore, Imran Khan underscored Pakistan's commitment to combating climate change by ambitiously undertaking the planting of 19 billion trees, thereby preserving crucial natural habitats. By showcasing Pakistan's achievements in handling the COVID-19 crisis and addressing climate change, Imran Khan conveyed the impression that Pakistan is actively fulfilling its responsibilities amidst the global crisis. He emphasized that the world is currently grappling with significant challenges in the realms of climate and economy, which require timely and effective solutions.

Islamophobia is a deeply concerning phenomenon that demands our collective efforts to combat it. Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, there has been an unfortunate association between terrorism and Islam propagated by certain groups. Consequently, this association has led to a rise in right-wing, xenophobic, violent nationalists, extremists, and terrorist organizations targeting Muslims. Imran Khan shifted his focus to address the issue of Islamophobia, boldly pointing out that Islam has been unfairly stigmatized in the aftermath of 9/11. He also highlighted the concerning rise of the hate-filled ideology of 'Hindutva' in India. Furthermore, Imran Khan presented various factual examples illustrating the deprivation of basic human rights faced by Muslim communities worldwide, particularly the Indian Muslim community. Towards the end of his speech, he touched upon the situation in Afghanistan regarding the Taliban. In summary,

Imran Khan's adept use of language conveyed his awareness of the facts and effectively presented his ideology in support of Pakistan and the global Muslim community. His speech at the 76th UNGA was highly persuasive, as he skillfully employed various linguistic features to establish his ideology and utilized leadership communication skills to assert power and persuade individuals to consider his perspective on the Muslim community.

Linguistic Devices

One of the persuasive rhetorical strategies leaders use to imply support for other individuals or leaders is the greeting. The following are some references from the specified text.

- **context:** I congratulate you on taking the president of the 76thsession of the General Assembly, Mr. President (mentioned more than five times throughout the speech).
- Use of we, us, and our pronouns We and us are examples of inclusive pronouns that illustrate the collectiveness tactic. Imran Khan too employs this rhetorical strategy in his speech to persuade. Here are a few quotes from the text that illustrate this point: Yet we are among the 10 most vulnerable nations in the world to the effects of climate change. "We have started game-changing environmental programs because we are fully conscious of our worldwide responsibilities. We need an all-encompassing plan that must implement transparent investment strategies.

Imran Khan used a variety of linguistic devices to demonstrate his political and religious authority during his address. Politically, when he declared that he is a lifelong member of the RSS, which draws heavily from Hitler's German Nazi party, he elevated the voice of Kashmiris and exposed Prime Minister Modi's goal. As he introduced himself as the leader of the Muslims and defended Islam and its teachings in front of the entire world, he also made use of the persuasive power of religious discourse.

Imran Khan tried to establish a connection with his audience by using phrases like "My Kashmiris" and "I am here, especially for you "Kashmiris". Here, he made use of the possessive pronoun to establish a connection with the Kashmiris. He presented himself as Kashmiris' authentic envoy and representative. He addressed the entire Muslim world when he said, "My Muslims." He stressed that there is only one Islam, which constitutes the Islam of the Prophet (SAW), and vehemently condemned the notion of radical Islam. Here, he cultivated relationships with Muslims and conveyed the idea that he is a genuine follower of Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) and represents Muslims.

Word Choices

In his address, Imran Khan made use of both common terminology and regional semantics. He spoke in terms that were both particular for the nation and Kashmiris and conventional for a global leader. He built up his speech into four steps, each of which had a different language. He employed hallucinations, glaciers, alarming pace, billions of trees, etc. In his first step, Climate Change. He utilized terms like devastation, debt servicing, developing nations, developed nations, etc. in the money laundering section. His third speech stage, which was anti-Islamic, included phrases like radical Islam, radical Muslims, etc. He used terms like restrictions in Kashmir, curfew, racial superiority, bloodbath, fascism, conventional war, self-determinism, etc. in his final section of the speech, which addressed Kashmiri issues. Additionally, Imran Khan

frequently used pronouns such as I, We, They, Them, You, etc. Imran Khan demonstrated his political ideology and optimism in his speech by utilizing collocation and the dictionary. Van Dijk's method aids in our comprehension of Imran Khan's division of people into them and We.

Findings and Conclusions

The study unveils the underlying motives behind the spoken text of politician, Mr. Imran Khan. Through a deep analysis of the words and phrases in his political discourse, it becomes evident that, like any other politician, Mr. Imran Khan employs hidden ideologies and perspectives. The researcher analyzed two spoken texts, namely "Imran Khan's speech at the opening ceremony of the Belt and Road Forum in Beijing, 2019" (Text 1) and "Imran Khan's speech at the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly, 2021" (Text 2), to reveal these hidden perspectives and the leadership language used by politicians to exert power and influence others.

The analysis utilizes Critical Discourse Analysis, with a specific focus on Fairclough's three-dimensional model as the theoretical framework. From the analysis, it becomes evident that Mr. Imran Khan's international speeches and interviews portray a positive image of Pakistan to the global community. His careful use of diction and the bold expression of ideas demonstrate his strong leadership qualities and his ability to articulate his ideology for his nation. Mr. Imran Khan strategically employs ideologically loaded leadership language to reshape perceptions of Pakistan. Much of his discourse centers around the concept of a "New Era" for Pakistan, emphasizing the country's pursuit of higher levels of economic growth. He also emphasizes Pakistan's commitment to fostering positive and prosperous relationships with other nations. Through deliberate word choices, Mr. Imran Khan effectively demonstrates his prowess in utilizing language as a leader to influence and inspire others. The overall analysis provides insights into the leadership language employed by Mr. Imran Khan in the two spoken texts under examination.

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