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A Critical Discourse Analysis of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's Speech at USIP

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Abstract

This paper critically analyzes Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's address at the USIP in Washington, DC. The paper examines Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's rhetorical methods to promote Pakistan's peaceful character and his own political aspirations. The objectives of the study are to identify and analyze the speech's dominant discourses and ideologies, examine the rhetorical devices used to promote Pakistan's stance on peace, and understand how the speaker uses language to construct and promote his political identity. Fairclough's Critical Discourse Approach (CDA) model which examines language, power, and social context in social realities and discursive systems has been utilized as method of research. The speech skillfully uses language, structure, and historical allusions to illustrate the necessity of democracy in combatting extremism. It shows the speaker's knowledge of religious fanaticism's social, cultural, and political elements. The research found that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's speech conveyed its message, resonated with the audience, and established him as an authoritative and informed voice on the issue.

Keywords: Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Critical Discourse Analysis, Norman Fairclough's Model, Political Discourse

Introduction

Political speeches possess multiple dimensions. This study employs a critical discourse analysis approach to examine the speech delivered by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari at the USIP in Washington, DC. On April 7, 2016, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari delivered the speech in Washington, DC at USIP. His speech addressed Pakistan's political atmosphere, foreign policy, and counterterrorism. The address was notable since it was Bilawal's first public speech in the US as PPP chairman and occurred during Pakistan's political and security crisis. Pakistan's role and ties with India and Afghanistan were also highlighted in the talk.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is the PPP's chairman. His birthplace is Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan. The late Benazir Bhutto and Asif Ali Zardari, who led Pakistan from 2008 to 2013, had one child, Bilawal. Bilawal joined politics in 2007 when his mother was murdered. In 2012, he returned to Pakistan to lead the PPP after studying in the UK. PPP elected him party chairman in 2015.

In 1984, Congress established the independent United States Institute of Peace (USIP) to strengthen the nation's capacity to peacefully resolve international



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problems. The USIP uses research, training, policy analysis, and peacebuilding to prevent, reduce, and terminate violent conflicts. The institute works with governments, civil society, academia, and businesses to solve complex global challenges. Washington, D.C.-based USIP has field offices in crisis zones worldwide.

Bilawal spoke on his vision for a democratic, forward-thinking Pakistan and the necessity of stability and peace. He also discussed Pakistan's issues, like as terrorism and extremism, and advocated deeper US-Pakistan cooperation. His speech was widely reported in Pakistan and abroad, boosting interest. The young leader delivered a brash and ambitious speech to establish him as a genuine political figure and build on his family's long history in Pakistani politics.

Problem Statement

When a political figure talks on any issue, he is not just expressing his opinions on that subject. To really grasp the meaning of the speech, it is necessary to study all of the hidden objectives and underlying discourses. Since extremism, terrorism, and violence are problems in Pakistan, it is crucial to provide a favorable picture of these problems in international forums. This research looks at how Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, a rising young leader in Pakistani politics, uses his speech to promote a peaceful identity for Pakistan while also furthering his personal political goals.

Research Objectives

In order to fully comprehend the underlying views and values being communicated, this research is aimed at to:

1. Identify and analyze the dominating discourses and ideologies that emerge from the chosen speech.
2. Analyze and categorize the rhetorical strategies utilized by the speaker in the chosen speech, paying particular attention to those used to promote a favorable picture of Pakistan, in order to comprehend their persuasive influence.
3. Examine the speaker's linguistic choices in the chosen speech and consider how they help to create and spread his own political identity in an effort to understand how language is strategically used for self-presentation and persuasion.

Research Questions

1. What are the dominant discourses and ideologies that emerge from the selected speech?
2. Which rhetorical devices are used by the speaker to create a positive image of Pakistan?
3. How does the speaker build and propagate his own political identity through his linguistic choices?

Literature Review

Previous scholars have conducted analyses of political speeches delivered by global leaders, utilizing critical discourse analysis to uncover the dominant ideologies present in political discourse, as well as the strategic use of linguistic features to effectively convey their message.



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Shah and Alyas (2019) conducted research that presents a critical discourse analysis of Imran Khan's speech delivered at the Global Peace and Unity Forum. The objective of the research is to investigate the impact of language on the ideologies of political leaders, with a specific focus on their deliberate choice of vocabulary to effectively communicate their ideas and exert control over their listeners (Shah & Alyas, 2019). The researchers examine how political leaders employ ideological control to manipulate mass perception, using Halliday's ideational metafiction as a framework. The study utilizes a quantitative methodology to conduct its analysis and subsequently presents its findings and implications (Shah & Alyas, 2019). The present study enhances our comprehension of the complex interplay among language, power, and political discourse. It elucidates the strategies employed by leaders to influence public opinion and reinforce their ideologies.

The research conducted by Rachman, Yunianti, and Ratnadewi (2017) employs critical discourse analysis to examine the linguistic expressions of Donald Trump during his presidential campaign aimed at garnering support from the American populace. The study endeavors to attain four distinct goals: The present study aims to analyze the political discourse in Donald Trump's speech by identifying the utterances that exemplify it. Additionally, the delivery style of political discourse will be examined, and the intended purposes behind the utterances will be explored. Finally, the impact of these utterances on the people will be assessed. The researchers utilized a descriptive qualitative methodology to examine the political discourse of Donald Trump. Specifically, they applied Van Dijk's thematic theory within the context of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyze the collected data. According to Rachman et al. (2017), the results indicate that Trump effectively executed political tactics to garner backing and ultimately clinch his nomination as the Republican presidential candidate. This study provides insights into Trump's ideology, his pursuit of power, and his capacity to sway public opinion, thereby illuminating the intricacies of political communication and campaign tactics.

Muhammad Aslam Sipra and Athar Rashid (2013) used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to evaluate Martin Luther King's "When I Have a Dream" speech's socio-political viewpoint. Fairclough's CDA is used to analyze the speech's initial section. The research also examines social, cultural, and political inequality. The researchers used CDA to illuminate Martin Luther King's discourse methods to fight these disparities. The study illuminates the speech's socio-political setting and its importance in promoting social justice and equality (Sipra & Rashid, 2013). This study illuminates Martin Luther King's rhetorical tactics and the socio-political ramifications of his famous speech, shedding light on social change and activism.

Similarly, scholarly investigations have been conducted regarding the speeches given by political figures hailing from Pakistan. Talib et al (2019) employed Fairclough's critical discourse analysis methodology to scrutinize the historical speeches of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif. According to the research findings, the individuals utilized distinct terminology and linguistic devices to portray a strong representation of Pakistan and assertively advocate for Pakistan's ideology. The speaker's diction and syntax demonstrate astute decision-making, while their speeches exhibit lucidity and rationality.



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Saeed et al. (2007) also investigated Bilawal Zardari Bhutto's address at the US Institute of Peace. Transitivity dominates their studies. Bilawal's speech mostly uses mental and material processes, emphasizing his political leadership. Bilawal has focused on his party's efforts to promote Pakistan while ignoring other parties' efforts, according to study. Using Fairclough's approach for critical discourse analysis, this research explores a new topic. The study emphasizes a politician's rhetorical methods and the speech's basic ideology.

Methodology

Fairclough's Critical Discourse Approach (CDA) offers a comprehensive framework for studying language's social and ideological function in generating social realities and discursive systems. CDA examines language, power, and social environment to reveal hidden ideologies and power connections. This technique seeks to critically examine Bilawal Bhutto's speech. The theoretical framework based on Fairclough's CDA model has been described below.

Theoretical Framework:

A theoretical viewpoint that is ideally suited for this research is Fairclough's CDA, which gives a thorough framework for looking at language usage in social settings. Fairclough's CDA stands out in comparison to other techniques like constructionist, Laclau and Mouffe's theory, Foucault's theory, and Van Dijk's approach owing to its intricacy, precision, explicitness, and systematic character. The constitutive and constituted features of discourse are acknowledged by Fairclough's CDA. It acknowledges that language actively participates in the creation of social structures and power relations as well as reflecting them as they already exist. This viewpoint is crucial to comprehending how the social and intellectual background of Bilawal Bhutto's speech influences and is influenced by it. This is consistent with the current study's goal of analyzing how social environment affects Bilawal Bhutto's speech and its discursive frameworks.

The research perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis is dedicated to examining the crucial function of language in the creation, preservation, and alteration of power dynamics within social relationships. Additionally, it endeavors to investigate how language is utilized as a tool by dominant groups to exert control over subordinate groups within a specific socio-cultural framework (Fairclough, 1989, p.1).

Fairclough's CDA also provides a theoretical and systematic method that facilitates the assimilation of many critical viewpoints. It gives the analysis of data a theoretical direction that enables the researcher to identify the underlying power dynamics, ideological biases, and discursive techniques used in the discourse under study.

Data analysis is guided by the research methodology of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Approach. The link between language, power, and social environment is taken into consideration to a limited extent by constructionist approaches to discourse. Foucault's theory only covers constitutive components of discourse and explains discursive frameworks; Laclau and Mouffe's theory does not experimentally and methodically explore the use of language in social context; and Dijk's approach approaches discourse from a psychological standpoint. However, Fairclough's Critical Approach towards Discourse is more advanced, in-depth, explicit, and systematic, and it is supported by theoretical notions that



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are more suited for the current research. It has the capacity to take in a range of theoretical and critical viewpoints for assessing the research being done. A theoretical approach that may be used as a research framework has been constructed.

Therefore, this study is theoretically and methodologically based on Fairclough's Critical Discourse Approach. This framework is used in the study to examine the social and ideological implications of Bilawal Bhutto's speech, with special emphasis on the function of language in creating and reflecting social realities and discursive systems.

Analysis and Interpretation

Descriptive Level

At the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in Washington, the speaker began by thanking the organization for allowing him to connect with policymakers. This opening sets the stage for a polite and thankful conversation about religious extremism.

The speaker uses formal and colloquial language to engage and educate the audience. Understanding the main elements is easy due to the vocabulary used. The speaker ensures that all listeners, regardless of expertise or experience, receive the message by striking this equilibrium.

During his address, Bilawal Bhutto used repetition and rhetorical questions to support his claims. The orator gave a cohesive speech with many examples and personal stories. The speaker repeatedly said "I am here" to highlight his presence and loyalty to Pakistan. The speaker constantly said "we are Pakistan" to emphasize Pakistani togetherness and might. "Wrestling with the twin challenges of terrorism and intolerance" emphasizes the gravity of these issues using alliteration. Figurative language was used to simplify complex issues. The speaker compared Pakistan-US diplomatic relations to a marriage, stressing the need of cooperation from both sides to create a successful and peaceful partnership. According to metaphor, Pakistanis are "torchbearers" who must preserve and advance the heritage of their national heroes. The author links Pakistan with the US via famous people and events. The person compared Pakistan's efforts to Martin Luther King Jr.'s. The speaker highlighted Quaid-e-Azam, Pakistan's founder, and other national leaders' contributions to the nation's development. The speaker contrasted the media's negative portrayal of Pakistan with the country's peaceful and welcoming nature. Bilawal repeated key terms in his speech to make them remember. The speaker repeated "Pakistan First" to emphasize the nation's commitment to its own interests. "We must" was used to emphasize the importance of addressing Pakistan's challenges. In speeches, "Democracy is the answer" emphasizes democracy's importance in Pakistan's political system. Bilawal used historical references to connect with his audience and honor his family and party. The person referenced their grandpa, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, the founder of the Pakistan People's Party and a former Pakistani prime minister. Bilawal evoked nostalgia and connected with the audience through this method. He also spoke about the Pakistani people's efforts in fighting terrorism, evoking empathy and sympathy. The "legendary Hydra" has been used to portray religious fundamentalism as an insurmountable foe. "Can anyone, in all honesty, tell me where these long wars are being won?" said the speaker. The speaker captivates and creates immediacy.



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The utilization of emotive language such as "vile message," "turbo-armed caveman," and "murderous and depraved path" serves to underscore the gravity of the threats posed to civilization. Bilawal employs a rhetorical approach to prompt the audience to contemplate the matter, as he inquires, "What motivates young Muslims from diverse backgrounds and regions to join the cause?" What factors contribute to the decision of numerous individuals who identify as Muslims to depart from liberal democracies and affiliate with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)? The importance of self-reflection in democratic societies is emphasized through the repetition of the phrase, "we must also engage in self-challenge, challenge our nations, and challenge our democratic systems." The author employs the rhetorical device of analogy by drawing a comparison between "the vacuum" and the imperative for democratic societies to address the absence resulting from unfulfilled commitments. The speaker employs contrastive pairs such as "equality, dignity, justice, life, liberty," among others, to emphasize the core tenets of democracy that are at risk of being undermined by extremist ideologies.

Interpretation Level

Through many facets of its content and environment, this speech given at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in Washington highlights the social practice component. The speaker emphasizes how important it is for the policy community to fight religious extremism while showing how organizations like the USIP influence public discourse and policy choices. The speaker's understanding of the social environment in which the speech is delivered is shown in this acknowledgment, which also recognizes the impact of institutions and stakeholders engaged in addressing the topic at hand.

Moreover, the speaker employs language and tone that conform to the societal conventions prevalent in that particular context. The discourse adopts a formal and authoritative demeanor that is fitting for the context of the USIP occasion. The speaker's demonstration of familiarity with the social norms governing formal interactions is evidenced by their utilization of polite expressions and deferential diction. The adherence to social norms fosters audience respect and engagement while also establishing the speaker's credibility.

The discourse's substance indicates that the orator possesses an understanding of the broader societal, cultural, and political concerns encompassing religious extremism. The speaker expounds upon the political milieu of Pakistan and its impact on the proliferation of extremist ideologies, while also acknowledging the historical antecedents of extremism within the country. The speaker's contextualization showcases their comprehension of the societal and political factors that impact religious extremism, providing a comprehensive examination that surpasses superficial responses.

The speech underscores the significance of democratic norms and their role in preventing extremism. The orator endorses the cultural conventions that assign significant importance to democratic principles by espousing democracy as a means to address structural issues and foster inclusivity. The aforementioned action enhances the speaker's credibility by aligning with the audience's anticipation of a conscientious and forward-thinking strategy towards tackling challenging societal issues.



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The discourse additionally employs historical allusions, serving as culturally ubiquitous points of reference and symbols. The mention of prominent figures such as Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and General Zia-ul-Haq evokes a sense of shared recollection and cultural consciousness among the populace regarding Pakistan's struggle against terrorism. These allusions not only demonstrate the speaker's acquaintance with the cultural setting, but they also strike a chord with the listener, fostering a sense of connection and understanding.

The speech also takes into account how religious extremism may influence various social groups and local communities. It draws attention to the need of resolving the underlying issues and societal injustices that fuel extremism. The speaker exhibits an understanding of social dynamics and the value of inclusive strategies in fighting extremism by respecting the unique experiences and viewpoints of many populations. This acknowledgment of the societal effects of extremism gives the speech more depth and subtlety and demonstrates a knowledge of how complicated the problem is.

By harmonizing with societal norms and situating the problem of religious extremism within its social, cultural, and political aspects, the speech successfully includes the second component of Fairclough's 3D model. The speech conforms to the standards of a formal setting like the USIP event thanks to its content and language, which show a grasp of the social environment in which it is presented. The speech deals with the social issues connected with religious extremism by acknowledging historical personalities, speaking to varied populations, and promoting democratic principles, generating a relevant and effective discourse that resonates with the audience.

Explanation Level

The speaker's subject positions and the underlying power relations in the discourse are made clear in the speech given at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in Washington. We may learn more about the speaker's posture and the underlying power dynamics by looking at the subject position dimension. Initially, the speaker asserts their expertise stemming from their comprehension and proficiency. The authors present a comprehensive and meticulously researched analysis of religious extremism, encompassing political, social, and historical dimensions. By adopting such a position, the speaker can position themselves as an authoritative and knowledgeable voice on the matter, thereby enhancing their ability to persuade.

The speaker assumes the role of a conscientious proponent by emphasizing the importance of combating religious radicalism and promoting democratic values. This perspective aligns with established societal norms of accountable leadership and bolsters the speaker's credibility in shaping public discourse on the matter. The orator positions themselves as a moral agent committed to addressing the issues stemming from religious fundamentalism through the adoption of this particular perspective.

The discourse additionally showcases the orator's empathy and concern towards the communities affected by religious radicalism. By addressing the injustices and frustrations that fuel extremism, the speaker establishes oneself as a sympathetic defender of underprivileged communities. By evoking emotional



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reactions from the audience and fostering a sense of trust, the speaker may increase his or her authority and persuasiveness.

However, it's crucial to take the discourse's power relations into account. A power imbalance between the speaker and the audience might result from the speaker's position as the authoritative figure when they deliver their analysis and suggested remedies. The audience is positioned as the ones who will benefit from the speaker's knowledge and competence in this topic position. Even though a speaking setting naturally has a power dynamic, it is important to maintain a fair and inclusive approach that promotes conversation and participation rather than a one-way delivery of information.

Additionally, the institutional setting of the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) has an impact on the speaker's topic perspective. The USIP has institutional influence and authority in the area of peacebuilding and conflict resolution as a respected organization. The speaker's attendance at the USIP strengthens their topic position even more since they are connected to the institution's standing and credibility. The speaker's speech on religious extremism has more weight and validity as a result of this institutional relationship.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study looked at Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's address at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in Washington, DC, and evaluated the prevailing discourses, rhetorical techniques, and language choices the speaker used. For the purpose of gaining a thorough knowledge of the speech's underlying meanings and the speaker's political motivations, the study goals and research questions were in line with one another.

By using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the methodology for this study, the research goals were achieved. First, the speaker proves his expertise. He thoroughly investigates religious fanaticism from political, social, and historical viewpoints. By taking this attitude, the speaker presents himself as an expert and persuader.

The speaker speaks against religious fanaticism and for democracy. This approach supports societal norms of responsible leadership and boosts the speaker's influence on public discourse. This issue positions the speaker as a moral agent committed to solving religious extremism's concerns. The speech shows the speaker's sympathy for the victims of religious extremism.

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