



Journal of Communication and Cultural Trends (JCCT)

Volume 2 Issue 2, Fall 2020

ISSN_(P): 2706-9141 ISSN_(E): 2706-915X

Journal DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jcct>

Issue DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jcct.22>

Homepage: <https://journals.umt.edu.pk/index.php/jcct/Home>

Journal QR Code:



Article: **Persuasion and Mind Control in Leadership Discourse: A Socio-Cognitive Approach towards Selected Political Speeches**

Author(s): Farzana Masroor, Sidra Shaikh, Safa Marwa, Saman Afzaal

Online Published: Fall 2020

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jcct.22.01>

Article QR Code:



Farzana Masroor

To Cite Article:

Masroor, F., Shaikh, S., Marwa, S., & Afzaal, S. (2020). Persuasion and mind control in leadership discourse: A socio-cognitive approach towards selected political speeches. *Journal of Communication and Cultural Trends*, 2(2), 01–19.

[Crossref](#)



A publication of the
Institute of Communication and Cultural Studies
University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

Persuasion and Mind Control in Leadership Discourse: A Socio-Cognitive Approach towards Selected Political Speeches

Farzana Masroor, Sidra Shaikh*, Safa Marwa, and Saman Afzaal

Air University, Islamabad, Pakistan

Abstract

Political leaders frequently engage with masses to fulfil their political agenda. For this purpose, language serves as a vital tool in the hands of politicians and that is mostly noticeable in political speeches made on various public forums. Taking into account the significance of such speeches for moving the masses in their favour, the present study carries out a critical discourse analysis of politician and current Prime Minister Imran Khan's speeches for uncovering the strategies adopted for such purposes. The researchers have chosen three speeches of the politician from three different eras, such as the protest era, pre-election era, and the post-election era. These eras have been categorized following stratified sampling technique. The lens of critical discourse analysis has been applied to the speeches using van Dijk's (1993) socio-cognitive approach. The analysis focuses on the use of strategies such as mind control, rhetoric art, argumentative move, emotional attachment and historical distortion. The results have attributed Imran Khan's rise to the position of Prime Minister to his strategic and manipulative political discourse in his speeches. His primary focus remained on controlling the mind of the youth which has been achieved through the use of above-mentioned strategies in multiple ways. This research is significant as it creates awareness as well as consciousness in the public regarding rhetorical strategies adopted by political leaders such as Imran Khan to exercise mind control and mould public opinion in their favour.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), manipulation, political discourse, rhetoric, socio-cognitive approach

Introduction

Politics and Language of Politicians

Politics is related to power expanding within a state. Language plays an eminent role in every political activity which is composed, guided, affected and conveyed through it. The political discourse can be defined as a discourse which involves text and talk of politicians and political institutions, such as prime ministers and other members of the parliament and government at the local and international level (van Dijk, 1997). Political speeches are the result of politics created by politicians and

*Corresponding author: doctor.sidra.shaikh@gmail.com

are culturally and historically determined. The political discourse cannot be called a central field; rather, it is the subcategory of discourse which works at two levels, i.e., thematic and functional. The topics in the political discourse can be varying chiefly related to political activities, ideas and acts (Fairclough, [1995](#)).

Politicians play their role in catching attention and building opinion of the general masses (Memon, et al. [2014](#)). However, politicians use the audience as a tool to gain their personal interest by portraying it as shared interest (Memon, et al. [2014](#)). They try to attest that they are working for the welfare of the audience. This is achieved through the use of manipulative strategies, whereas the general mob is unable to comprehend those socio-cognitive strategies which politicians use to control their action.

Imran Khan

Imran Khan (IK) is a distinguished and acclaimed former cricketer and chairman of one the most emerging and successful political party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf. IK graduated from Oxford University in 1975. Currently, he is Prime Minister of Pakistan, but his journey started as a cricketer.

In 1992, IK retired from Pakistani cricket team. After retirement, he worked as a philanthropist and acted as a primary fundraiser for Shaukat Khanam Memorial Cancer Hospital. It was in 1996 that he became an outspoken critic of mismanagement and corruption in Pakistan. After this, he started to take interest in politics and founded his political party Tehreek-e-Insaf in 1996. Like other politicians in Pakistan, IK did not have any political family background (Imran Khan, [2018](#)). After his continuous struggle of 22 years, he became Prime Minister of Pakistan (Imran Khan, [2021](#)). Known for his art of public speaking, it is believed that his success was achieved through his powerful discourse. IK as a leader is considered to have great influence over the general masses especially his party supporters (Imran Khan, [2021](#)). The supporters admire IK's speeches for his strong intention for uplifting the country in domains of education and economy. His discourse is captivating through the use of rhetoric which is the art of speaking mainly used in political speeches. This strategy enhances attention to economic and civil rights policy and leads to a surge in public concern for those policies (Cohen, [1995](#)).

Political Discourse and Critical Discourse Analysis

The researchers aim to carry out critical discourse analysis (CDA) of the speeches of IK. At the end of the 20th century, CDA has emerged as a field for research studies. It is of paramount importance to study political discourse from

CDA perspective. CDA is based on social theory and the union of language studies (Fairclough, 1992). CDA views language as social practice and focuses on revealing the underlying patterns in any discourse. It highlights the social problems and political issues, with the ultimate aim of solving them. CDA is not a school of thought or any specialization in the discourse studies; rather it aims to offer a different “mood” or “perspective” of discourse analysis and application throughout the whole field (van Dijk, 1993). In the research perspective, the main agenda of CDA is not the description of discourse structures; rather it tries to explain them, keeping in mind the properties of social interaction and social structure (van Dijk, 1993). The basic terms frequently encountered in CDA include hegemony, power, ideology, discrimination, social order and structure. There is no concrete and solid form of a theoretical framework of CDA; rather, there are many types. These types could be theoretically quite diverse, for instance, critical analysis of media discourse is different from the discourse analysis of politics whereas political discourse analysis varies from conversational discourse analysis (van Dijk, 1993). This approach highlights how talk and narrative resist and represent inequality and misuse of power in the political and social context. CDA focuses on the analysis of discourse such as official documents, newspapers, political speeches and advertisements etc. CDA is aimed at uncovering the relation between power, language and ideology. Its objective is to unveil the evaluation and misuse of language dominance through narratives.

In this article, researchers have employed CDA in order to show persuasion, and to an extent manipulation, in the speeches of IK through the use of rhetoric and argumentation. For van Dijk (1993), the ‘argumentative move’ is to follow the principle of positive self-representation and negative other representation. The ‘argumentative move’ serves as a solution to convince other people about some idea or opinion with the help of some evidence so that argument becomes much more convincing. Political leaders use political arguments to control their discourse to exert their power and convince general masses. A person can control the discourse and action of people through mind control (van Dijk, 1993).

Review of the Literature

The previous researches on political discourse have uncovered the relation between power and language. Wang (2010) has used critical discourse analysis and systematic functional linguistics to analyze speeches of Barak Obama. The research focuses on how a political discourse mainly addresses the issue of power and ideology by looking at modality and transitivity in discourse. The findings show that the use of modality allows Obama to easily capture the minds of his audience

through careful use of modal verbs and first-person pronouns primarily used to reduce the distance between the speaker and the audience. The analysis of transitivity, which refers to the process of doing, shows its use by Obama to show the audience what the government has achieved and what it aims to achieve in future. The research helps to establish the way certain political discourse helps to achieve certain motives of persuading or manipulating the civilians. The control in the political discourse of leaders of less powerful masses is reflected in a study by Memon, et al. (2014) which looked at the last speech of Benazir Bhutto. The researchers have used the qualitative method to show how certain linguistic features are used to propagate the ideologies. They have used van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach of CDA to draw out how Benazir Bhutto practiced the art of rhetoric to control the mind of the mob. Through the speech of Benazir Bhutto, researchers highlighted how social inequality is practised through political discourse.

Many researchers have used Aristotle's rhetoric to show its emphasis on the audience. They have analyzed the speeches through the lens of three elements of Aristotle's rhetoric such as logos, pathos and ethos. They drew the findings that a speech could be more emphatic by using ethos, logos and pathos. The art of rhetoric finds its perfection in orators such as Martin Luther King. Triadafilopoulos (2018), with the help of Aristotle's theory of rhetoric, tried to explicate how King's speech helped African Americans in gaining their rights. The analysis reflected how the discourse brought the African American's demands to the top of the nation's political agenda. King's speech was persuasive due to the use of Aristotle's ethos, logos and pathos; King's speech was an excellent example which provides an insight that the audience cannot be persuaded with rationality only, but emotional appeals also play their role. Another study by Fortenbaugh (1992) has deeply analyzed and elucidated Aristotle's three elements that make the political speeches persuasive. Each of the three elements, such as persuasion through the character of the orator, through emotions of the hearer and the arguments in speech, should be considered in constructing a speech. The researcher discussed the different character of the tragedies such as *Iliad* and *Pericles* and many others to justify whether Aristotle's rhetoric makes the speeches persuasive and wins audience hearts or not.

The review of the previous researches highlights the need to research the domain of political discourse. Politicians frequently engage with masses, especially with the youth to captivate their minds and fulfil their hidden political agendas such as gaining power and supremacy, in the guise of showing themselves as honest and loyal to the country. For such purposes, along with other means, language serves as a crucial tool used mostly by politicians in political speeches made on various

public forums. To analyze manipulation of the public through political discourse, the present research has focused on the *rhetoric*, *argumentation* and *socio-cognitive elements* in the speeches of Imran Khan, current Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Statement of Problem

Politicians play their role in catching attention and building opinion of the general masses. To accomplish this purpose, language serves as a vital tool in terms of rhetoric and the locutionary strategies in the hands of politicians, which general masses are naive of. Consequently, the present study focuses on the critical discourse analysis of political speeches, to unveil ideological underpinnings of rhetoric and speeches of the popular and emerging politician, who has challenged the two-party system in Pakistan in the political arena.

Research Objectives

The research aims:

1. To do a critical discourse analysis of selected speeches.
2. To examine socio-cognitive elements & strategies used in the discourse of Imran Khan to manipulate masses.

Research Questions

1. Which strategies IK has employed to move masses in his favour through his political speeches?
2. How has he persuaded people to the extent of manipulation through rhetoric and argumentation?

Significance of Research

The study is significant as it explores how the phenomenon of persuasion has been employed by the speaker, Imran Khan. The effects of his impeccable locution on public opinion are inevitable. Hence, awareness regarding ideological underpinnings of political rhetoric and speeches of the emerging politician in the Pakistani context who has challenged the two-party system is significant to be enlightened.

Research Methodology

This section deals with the methodological aspects such as research design, data collection, data analysis, and sampling technique used for the study. This research is qualitative in nature in order to uncover the attributive features of IK's speeches which have assisted him to manipulate his audience/general masses.

Data

The constituent population of this research work is the speeches of IK prevailing over his entire political period. Following the stratified sampling technique, the speeches are further classified into three eras namely: protest era, pre-election era, and post-election era. This sampling technique has been chosen because it comes under probability sampling, which ensures that each and every member of the population has an equal chance of participation, moreover, the key benefit of this method is that it guarantees that the sample chosen is representative of the population.

From the protest era, IK's speech from PTI Dharna (sit-in) has been chosen, which he delivered in order to call off Dharna (sit-in) in the honour of 140 innocent students who were brutally assaulted and martyred in Army Public School (APS), Peshawar. From pre-election era, his speech at Minar-e-Pakistan, Lahore delivered on the 29th April 2018 has been selected, and for the last post-election category, his renowned first speech which is popularly known as Victory Speech has been selected. Hence, these three speeches serve the purpose of the sample for this research work.

Data have been collected from reporting of a local newspaper, official website and official social media site of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), i.e., *Complete text of Imran Khan's maiden speech* (The News, [2018](#)), *Imran Khan's Full Speech at Minar-E-Pakistan*. (Insaf, [2018](#)), and *Full transcript of Chairman Imran Khan's speech at the #ptidharnaconvention in Islamabad* ([2015](#)), respectively.

The current study is delimited to IK's speeches only as no interviews or political talk shows are included. Moreover, the analysis is only concerned with mind control and manipulation. Other factors like ideological stance etc. are excluded.

Theory and Method

Critical Discourse Analysis falls in the domain of Critical Linguistics and is a multi-dimensional field. Its major contributors are (van Dijk, [1993](#); Fairclough, [1995](#); Wodak, [2009](#)). The selected model for analysis is van Dijk's socio-cognitive model ([1993](#)), an approach for the critical discourse analysis, different from other approaches in terms of 'cognition'. The socio-cognitive approach (SCA) states that socio-cognition (personal cognition and social cognition) mediates between discourse and society.

Van Dijk ([1993](#)) has vastly contributed to the work in social-cognition, which is a system of processes and representations of mind of group members. This approach is linked to the socio-psychological dimension of critical discourse

analysis. Van Dijk (1993) is a proponent of the socio-psychological policy of negative representation of others and positive representation of self. Speakers who are in the process of utterances rely not only on the strategies and their personal experiences but also on the collective frames of general masses. van Dijk (1993) claims that social cognition is related to power and discourse. This model explicitly explains how attitudes, knowledge and social factors are used in discourse to build the opinion of others. SCA has two levels of analysis: macro and micro (van Dijk, 1993). In every experience and interaction, the micro and macro form a unified system of the whole. The social order of micro-level includes communications, verbal interaction and language use while power, inequality and dominance among social groups come under macro-level. Furthermore, the relation between society and discourse is indirect, which needs to be directed by context.

Data Analysis

In this section, the researchers have analyzed the selected data. The analysis has been thematically divided into sections on the basis of the explored cognitive strategies.

Emotional Attachment

The salient and visible quality of the speeches of IK can be termed as *the emotional involvement and an understanding* of the feelings of his followers. The analysis below is carried out by providing examples from the speeches to develop this theme.

Excerpt 1:

In the name of Allah. Iyyaka na budu wa iyya ka nastaeen. First of all, *I want to thank you my Pakistanis.* Whenever I called you. *You never disappointed me. I am greatly thankful.* Pakistan, today, is contrary to Quaid and Allama Iqbal's vision. Pakistan on crossroads today: on one end is disrespect, on the other dignity. People who have travelled across cities to reach here, *I welcome you.* I'm seeing since morning in fact last night. You came from Swat, Sindh, Gilgit, I want to *thank you all.* I also want to *thank you Pakistanis.* Whenever I asked you for money be it for SKMH or Namal. You always gave me more and more. As long as there is last drop of blood in me, *I will fight for your rights. No one can stop me.* I commend Shoaib Siddiqui and Aleem Khan for this brilliantly organized jalsa on such a big scale. I thank you & your teams. (IK Speech # 1, 29th April 2018)

The above example is taken from the beginning of his speech. He begins it with the name of Allah. In this way, since the majority of IK's followers are the Muslims, he invokes the religious feelings and emotions in his listeners. Afterwards, he appreciates the efforts of Pakistani people for joining the jalsa held at Lahore, one of the famous cities of Pakistan in Punjab province. By taking the name of Allah Almighty and thanking 'all Pakistanis' he has tried to get the attention of the whole of Pakistan, without expressing any discrimination against anyone. This inclusion of every citizen is reflective of the fact that he is addressing every citizen of Pakistan. He has been trying to ensure that the maximum number of Pakistanis keenly listens to him and no one feels left out. Interestingly, he calls them as 'my Pakistanis', another inclusive strategy that helps to drop the barrier between 'us' and 'them' through the use of possessive 'my'. It can be taken as a persuasive strategy of *ethos* where the feelings of oneness are generated among the masses. On the one hand, he praises Pakistanis, and at the same time, he also invokes the vision of Quaid-e-Azam and Allama Iqbal. The feelings of Pakistani nationhood cannot be completed without these two prominent figures in the history of Pakistan. The feelings of oneness fit in well with the feelings of nationhood. He has used the word 'welcome' for all the people who have made an effort to travel across cities to attend his jalsa. In this way, he plays the image of a host who is in all praises of his guests. Right after this, he comes to the real cause of his praise and links his objective, i.e., to collect donations for his hospital and university projects, to the generosity of the Pakistani nation. Although there is no direct request for donations, by praising the generosity of people he is encouraging them to donate more. Having said that, he seems to be feeling obliged and under the burden of their goodness and generosity. He promises to pay them back in kind by fighting for their rights till 'the last drop of blood'. He, at the same time, through these words projects himself as a fatherly figure for his nation, likening himself to Quaid-e-Azam and Allama Iqbal.

Excerpt 2:

The number of people who came out across Pakistan, this never happened in the history of Pakistan. I am here to thank you, especially the women. There were days when there were more women than men at the dharna. When a woman of a household is awakened, there is no turning back. We empowered women and saw their participation like never before. In conservative places like Mianwali too." (IK Speech #3, 18th January 2015)

He has tried to reflect that he is vigilant towards the participation of women in his Jalsas as well by thanking their contributions towards the success of his political

movement. Pakistani women comprise more than half of the population, however, their achievements are not at times given the due credit. In addition, their participation is discouraged in various walks of life, especially politics, due to the patriarchal setup of the country. Thus, it has also been elucidated from his excerpts that he wants to highlight their contributions as educated and emancipated women can lead the nation. By targeting the female audience in his speeches, he tries to show that he is more concerned about the development of the country and realizes that undermined women cannot achieve this purpose. In his speech, he has also highlighted the participation of women in areas like Mianwali. Since he also belongs to Mianwali, he knows their conservative norms and customs. Therefore, he is admiring the brave step of women of this city by coming forward and showing their political presence. This also serves as a move towards a show of his unbreakable association with his city fellows. It is an important tool for moulding opinion and getting the attention of his own people by involving them directly in his address.

Excerpt 3:

The media is here; I am not saying this to appease you. I saw you people the night of 31st August, *the way you have coverage amid the shelling, tear gas...I want to thank you all.*

We thanked every community in Pakistan but I am extremely thankful to *the journalist community. And we truly believe the working journalist must get their rights.* (IK Speech #3, 18th January 2015)

Adding to it, he also acknowledges the struggle of journalists, who for him have also played their role in nation-building. Thus, admiring their efforts, he accentuates their vigilance which they usually show during the coverage of any event by putting their lives at risk and making the masses aware of happenings during such harsh conditions. He has recounted the happenings of an event in order to applaud their valour and consistency, where not only his followers and protestors but also the journalists and media-related persons were afflicted by tear gas. He believed that journalists must get respect, value and rights. For the mind control, a strong bonding is required; he is also creating that bond to control the discourse of journalists which would consequently be moulded into his favour and would get reflected in their reporting. Hence, by arousing emotions he has tried to motivate and stimulate and get the attention of the public and professionals as well.

Excerpt 4:

I thank *our youth, our tiger force, ISF...* And most of all I thank our most youthful member Roeded Khan, who stood with us through everything. (IK Speech #3, 18th January 2015)

IK's political movement right from the inception planned to target the Pakistani youth, as a majority of the country's population comprised youngsters. In the above excerpt, IK shows his affiliation and admiration for the efforts of youth for making his movement successful.

Excerpt 5:

We ended our dharna in wake of 16th Dec. As a father I cannot fathom what I saw. *The pictures, the injured at the hospital, the calculated way in which children were killed; my mind could not wrap around standing at any form of protest at that time.* What those *parents* are going through, as a father I can't understand how we can ease their pain but *we have to do everything we can* still in any way that we can help. (IK Speech #3, 18th January 2015)

Another kind of emotional appeal is aimed at people in the above excerpt by IK, in the wake of 16th December 2016 tragedy, to show support and care for them in the times of their suffering. This evoking of sympathy is achieved by speaking from the stance of the sufferers, as if being a father himself, he can feel what they felt when they underwent the tragedy.

Mind Control

In the strategy identified as *Mind Control*, IK has tried to control minds of people by quoting examples from the past, history of Islam and from the economic statistics of Pakistan, about which most of the audience are not aware. Some of the excerpts provided below explain this strategy.

Excerpt 6:

And then there was *Merit in Medina*. *Hazrat Khalid bin Walid RA* caused most damage to Muslims in Ohad. But when he RA came to fold of Islam, he RA got the title 'Saifullah' and appointed General of Islamic battles because of *MERIT*. And then the state of Medina took responsibility of the destitute. ...Such Muslims then ruled for 700 yrs. But when Muslims let go of the system based on *Justice*, they got defeated by Halaku Khan. The last Caliph bowed before Halaku Khan & begged for mercy. To which Halaku replied 'Only if you spent your gold in godowns upon your people. You wouldn't have had to beg for your life today! Quaid e Azam worked for

Pakistan for 40 yrs. hid his illness so that Pakistan could come to reality. Alas, Middle Eastern Muslims took 700 yrs. to reach debacle. But we took only 70 yrs., *A time when Pakistan was the fastest country to progress in South Asia. I was born in a govt hospital. PIA was world class airline. Our civil servants were exceptional! In only 5 yrs under Zardari Pak's external debt went up from Rs. 6 Arab to 13 Arab. Under PMLN it has gone from Rs. 13 Arab to 27 Arab. We are on a self-destruction mode.* (IK Speech # 1, 29th April 2018)

In the example above, IK has described merits being followed in the state of Medina. In this context, he talks about Hazrat Khalid bin Walid, a brave warrior, who caused destruction to the Muslims in Ghazwa e Uhd, but after embracing Islam he was assigned the title of *Saif Ullah* and rose to the rank of the general on the basis of merit and served as an amazing general in most of the Islamic battles. Khan has highlighted the importance of merit through the example. He quoted example of Halaku Khan in the context that after shunning the criteria of merit and justice, the Muslims came under his control and had to beg for his mercy. Furthermore, he has given the example of 40 years of struggle of the Quaid-e-Azam, despite being terminally ill. Through these examples from history and stories of great leaders, he controls the mind of people by highlighting the principles he believes in and follows such as merit, justice and dedication to work.

Excerpt 7:

In past 10 years 100 billion worth of *trees were chopped* down in KPK....I will say again peace will not come to tribal areas till you do not involve the people of the tribes...*This is why Pakistan is left behind; no system of merit. We got to address this issue during the Dharna.* (IK Speech #3, 18 January 2015)

Moreover, most of the people are unaware of the problems in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). He stresses the necessity to bring peace to the tribal areas as well, and put emphasis on the implementation of the system that will bring prosperity there. Majority of people are unaware of the situation regarding FATA, that is why by showing his positionality and awareness that he knows about the past, he attempts to control the minds of people. He tries to control them by providing this knowledge since earlier, the public was unaware of the facts and that is why they have been electing two parties only. Now facts are known to masses, that is why they are convinced that he is the right person, and they should get rid of this two-party system.

Excerpt 8:

In the history of Pakistan economic conditions were not as bad as are today. Presently, *Pakistan is burdened with a loan of Rs 28000 billion, while 10 years ago, the loan of Pakistan was Rs. 6 thousand billion*, that our debt in the 60 years history. Rs. 6 thousand billion increased up to Rs 15,000 billion in 2013. And today this loan has reached Rs 28,000 billion. Debt of 60 years of domestic history is on one side and the last 10 years loan is on the other. *InshaAllah, we will bring facts before you where that money has gone. What have been done with that money? Secondly, today we are borrowing money to pay the interest in those loans. In the last year of the previous PPP government foreign debt was \$ 2 billion, in the past one year, we are borrowing \$ 2 billion each month and when the Pakistan People’s Party government ended in 2013 our foreign debt went to 60 billion, which is \$ 95 billion today and that is the real problem of our country that our overseas debt has increased.* (IK Speech # 2, 19th August [2018](#))

In his victory speech above, Khan has quoted ruined economic condition or history and is blaming the previous politicians and the two other parties for burdening Pakistan with this much loan, i.e., 28000 billion. Through bringing this fact forward, he is unveiling the corruption of the previous governments who were indulged in self-interest rather than national interest. To express his moral superiority, he has referred to the flaws of the previous system of government. Under the guise of these factual details, he is trying to accomplish his hidden agendas. van Dijk ([1993](#)) is of the view that dominance is necessary for mind control and persuasion. Since the unequal distribution of power exists everywhere, and no conversation is deprived of this fact, Khan now being in power uses it not only to criticize but also pledges to penalize the previous governments. He achieves this move of *mind control* by expressing his moral superiority.

Rhetoric Art

The researchers have observed a continuous pattern of repetition in his speeches. Reiteration of some ideas is meant to attract audience or listeners towards the speaker. van Dijk ([1993](#)) has given many kinds of repetition operations, such as repetition at the sound level called alliteration and rhyme. Parallelism is repetition operation at the sentence level, and lastly, operation at a meaning level is a semantic one. Here the focus is only on the sentence level, as the example from the speech excerpt illustrates.

“ *gali gali me shor ha sara tabbar choor ha*”
 tabdeeli a nae gae, tabdeli agae ha”
 “*Naya Pakistan*’

“*iiyaka na budu wa iyyaka nastaeen*”

The statements above are kind of slogans repeated in his speeches many times to emphasize on what he believes in, and in turn, would make his listeners believe in as well. The meaning embedded in the sentences mostly refers to the concepts such as the supremacy of Allah, Khan’s resolve to bring a change in the political scenario of Pakistan in the form of ‘Naya’ (New) Pakistan and a resolve to put the looters (previous government) behind the bars.

Argumentative Move

For van Dijk (1993), the *argumentative move* is to follow the principle of positive self-representation and negative other-representation. Moreover, the argumentative move also serves as a solution to convince other people about some idea or opinion, with the help of some evidence so that argument becomes much more convincing. Political leaders use political arguments to exploit the power and convince general masses.

Excerpt 9:

Today I want to tell you what Pakistan was like a few decades ago. Back when *Gen went to US he got respect*. Now see the recent times when our PM would go to US. *We all know what happened at US airport* with the current PM of Pakistan. He is being checked. This is a ‘*sharamnaak*’ thing to have happened at US airport or when he talks with a paper.... It is Pak’s head of state we are talking about.... *I decided I will make a cancer hospital* where no man would have to take up labor jobs to pay for medicines. Out of 20 doctors in our board, 19 said a charity cancer hospital is not possible.... A swarm of people gathered in no time. They seemed like the poorest of people. I was ashamed. Some had 5 rs. some had 10 rs to donate..... *A Joint Commission in US has declared SKMH to be a world class medical facility.....My party will ensure we educate our girls*. Educated mothers raise educated nation. Whatever I am today is because of my mother.... For every 100 colleges, *70 will be for women*. We will educate our women. After education, we will empower our women legally. We will replicate KP govt styled women police stations so women are encouraged to report crimes. Also we will ensure through legislation that women get their due right in property as per Shariah.... (IK Speech # 1, 29th April 2018)

Excerpt 10:

...four new *tourist resorts* would be opened to promote tourism industry. He especially mentioned the tourism potential of sea beaches and said Karachi and Gwadar beaches would be developed...(IK Speech # 2, 19th August 2018)

Excerpt 11:

I am going to be putting my full focus and energy on KP. These people who keep saying make new KP, we will prove it to you KP will be different from all the other provinces...Police there will not be used for the wrong reasons. Me and the rest of leadership have numerous FIRs cut on us in Punjab. You will not see one political based firm in KP...We are doing a massive cleanliness drive in KPK; cleanliness is an important part of our religion. We will start from Peshawar. From there we will move to clean water. And we are planting 1 billion trees. In past 10 years 100 billion worth of trees were chopped down in KPK...The hospital system has changed in KPK. For the first time the government sector will compete with private sector. We are bringing autonomy and merit. The same will happen in our education system. You will find doctors and teachers...The real change will be from local body system; we are ready to do the election. When KP has its LB elections it will trickle down to village level. MPAs will not get development funds...Tabdeeli has come...even in my own home! The dharna showed us who was loyal to the party, exactly which institutions of ours are in trouble, and who did not stand with us in difficult times. (IK Speech #3, 18th January 2015)

In the above excerpts, negative attributes are presented for other political parties. For instance, Khan says that due to indulgence in corruption, Pakistani politicians have lost their respect. Resultantly, they get no protocol internationally and are subject to scrutiny, such as expressed in an incident that happened to a political leader at the US Airport. Khan portrays negative attributes of Pakistani politicians. He attests that they lack leadership qualities and are incapable to deliver speeches without assistance, as a means to highlight how it negatively impacts the image of Pakistan abroad. In contrast, IK projects himself in a positive way through his contributions in building Shokat Khanum Memorial Hospital, which is considered as one of the best in the world, alongside admiring generosity of people and trust in him for making his dream come true.

Throwing light upon what his government has done, he says that KPK has improved a lot in every sector. His government has issued health cards for better treatments in KPK. He focuses on highlighting the contributions towards plantation by attesting that his government has made a record of planting trees. To be more authentic, he has also provided evidence for malnutrition in Thar. For him, the military, the judiciary and the government of Pakistan are a unified whole and must work in coherence with each other for nations' betterment. Tourism will also add to the economy and this he did not forget to mention in his speeches. Therefore, by highlighting the positive attributes of his government's current and future projects, he tries to win the argument in his own favour.

Historical Distortion

The researchers have observed a pattern in his speeches, where he continuously refers back to history and past. He is presenting historical references and evidence to catch the attention of listeners and to persuade them. Evidence for debts, tree chopping, malnutrition and presentation of the facts that 2.5 million children are not going to school reflects that he employs past references. Through analysis, it is observed that instead of self-interest, IK projects national interest at the foremost. This continuous reference to the past in his discourse points out its use as a manipulative strategy. IK discourse has a recurrent pattern of presenting only those historical facts which could act in his favour. He mentions the issues faced by the youth, which is his primary focus in his speeches, by highlighting their problems, for example getting jobs. He has considered Pakistan as a unified whole, not as a nation segregated into provincial units, and talked about minorities' equal rights in the government. He has tried to address certain unsolved issues which have been disrupting national harmony in the past such as the rights of minorities. The manipulative goals are achieved in his speeches by continuously juxtaposing the past with the future: the history is presented as the darkest period of the nation in comparison to the bright future that the nation has in his leadership. The ugly side of the history is presented by referring back to several facts such as the contaminated water which caused the death of numerous children, and rating of Pakistan among top 5 countries with the highest death rate of children and stunted growth due to malnutrition. With this, IK strengthens his argument by referring back time and again to the vision of the Quaid and Iqbal, the founding fathers of the nation. Conclusively, IK, as a politician uses historical distortion as a strategy to manipulate the mind of the general masses and to take a lead from other political parties.

Conclusion

The current study analyzed the strategies in the speeches of IK for the manipulation of the public. The researchers employed ‘socio-cognitive approach’ specified by van Dijk (1993). Through this research, the researchers have tried to deduce that how rhetoric helps IK to win the heart of the people, and what are the changes that come in his use of rhetoric before and after becoming prime minister. This research has explored the political discourse with a new angle. Unlike previous researches carried out on leaders such as Benazir Bhutto (Memon, et al. [2014](#)), this study has shed light on the political discourse of a relative newcomer to the politics by tracing his political journey and rhetoric through his speeches.

Through the analysis of his speeches, this research has exposed the strategies and agendas IK adopted in communication with masses that helped moving them in his own favour and achieve public approval. According to the analysis, it is revealed that his primary focus in his speeches has been on capturing and controlling the mind of the youth (an intelligent strategy keeping in mind the high numbers of youth in the population of the country) and to meet this end, he utilized his locutionary and argumentative capabilities. Moreover, he refrained from showing his alignment to a single ethnic or religious group. He took care in invoking nationalism by addressing Pakistan as a unified whole, not as a segregated provincial nation, including minorities, their rights and their quota in the government. His preference of national interest over personal interest proves to be convincing in the light of multiplicity that Pakistan stands for.

Another significant move in IK’s argumentation is the image of credibility and moral strength he invokes for himself through expressing his dedication for welfare and charity and empathy for sufferers. More so, the high moral grounds are also projected through the continuous alignment he projects with the national heroes of Pakistan, i.e., Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Iqbal. In this way, he successfully gains sympathies on ideological and moral grounds.

In this regard, what works the most is the contrast between him and the opposition: they are what he is not, i.e., morally corrupt and selfish. Through this binary opposition and contrast between ‘us’ vs ‘them’, IK successfully gains sympathies and ultimately the vote bank. Consequently, the researchers have come up with the conclusion that IK, being aware of these strategies, succeeded in controlling the mind of people through the use of rhetoric, which brought him the seat of Prime Minister of Pakistan. This research is significant for highlighting the hidden strategies and ideologies behind the apparently naïve discourse of

politicians and is worth studying equally for the general masses as well as the students of politics and mass communication.

References

- Aristotle. (1999). *On Rhetoric: Trans. George Kennedy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Batstone, R. (1995). Grammar in Discourse: Attitude and Deniability. In G. Cook and B Seidlhofer (Ed.) *Principle & Practice in Applied Linguistics* (pp. 197-213). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bughio, F. A. (2014). Critical analysis of political discourse: A study of Benazir Bhutto's last speech. *Balochistan Journal of Linguistics*, 2, 79-95.
- Cohen, L. (1995). *Time-frequency analysis* (Vol. 778). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall PTR.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. London: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Longman.
- Fortenbaugh, W. W. (1992). Aristotle on persuasion through character. *Rhetorica*, 10(3), 207-244. <https://doi.org/10.1525/rh.1992.10.3.207>
- Horváth, J. (2011). *Critical discourse analysis of Obama's political discourse*. London: Polity Press.
- "Imran Khan". Encyclopedia Britannica. (2021).
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Imran-Khan>. Accessed 30 March 2021
- Luke, A. (1997). Theory and Practice in Critical Science Discourse. In L. Saha (Ed.) *International encyclopedia of the sociology of education* (pp. 50-56). NY: Pergamon.
- Triadafilos, T. (2018). Politics, speech, and the art of persuasion: toward an Aristotelian conception of the public sphere. *The Journal of Politics*, 61(3), 741-757.
- van Dijk, T. A. (1993). Principles of critical discourse analysis. *Discourse and Society*, 4(2), 249-283.
- van Dijk, T.A. (1977). *Current Trends in Text linguistics*, New York: De Gruyter.

van Dijk, T. A. (1997). What is political discourse analysis? *Belgian Journal of Linguistics*, 11(1), 11-52.

Wang, J. (2010). A critical discourse analysis of Barack Obama's speeches. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*. 1(3). 254-261.

Wodak, R. & Micheal, M. (2009). *Methods of critical discourse analysis*. Sage.

Data Sources:

Insaf. (2018, April 29). *Imran Khan's Full Speech at Minar-E-Pakistan*. Retrieved from <https://insaf.pk/news/imran-khans-full-speech-minar-e-pakistan-29th-april-2018>

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. (2015, January 18). *Full transcript of Chairman Imran Khan's speech at the #ptidharnaconvention in Islamabad*. Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/PTIOfficial/photos/full-transcript-of-chairman-imran-khans-speech-at-the-ptidharnaconvention-in-isl/10152733177869527/?_rdc=2&_rdr

The News. (2018, August 20). *Complete text of Imran Khan's maiden speech*. Retrieved from <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/357736-complete-text-of-imran-khans-maiden-speech>