

**Stylistic Analysis of Imran Khan's Speech at the 76th
Session of the United Nations' General Assembly Meeting**
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Abstract

This paper carries out a comprehensive stylistic analysis of the speech delivered by the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Imran Khan, at the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly. From the standpoint of stylistics, PM speech is analyzed from three major perspectives: language description, textual analysis, and contextual analysis by following a heuristic checklist of stylistic features put forward by Leech and Short (2007). This paper explores the significance of stylistic analysis in uncovering the nuanced layers of meaning, intention, and rhetorical strategies inherent in spoken language. The study focuses on the speech delivered by the then Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Imran Khan, during the 76th session of the UNGA. The analysis employs a heuristic checklist of stylistic features proposed by Leech and Short (2007) to shed light on linguistic elements, and contribute valuable insights to discourse studies. The research underscores the importance of stylistic analysis in deciphering the intricacies of political speeches on the international stage. The study concludes that Imran Khan has employed the stylistic devices in his speech by utilizing witty statements, semantics, syntax, and sociolinguistic competency so as to draw public attention.

Keywords: socio-cultural features, syntactic features and the use of rhetorical devices

Introduction

Language and politics are widely seen to be interrelated and closely intertwined at primary level, since language is the primary tool to communicate politics. According to Chilton (2004), language is "how politics or political discourse and ideas are widely disseminated". Following, Harris (1979) asserts "in politics, words have a powerful effect" and "language is how political ideas are transmitted to the community."

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Politicians pay close attention to many aesthetic methods in order to improve their ideas and public image. They use these stylistic qualities in their talks to reinforce their ideologies and to give the impression that they are authoritative leaders, persuading their audience. (Cappetta et al., 2006).

Hence, the subsequent sections are devoted to elicit a proposed paradigm for the stylistic analysis of Imran Khan speech at the Seventy-Six session of the United Nation General Assembly, by defining stylistics and focusing on its primary components.

Moreover, this paper has undertaken a comprehensive stylistic study of the PM's speech, based on the theories and approaches epitomized by Leech and Short (1981), in order to determine how PM Imran Khan makes his speech persuasive to impart his desired impact over the audience and for the purpose to improve the level of appreciation for English works and to enrich the techniques in English writing and speech delivery.

The current study aims to figure out stylistic. Human language, recognized as a remarkable human asset, serves multifaceted functions in social interactions. Its universal utilization spans across individuals of varying ages, genders, races, and social standings, facilitating communication within both individual and group settings. Through the strategic application of language in communication, individuals effectively convey ideas, thoughts, opinions, or messages, fostering a mutual understanding between parties. The proficiency with which humans employ language enables the fulfillment of diverse needs and objectives, including aspirations for power, authority, and societal status. These objectives often find actualization exclusively through adept linguistic expression, prompting individuals to adopt specific linguistic approaches.

The utilization of language exhibits distinct characteristics contingent upon social contexts, with political discourse emerging as a particularly unique and complex linguistic domain. Within the political sphere, language becomes a strategic instrument wielded by politicians to exert influence and persuade individuals, particularly for the attainment of paramount political objectives such as power and credibility. The absence of effective linguistic prowess would compromise individuals' opportunities to secure desired positions within governmental or institutional structures. Metaphorically, language assumes the role of a weapon employed by politicians to cultivate public trust. Politicians purposefully craft their discourse with eloquence, aiming to create a compelling, attractive, and persuasive linguistic arsenal. Recognizing that voters, while not universally

uniform in their judgments, form perceptions of politicians through their language, politicians strive to project a specific image.

Consequently, voters are compelled to discern the character of politicians before exercising their voice, relying on the content of political discourse, promises, and intended actions for societal and national benefit. Given the pivotal role of language in influencing the electorate, politicians consistently refine their linguistic presentations to ensure they are captivating and provocative. Hence, it can be deduced that the adept manipulation of language is an indispensable skill in the political realm, where the ability to artfully engage with language becomes a decisive factor in eliciting support from the electorate.

The significance of stylistic analysis of speech lies in its ability to uncover the intricate layers of meaning, intention, and rhetorical strategies embedded within spoken language. Here are some key reasons why stylistic analysis of speech is valuable:

1. Understanding Communicative Intent
2. Identifying Rhetorical Strategies
3. Revealing Speaker Identity and Persona
4. Contextualizing Discourse
5. Evaluating Effectiveness and Impact
6. Informing Discourse Studies

The study reveals the various linguistic features of the speech, delivered by then premier of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Imran Khan at 76th session of the UNGA, into limelight through stylistics. With the purpose to investigate the premiers' choice of language at international platform, the speech has been analyzed by following a heuristic checklist of stylistic features put forward by Leech and Short (2007).

Following, Leech and Short model provides us with a systematic approach to carryout stylistic evaluation of certain linguistic data by offering four different levels under which stylistic analysis could be conducted. These sub-categories include, "lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech context and cohesion." (Khan et al. 2015, p. 11). Leech and Short acknowledge the incompleteness of their model by pointing out the limitations of models as they believe that model is based on limited linguistic categories, leaving out a lot of details (Leech and Short 2007). However, how limited the model might be, it has yet a significant potential to provide

a reader with the ability to explore the style of an author through a carefully knit linguistic survey.

Keeping in view the limitations of Leech and Short Model (2007), the speech in hand is also analyzed through Thematic Content Analysis by interpreting the linguistic data in order to see the effects these deliberate linguistic choices might be on the concerned quarters i.e. world leaders, other respected dignitaries and more importantly, on the people of Pakistan listening to their PM at homes.

Overall, stylistic analysis of speech enhances our understanding of spoken discourse by uncovering its nuanced linguistic features, rhetorical strategies, and socio-cultural dimensions. It offers valuable insights into how language is used to convey meaning, shape perceptions, and influence audiences in diverse communicative contexts.

Analyzing Imran Khan's speech from a stylistic perspective can be both important and relevant for several reasons such as Stylistic analysis can unveil the rhetorical strategies employed by Imran Khan in his speech. This includes the use of persuasive techniques, repetition, metaphors, and other linguistic devices that contribute to the overall impact and effectiveness of his message. The way Imran Khan speaks can affect how the public perceives him. Through examining the stylistic components of his lectures, scholars might acquire a deeper understanding of his strategies for influencing public opinion, establishing credibility, and projecting authority. In conclusion, Imran Khan's speeches can be studied stylistically to gain important insights into the subtleties of his communication, the rhetorical devices he employs, and the effects his words have on different audiences. It can aid in the development of a more thorough comprehension of his public persona, political messaging, and the mechanics of political communication in Pakistan.

Literature Review

The Notions of Stylistics and Style

Stylistics is the branch of applied linguistics which deals with the study of literary texts through the lenses of various linguistic models. According to Widdowson (1975), stylistics is “the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation.” Short and Candlin defines the term as “stylistics is a linguistics approach to the study of the literary texts. It thus embodies one essential part of the general course-philosophy: that of combining language and literary study” (1989, p.183). These given definitions presuppose that stylistics follows a critical approach to utilize the science of linguistics in order to describe

various linguistic features of a literary texts.

Researchers in the field of communication have long focused on the stylistic analysis of the text. Imran Khan's speech analysis is another goal of the current investigation. The Last Word by Tabassum is the subject of a stylistic analysis by Khan, Ahmad, Ahmad, and Ijaz (2014). The story is analyzed stylistically by the researchers, who take phonological, lexical, and grammar trends into account. The story's style is mostly constructed through the use of rhyme, repetition, parallelism, alliteration, consonance, and assonance, according to the scholars.

Historically, stylistics as a discipline emerged and later developed in the 20th century as an approach to study literary texts with reference to the linguistic features it possesses. It also pinpoints as a framework to analyze how various linguistics' choices made by literary figures in their respected works to produce the desired effect over the reader. (Barry, 2010)

Furthermore, stylistics is mainly concerned with the style which a writer or a speaker adopts to produce certain effect, and to achieve the intended purpose with the help of specific language use. To achieve their desire objectives, writers mostly utilize various grammatical, lexical and other available choices in order to convey their thoughts and meanings.

In addition to this, there are some creative writers who, for the sake of producing aesthetic effects and to express their emotions, resort to the use of specific linguistic choices. Simpson(2004) asserts that "to do stylistics is to explore language, and, more specifically, to explore creativity in language use."

According to a review of earlier research, stylistic analysis of literary texts is typically done using Leech & Short's paradigm. There are incredibly few studies that analyze non-literary materials stylistically. Munir (2014) analyzes Barack Obama's second inaugural speech stylistically. His research attempts to analyze the speech's lexicon and syntactical structure as well as reveal how figures of speech are used in the discourse.

These lexical and grammar related choices make up the style of an author \ speaker. According to Oloruntobe-Oju, taking into consideration the notion of style, asserts that "style is almost synonymous with variety: it refers in a simple way to the manner of expression, which differs according to various contexts" (199, p.127)

Hence, style could be defined as, "a selection from a total linguistic repertoire that constitutes a style ... style can be applied to both spoken and written, both 'literary' and 'everyday' varieties of language; but by tradition, it is particularly associated with written literary texts" (Leech and Short, 2007, p.09-10).

Stylistic Devices

Stylistic devices refer to the techniques used by the writers or orators to stress upon the themes that they want to convey through their respective works. To heighten the effect of the literary work, stylistic devices are utilized to effectively portray the desired stance. However, when it comes to political discourses and texts, such techniques when employed are determined by aims and objectives of the orators or authors i.e. 'condition of communication'. (Ramzan et al., 2021).

For instance, speeches of politicians are often characterized by different styles to create comparison and contrast, to criticize, or to produce a humorous effect, especially when comparing their political parties with their opponents. Likely, the significance of a stylistic analysis lies in the assumption that various kind of patterns related to structure, lexis, semantics and alike are deliberately introduced by the author to manipulate different functions accordingly.

Moreover, stylistic devices are traditionally utilized in political discourse to enhance the aesthetic effect over the audience. (Dlugan, 2008). To achieve the desired effect, politician usually employ techniques such as repetition, extensive use of powerful metaphors and similes, besides the use of rhetoric devices to elicit emotional response of the audience.

To sum up, one may argue in the words of Thornborrow & Wareing 1998 that the purpose of stylistic analysis has become more complex with the advancement in literary stylistics. Initially, the texts were analyzed to elicit the general meaning of the text, however, there comes a shift from structuralism approach to the stylistic analysis to a more pragmatic orientation recently with the purpose to "link choices in text to social and cultural context." (p. 32)

Methodology

The research is qualitative and descriptive. The current research aims to find out the stylistic devices used in Imran Khan's speech. To analyze language stylistically, the researcher chooses the model of style analysis proposed by Leech & Short in the book "Style in Fiction". Using this model, the study examines language to highlight stylistic devices embedded in it. The research is theoretical, analytical and descriptive in nature as it analyzes the poems to find out the stylistic devices present in the poems and examines how these devices create the rhetorical effect in the speech.

Taking into consideration the limitations of time and space, the current study is delimited to the analysis of the following linguistic categories/themes.

- Socio-cultural features
- Syntactic categories
- Rhetorical devices

To sum up, the writer has followed a systematic approach to carry out this study. First, after deciding about and careful selection of the Speech, the researcher has closely read the transcript to identify the instances related to the above-mentioned categories. The recorded linguistic data is then interpreted and discussed in the analysis and discussion section of this paper.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

According to stylistic pluralism, "language performs a number of different functions and any piece of language is likely to be the result of choices made on different functional levels." (Leech, 1981) That is, an author's linguistic choices are based on the particular tasks he wants to accomplish, which are intimately tied to his writing and speaking goals. According to Janna Thornborrow (2000), addressing literary texts entails the application of linguistics (cited in Thornborrow, Joanna & Shan Wareing, 2001).

Consequently, the next section is devoted to evaluate the linguistic aspects of Imran Khan's address during the 76th session of the UN General Assembly. However, it should be noticed that language used in political addresses demonstrates some special characteristics that set it apart from other language usage styles. The main focus of this session remains on the examination of socio-cultural features, syntactic features and the use of rhetorical devices in the speech.

i. Socio-Cultural Features

Societal and cultural characteristics are of interest to speakers who wish to arouse their audience in order to touch their national spirit and commemorate sensitive and historical events. Such instances can also be observed in the Premier's speech. Following are the details.

ii. Religious Connotation

Connotations add to the overall meaning and underlying effect of a text's discourse. They strengthen "the rhetorical force and the traditional significance of political speeches" (Borowska, 2014). Imran Khan uses religious connotation to express power or devotion to God by using the name of God. His speech is guided by the belief that Muslims are a chosen and blessed people by God. Consider the following illustration:

[*Bismi l-lāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm(i)*
['iy-yāka na 'budu wa 'iy-yāka nasta 'īn(u)]

The reason behind Imran Khan's recourse to citing reference to God and The Quran in almost all his political speeches is that he wants to offer his speech spiritual authority because he thinks that since most Pakistanis are devout Muslims, it would be effective to use references to faith to get public attention.

iii. Appearance

Dress is considered an important aspect of non-verbal communication and might have an immense social significance for the audience. In addition to clothing, dress also refers to accessories like jewelry, ties, bags, hats, and eyewear. In general, clothing gives nonverbal cues about a speaker's culture, personality, and financial position.

The outfit that the Premier worn during the speech carried a symbol of national recognition for Pakistan. He always wears a neat Kameez shalwar along with a waistcoat wherever he goes, whether it's in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, or China. For the UNGA address, he also dressed himself in a white Kameez Shalwar and a black waistcoat, which is a typical Pakistani and Pashtun attire. His clothing might have posed a great impact over the people, especially of Pakistani origin. Furthermore, Premier's devotion to Sufism is well known to the intelligentsia and the masses. The specific ring that he wore during the speech demonstrated his predilection towards Sufism. Recently, PM also led the foundation of Al-Qadir University, the main focus of the Al-Qadir University will be research on Sufism.

iv. Historical Past

Imran Khan's reference to the notion of historical past when talking about Islamophobia in his speech during the United Nations General Assembly session, is another artistic device where writers/speakers resort to historical pasts to make their point. Here, PM is alluding to the recent past regarding Islamophobia as not a new phenomenon, but it has strengthened its roots in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

“In the aftermath of 9/11 terrorist attacks, terrorism has been associated with Islam by some quarters. This has increased the tendency of right-wing, xenophobic and violent nationalists, extremists and terrorist groups to target Muslims”

Syntactic Features

The variety of English sentence structures allows language users to perform a variety of activities, one of which is to display stylistic features. As a result, speakers, particularly politicians, use a variety of sentence patterns, modalities, etc. to convey their intended thoughts.

i. Sentences

Imran Khan commonly employs clauses connected by coordinating conjunctions in order to elaborate on his ideas. Compound sentences pinpoint a compromise between the clauses in complex sentences, which can make a speech strong and have the potential to produce the lasting impact. For the sake, Imran Khan employs coordinating conjunctions and linking and hyphenated clauses and phrases throughout his speech, resulting in compound and complex syntactic structure that help him to organize his jumbled thoughts. Imran Khan's manipulations can be shown in the following examples:

“Such double standards are the most glaring in case of India, where this RSS-BJP regime is being allowed to get away with human rights abuses with complete impunity.”

“Then all along the tribal belt bordering Afghanistan - Pakistan's semi-autonomous tribal belt - where no Pakistan army had been there since our independence, people had strong sympathies with the Afghan Taliban, not because of their religious ideology but because of Pashtun nationalism, which is very strong”

Imran Khan employs complicated sentences, which are expressed by his use of relative clauses, comas and colons in order to build on his thoughts and explain his ideas more vividly than he could have expressed by the use of compound sentences.

“I also wish to express appreciation for the significant achievements of your predecessor, Volkan Bozkir, who guided the Assembly skillfully under the difficult circumstances imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic.”

“Being fully aware of our global responsibilities, we have embarked upon game changing environmental programs: reforesting Pakistan through our 10 billion tree tsunamis; preserving natural habitats; switching to renewable energy; removing pollution from our cities; and adapting to the impacts of climate change.”

Since short and simple sentences can imply stress, impatience, or urgency, it appears that Imran Khan rarely uses these unless he wishes to consolidate his argument, concentrate on a single point, or provide a

conclusion. Consider the concluding para of the premier's speech.

"You cannot waste time. Help is needed there. Humanitarian assistance has to be given there immediately. The Secretary General of the United Nations has taken bold steps ..."

Syntactically, though most sentences are either declarative, imperative or interrogative that have been detected in Imran Khan's speech. Declaration is frequently used to provide facts and establish a claim. Due to their directness and intensity, imperative sentences are often employed to make demands or call for action, whereas interrogative statements always prompt people to concentrate and pay close attention to what is being said. Moreover, we can find a vivid pattern of using declarative statements followed by interrogative structure and then a statement or two of imperative structure by the PM in his speech. For instance;

"Last February, we reaffirmed the 2003 ceasefire understanding along the Line of Control." "So, what happened? ... What about us? ... What have the Taliban promised?"

"I urge you to mobilize the international community, and move in this direction."

ii. Pronouns

In Imran Khan's speech, pronouns, such as we, our, I, and they are mostly manipulated. Imran Khan, for example, uses the words "we" and "our" to build unintentional or subconscious understanding with his listeners. By empathizing with his audience more, he expects to win their sympathies. He also intends to convince them that they have something in common, which will assist in resolving their differences. Indirectly, using such pronouns can help reduce the distance between the speaker and the listeners. For example,

"We hope the Secretary-General's report will focus on these new threats of terrorism posed by Islamophobes and right-wing extremists".

"Our parallel efforts, at the same time, should be to promote interfaith harmony, and they should continue".

Yet, in certain cases, Imran Khan resorts to the pronoun 'I' when he directly expresses himself to his audience.

"And now Mr. President, I want to talk about Afghanistan".

“I urge you to mobilize the international community, and move in this direction”.

'They' is usually used to refer to people or groups as 'one single entity'. Imran Khan frequently uses the word 'they' to refer to groups or individuals as a whole;

“They declared Jihad on us”.

iii. Modality

The use of modal verbs such as must, will and need to, is another distinguishing feature of the address. Modal verbs demonstrate how Imran Khan, a man of principles, refuses to compromise on his ideas in the pursuit of better change for his neighbors and his own countrymen.

“A destabilized, chaotic Afghanistan will again become a safe haven for international terrorists -the reason why the US came to Afghanistan in the first place.”

“We must strengthen and stabilize the current government, for the sake of the people of Afghanistan.”

“And if today, the world needs to know why the Taliban are back in power ...”

Rhetorical Devices

Imran Khan employs a variety of rhetorical devices, including repetition, simile, metaphor, and metonymy, to persuade people to believe his ideas and principles.

i. Repetition

The term "repetition" is frequently used to describe the purposeful use of the same thing frequently for the sake of emphasis. It should be noted that repeating a word, phrase, or idea aids in its comprehension and memorization by the listeners. In political discourse, repetition is one of the most preferred stylistic figures. Politicians repeat the same words and phrases numerous times for their audience to better understand and to produce the desired effect. Consider:

“The rich countries have no incentives, or compulsion, to return this ill-gotten wealth, and this

ill-gotten wealth belongs to the masses of the developing world.”

Repetition serves to highlight arguments and strengthen the desired impression on the audience, as shown by the above excerpt from Imran Khan's speech. When an idea is repeated at the appropriate place and time, it enhances acceptability while making it more obvious to the intended audience.

ii. *Metonymy*

Metonymy is a technique for linking one thing or notion to another that is connected in some way. This figurative use of language is constantly linked to the development of symbolism. In the speech, PM Imran Khan has uttered the name of city to designate the country. Consider:

“New Delhi has also embarked on what it ominously calls the “final solution” for the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.”

“There were attacks being conducted from the Afghan soil into Pakistan.”

iii. *Simile*

A comparison of one thing to another of a different kind is used to enhance or intensify a description (e.g. as brave as a lion). By comparing the evolving events and highlighting what they have in common in terms of transformation, this figurative language use seeks to highlight their connections by using the words 'like'. Consider the instance from the Premier's Speech;

“I fear a few “wealthy islands” in the sea of poverty will also turn into a global calamity, like

climate change.”

Conclusion

In conclusion, the stylistic analysis of Prime Minister Imran Khan's speeches reveals a masterful use of language that significantly contributes to the effectiveness of his communication. His skillful incorporation of witty statements, semantics, syntax, and sociolinguistic competence enhances the overall appeal of his speeches, making them not only engaging but also impactful. This study delves into the various stylistic elements employed by Khan in addressing global leaders and the public, focusing on key contemporary issues such as Covid-19, Climate change, Islamophobia, The Afghanistan Conundrum, and Unfair Distribution of Wealth.

Of particular note is Imran Khan's ability to use humor in his

speeches. Witty statements add extra charm to his rhetoric, capture the audience's attention and make his messages more memorable. This choice of style not only conveys a sense of intelligence and quick thinking, but also helps create a relatable and likeable image of the leader.

The main conclusion that can be drawn from this work is the semantics employed by Imran Khan in his speech play an important role in shaping the meaning in his speeches to create impact on the audience. His choice of words is carefully calibrated to resonate with the audience, creating an emotional connection and emphasizing the urgency and importance of the global issues he addresses. The semantic nuances contribute to the persuasiveness of his arguments and align the audience with his viewpoints.

Syntax or the arrangement of words and sentences is another stylistic aspect where Imran Khan excels. His speeches have a rhythm and flow that add to the overall coherence and readability. Strategic use of sentence structures helps emphasize main points, create focal points and maintain audience engagement throughout the speech.

Imran Khan's sociolinguistic competence is evident in his ability to tailor his language to resonate with diverse audiences. Whether addressing global leaders or the general public, he adapts his linguistic style to suit the context, demonstrating an acute awareness of the sociocultural factors that shape effective communication.

The analysis of Khan's speeches on pressing global issues underscores his proficiency in using language as a tool for persuasion and mobilization. By drawing attention to critical matters such as Covid-19, Climate change, Islamophobia, The Afghanistan Conundrum, and Unfair Distribution of Wealth, he not only informs but also calls upon world leaders to take action.

This extensive stylistic analysis of Imran Khan's speeches serves as a valuable resource for those seeking to enhance their stylistic analytical skills. It provides insights into how a skilled communicator can use language strategically to achieve specific rhetorical objectives, fostering a deeper understanding of the interplay between linguistic choices and effective communication. As Khan continues to address global challenges through his speeches, further analyses of his stylistic techniques promise to contribute to ongoing discussions on the power of language in shaping public opinion and influencing political discourse.

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