

Critical Discourse Analysis of Imran Khan's Sit-in Speeches

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Abstract

The present study investigates the ideological discourse structures in Imran Khan's political speeches during sit-in through the application of critical discourse analysis. It attempts to ascertain the hidden ideological meanings of his words, phrases and sentences. The present study employed three dimensional framework by Fairclough (1995) to investigate the implicit and explicit meanings of the linguistic patterns used by him. The data was collected from his speeches delivered daily during sit-in and addresses to the public in different cities from August 14, 2014 to December 17, 2014. Repeated subject in the speeches labeled as the major themes. The results drawn from the current study show that free and fair electoral process and good governance these two themes have been the main content of his speeches. He reiterated these themes by frequent use of few words and sentences to inculcate desired ideology into the minds of masses. He instilled a particular image of him being the savior of the nation and others as liars and corrupts through discourses. The findings show that language plays a pivotal role in disseminating and generating intended meanings.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis, political speeches, ideologies

1-Introduction

Discourse is expressing oneself verbally. Discourses can be used for an assertion of power and knowledge, and they can also be used for resistance and critique. These are used in everyday context for building power and knowledge for regulation and normalization, for the development of new knowledge and power relations and for hegemony. Discourses help us to move from seeing language as abstract to seeing our words as having meanings in a particular historical, social and political condition. Even more significantly, our words are used to convey a broad sense of meanings and the meanings we convey with those words is identified by our immediate social, political and historical conditions as Wodak (1997: p. 271) explained “critical discourse analysis addresses social problems”. According to Dunmire (2005) critical discourse analysis does not provide answers to the problems but enables one to understand the condition behind the specific problem—the deep ideological roots of the issue. It can be carried out in various institutional settings or on various social, political and critical issues by paying attention to the details of what social members actually say and do. Starting with the full text working down to the individual word level, one can peel back the layers to reveal the “truth behind regime” the profoundly insidious, invisible power of the written and spoken word (Van Dijk, 1999). Fairclough (1992, p. 63) “critical discourse analysis is clearly political in its objectives. Discourse is a mode of action, one form in which people may act upon the world and especially upon each other, as well as a mode of representation” and “the word ‘critical’ implies showing connections and causes which are hidden; it also implies intervention, providing resources for those who may be disadvantaged through change” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 9).

The purpose of the study is to analyze Imran Khan’s speeches delivered during dharna (sit-in) movement and see what major themes have been the topics of his speeches. It is an attempt to find out the ideologies behind his words through critical discourse analysis. He made speeches at different places during

sit-in along with a daily speech at D-Chowk. Language plays an important part in creating and changing perceptions, cognition and emotions. Language molds how we see the world; it determines our perception and reality. Through language politicians tell us about their agendas, policies, objectives and themes. Imran Khan's speeches are ideologically loaded and he used language to assert power upon masses.

Language does not simply reflect reality but actually constitute it. Political ideologies are concerned with different aspects of a society, including the economy, education, health care, labor law, criminal law, the justice system, the provision of social security and social welfare, trade, the environment, minors, immigration, race, use of the military, patriotism, and established religion. According to Eagleton (1991) ideology means ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power. The analysis of power and class relations requires the category of ideology because ideologies are a significant element of processes through the relations of power are established, maintained, enacted and transformed. The present study aims to investigate hidden ideologies embedded in Imran Khan's political speeches to discover language and power relationship. It also highlights the discourse structures used by Imran Khan in his speeches to investigate the underlying meanings. The researchers intended to disclose the hidden ideological discourse structure by highlighting the major themes, words and phrases frequently used by Imran Khan.

2- Literature Review

Critical discourse analysis is an instrument for describing and interpreting social life reflected in the text (Luke, 1997). Van Dijk (1998) adds in it by commenting that critical discourse analysis is related to studying and analyzing written text and spoken words to disclose the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced and transformed within specific social, political, economic and historical context. Texts are analyzed in terms of a diverse range of features of form and meaning. It not only concerned with power relations but it includes how power relations shape and produce an ideology. The critical approach is distinctive in its view of the relationship between language and society and relationship between analysis

and the practice analyzed. Van Dijk (1993) believes that texts not only provide information but at the same time disseminate ideological standpoints of the person and organization etc. therefore, Van Dijk (2001) describes ideology as an attitude or behavior of a group of people towards other in order to manipulate the minds of the people to gain their interests. Persuasive devices are variously used by politicians who are in power or otherwise to show the intensity of their words. Ferrari (2007) examined George W. Bush's public speeches to the nation in April 2001 to illuminate the ways by which persuasion strategy enacted to promote the preventive war in Iraq. Yarmohammadi (2000) demonstrated how particular discursive structures utilized in a text manifest producer's ideology. He states that particular attitudes towards power relations and ideological functions reside in the powerful people's minds, causing them to think, speak and look at the world in certain manners. He believes that language tends to hide rather than reveal. Memom et al. (2014) did a critical discourse analysis of political discourse of Benazir Bhutto's last speech to analyse ideologies behind contents of her speech and identified that specific linguistics features were used by her to assert power over the masses. Rahimi and Sharififar (2015) did analysis of Obama's and Rohani's speeches at UN by using critical discourse analysis framework. The study illustrates that both leaders used the language patterns that suit their interests in best possible manner. Rashidi and Souzandehfar (2010) did a critical discourse analysis of debates between republicans and democrats over the continuation of war in Iraq. The study shows that issues were projected differently by the two major American political parties' representatives. It reveals how the use of language promotes ideology to assert power upon others to gain personal benefits. Adetunji (2006) examined the use of lexis for personal, spatial and temporal anchorage of political discourse. Using two thematically and contextually different speeches of Nigeria's president Olusegun Obasanjo as his database, the paper established how politicians could associate with and dissociate from actions taken by them or their officers at different times and how they conscript their subjects into accepting their views on controversial issues or positions by

using language. The present study is the critical investigation of political speeches of Imran Khan during sit-in.

3- Research Question

- 1) What major themes have been the topics of Imran Khan's political speeches?
- 2) What particular words, phrases and sentences have frequently been used by Imran Khan to influence the masses?
- 3) What ideologies have been communicated through these speeches?

4- Research Methodology

The present study is qualitative in nature and for textual analysis it draws upon Fairclough's (1995) method of critical discourse analysis to analyze speeches of Imran Khan during sit-in with the purpose to unveil hidden and disguised ideological themes behind the text of speeches. Fairclough (1995) opines that language is a type of social practice. The three dimensions are following

- 1- Description
- 2- Interpretation
- 3- explanation

The first stage of Fairclough's (1995) model for critical discourse analysis deals with the description of text, where analysts do critically analyze formal properties of discourse such as word choice or vocabulary items, grammar, and structure of text in order to disclose ideologies spread through discourse(s). The second stage deals with their juxtaposition, and third explains sequencing, intricacy of power relations for the attainment of set goals.

4.1- Data Collection

The data for the present study is comprised of Imran Khan's political speeches during sit-in. The speeches' transcripts were downloaded from the internet source <http://www.imrankhanspeeches.dailymotion.video>. Some of the

data was collected from the twitter account of Faisal Javed Khan's (information secretary PTI) @faisaljavedkhan. The time period was from August 14, 2014 to December 17, 2014. Sit-in lasted for 126 days. During sit-in Imran Khan and Party arranged processions in different cities. The cities are as follows:

Lahore on August 14, 2014

Karachi on September 21, 2014

Lahore on September 28, 2014

Mianwali October 2, 2014

Multan on October 10, 2014

Sargodha on October 17, 2014

Gujrat on October 24, 2014

Rahim Yar Khan on November 9, 2014

Larkana on November 21, 2014

Gujranwala before the end of sit-in

The data also includes the speeches delivered during dharna (sit-in) in major cities of Pakistan as details are given above.

5- Data Analysis

The data has been analysed by categorizing the repeated concepts in his speeches as major themes. The extracts have been taken from each theme to analyse what words choices have been used to convey his message to the public and what ideologies are being communicated through these. The analysis is done at word, sentence and discourse level by employing Fairclough' (1995) model. Theme is the subject matter or the topic of any discourse. It is an implicit or recurrent idea embedded in a text. By carefully investigating the speeches of Imran Khan, the researchers found the following major themes;

- 1) Free and Fair Electoral process

2) Good Governance

5.1 Critical Discourse Analysis of First Theme “Free and Fair Electoral Process”

In every country election commission is one of the major institutions as it arranges elections all over the country and announces the final results. According to Imran Khan Election 2013 was rigged and election commission remained biased so one of the major causes behind the sit-in was the establishment of free and fair electoral process. That is why in his every speech he talked about the free and fair elections.

5.1.1 Chunks Taken from Imran Khan’s Speeches

“I will tell you the reasons of sit-in in Islamabad. The basic reason is the record rigging in of elections 2013. Mian Sahib claimed 1.5 million votes in the elections 2013. If it is true then arrange such a huge procession at Minar-e-Pakistan. Next year is the year of elections, I believe that your party (PTI) will win the elections and all other parties will ruin. I challenge you Nawaz Sharif that allow reelections in Punjab and we will arrange it in KPK, then the results will be clear to all of us and rigging will be proved” (Taken from his speech at Sargodha on October 17, 2014).

“There is no bigger tragedy in the history of nations that its mandate be stolen by the leaders. There is no change unless the culprit is not imprisoned.”(December 14, 2014).

“Mian sahib must arrange as big procession as you can in Punjab if you claim that elections were not rigged. (Mianwali) if you can arrange just 20% of it then we accept the elections. A prime minister elected from free and fair electoral process will always think for the good of public. But if he is from rigged elections he will not think of you. He has no importance of your votes. He will make his relatives happy and grant them with high ranks. It is the case with Pakistan” (Taken from his speech at Larkana on November 21, 2014).

“I didn’t get justice in one and a half year. Speaker sahib is afraid of recounting. The biggest fraud has been done in

elections 2013. It is a deciding war. It will decide whether rigging will win or status quo. Will there be free and independent Pakistan or Pakistan of cruel leaders. Whether we spend a life of slaves or make an independent Pakistan” (Taken from his speech at Gujrat on October 24, 2014).

5.1.2 Analysis of First Theme “Free and Fair Electoral Process”

This is the most important theme as sit-in was basically arranged for this purpose so Imran Khan had frequently used the word ‘*rigging*’ in almost every speech and the word dominates in this theme as well. Rigging means the use of unfair means by the candidate to win election. It is verb in nature. He believed that the elections were rigged and investigations should be done in this respect. He was of the opinion that record rigging has been done by political parties in election 2013 therefore he used ‘*record rigging*’ various times in his speeches just to show the importance of independent election commission.

The phrase ‘*free and fair*’ electoral process was also immensely used by Imran Khan. He wanted to build a relation of the text with the topic that he is in favor of equal and independent election commission. ‘*Justice*’ has also been frequently used by him which is a noun. He declared that he has been struggling for justice for one and a half year and still he is deprived of it. Government has failed to provide justice because the judiciary is also biased and everyone was involved in rigging. In extract two, Imran Khan challenged the elected Prime Minister that if his government is legal and his claim of 1.5 million votes in Punjab is true, then he must show his power and arrange a huge procession at Minar-e-Pakistan. A strong lexis ‘*challenge*’ was used by Imran Khan in a very informal way. He spoke small sentences and repeated the words just to show the importance of the issue.

In the second extract, the speaker used such a strong and powerful words; “*histories of nations*” and “*stolen by leaders*” and “*There is no change unless the culprit is not imprisoned*”. It shows that something seriously had happened and serious steps must be taken to counter such terrible situation. Further he said

that it is a great tragedy that the mandate of the people was stolen. The speaker blamed the leaders as thieves to tell the people that their leaders are not sincere with them; they won the elections by rigging. It was not people's opinion; their mandate had been changed for the benefits of false leaders. He called leaders as "*culprit*" and demanded that they must be arrested and imprisoned.

In order to make people aware of the facts he further says that Nawaz government has no concern with the betterment of people. The Prime Minister whose government is legitimate always thinks of the people but Nawaz government is illegitimate therefore he has no concern with the masses. Furthermore, he used a technique of comparison to explain his point of view. He asked people whether they want '*free and independent Pakistan*' or '*Pakistan of cruel leaders*', whether you (people of Pakistan) want to spend your lives as slaves or as independent citizens of Pakistan. Personal pronoun like "*I*" has frequently been used by Imran Khan to gain the sympathies of the masses. He spoke small sentences and repeated the pronoun I, we and you to relate him with the public.

In August 2014, Imran Khan stated that for the past 14 months, the PTI had been trying to bring those who were responsible for rigging to justice, "*I didn't get justice in one and a half year*" because of the lack of government initiative to start investigation into allegations of electoral fraud, he gave the government a month to fulfill his demands. He said that he had knocked all the doors to find justice but all in vain. That was the basic reason of his strong condemnation of the present government. He sometimes threatens the government with the rhetoric "*people of Pakistan are standing up, they have awoken, they are getting up for their rights. And if you will not allow judicial inquiry we will cease the country and hence derail the government*". Indirectly he was addressing to PM that we need only his resignation. Imran Khan has put emphasizes on the need of free and fair electronic process. He claimed that Pakistan will make progress if we have independent election commission. Time and again he challenged the Nawaz government to have fair investigations of rigging furthermore electoral process must have no political

interference. The office should work independently, irrespective of favoritism and any other influence.

5.2 Second Theme “Good Governance”

On August 14, 2014 Imran Khan along with his party workers and followers started his Azadi march towards Islamabad. They were against the traditional way of government in Pakistan. They claim that the performance of government is very bad and it has been failed to provide basic needs and facilities to the people of Pakistan. He invited people from all over the country and tried to make them realize that government has failed in fulfilling the needs of masses and has no concern even with the sovereignty of Pakistan. All the politicians are involved in merry making and collecting money.

5.2.1 Chunks Taken from Imran Khan’s Speeches during Sit-in

“We will establish such a just and pure system that people in abroad wish to spend their money in Pakistan. The lives of the people would be protected in a just society and it will bring prosperity. The day will come when people from abroad want to do business in Pakistan. Our nation is in a great threat; at one hand India is shooting guns at Sialkot boarder and on the other hand drone attacks are destructing Pakistan, but Mian Nawaz Sharif you didn’t condemn these things. Why you (PM) are not saying anything. You condemned every wrong act of government when you were in opposition. You are silent because your property of millions of dollars is out of country. Your children are doing business out of Pakistan. Your son has business in India. And that is the reason you do not have courage to protest against America and tell them that these attacks are against the sovereignty of Pakistan. PM Modi has been giving threat to Pakistan but still you (PM) are silent. But I am giving answer on the behalf of PM. O Modi do not assume that people of Pakistan will become afraid of these attacks, we are living nation and we are one against you. He asked: will there be more province in south Punjab? The purpose should be one. People have no need to go to Lahore for every purpose. Southern Punjab has remained behind. They make metro busses so that they have

commission. All the wealth is spending around Raiwind. Even the 70 % people of Lahore do not have drinking water. We will make province only for the ease of people” (Taken from Imran’s Speech at Multan on October 10, 2014).

“It is our first turn, I ask you people to tell me in only one thing that is right in Pakistan. Is the department of police fine over here? Are hospitals in good situation? Is the system of patwari working well? Do you get justice in courts? And tell the condition of your schools. Are they running well? A new born baby died in Rawalpindi because of rat biting. This is all because your leaders are making money. Imran had not built any factory in KPK. You make one Metro that costs 50 billion. Can metro give cure to people? Can it give education to the masses? Can it provide basic necessities? Can it give justice to people? The answer is ‘No’. First of all fulfill basic need of the population; improve your hospitals, improve your police, bring reforms to your education system and so on. I am challenging that go to KPK and if you find any miss management then do tell us” (Taken from Imran’s Speech at Sargodha on October 17, 2014).

“You might think Imran has KPK; he will do whatever he wants. Punjab is ours we will do whatever we need. Sindh belongs to Zardari; he will make money and be merry. And the population of Pakistan will continue to grind under debts and dearness. It is your policy” (Taken from Imran’s Speech at Mianwali on October 2, 2014).

“What is the condition of hospitals over here? Do you have jobs? Is there any merit? No there is no merit at all. There is corruption in giving jobs. I am here to tell you that it is the condition of hospitals. There is no doctor. It cannot be solved unless we have independent local bodies. The government schools and colleges will remain close unless you do not make them autonomous. Children are dying in Tharparker (desert in interior Sindh) due to hunger and thirst. But people of Pakistan we will not be successful unless we eradicate theft, corruption, bribery from Pakistan. No one will do any investment and we could not get rid of inflation. It needs a just and impartial state. The only solution is in free and independent local bodies. A

system that will set the people free from oppressors” (Taken from Imran’s Speech at Larkana on November 21, 2014).

5.2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis of Second Theme “Good Governance”

While talking about the performance of government, Imran Khan said that the present government has failed to build a just and pure society irrespective of any social evils. He opines that next year will be the year of elections and PTI will make Pakistan in such a way that the investors from all over the world would long to invest their money in Pakistan. By doing so he is presenting himself as the better politician than the ruling PM and expressed his desire to be a PM in future time. He shows his power by putting an ideology that he is the only well-wisher of the people of Pakistan. Imran Khan intentionally targets the youth and uses discourse that sensitizes their feelings for the better future.

In the second theme, the speaker emphasized upon the importance of good governance. Here he used powerful words to address the government in order to put pressure on it. The speaker talked about education, health, schools, injustice, nepotism, jobbery, corruption, theft and external threats to Pakistan. He put pressure on the government that nothing has been done to reduce the social evils in the society. He talked about international pressures and criticized Nawaz Sharif’s inability to handle these well. He said “*Why you (PM) is not saying anything, You are silent because your property of millions of dollars is out of country. Your children are doing businesses out of Pakistan. Your son has business in India. And that is the reason you do not have courage to protest to America and tell them that these attacks are against the sovereignty of Pakistan. PM Modi has been giving threat to Pakistan but still you (PM) are silent*”. So he attacked PM for not defending country well on international forums due to personal interests. His discourses are loaded with good self representation and bad others representation. He is so coercive and persuading people not to believe in them as they are impotent and safeguard only their personal vested interests. He claims that if we make our

education system better and local bodies system autonomous then Pakistan will definitely progress. Imran Khan again and again talked about the luxuries of Nawaz's family, this is intentionally done in processions to make masses' mind against them. He opined that all the money of the people of Pakistan is being spent upon Raiwind. In order to gain the sympathies of the Southern Punjab he inculcated an idea that southern Punjab always remained deprived of the basic needs so there must be a separate province for them. The people residing here go to Lahore even for their minor needs. He talked almost about every institution. He asked the people whether they are getting justice irrespective of any bribery. The department of police is widely politicized by him. Patwaris (clerks) are not doing their work properly and demand huge money from the lay man. The condition of schools is getting worse day by day. He asked the audience that *do you think we have an equal system of education in Pakistan*. His audience is youth so he knew what is appealing for them, so his rhetoric well suits the interests of the youth.

Nawaz Sharif launched Metro bus service for the people of Lahore and he was bitterly criticised by him for launching this service. Imran Khan said that behind this Metro bus Nawaz had a lot of commission. He earned huge money through this project. Nawaz and Zardari families continuously making money and their wealth is out of the country. *You (audience) tell me that has Imran Khan built any factory in KPK? Have you ever listened to such an act about me?* Imran Khan seems to be strictly against the government that not a single institution is working properly and independently. Leaders have no concerns for the betterment of the common man. Here again he used personal pronouns i.e. 'I, We, You' and demonstrative determiners like 'that and you'. Imran Khan continuously presented himself as good and whereas his opponents have continuously been presented as oppressors and cruel beings. He manipulated language to construct social and political realities the way he wanted. He strengthened his position by highlighting the weaknesses of others through appealing discourses that evoked the sympathies of the audience.

Findings

The study investigated the ideological discourse structures in Imran Khan's political speeches during sit-in to observe what major themes have been the topics of his speeches and what linguistic choices have been used to communicate those themes to the public to inculcate desired ideologies. The critical analysis of the speeches reveal that Imran Khan repeatedly used the words and language structures that portrayed a very negative image of the opponents and interestingly a few phrases and words were used so frequently that these may called the pet words or sentences like *rigging, corrupt, liar, change and free and fair elections* etc. The study tried to evolve a relationship between language, power and ideology. Repetition of few words, sentences and personal pronoun are the features used by Imran Khan frequently in his political speeches to justify his sin-in against the ruling party. He evokes peoples' sympathy through language and declares every demand as the masses' demand through the choice of his words and sentence structures.

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