Annals of Human and Social Sciences
www.ahss.org.pk

RESEARCH PAPER

Imran Khan and Bilawal Bhutto's Interviews on the CNN: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This research endeavor is an attempt to explore two Pakistani politicians' (Imran Khan and Bilawal Bhutto) expressive mode of communication to propagate their narratives. Our overarching goal is to dissect the most consequential political discourses produced by the two politicians during their interviews with the CNN after a no confidence move against the then PM Imran Khan. We have employed the Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MMDA) to investigate the self- presentation modes and linguistics features used by the two leaders. Our findings show that during his interview with the CNN, Khan took care to maintain his composure, as evidenced by his posture and facial expressions, while the network painted Imran Khan as a political leader who will stop at nothing to restore his authority by casting blame on the United States. After analyzing the interviews of Imran Khan and Bilawal Bhutto, it is concluded that Imran Khan as a political leader is more mature than Bilawal Bhutto and has the ability to express his position clearly.

| **Keywords:** | Bilawal Bhutto, CNN, Imran Khan, Multimodal Discourse Analysis, Pakistan, Regime Change |

Introduction

Expressive mode of communication i.e. the extent to which the language is understood depends on the degree to which the audience believes the speaker's claims. In other words, the extent to which the audience believes the discourse being conveyed determines the meaning of the text. In particular, shifting discourse from the verbal mode to the visual mode seems to act as a method of merging various discourses into a single text without the requirement for articulating these discourses through the use of language. This is because shifting from verbal to visual discourse seems to function as a method of incorporating multiple forms of discourse into a single piece of writing. Politicians' efforts to shape their public image and establish their own unique brand have been the subject of academic inquiry and public debate in recent years. The public's opinion of a politician may be shaped by their policies, their political savvy, or their personality and how they interact with the public and other political factions. Media is very keen about politics, politicians and their personalities for making their narratives that are seemed to be very important for voter identification, emotional connection, and interest. In order to promote their political ideologies and gain media attention, political leaders also uses different strategies for their personalization by constructing an alluring image based on appealing personal features and attributes (Campus, 2010; Helms, 2012).

Apart from mainstream media, social media has also played a vital role in image construction of politicians because it gives a platform to politicians to engage with the people without the interference of journalists, which give them more freedom for projecting their desired image. The very idea of media logic, with its emphasis on dramatization,

conflict, and a propensity to downplay complexity when publicizing political activities and leaders, is interwoven with the idea of image consciousness in the politics (Malik, 2017).

As argued by Maugham and Bittner in 2000 that public does counts the Leadership in politics. Scholars have studied the issue image constructions of politicians for decades and majority of scholars argue that their findings indicate political leaders have surely a great influence on voters' decisions to cast ballots in Election campaigns. Scholars also argues that the recent trends shows that now public attention is shifting away from parties and toward party leaders specifically in Media and then most importantly, it contends that party leaders holds a great importance for voters in their vote choice, and after that as a result, political leader's effects have grown stronger in the most recent times. Researchers also argues that we have seen a change in media's coverage of politicians and now media pays more attention to non-political personality traits that also includes the private lives of politicians (Amsalem et al., 2018).

Scholars of discourse agree that political discourses rely on other texts and discourses for their meaning. Racemization, as Fairclough (1992) argues, is a cutting-edge, cutting-edge technique whose primary goal is to supply an analytically-based strategy for studying not only the ways in which texts draw upon and alter one another but also the ways in which they move through various professional contexts. These illustrative features of multimodal communication have only recently become the standard in academic studies. Most studies that essentially investigate the discursive manufacture of identities in the media currently focus on the image construction of particular groups like political leaders, ethnic minorities, depiction of different genders, or the construction of sub-groupings like "workers" (Ains,worth & Hardy, 2004; De Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999).

Looking at the views of different political scholars about identity construction by media, De cilia (1999) argues that identities are basically "created, reproduced, altered, and destroyed" discursively through media. Language and other semiotic systems are then employed to generate these discursive media-based creations of identity, highlighting the central role language plays in this process. Justifications for studying identity as it is constructed discursively often state that doing so reveals tensions between different conceptions of one's identity as presented in the media and shows how one form of discourse is linked to another in the context of everyday life (De Cillia et al., 1999, p. 170). While it is clear that what De Cillia intends by "discursive" is a reference to both linguistic and nonlinguistic semiotic systems, this term is more commonly used to refer to linguistic systems. The purpose of this research endeavour is to specifically explore the multimodal production of image construction media, which distinguishes it from earlier research in this lineage. The paper will especially look into how language and words flow across various semiotic types.

Literature Review

The international media pay considerable attention to the political situation in Pakistan. Virtually every political organization nowadays uses some form of online and social media to spread its message. The political situation in Pakistan is being actively monitored by international media outlets, and mainstream political leaders in Pakistan have received extensive attention in a variety of international outlets. As the head of his political party- Pakistan Tehreek I Insaaf, Imran Khan is always featured in the national and international news. According to a BBC article (2022), Imran Khan campaigned for the PM office on a promise to clean up the corruption from the government institutions and revitalize the national economy. His removal as Pakistani Prime Minister came after a vote of no confidence in April 2022. There were rumors that the powerful Pakistani military, an important part of the country's nuclear programme, had abandoned Khan. The international press portrayed Khan as a "change" candidate, one whose promise to usher in a new era of honest politicians resonated with voters dissatisfied with the current crop of candidates.

(BBC, 2022). But Bilawal Bhutto Zardari heads the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the main opposition party in the country at that time. Since his mother's murder in 2007, he has taken over the party as Chairman. In a climate of animosity, insult, and name-calling, he has emerged as a captivating campaigner. In Pakistan, many people anticipate him to continue his family's political legacy. After becoming the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Bhutto has been a new subject for global media (BBC, 2018).

It will be very interesting to analyze the global media coverage of these two main political leaders after the political chaos and uncertainty in the country which resulted in the removal of Imran khan from the PM office. In the framework of building a civil society, the subject of how a political leader's image is shaped, utilized, and promoted in the present day is gaining prominence. With the expansion of Pakistan's democratic institutions comes the additional burden of ensuring political leaders can adapt to the country's ever-evolving political climate and maintain their competitive edge. This means that it is essential to look at how the media portrays political leaders if we want to know how the public views them. The study fills a gap and investigates how two prominent political leaders are portrayed in the media and how they respond to these portrayals on a worldwide scale. Some characteristics of political leaders are useful in establishing credibility and winning the support of the populace.

The media's status as a potent "image former" was first recognized by Galtung and Ruge (1970 p. 260). So the media has a lot of influence on how people feel about their own government. The domestic political and social climate, diplomatic ties, and the shifting international political and economic landscape are all important in shaping a country's reputation through time (Zengjun, 2004). Putting events in the context of ideology, politics, and culture, as Kellner (1995) says, helps the media paint a more accurate picture in the public's perception. Cohen (1963) shows how most of us get our ideas about other countries and cultures from the media. What we take away from the media are "pictures in our heads," as Lippmann phrased it (Lippmann, 1922). Constructed from stills, media images can have a positive, neutral, or negative tone, depending on the context in which they are used. According to Berenger (2004) people are more likely to remember and understand information if it is presented in a context.

Gitlin (1980) argues that journalists and, to a lesser extent, the rest of us who rely on their reporting are subject to an unspoken and unrecognized media frame that orders the world. According to Neumann et al., (1992) frames are "conceptual tools" used for exchanging, understanding, and evaluating information. To cope with the challenge of choosing a leader in today's media-saturated climate, the vast majority of voters rely on their preconceived notions of the candidate's character as presented in the media. A politician's image in the media is shaped by a number of factors, including the public's preexisting beliefs and the topics covered on news and analysis shows, editorials, and ads. The public's opinion of politicians is greatly influenced by the media (Smolyakova, 2000).

It is not often the elected official's own efforts, but rather his opponents', that shape his public image, as Pocheptsov (2000) discusses in his study piece "Image Maker." Despite the efforts of politicians and their teams to present a positive image, this picture often conflicts with the facts of the situation and the image created by their opponents. People only consider real-world events and activities notable if they are reported in the media; this is a result of the media's enhanced importance in modern culture. Pocheptsov (2000) argues that "in modern society, there is a law that states: a factual event is only relevant when the media alerts the wide public about it." Whenever a politician's activities are no longer reported on in the media, there is a risk that his constituents will forget about him. It was inconceivable at the turn of the century, but with the rise of mass media and television in especially, a new leader could be "promoted" in a matter of hours. It's possible that budding political stars will gain widespread attention soon thanks to the media. Top-tier political

leaders like Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, and Vladimir Putin are among the many people who could be "media candidates" (Kiev, 1995, p. 74).

Research has consistently pointed to only two distinguishing characteristics of effective leaders: competence and trustworthiness (Bittner, 2011; Greene, 2001; Kinder et al., 1980; Stewart and Clarke, 1992; Johnston, 2002; Popkin et al., 1976). A two-dimensional conceptualization may be possible, nevertheless, if the two character dimensions are so broadly defined that many character qualities fall into one dimension. We present a comprehensive conceptualization of leadership character traits, which includes six dimensions, based on an analysis of the existing literature on leadership traits. We made the deliberate decision not to a prior limiting the conceptualization of leadership traits to only two character dimensions.

By reviewing the literature, the we have identified that there is not much literature produced specifically on the image construction of Pakistani politicians particularly on global media so it will be very interesting to analyze it in the light of multimodal discourse analysis and to contribute to the existing literature. Hence, this research is pursuing following objectives; to explore the presentation of Imran Khan and Bilawal Bhutto while talking to the CNN for their narrative construction. Secondly, to analyze the linguistic features used by Imran Khan and Bilawal Bhutto while talking to the CNN.

This research study is based on the following research questions; how did Imran Khan and Bilawal Bhutto presented themselves while talking to the CNN during May 2022? And, what linguistic features were used by Imran Khan and Bilawal Bhutto while talking to the CNN during May 2022?

Material and Methods

Data Collection and Sampling

The time period selected for this study is May 2022. The reason for the selection of this time period is the unstable political situation of Pakistan after the removal of then Prime Minister Imran Khan from his office by a vote of no Confidence. The reason behind selecting these particular political figures is because Imran Khan and Bilawal Bhutto, being the chairman of their respective political parties were in public's eye during this period. Imran Khan's Interview with Rebecca Anderson was selected for this study because it was the most talked about interview after his government was removed while Bilwal Bhutto's interview with Christine Amanpur was his first appearance on CNN after becoming the foreign Minister of Pakistan. We have employed the purposive sampling technique to extract the desired sample. Purposive sampling is a sort of non-probability testing in which researchers rely on their own judgment when selecting people from the general population to participate in their reviews or studies. It is also known as critical, particular, or abstract sampling. Data has been collected and downloaded from the official website/channel of CNN and has been saved in MP4 format.

Data Analysis; Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MMDA)

Keeping in view the nature of the study, research questions and the objectives of this study we have employed the Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MMDA). By employing more than one semiotic modality, multimodal analysis allows us to better understand a text's meaning. We have opted for the MMDA because it would be the most effective in answering the study's research questions and accomplishing its objectives. When the goal is to produce a deeper comprehension, it is often stated that subjective approaches are more suitable.

Multimodal discourse analysis is concerned with the examination of a variety of forms of communication, including but not limited to words, colors, and images. MMDA is

an approach that takes into account the interplay of many modes of communication in the production of semiotic meaning. Educators now acknowledge the increasing multimodality of today's communication environment (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996; Kress, 2009 and 1998; Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010). Basically, meanings realized through more than one semiotic modality has been called a multimodal text (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 183). The study of multimodal texts in the academic literature has traditionally relied on socio-historical analysis. Kress (2005) defines a mode as "resources for representation that are culturally and socially created" (p. 6). From this definition, it is evident that the study of modes considers both its physical appearance and its contextual significance.

Results and Discussion

Following pages contain the findings and analysis on the interview of Imran khan with Ms. Rebecca Anderson in her show 'Connect the World' on 23rd May 2022;

After the then Prime Minister Imran khan's Government was overthrown by then opposition on 10 April, 2022 Imran Khan gave an interview to Becky Anderson who is a British journalist, who is currently leading a news and current affairs program on CNN International, 'Connect the World', prior to this she also hosted 'Business International'. The discussion focused on three primary themes: the government's overthrow, the country's economic woes, and an alleged U.S. conspiracy. The fall of his regime via 'plot' and 'dishonorable ways' was the primary topic of conversation.

Following are the main three issues discussed by the interviewer and interviewee. The researchers have analyzed them employing the MMDA as;

Table 1
Protest after Khan's Government Removed

Discourse	Mode of Communication
Government removed	Hurt
Removed through Conspiracy	Astonished
Foreign intervention	Surprising
Replaced by criminals	Sarcastic smile
Cabinet on bail	Funny and as well as feeling sorry

Table 01 shows the discourse and the mode of communication that supported the claims of Imran Khan while talking about his government removal by 'unfair means' and those who conspired against him. The selected discourse shows the intensity of his facial expressions while speaking these words.

Figure 1. Imran khan talking about his government being replaced by 'criminals'

Answering the first question about his removal and being replaced, Khan's facial expressions were fully supporting his claims and his tone was showing the emotion of surprise and at the same time confident about his claims. While the interviewer Becky Anderson was using words like *"sabotaging Pakistan"* and *"Alleged"* with the feeling of disappointment and confusion

Table 02- US Conspiracy

Discourse	Mode of communication
Pakistan will suffer consequences	Victim
bad manners and sheer arrogance	Disappointment
anti-American sentiment runs	Warning
Get Rid of Him	Confident

Table 02 includes those linguistic features and mode of communications that were used to describe the severity of the claims made my Imran Khan while talking about US conspiracy. These linguistic features were selected because of the intensity of visuals attached to it.

Figure 2. Imran khan talking about US conspiracy and Becky Anderson asking about Evidence (right)

While discussing the alleged US conspiracy, Imran Khan exuded self-assurance in both his facial expressions and his voice, despite the interviewer's persistent attempts to cut him off. It seems that Imran khan keeps making the same accusations over and over again. Khan said the Pakistani envoy to the US, the Assistant Secretary for the US, voted against his confidence in April. When Khan said "***Pakistan will suffer consequences,***" it meant that someone had vowed to make Pakistan suffer if Khan wasn't deposed. Clearly, the interviewer was taken aback by Khan's comments, as she kept pressing him for *"Evidence"* to back them up.

In the interview, Khan went as far as to urge that Lu be dismissed "***for bad manners and plain arrogance***" for participating in Pakistani domestic matters which means that Khan accused him for being disrespectful.

Table 3
Russia Visit

Discourse	Mode of communication
visit was planned a long time back	Confident
we wanted oil	Need /Helpless
I do not believe in military solutions	Clear
known about the invasion beforehand	No regrets

Table 03 data shows a very clear stance of Imran Khan on his visit to Russia during Russian invasion of Ukraine. Visuals of him talking about Russian visit clearly supported his unapologetic and unregretful stance regarding the most talked about visit.

Figure 3. Becky Anderson and Imran Khan Talking about Russian Trip

As Imran khan spoke about his visit to Russia on the day of the invasion, the journalist kept asking him the same question over and over again, but he disregarded her. The fact that he hasn't changed his mind about military invasions despite being asked about it and responding, *"I do not believe in military solutions,"* is telling. If Imran had known about the invasion earlier, he might have changed his mind about going, but he indicated he was delighted he went anyway, suggesting he had no regrets. In this segment of the interview, the interviewer became visibly annoyed as Khan repeatedly avoided answering her questions.

Following pages contain the findings and analysis on the interview of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari with the CNN;

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari

The topic of Pak-Afghan relations and the truce with the Taliban in Pakistan came up during a CNN interview with Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on May 18, 2022. Bilawal was speaking in his capacity as foreign minister of Pakistan to Christine Amanpur who is a British Iranian journalist and television broadcaster. Amanpour is CNN's Chief International Anchor and the host of the daily interview show Amanpour on CNN International. She did an interview with Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in which the major topic was Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan following the fall of the Taliban.

Table 4
Pak-Afghan Relations

Discourse	Mode of Communication
Tackle the threat of terrorism	Hopeful
Encouraging sign	Hopeful , happy
Kabul would live up to its promise not to allow Afghan soil to be used to launch terror attacks	Hopeful
Looking to the regime in Afghanistan to play their role in discouraging increase of terrorist activity	Worried
we continue to advocate for engagement, and particularly in light of the humanitarian crisis developing in Afghanistan	Motivated

Table 04 data shows the mode of communication and facial expressions attached to the discourse produced by Bilawal Bhutto while talking about US and Afghan Relations with Pakistan. Visuals of Bilawal Bhutto showing multiple facial expressions that are linked to the linguistic features used in this particular discourse is discussed in the above mentioned table.

Figure 4. Bilawal Bhutto zardari talking about Taliban and Pak afghan Relations

After becoming the Foreign minister of Pakistan, this was the first interview of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to any global media Channel where he seemed confident, the mode of communication used by Bilawal was motivated and hopeful and he was answering all the questions with a smiling face. The interviewer Christine on the other hand was very particular about her questions and her mode of communication was attacking and hard. While talking about Pak afghan relations after Taliban's control Bilawal used words like **"*Encouraging sign*"** and **"*would live up to its promise*"** which indicates that he was hopeful for the future and good diplomatic relations with Afghanistan. During his 40-minute interview, Bilawal Bhutto ignored many questions asked by the host, which clearly showed that Bilawal Bhutto was quite nervous. This is the reason why his facial expressions did not match his stance in many places. Bilawal's choice of words was quite careful, from which it can be inferred that he had prepared his answers in advance. Here, if we talk about the host, she tried hard to discuss various issues with Bilawal Bhutto, but because of Bilawal's attitude and getting the same answer again and again, disgust can be seen on the face of the host. .

Imran Khan, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, told CNN's Becky Anderson that he was unfairly removed from power by a global conspiracy. Because he so confidently contended about the US conspiracy and claimed about the feelings of the public, and because he indicated that anti-Americanism was on the rise in Pakistan particularly because **"*all this was known,*"** his mode of communication included both a warning and expressions of threat. The media throughout the world have begun portraying him as a courageous and confident leader, and he is careful to maintain that perception in his public pronouncements. It is essential for politicians to present themselves confidently on mediated communication channels since media portrayals of political personalities promote voter familiarity, emotional involvement, and general interest (Alexander, 2011; Langer, 2010; Stanyer, 2013).

Whereas Bilawal Bhutto Zardari presented himself as a newly appointed Foreign minister of Pakistan and He made sure to not look nervous as for his first appearance on global media. He presented himself as a young political leader of Pakistan who is hoping to change the stereotypical image of Pakistan on global Media. He was clear with his arguments and tried to create a happy image of him as an individual. In order to advertise their ideas

and goals to the public and attract media attention, politicians use personalization methods including crafting an appealing image based on their own fantastic traits (Campus, 2010; Helms, 2012).

After the analysis of language used by Imran khan in his interview, we can say that his speech is all about drawing attention to, stirring up, acknowledging, threatening, and presenting the ideas behind his removal from the Prime Minister's office and foreign intervention involved in his government removal. Imran Khan's linguistic and social examination reveals his disappointment and confidence in his claims about US conspiracy in the removal of his government. Imran Khan's discourse was produced declaratory and accusing style.

"Get rid of him"

"Bad manners and sheer arrogance"

"Pakistan will suffer consequences"

In the above mentioned text, Khan used expressive modality which means that text is determined by the reader's or listener's confidence in the truthfulness of the account being presented. In his opinion all of the information he presented was accurate, and his explanations were quite clear about Us Conspiracy and their behavior with Khan's Government. While if we look at the language used by Bilawal Bhutto in his interview to CNN's Christine Amanpur, bilawal when appealing to the international community and the United Nations for aid in the midst of a humanitarian catastrophe, the language used was professional, but when discussing matters related to terrorism, it became much more casual.

"Looking to the regime in Afghanistan to play their role in discouraging increase of terrorist activity"

"We continue to advocate for engagement, and particularly in light of the humanitarian crisis developing in Afghanistan"

In his entire speech, he uses the pronoun "we" numerous times. By using the pronoun "we" in this context, the foreign minister of Pakistan is letting the world know that anything he says represents Pakistan's foreign policy and is within his authority as the country's top diplomat. The text's expressive values show that it was written with the intention of conveying meaning clearly and accurately. Bilawal Bhutto used terms that shed light on his motivations and emotions at different points in his speech.

So, overall the CNN portrayed Imran Khan as Once a hard-partying cricket star, prime minister who has been removed from his office and now attempting to steer through the Us Conspiracy involved in his removal from the public office. Becky Anderson while conducting the interview of Imran khan introduced him as "former Prime Minister" who is struggling hard to get back his power. Rather than beginning the narrative by explaining that Khan is a former Prime Minister who was ousted from office due to a vote of no confidence from the opposition, the report simply states that Khan was a cricket star who struggled and is now chairing PTI. In light of this, it's possible that journalists' depictions of political leaders aren't necessarily based on an investigation of their backgrounds and experiences.

In contrast, Bilawal Bhutto presented himself as an energetic young politician who has recently been appointed foreign minister of Pakistan. During his appearance with CNN, Bhutto appeared approachable and casual. The media and political establishment dismissed him as "Son of previous prime minister and president." These findings demonstrate the vast range of treatment given to political leaders in the media and the varying goals of different

authors. Familiarity with the parties and their history on the side of journalists does not eliminate the possibility of bias while reporting on political leaders, though.

Conclusion

Our research and analysis led us to the conclusion that multimodal discourse analysis provides a comprehensive framework for assessing the efficacy of a given language and its accompanying method of communication. Imran Khan, Pakistan's former prime minister, has claimed on multiple occasions that ,the assistant secretary for the US, told Pakistan's ambassador that Khan should be removed from office in a vote of no confidence. The United States has been the target of Imran Khan's anger and animosity throughout his speech. Allegations are made plainly, and evidence is laid out in great depth to back them up. During his interview with CNN, Khan took care to maintain his composure, as evidenced by his posture and facial expressions, while the network painted Imran Khan as a political leader who will stop at nothing to restore his authority by casting blame on the United States.

With Bilawal Bhutto, though, things were a little different because he was presented as Pakistan's Foreign Minister who was enthusiastic about maintaining positive ties with both Afghanistan and the United States. After analyzing the interviews of Imran Khan and Bilawal Bhutto, it is concluded that Imran Khan as a political leader is more mature than Bilawal Bhutto and has the ability to express his position clearly. While giving interview to the CNN hosts, the two political leaders of Pakistan got an equal opportunity to clearly state their position regarding the ongoing political crisis in Pakistan, in which Imran Khan showed tolerance, fearlessness and talked about the American conspiracy. Here it is commendable to Imran Khan that with the self-confidence with which he presented his position, his body language and facial expressions showed the same self-confidence.

Whereas, if we talk about Bilawal Bhutto's speaking style and expressions, he did not have that self-confidence due to which his first interview after becoming the foreign minister was not very impressive .Each interview was conducted by a different journalist, illustrating the importance of the journalist's bias. When journalists write or give presentations, they evaluate their own points of view in light of the existing body of knowledge, including both conventional wisdom and paradoxical findings. Other elements, such as the opposition's strength and the political leader's standing inside his or her own party, have a role in addition to the attitudes and tendencies of the media. In an era where political players may reach their audiences directly via Twitter and Facebook, the role of journalism, and the decline of critical reporting, has to be investigated.

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