



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Leading Through Leadership Language: Analysing Mr. Imran Khan's Spoken Political Discourse

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ABSTRACT

Politicians within any system often depend on language to assert power and persuade and convince people of their ideologies. This suggests that language plays an important role, particularly in politics. Such language underscores the importance of using appropriate and non-threatening word choices to reflect one's intention for fostering better networking and relationships. However, not much is known about how political leaders use language. This paper considers the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Imran Khan's, spoken political discourse. More specifically, it reports the study that explores the language used during his leadership, both locally and internationally. Four spoken texts were carefully selected and analyzed based on the theoretical framework of Fairclough's three-dimensional model: description, interpretation, and explanation, including word choice, repetition, persuasive strategies, referential strategies, and positive and negative self-presentation. The findings reveal that Mr. Imran employed linguistic and rhetorical approaches to demonstrate his leadership in Pakistan and abroad, as reflected in the spoken discourse. His persuasive and strong rhetoric informed the world of his standpoints, whereas, in some instances, he used irony that displays emotional sentiment when making critiques. He also used inclusive pronouns rather excessively to persuade the world communities on how to manage ecological and global issues. The paper demonstrates that a political leader such as Mr. Imran tends to relate to others through persuasive rhetoric and linguistic features to convince and reach out to national and international audiences. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of leadership language and its persuasiveness and how these should be enhanced for better understanding, especially among future scriptwriters, language learners of English, and political science students.

INTRODUCTION

Language in any form tends to shape ideas and influence people. It speaks volumes and should be given serious attention in daily communication. It is an established system of utterance or non-utterance symbols a specific social group uses to express their identities (Saputra et al., 2023). Language performs different oral or written functions, such as ordering, persuading, and informing (Oktiani and Putri, 2020). Language or discourse is a form of 'social practice.' It represents reality from every angle and helps manipulate and influence social processes by creating ideology (Fairclough, 2001). Verbal and written communication, including personal letters, newspaper reports, family talk, or even political speech, comes under the umbrella of discourse. Discourse refers to a 'communicative event' (Van Dijk, 1997) where ideas and emotions are transferred through language. Discourse carries ideologies and enhances power flow in many social institutions. Language is an arbitrary vocal system used by different social groups and holds and creates social relationships and identities (Crystal, 2021; Li, 2023). This paper considers the political influence, leadership, and persuasiveness in Mr. Imran's spoken discourse. More specifically, it reports the analysis of Mr. Imran's national and international spoken texts using Fairclough (1989) Three-Dimensional (3D) model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an expanding interdisciplinary research field encompassing various theoretical and methodological perspectives to investigate language usage critically (Johnson and McLean, 2020). Analyzing written and spoken discourse is essential in education (Li and Zhang, 2019). It offers a suitable analytical tool to examine and understand the hidden meanings and intentions behind such texts. CDA analyses how meanings are created in different social contexts or situations. It investigates the relationship between language and the social and political aspects in which it occurs (Rubbani et al., 2021). CDA helps to elucidate the opaque ideological views of politicians regarding their political agendas and scrutinize the presence of power in media discourse studies (Ramanathan and Hoon, 2015).

Background of Mr. Imran Khan

Mr. Imran Khan's political discourse was analyzed due to his prominence. He became the Prime Minister of Pakistan for several years (2018-2022). Mr. Imran is a relatively well-known political figure given his outspoken nature (Shah, 2020). Before joining politics, he had already impacted the country as a famous cricket player. His team won the Cricket World Cup in 1992, which spoke volumes about his leadership and made Pakistanis proud of him. He has also been considered a prominent public speaker, communicator, and debater. Hence, this makes his language style, the selection of words, tone, and rhetoric, a potential subject for linguistic analysis of his language of leadership (Shah, 2020). His language as a leader can shape public opinion, influence policies, and impact international relations (Siddique, 2019). As such, analyzing his language style can offer insights into the role of language in shaping and changing political discourse, rallying support, and addressing national and international issues (Nusrat et al., 2020). It can inform laypeople about how language can shape many forms of judgments and critical thinking. Mr. Imran is still regarded as a highly controversial political figure, and his speeches and statements often create public interest and debate. He has employed various communicative strategies in his political career, such as using metaphorical language, addressing specific audiences, and utilizing persuasive techniques to address the targeted audience (Umar and Kamran, 2019). Since listeners might have access to many competing narratives from Pakistan and India about the Kashmir conflict since 1947, there is the risk that the intended message might be misconstrued by the targeted audience (Ahmed and Chakma, 2012). Ahmed and Chakma (2012) explained that Mr. Imran faces the challenge of putting forward his points unequivocally in a charged atmosphere, which involves both sides of the divide and the international community. Thus, research on these strategies may provide a valuable understanding of the art of leadership language. Hence, such analysis can help the readers understand how Mr. Imran interprets and portrays realities in his versatile leadership language.

Leadership language and political discourse

The relationship between language and leadership is unique given that they are interconnected; leadership is language, as pointed out by Marquet (2020). Language is articulated by the person who is known as a leader. As such, language plays a pivotal role in leadership as every political action is prepared, accompanied, controlled, and influenced by it. According to Alkhalaf (2021), political leaders, through leadership language, try to inspire and satisfy the target audience because their words are fully coated with social, political, and racial ideologies. Various political ideologies and policies are manipulated through language. Political leaders change the ideologies of the masses through their speech, acting, or discussion on unique platforms or television (Anjum and Hussain, 2023).

Leaders use political tones through their language, and people are receptive to these messages. When leaders use positive words, people, in turn, experience more positive emotions themselves and also appreciate the leaders with higher approval ratings (Bono and Ilies, 2006; Radhakrishnan et al., 2019). Leadership is always considered an essential and prolific topic for scholars in many fields, such as religion, industry, sociology, political science, and organizational studies. According to Oktiani and Putri (2019), leaders' language is coated with persuasion and rhetoric, and they mention instances from historical events, using metaphors and similitudes that evoke emotions, sympathy, anger, frustration, love, fear, and hate. The primary purpose is to evoke certain feelings in the audience to make them feel the way the leaders want them to.

Leaders' language tends to be coated with metaphors. Leaders use metaphors in spoken discourse to manage situations and rhetorical language in interpersonal conflicts (Melo et al., 2014; Kurniawati and MeilianaIntani, 2016; Jam et al., 2011). In politics, there are various conceptualizations of experience from which people are left to derive possible metaphor entailments in the language used by the leaders. Conceptual metaphors used by political leaders reveal not only the ideology of politicians but also provide insight into their political practices (Yumna Zahid and Amin, 2022).

Fairclough (2013) analyzed the relationship between

power and discourse and revealed that politics reflects some form of power. Political leaders use persuasive language deliberately to express ideas and ideologies and utilize words and expressions or omit them to affect meaning in many ways (Chen, 2018). Political speeches are used to influence others by using rhetoric to convince, excite, and claim leadership (Klebanov et al., 2008). Hence, according to Finlayson and Martin, (2008), political discourse can be defined as:

"An argument of some kind: an attempt to provide others with reasons for thinking, feeling or acting in some particular way; to motivate them; to invite them to trust one in uncertain conditions; to get them to see situations in a certain light and even in some measure, adapt to audiences, confirming their expectations and respecting their boundaries, even as it tries to transform them" (p. 450).

Politics and power tend to have a strong relationship. More often than not, politicians utilize language to represent leadership and persuade (or dissuade) people by using a variety of linguistic and rhetoric strategies (Almahasees and Mahmoud, 2022). In this sense, politicians are successful because of their ability to use rhetoric. With the particular use of language, politicians depend on verbal power to persuade people about the validity of their views and ideologies (Ghasemi, 2020).

Leaders use language to convey their culture, ideology, core values, and purpose, enabling them to persuade and convince others (Ashraf et al., 2022). According to Jaradat (2020), language is a vital tool for leaders to influence the hearers, and even language shapes the leader's legacy in the political arena. Both the leadership language and rhetoric strategies reflect the art of using language to inform, manipulate, and influence people, a way usually used by politicians to encourage people to follow their hidden motives and ideology (Ashraf et al., 2022). As Burns (1978) explained,

"Leadership over human beings is exercised when persons with certain motives and purposes mobilize, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological, and other resources to arouse, engage, and satisfy the motives of followers. (p. 18)"

CDA has emerged as a suitable model to understand and interpret language. Fairclough (1989) argued that discourse comprises three levels:

- The descriptive stage
- The interpretation stage
- The explanation stage.

The descriptive stage focuses on the 'vocabulary (us or them), grammar, thematic choices, linguistic form, and other related text features. The interpretation stage considers the intention and hidden motives within the text. The explanation stage examines the social context and ideology, such as feminism, leadership, and racism.

Purpose of the study

To gain insights into the language used by the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, the following objective guided the study:

- To analyze the leadership language patterns and the linguistic and rhetorical strategies embedded in Mr. Imran Khan's political and spoken discourse.

Hence, the research question was formulated as follows:

- What were the leadership language patterns and the linguistic and rhetoric strategies embedded in Mr. Imran Khan's spoken political discourse?

RELATED STUDIES ON LANGUAGE AND LEADERSHIP

Language has always played an essential role in defining actions. Therefore, we must use language appropriately and sensibly regardless of who we are given the multiple roles we enact in society and our daily lives (Soedjarwo, 2020). Fairclough (1989) considered language as a social practice. Its use defines its strength and power (Siddiqui, 2014). Fairclough (2013) analyzed the relationship between language and power from political perspectives and found that the language of politicians was loaded with rhetorical components that construct ideological concepts.

There have thus been many studies on analyzing political speeches. Ivana and Suprayogi (2020) analyzed Donald Trump's political speech using Van Dijk (2013), corpus-based discourse analysis. They revealed that political speeches are the primary source of influence on others, that Donald Trump utilized rhetorical devices to assert power and claim leadership through leadership language, and that he assures the American people about their sovereignty

through leadership language. The study also revealed that Trump promotes peace and invites world leaders to work together for world peace. His language reflects that as a leader, he has been recognized by all countries worldwide.

According to Shukry (2013), Malaysia's former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed used discursive strategies to oppose and criticize former US President George Bush's post-9/11 military strategy of "war on terror." The emphasis placed by CDA on the representation of power dynamics and political infighting in language serves as a research direction. The study reveals that if Mahathir is to be taken seriously when it comes to speaking out against terrorism, his criticism of President Bush's handling of the crisis must be viewed as a chance to promote his own ideas.

Leaders use different techniques in communication, such as repetition, rhythm, masculinity, alliteration, symbolic language, and even positive and negative framing of events and situations. These language techniques leaders use primarily appeal to followers rather than their intellects. Leaders develop commitments by engaging people's sentiments, that is, by emotionally stimulating them. Hence, today's language of leadership is complex, dynamic, and subtle (Brower et al., 2007).

Zhu (2020) examined leaders' motivating language and revealed that political leaders mostly pay attention to the expression and contents of their leadership language and magnify the direction and meaning of their leadership discourse. The study showed that leaders' meaning-making and direction-giving language motivates, manipulates, and encourages people to accept their ideology. Hence, leaders build relationships with the masses to achieve their goals by using leadership language.

Tyutyunnik (2021) analysed one of the most prominent political leaders of New Zealand, John Key, 's communication through his online written diaries in open social networks using pragma-linguistics. He revealed that the language used in political speeches is always aimed at influencing and persuading the desired audience, and in the process of attaining power, political leaders make verbal influence on the hearers.

Similarly, Bayram (2010) analyzed politicians' skillful

use of language to convince their listeners. The study used Fairclough's 3D model of CDA to identify the language used by the Turkish Prime Minister. Bayram (2010) revealed that the Prime Minister intelligently used language as a powerful tool to present his ideologies. The study also disclosed that the language of politicians has a potent role in exchanging values in the political domain and transforming power into right and obedience duty. Furthermore, politicians' language may create power and become an area where power can be applied. Political ideologies and beliefs are the products of institutions and organizations created and shared through language.

Tarigan (2017) examined the leadership qualities in the local proverbs of Karonese and revealed the three leadership qualities: decision-making, advising, and mentorship. Tarigan described leadership as having eight characteristics: diligence, wisdom, bravery, ambition, optimism, altruism, smartness, and tact. Similarly, Nasih and Abboud (2020) analyzed the speeches of Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi and President Barham Salih by employing van Dijk's socio-cognitive model. The study revealed that both leaders use positive self-representation and negative other representations in language. Both leaders stressed and promoted the good things and features of Iraq and its people, as well as highlighting the wrong things and treatments of their rivals like the terrorists, Takfiris, Saddamists, and the jihadist base to convince and manipulate the Iraqi people.

Mahfoud et al. (2023) analyzed Biden's speech using van Dijk's Ideological square model and revealed that Biden constructs his ideology through language by portraying himself as having positive self-representation and negative other-representation. He commented on the Russian President (Vladimir Putin) as an anti-liberal and undemocratic. He embodies subjugation, intimidation, tyranny, authoritarianism and violence. The study revealed that through their positive self-presentation, political leaders manipulate the audience and spread hate for their opponents. As such, Biden reduced the distance between him and the audience through positive self-representation and negative other-representation. Thus, examining the language of leaders will assist us in understanding the intentions and mindsets of those in power more fully and correctly.

METHODOLOGY

The sample

In the study, which was part of the more extensive study, only four spoken texts of Mr. Imran Khan were examined:

- "Statement of Prime Minister Imran Khan on Pulwama Attack" (February 19, 2019) (Text 1),
- "Prime Minister Imran Khan's speech at the UNGA" (September 28, 2019) (Text 2),
- "Imran Khan's interview with Al Arabiya" (February 17, 2019)" (Text 3) and
- "Imran Khan's interview with Opinion Q. and A." (June 25, 2021) (Text 4). These spoken texts could be accessed publicly from "YouTube" and were transcribed.

Rationale for the sample choice

The four spoken texts were chosen for the following reasons:

- They were considered to have provided valuable insights into leadership discourse at the highest level of government, given that these were delivered by the (former) Prime Minister of Pakistan.
- Before the study, the first researcher collected several spoken discourses with Mr. Imran Khan's involvement. A pilot study was conducted to ensure that the texts were appropriate to analyze regarding the word length and length of the discourse.
- Analysis of these spoken texts can shed light on the communication strategies employed by a leader in addressing various national and international audiences.
- These spoken texts were also highly persuasive sociopragmatic textures since a newly elected prime minister tries to persuade his audience to believe him, accept him, cooperate with him, perform his plans for the future, and feel convinced that they have selected the right politician.

Validity and reliability of the data

The four spoken texts were downloaded in oral and written forms. They were introduced to a panel of university professors who specialized in discourse analysis to ensure their suitability and decide whether or not they would be enough to meet the study's objectives. For reliability, the researcher employed a

pilot study on the selected spoken texts.

Data analysis

Fairclough's three-dimensional model guided the analysis:

- Description
- Interpretation, and
- Explanation.

Several features involving word choice, persuasive strategies, referential strategies, positive and negative self-presentations, pronouns (I & We), and word repetition were analyzed, leading to prominent themes. Fairclough's integrated model comprised the description, the first stage associated with the text's properties. The second stage, interpretation, is associated with the relationship between text and interaction. Meanwhile, the third stage, explanation, concerns interaction and social context. Following Fairclough, language is a form of social practice that focuses on how social and political dominance is exercised in discourse by 'text and talk. The social structure determines language as a social practice.'. By considering discourse as a social practice, the interrelations of texts, processes, and context are more meaningful. In this sense, Fairclough's integrated framework or the three-dimensional model is considered appropriate to be applied given that he referred to linguistic theories, including systematic functional grammar, pragmatics, ideological theories, Foucault's power theory, and theories of language and society of post-structuralism (Xin, 2007).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Text 1 – “Statement of Prime Minister Imran Khan on Pulwama attack”

Description of text 1: The findings reflected Fairclough (1989) assertion that a critical analyst should not focus merely on text but also look into the correlation of text, production, and social context.

“It is in our interest that no one goes from our soil to carry out acts of terrorism anywhere outside Pakistan, and similarly, no one is allowed to come into Pakistan from outside for terrorism against us. We want stability. If you have any actionable evidence about the involvement of any Pakistani, I guarantee we will take action. India needs to develop a new mindset to introspect about the reason why Kashmiri youth have reached the point where they have lost all fear of death.

Do you think one-dimensional oppression, cruelty, and resorting to the use of force to solve a problem is the right way?”

Mr. Imran used active verbs and personal pronouns, 'we,' 'us,' and 'our,' emphasizing the importance of peace and stability. This reflects the government's willingness to cooperate with India in investigating the attack. The personal pronoun 'I' in “I guarantee we will take action” indicates his authority in executing action if India had substantive evidence about the incident. He reminded Delhi to reflect on why Kashmiri youth has reached a point where they no longer feared death, as reflected by the words 'oppression,' 'cruelty,' and 'resorting.' He was determined to fight against terrorism and would not tolerate any 'acts of terrorism' either inside or outside of Pakistan. The word 'terrorism' presented a sign of rivalry between Pakistan and India as he remarked that Pakistan would emerge with “a new mindset” and would not allow anyone to attack Pakistan and vice-versa. This marks the leader's clear message of authority when defending the country's safety from any harm.

Interpretation and explanation of text 1: Mr. Imran denied every accusation against India's allegations in the Pulwama attack after Saudi Arabia's visit. He claimed that it would be detrimental to the region if India still wanted to be the victim of the past and did not want to resolve the dispute between Jammu and Kashmir with a dialogue. He added that the 'new Pakistan,' for the sake of stability and prosperity, would investigate this attack to discover the culprits and would prefer table talk over war at any time.

Themes

Several themes emerged: New Pakistan, terrorism, solidarity and unity, table talk versus war, Kashmir independence, and rhetorical strategies.

New Pakistan: Mr. Imran narrated that Pakistan was promoting peace and stability in Asia as its new image, thus portraying a positive image of the country and debunking the negative image that seemed to be popularized.

Terrorism: The text reinforced Pakistan's determination to fight against terrorism. The goal was to work very hard to make the country peaceful and negate the allegation that Pakistan was a terrorist country. Mr. Imran argued that if India wanted to

investigate the attack, Pakistan would be sure to punish those who committed any crime.

Solidarity and unity: Mr. Imran spoke in favor of Pakistan and used strong words to warn India, which reads: Suppose India thought that Pakistan would remain quiet on its actions against the Pakistani people. In that case, the former should remember that the latter believed in solidarity and would stand against India together. He warned that Pakistan knew how to retaliate if the country was harmed; hence, this was viewed as giving India a rather strong message.

Table talk v/s war: The table talk theme is also evident in Mr. Imran’s spoken text. He rejected war but offered a solution through a discussion when he asserted, 'We do not want war, we want stability.' For him, only peace is the solution to any issue. His ideas of table talk and anti-war portrayed him as a promoter of peace and stability. "It is in our interest that no one goes from our soil to carry out acts of terrorism anywhere outside Pakistan, and similarly, no one is allowed to come into Pakistan from outside for terrorism against

us." Such words would have a significant impact on the listeners’ minds and act as a severe warning to all forms of terrorists.

Kashmiri’s independence: Kashmiri independence was another critical theme in Mr. Imran’s spoken text. The Kashmiris have faced the worst cruelty, and they should deserve independence. Mr. Imran argued that Pakistan should not be blamed for any incident in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Both countries were recommended to look for decisions that could bring peace and solve the problem.

Rhetoric

Use of pronouns (I & We: Text 1 comprised the personal pronouns ‘I’ and ‘we’. These pronouns represent inclusivity and leadership, reflecting the power of ‘I’ and the togetherness of ‘we’; as such, they indicate that the audience or readers were part of the discourse. For Pakistanis, the words ‘I’ and ‘we’ directed attention to the self and others in one formation or unity: the togetherness factor.

Table 1: Word-repetition

Sr.	Top Repeated Words	No. of Repetition	Evidence from Text 1
1	We	22 times (3.1%)	"We are ready to speak to you." "We will take action, not because we are under pressure from anyone but because such acts are hostile to Pakistan’s national interest."
2	Pakistan	22 times (3.1%)	"I am clearly telling you, this is the new Pakistan, a new mindset, a new thinking." "Pakistan is the country which has suffered the most from terrorism..."
3	I	12 times (1.69%)	"I therefore wish to convey to the Government of India..." "I want to say 2 final things to you. India needs to develop a new mindset."
4	Would/should	7 times (0.98%)	"Even a foolish person would not sabotage such an important visit and conference by such an act." "I would like to ask the Indian government if they wish to stay trapped in the past..."

Text 2 - "Prime Minister Imran Khan's speech at the UNGA (September 28, 2019)"

Description of text 2 "I start with climate change. Many leaders have talked about it. We depend upon our rivers. We are mainly an agricultural country. We have already detected 5,000 glaciers".

Moreover, if this keeps going, if nothing is done, we are scared. Money laundering is not treated the same as drug money or terror financing. Today, poor countries are being plundered by their elites. My third point is Islamophobia. Islamophobia is creating division.

Muslim women wearing hijab has become an issue. A hijab is some sort of weapon. What is radical Islam? There is only ONE Islam, and that is the Islam of the Prophet (PBUH). The way Kashmiris are caged like animals in homes. One hundred million Kashmiris were killed, and thousands of women were raped. UN reported on this. However, the world did nothing and saw India as a vast market. Materialism has trumped humanity".

Mr. Imran addressed many universal issues, such as climate change, money laundering, Islamophobia,

and Kashmir. The word choice was seen as impactful and sensitive to some, for instance, poor 'countries,' 'terror,' 'Islamophobia,' 'hijab,' and 'radical Islam.' The use of solid verbs demonstrates how he subjugated the audience's minds. He explained that the world faces many problems regarding agriculture, climate change, and irrigation systems. He convinced the audience to make every possible effort to resolve the issues. However, he required support from other nations in solving them, including the corruption issue that has affected many countries, and the cruelty of Indian forces in Kashmir who raped and molested Kashmiri women. Mr. Imran criticized the world for not taking action against the violence in Kashmir. Using personal pronouns enabled him to direct his attention to himself as the leader and others.

Interpretation and explanation of text 2

These themes were observed in text 2: climate change, corruption, Islamophobia, terrorism, problems of Kashmir, and the rhetoric strategies.

Themes: Mr. Imran talked about different themes during his speech at UNGA, some of which are explained below;

Climate change: This was highlighted as one of the major crises, given that the world's climate was changing daily, and glaciers were melting because of dangerous gas emissions. The problem needs the world's attention and should be solved by planting trees and changing energy sources.

Corruption: For Mr. Imran, one reason for the increase in corruption could be money laundering, the presence of corrupt politicians in developing countries, and the West's accusations of protecting them. He felt the need for rich countries to help stop corruption and assist poor countries.

Islamophobia: Islamophobia was another critical element Mr. Imran raised. It created divisions among people and countries. Some people viewed women who wore hijab as a problem. It was considered as a weapon. He depicted that Islam is about peace, humanity, pluralism, and harmony and not about racism or terrorism.

Terrorism: The West has falsely associated Islam with terrorism and terrorist acts. Mr. Imran claimed that such a negative connotation or scenario must be negated.

Kashmir's issue: Mr. Imran highlighted Kashmir's issue and reiterated that Pakistan's priority has always been maintaining peace in the subcontinent. He urged the world to play a role in solving the Kashmir issue for subcontinent peace.

Rhetoric

Lexical choices: Mr. Imran repeatedly utilized personal pronouns to represent inclusivity and leadership. He also used words like 'would' / 'should' and 'must' to assert power and responsiveness. Words like 'must' would induce actions (Table 2). Thus, Mr. Imran deliberately utilized language to present his ideology.

Table 2: Word-repetition

Sr.	Top Repeated Words	No. of Repetition	Evidence from Text 2
1	We	89 times (3.42%)	"We planted a billion trees in 5 years. Now we are targeting 10 billion trees." "We can do great things." "We detected 5000 glacier lakes in our mountains. If nothing is done, we fear humans are facing a huge catastrophe."
2	I	37 times (1.42%)	"I blame some people in the West who provoked Muslims." "I want the United Nations to take the lead in invoking this will." "When I took charge of our government a year back, our total debt went up four times in the 10 years preceding that."
3	Would/ should	18 times (0.69%)	"Pakistan would be that country that would try its best to bring peace." "Our main priority should be our people as we have similar problems: poverty and climate change" " "We should wait till the Indian elections since BJP is a nationalist party. Meanwhile, a Kashmiri boy radicalized by Indian forces blew himself up on an Indian convoy. Immediately, India blamed Pakistan."
4	Must	9 times (0.34%)	"The United Nations must urge India to lift the curfew;" "UN must insist on Kashmir's right to self-determination!" "Rich countries contributing the most to greenhouse gas emissions must be held accountable."

Text 3 – Imran Khan’s interview with Al Arabiya, 2019.

Description of text 3: “People of Pakistan have always, always felt this special relationship with Saudi Arabia, and that relationship has two dimensions to it. One is Mecca and Madina. So whatever happens, Mecca and Madina, you know, is in their hearts. Pakistan is the only Muslim country that has the capacity and ability to build a nuclear bomb, nuclear reactors, and missile technology. Saudi Arabia has the capital; it has oil. Pakistan has entrepreneurs and businessmen in different areas. We have labor. China is now the fastest-growing economy in the world. At the rate China is growing, in the next 10 years, it will even take over the US. Along the CPEC, we are developing special economic zones, and that is where Saudi Arabia benefits by participating in these special economic zones. This whole division in the Muslim world, Muslims fighting Muslims. You look back in the last fifteen years, the devastation that has taken place in the Muslim world”.

Text 3 was Mr. Imran’s interview with Al Arabiya on February 17, 2019. The words demonstrated his confidence in answering the questions. The words ‘Mecca’ and ‘Madina’ reflect how Pakistani people have a strong bond with Saudi Arabia. The word ‘Pakistan’, which was repeatedly used, shows that he wants to make a strong bond with Pakistani and Saudi people. The words ‘nuclear bomb’, ‘nuclear reactors’, and ‘missile technology’ highlighted the importance of stability of any country and the threats to humanity. Mr. Imran confidently expressed how Pakistani trade and relationships with other countries, especially with China, have improved daily. The word ‘CPEC’ (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) represents Pakistan’s current situation with other countries and persuades different organizations and countries to invest in Pakistan. He reminded the Muslims to stop the fight, grievances, and tyranny against each other and become the promoter of peace. He uses rhetorical

words like ‘Mecca, Madina,’ ‘CPEC,’ ‘entrepreneurship, and China to persuade people.

Interpretation and explanation of text 3

Themes: Mr. Imran influenced his listeners about the current commercial situation in Pakistan by using words such as ‘new era,’ ‘new relationship,’ and ‘higher level.’ The words also represented Pakistan’s success in different fields. He used “we” when mentioning the investors, especially China, Saudi Arabia, and UAE. ‘We’ is an inclusive pronoun that represents togetherness, solidarity, and good relationships in linguistic terms.

Relation with Saudi Arab: In the first part of the interview, Mr. Imran explained the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan by saying that Pakistan would always have a special connection with Saudi Arabia. Mecca and Madina are sacred to Muslims, so the bond between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia would be stronger. Mr. Imran also felt that Saudi Arabia had always stood with Pakistan in difficult times, so it would support Saudi Arabia at any cost.

Trading and investments: Mr. Imran believed that if one had a strong trading partner, then both countries would tend to receive benefits from each other. He asserted that Saudi Arabia and Pakistan needed to look beyond their past relationships and aim to raise the standard of living in both countries.

CPEC project: He believed that CPEC would provide basic connectivity between China and Pakistan. Being the fastest-growing country in the world economically, China and the project would open new gates of prosperity for Pakistan and China. He invited all countries to invest in Pakistan for mutual growth.

Rhetoric

Word choices: He used words like ‘would,’ ‘should,’ and ‘can’ to assert power responsiveness and induce actions. Evidently, Mr. Imran deliberately highlighted his ideology through word repetition (Table 3).

Table 3: Word-repetition

Sr.	Top Repeated Words	No. of Repetition	Evidence from Text 3
1	We	127 times (2.96%)	“We want to play the role of a country that brings other countries together.” “We have the second youngest generation in the world.” “So we have human capital in every field,”
2	I	43 times (1.03%)	“I can assure you that he will receive a warm welcome. People are looking forward to his visit.”

Cont.....

Sr.	Top Repeated Words	No. of Repetition	Evidence from Text 3
3	Should/would	15 (0.35%)	"I mean, you do not do business for charity; you do business to make money." "It should not be rich getting richer and poor getting poorer, but the wealth creation should be spread out." "We would want them to make profits." "What we have to be careful with is the people that brought Pakistan to this state should never be able to come back and again to what they did to our country."
4	Can	14 times (0.32%)	"I can assure you that- forget our military- the people of Pakistan would want to defend Saudi Arabia." "Pakistan can play the role because Pakistan has probably one of the best militaries."

LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

Leadership communication refers to the type of communication leaders use to communicate about their cultures, core values, missions, and crucial messages to build trust and encourage others. Mr. Imran reinforced this communicative act to build trust in Pakistan and encourage others to invest in its progress. The visit of Saudi’s Crown Prince would enhance the relationship between Saudi and Pakistan. Pakistan’s most significant human capital was one reason for such a good relationship with other countries. Many Pakistanis went to countries like Saudi, UAE, and China to work as engineers and laborers.

Mr. Imran also mentioned that CPEC has successfully created an economic zone for Pakistan; thus, Pakistan invited other countries, such as China and Saudi Arabia, to enjoy its economic zone. The new innovative wave has educated the people of Pakistan that making money is not a sin. The first and foremost duty would be to facilitate its investors. In that way, money can be shared. Mr. Imran claimed that Pakistan had created and was willing to create new economic zones for its investors. He promoted the image of good economic growth in Pakistan and encouraged other investors to invest in Pakistan through his carefully constructed words.

Text 4 – “Imran Khan’s interview with opinion Q. and A., 2021”

Description of text 4: “Now, after the US leaves Afghanistan, basically Pakistan would want a civilized relationship, which you have between nations, and we would like to improve our trading relationship with the US. So, there was this mistrust between the two

countries. Moreover, people in Pakistan felt they paid a heavy, heavy price for this relationship. Moreover, the US thought Pakistan needed to do more. We have one of the biggest markets on one side of Pakistan and China on the other. China is the country that came to Pakistan’s help. I approached Prime Minister Modi and said, “Look, my main objective for coming to power is to alleviate poverty in Pakistan.”

The word ‘civilized’ shows that Mr. Imran wanted to maintain a good relationship with the US as the strategic partner of Pakistan in trade and other fields. The central theme of this interview was to explain the relationship between the United States and Pakistan, given the various ups and downs in the past years. However, Mr. Imran could express the current state of the US-Pakistan relationship and share his desire to make a new US-Pakistan bond. The word ‘China’ has its significance, and Mr. Imran knows China is a rival of the US, and very diplomatically, he gave the reference of China as always coming to Pakistan’s aid. It shows that if the US were not ready to give importance to Pakistan, then Pakistan would renege on China. Mr. Imran also grabbed the world’s attention by referring to Modi, the Indian Prime Minister. He convinced Modi for the betterment of both nations. The word ‘alleviate poverty in Pakistan’ shows Mr Imran’s intention to prosper the country and region. The careful use of linguistic features and facts portrayed Mr. Imran as demonstrating good leadership to the world.

Interpretation and explanation of text 4

Initially, with a rather careful use of diction, Mr. Imran explained that the relationship between Pakistan and the US was at a watershed moment. The US leaving Afghanistan was a sudden move that left Pakistan wondering about the strategic cloud the US might

have. The interview with Mr. Imran tended to clarify the relationship status between these two countries from his diplomatic narrative, though the interview might have been proofread before it was published.

Rhetoric

Leadership communication: When asked about the meaning of a civilized relationship, Mr. Imran explained that it would be the same relationship that India, Pakistan, the US, and Britain shared. Relationships are created based on common interests. However, he claimed that the United States had lopsided these relations with Pakistan because the

former had kept expecting more and more from Pakistan. Pakistan had already paid a heavy price to keep this relationship secure. He then explained that China and the United States were the world's two biggest markets, and Pakistan would do anything to secure a good place or relationship with them. Imran Khan also responded very well when asked about the Taliban, as he said, "We will do anything to stop terrorism in this world." Hence, Mr. Imran made sense of the situations surrounding him through his persuasive and reassurance discourse.

Table 4: Word – repetition

Sr.	Top Words	Repeated	No. of Repetition	Evidence from Text 4
1	We		26 times (1.17%)	"We would like to improve our trading relationship with the US." "What we want in the future is a relationship based on trust and common objectives."
2	I		26 times (1.17%)	"I am an optimist. I hope it will." "Which I have to say is very disappointing to us when they blame us for being unable to come to some sort of settlement after so many years."
3	Should/would		5 (0.22%)	"We should have a relationship with everyone." "Pakistan has been emphasizing to the Taliban that they should not go for a military victory because it is not going to happen."

As a leader, Mr. Imran's language is viewed as a reflection of peace, harmony, deception, and pluralism; it reflects acts of wanting to do the best for the country, as reflected in the interviews. The spoken texts revealed his intentions to portray Pakistan's good image to the world with clear diction. His ideas disclosed relatively strong leadership qualities. He can express his ideology with confidence and with the use of rather diplomatic language.

After the 9/11 incident, the Western world considered Muslims as terrorists, and it constructs an unmistakable shape to Islamophobia in the West (Javaid et al., 2022). Islamophobia is a term that means fear of Islam (Bazian, 2019). The use of ideologically loaded leadership language enables Mr. Imran to create awareness among Western people about Islamophobia. He stresses that Islam and terrorism have no relation and cannot be linked to each other. He reminds the West that Islamophobia has led to intolerance, which might be a threat to world peace. Mr. Imran skillfully, with his language, gets the attention of different world leaders by revealing the unfair agenda of the Indian Prime Minister (Modi) that

he is a supporter of RSS. This organization killed the Kashmiri and Indian Muslims, and Modi is a member of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a right-wing Hindu nationalist paramilitary volunteer organization (Bukhari et al., 2021). Mr. Imran exposed that RSS is a certified terrorist organization that was several times banned in India. Mr. Modi promoted the ideology of Hindutva to foster Hindu nationalism under the umbrella of RSS, which is creating chaos, fear, and threat in Kashmir (Kamal and Zafar, 2021).

The spoken texts also revealed that he managed to highlight the burning issue of climate change and recommended how people could secure their generations by growing plants. The language he used tended to portray himself as a global environmental leader at the UNGA wh, which confidently urged the West to minimize money laundering by making strict laws as money laundering is creating a negative impact on poor countries' economy and their existence. Mr. Imran used most of the linguistic mechanisms of power in the models, such as religion, persuasion, and future plan statements (Afzal and Hassan, 2021). The spoken texts also revealed that

Mr. Imran recapitulate Pakistan's role in solving global issues and crises and Pakistan-Indian conflicts. He utilized neutral references (We) in his spoken texts to avoid impersonalisations. The spoken texts disclosed that he used persuasive language to highlight the status quo and the solution for the American war.

Most of his political discourse is about the 'futuristic era' of Pakistan in which he related to Pakistan as achieving higher economic growth and success in the world (Tahsin, 2019). It has been revealed that the language of Mr. Imran as a leader is fully loaded with the universality of social representations, which speak volumes, and he urges for prosperous relationships with other countries. Mr. Imran's language clearly shows that he attempted to influence and encourage others and win people over to his side or perspectives.

CONCLUSION

The paper has demonstrated the study of language as articulated by a political leader, which is seen as impactful in some ways or the other, and such language is known as the language of leadership. The study highlighted that Mr. Imran used desirable linguistic and rhetoric devices as a leader to present specific ideologies and persuade people through his mindsets, which are converted into careful language construction. Careful or careless use of words can be impactful on the hearers. The spoken texts illustrate the essential functions of word and word choice, plus the importance of having a skillful writer or person who can help to transform the idea of a leader to the written form or wordings. The leader's voice, in this sense, will then be transmitted to the public.

Limitations of the study

The study, no doubt, has its limitations. Only the spoken discourse of Mr. Imran and not the written texts from other reliable sources (e.g., newspapers and government reports) were analyzed. Whether factually accurate, evidence-based, inclusive, selective, or biased, it is beyond the scope of this paper to critique the worldview and all the underpinning beliefs expressed by Imran Khan in these 4 selected speeches. It would add depth to the analysis by looking at interpretations of his speeches from mainstream or alternative media in Pakistan, Kashmir, India, the USA, Russia, Britain, China, and other countries. The latter might have provided more

insights into the language used by the leader from the media perspective. The textual analysis also should have focused on other linguistic features, such as figurative language.

Implications of the study

The study has several implications. First, in making sense of how leaders use language, one learns much about how the leader communicates, which suits the intentions known only to the persons. In this electronic and media-driven society, politicians' leadership and language will likely become increasingly intertwined with each other and embedded with all sorts of ideologies. This contributes to the theory of leadership language, in which a common language of leadership can be pursued and further interrogated to add to the existing understanding of its features. Second, regarding practical implications, leadership language is undoubtedly a skill to be learned, not acquired, as shared earlier. What the public might have observed or heard might not have reflected the actual intentions of the leader if the leader is careful with what is said or pays attention to what has been said. In reality, what has been said must be said. The politicians who might have intended to achieve their goals would find all necessary means to share these through their language use by showing their concern, giving information, apologizing if needed, and attending to the hearer's/viewers' emotions. Through leadership language, leaders can change the public views and attitudes to the extent of controlling public sentiments.

Future recommendations

Future studies need to be done to understand the language of leadership more fully, which can justify or extend what this paper has tried to report. Researchers can interview the actual politicians by liaising with their associates or inner circle to understand the embedded intentions through language use. However, the leaders' busy schedules and pertinent positions may make it difficult for researchers to interview them directly. Another way is to conduct an in-depth or focused group interview with various public groups to explore their perspectives on the leaders' language use.

While politics might have its peculiarities, language has all types of people or leaders who articulate it

even though the speech might have been written for them. To be a very well-articulated leader, one must communicate effectively and meaningfully to enable the hearer to pick up the intended message. An effective leader should be knowledgeable and able to persuade, mobilize, direct, and help people through continuous support and good common sense. Most importantly, in enacting all these acts, language plays a crucial role. It differentiates the individuals/speakers and portrays their mindsets through language or articulation. The latter can decide whether they want to accept or discard what they hear. The leaders, thus, have more responsibilities in ensuring that what they said made sense; hence, language use speaks volumes and should not be taken for granted.

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