



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Constructing Ideology through Hate: A Discourse Analysis of Pakistani Politics**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the implicit ideologies and discursive devices in Pakistani political leaders' speeches, focusing on how hate speech influences ideological divides and public mobilisation. Political hate speech has become prevalent in Pakistan, with leaders using polarising language to deepen societal divides and delegitimise opponents. This study examines the linguistic strategies underlying this trend. Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework, this qualitative analysis reviews fifteen speeches by leaders from Pakistan's major political parties: PTI, PML-N, and PPP. Discursive devices, such as presuppositions, metaphors, and lexical choices, are analysed for their ideological impact. Findings reveal that strategic language choices embed assumptions, evoke emotions, and frame oppositional narratives, shaping public perception and consolidating ideological stances. Policymakers should discourage hate speech in political discourse, and educational programmes in critical media literacy are recommended to help the public discern manipulative language in political narratives.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Discursive Devices, Hate Speeches, Socio-Cognitive Approach

**Introduction**

Language is fundamental to human interaction, enabling individuals to share information, express emotions, and shape social connections (Strauss & Feiz, 2014). It not only reflects the surrounding world but also wields power to influence it, reinforcing or challenging social ideologies through discourse (Bayram, 2010). In particular, political discourse uses language strategically, blending rhetorical devices with ideological constructs to impact public opinion and sway audiences. Through mechanisms like presupposition, metaphor, and lexicalisation, political language becomes a potent tool for reinforcing ideological stances and shaping collective identity (Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 2008). This is especially evident in political contexts where discourse frequently reflects power dynamics, often taking the form of polarised or hate-laden rhetoric.

In recent years, Pakistan has experienced a rise in political hate speech, with political leaders employing divisive language to consolidate support and discredit opponents. Such rhetoric is not limited to casual commentary; rather, it often permeates formal political discourse, contributing to an "us versus them" mentality that fuels division and, at times, incites hostility (Essig, 2017). Pakistani political leaders, particularly from the three major parties—Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), and Pakistan People's Party (PPP)—have been observed using inflammatory language to resonate with specific audience segments, thereby amplifying social and ideological divisions (Mondal et al., 2018).

The intersection of politics and hate speech has serious implications. Hate speech does not merely offend; it threatens social cohesion, particularly when invoked by influential leaders. Beyond immediate political gains, such language influences public sentiment, potentially inciting discrimination, hostility, and, in extreme cases, violence. To examine this phenomenon, this study employs van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore the ideological undertones in the speeches of key Pakistani political figures: Imran Khan (PTI), Maryam Nawaz (PML-N), and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari (PPP). By dissecting how discursive strategies are used to embed ideologies at both micro and macro levels, this research aims to unveil the underlying motives within these speeches and the broader implications of political hate speech in shaping societal attitudes and perpetuating inequality.

## Literature Review

### Political Discourse Analysis

Defining political discourse revolves more around the context than the specific words or structures employed. It is fundamentally shaped by factors such as the speaker's identity, the intended audience, the purpose of the communication, and the situational context. Essentially, political discourse encompasses any statement made by politicians or others with a political aim, such as influencing decision-making processes or policies. Thus, its defining characteristic is its role within the political framework. Furthermore, political speech is marked by language commonly recognised as "political". Sharhan (2022) notes that certain linguistic features, whether structural or lexical, are consistently associated with actions deemed political.

The essence of political discourse lies in the replication of political control, the exercise of dominance, the misuse of power, and the validation or invalidation of social events—where political actions are viewed as social phenomena. Politicians engage in power struggles to achieve their objectives, shape societal values, and secure regulatory authority over resource allocation and decision-making processes. To be successful, their ideas must prevail in competition with opposing viewpoints (Shakoury, 2007). Van Dijk (2008) asserts, "If there is one social field that is ideological, it is that of politics. This is not surprising because it is eminently here that different and opposed groups, power struggles, and interests are at stake. To be able to compete, political groups need to be ideologically conscious and organized" (p. 732). Shakoury (2007) elaborates that linguists have shown considerable interest in the language forms used in political discourse to convey significant messages to specific audiences and achieve particular objectives. He argues that the patterns of language in political speeches are heavily influenced by the context of communication. Consequently, he advocates for the integration of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a comprehensive methodological approach.

Political speeches can exhibit distinct characteristics based on functional and thematic criteria. They often focus on political content, aim to reach broad audiences, and serve as products of the political sphere. Thus, "political discourse" encompasses any discussion related to politics, including political activities and initiatives. The term is closely associated with its key players—politicians. Most studies on political discourse concentrate on the writings and speeches of professional politicians or political institutions, such as presidents, prime ministers, and members of government or parliament at local, national, and international levels. Various forms of political communication include campaign speeches, inaugural addresses, Independence Day speeches, interviews, debates, and governmental discussions (Medina Chávez, 2019).

## Hate Speech in Politics

Hate speech involves language that expresses negative sentiments towards individuals or groups, aiming to dehumanise them. It encompasses any verbal, written, or symbolic communication fostering hatred based on distinguishing traits, often including attacks, discrimination, dehumanisation, and incitement to violence (Fadhel Hassan & Sahib Mehdi Muhammed, 2022). Hate speech can degrade dignity based on factors like race, gender, or ethnicity, potentially inciting violent behaviours and leading to acts of discrimination. Discourses motivated by hatred are both injurious and, in many jurisdictions, legally restricted due to their potential to incite violence (Obiora et al., 2021). With the rise of digital platforms, hate speech has become prevalent on social media, notably targeting ethnic minorities in alarming proportions. It manifests in both verbal and symbolic forms, often directed at those deemed "inferior" based on race, ethnicity, or gender, thus promoting violence, unfair treatment, or undermining dignity (Buturoiu & Corub, 2020). Balancing freedom of speech and hate speech regulation is complex in democratic societies, where free expression is crucial, yet it must be weighed against fundamental rights like equality, thought, and religious freedom (Marisa, 2019). In political discourse, limiting hate speech is essential, as hateful language threatens the dignity and rights of others. Extremist and mainstream political groups often use hate speech, which risks its normalisation, especially in discussions of migration and Islam (Olmati & Keim Petra Chvojková, 2019). In Pakistan, social media platforms like Facebook have become prominent spaces for hate speech, with political figures using inflammatory language to influence public opinion, which can incite societal division and, at times, hate crimes. These tensions and rivalries often fuel animosity and division among groups within Pakistan (Abid et al., 2021; Essig, 2017; Mondal et al., 2018). The impact of hate speech in politics is significant, contributing to social and political issues. It creates divisiveness along political, ethnic, and religious lines, limiting constructive discourse (Böttcher & Gersbach, 2020). Further, it undermines democratic norms by discouraging minority voices, leading to less representative governance (Hoice & Bernhardt, 2006). Hate speech can also exacerbate conflicts and worsen diplomatic relations, potentially leading to violence (Gagliardone, 2019). Additionally, it erodes social cohesion, fostering suspicion and animosity, and negatively impacts individuals' mental health, sometimes inciting physical violence (Tuovinen, 2022).

## Critical Discourse Studies on Hate Speech

Marisa (2019) explored hate comments with distinct discursive traits in online news sections. The study aimed to deepen understanding of individuals spreading hate speech by analysing their language and discourse. Content and discourse analysis were applied to 5,337 comments, including replies, selected for discriminatory content. The study highlighted that most comments were from Norway, addressing ethnicity, faith, customs, political views, officials, and media, typically targeting groups rather than individuals. Naeem et al. (2022) analysed speeches by Pakistan Democratic Movement leaders to examine in-group and out-group ideologies through van Dijk's (2008) model. Four speeches per speaker (October–December 2020) were examined for self-positive and other-negative representations. Results showed PDM leaders' use of linguistic forms to promote in-group favouritism and out-group negativity, reinforcing the role of political discourse in idea dissemination. Erjavec and Poler Kovai (2012) performed a critical discourse analysis on Slovenian news websites' comment sections, identifying hate speech keywords and themes. Hate speech was more common in internal politics news, frequently targeting minorities, including blacks, Roma, and Muslims.

Alakali et al. (2017) investigated hate speech on Nigerian social media, assessing its moral and legal implications. Using surveys and focus groups with 384 participants, findings indicated widespread awareness of the illegality of hate speech, though respondents were uncertain of legal responsibilities. Abiodun et al. (2017) examined hate speech during Nigeria's 2015 elections, highlighting the tense political climate and the use of media for

propaganda. The analysis included a speech by Governor Ibrahim Shema, which incited violence against opposition groups. The study recommended punitive measures for politicians engaging in hate speech. Abid et al. (2021) investigated Islamic sectarian hate speech on Pakistani social media. Using survey methods, they sampled 100 individuals (Sunni and Shia) in Lahore. Findings showed a strong link between religiosity and hate speech posting. Higher socioeconomic and educational levels were associated with reduced hateful content. Nasih and Abboud (2020) conducted a comparative critical discourse analysis of speeches by Iraqi politicians Allawi and Barham Salih using van Dijk's (2008) socio-cognitive model. Allawi's speeches featured more formal, complex discursive strategies, with a higher frequency (544 instances) compared to Salih. This variety suggested greater formality and discursive complexity in Allawi's rhetoric.

## **Material and Methods**

### **Theoretical Framework for this Research**

#### **Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis**

Van Dijk is a prominent figure in critical discourse analysis (CDA), particularly known for his socio-cognitive approach, which provides an important framework for examining hate speech and social power dynamics. CDA, according to van Dijk (1998), refers to analysing language, discourse, and communication with a focus on social power, dominance, and inequality as enacted through language in political and social contexts. His socio-cognitive model, which integrates cognition and social contexts, explores how discourse reflects and influences mental models, subjective interpretations, and social structures, adapting to different political, cultural, and social settings (van Dijk, 2008).

Central to van Dijk's CDA approach is the notion that discourse operates at both macro and micro levels. The macrostructure involves analysing overarching themes or topics in discourse, such as in news headlines, to gauge the primary intent. The superstructure focuses on the organisation of text through components like introductions, main content, and conclusions, while the microstructure scrutinises smaller textual elements such as words, phrases, or images to uncover embedded meanings (van Dijk, 1998). This structure allows for the assessment of how discourse supports specific social narratives. For instance, in a hypothetical newspaper coverage of a religious conflict, the macrostructure may frame the event as a religious issue, while the microstructure may use specific words and images to reinforce this narrative, often obscuring underlying socio-political dynamics (van Dijk, 1998).

Van Dijk's model aligns with Fairclough's concept of discourse as social practice, yet van Dijk's focus remains on the cognitive processes mediating discourse and society. He posits that shared social knowledge and cognition play a critical role in how people comprehend and produce discourse (van Dijk, 2008). By examining discourse at both macro and micro levels, van Dijk emphasises how language use, verbal interaction, and conversation contribute to larger social dynamics of power, dominance, and inequality.

Additionally, van Dijk (2008) identified 25 discursive devices to analyse discourse. These include actor description, which portrays in-groups positively and out-groups negatively; authority, where authorities support particular arguments; categorisation, grouping people based on various identities; generalisation and polarisation, which solidify in-group and out-group distinctions. Other devices, like irony and metaphor, indirectly suggest meanings or convey an enhanced image of oneself. The number game, involving statistics, is often used to lend credibility to arguments, whereas victimisation frames the in-group as suffering due to the out-group, intensifying conflict narratives. Through such devices, discourse reinforces power dynamics by portraying out-groups unfavourably while affirming in-group solidarity.

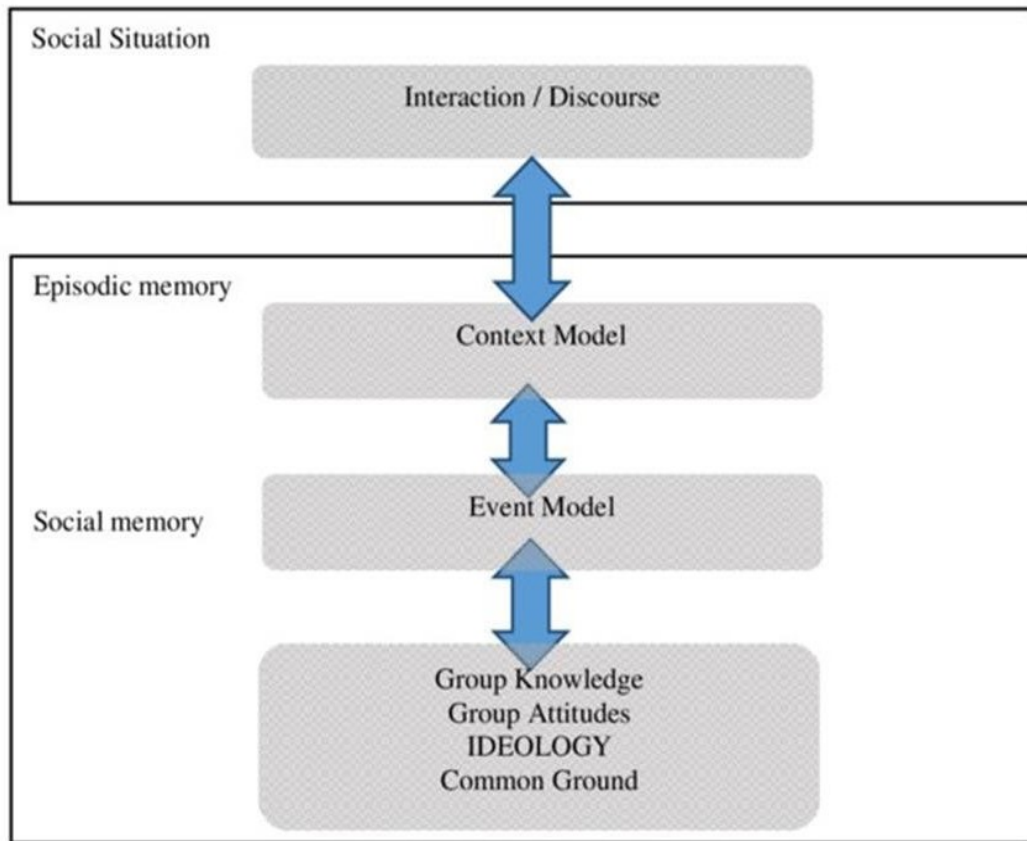


Figure 1: van Dijk's (2015) Socio-Cognitive Approach

## Data Collection

The study analysed speeches from two primary sources: original speeches delivered by Pakistani politicians and their coverage in local newspapers. This selection reflected the assumption that these texts represented general discursive practices in print media. The focus was on speeches from three influential political leaders—Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Imran Khan, and Bilawal Bhutto—whose public addresses garnered extensive media attention, particularly during the dynamic period from the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan on March 8, 2022, to August 9, 2023. This timeframe was characterised by intense political discourse, where hate speech was often employed to delegitimise opposing views and provoke public emotions.

The analysis employed van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach, which underscored the importance of context in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The study considered how participants constructed context subjectively, thereby influencing discourse comprehension. It highlighted macrostructural elements, revealing how societal and cultural frameworks shaped discourse and maintained social hierarchies.

Key discursive devices examined included lexicalisation, metaphor, and presupposition. These elements exposed the ideological underpinnings of political rhetoric and their impact on public perception. By analysing presuppositions, the study identified the assumptions that informed political messaging and shaped audience responses, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the role of language in political communication.

## Results and Discussion

### Discursive Analysis of Ideology

Ideology has a discursive dimension that can be analyzed through van Dijk's sociocognitive approach to critical discourse analysis (CDA). This approach emphasizes that discourse not only reflects social structures but also shapes social cognition and representations. Researchers using this framework examine how ideologies are constructed and disseminated through language, employing linguistic strategies to persuade and legitimize certain beliefs while marginalizing others.

In this socio-cognitive framework, ideologies are polarized, categorizing social actors as "Us" or "Them" (van Dijk, 2015). This polarization highlights group positions, associating "Us" with positive traits and "Them" with negative ones, demonstrating how language shapes understanding.

### **Presuppositions**

Presuppositions are assumptions embedded in communication, often used strategically to imply truths. Analyzing presuppositions in political speeches can reveal insights into leaders' perspectives and strategies. For example:

*Imran Khan:* "Those who plundered the national exchequer would be made answerable."

*Bilawal Bhutto:* "Imran Khan is a liar and hypocrite."

*Mariyam Nawaz:* "Thieves are afraid of arrest, but leaders are not."

Khan's statement presupposes national plundering, establishing a narrative around financial woes without concrete evidence. Bhutto's remark assumes Khan's dishonesty, shaping a negative perception. Nawaz's statement simplifies complex dynamics of leadership and crime, neglecting nuances. Such presuppositions demonstrate their persuasive power in framing public perception while underscoring the need for critical examination of underlying assumptions.

### **Meaning of Words**

van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach highlights how language conveys attitudes and influences audience understanding. Analyzing the speeches reveals how word choices reflect deeper meanings:

*Mariyam Nawaz:* "Imran Khan is a jackal who cancels movements due to the fear of police."

*Imran Khan:* Referring to opponents as "diesel" and "boot polisher."

*Bilawal Bhutto:* Describing a political act as committed by "political terrorists."

Nawaz's use of "jackal" connotes cunningness, shaping a negative image of Khan, while implying his cowardice. Khan's derogatory terms seek to discredit opponents, portraying them as incompetent. Bhutto's framing of the Jinnah House incident as terrorism invokes strong negative associations, linking it to national reverence.

Overall, these examples demonstrate how specific language choices, connotations, and presuppositions shape discourse, advancing perspectives and influencing public opinion. By analyzing these implicit meanings, we gain insights into how speakers strategically use language to frame their narratives.

## Metaphors

Metaphors compare dissimilar entities to attribute characteristics, serving as a crucial tool for conveying abstract concepts and ideologies through familiar imagery. In van Dijk's sociocognitive approach, metaphors reveal underlying ideologies and power dynamics in discourse, influencing opinions and framing discussions.

"Imran is the real 'rat' eating up the country's resources."

"Imran Khan is a \*jackal\* who cancels movements due to fear of police" (Maryam Nawaz).

"The Mir Jafars and Mir Sadiqs among us betray the trust and conspire to bring these thieves into power. The crooks who were stealing for generations from Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif, Zardari" (Imran Khan).

"Imran Khan is Fitna" (mischief) (Bilawal Bhutto).

Maryam Nawaz's use of metaphors aims for political gain. The "rat" metaphor depicts Imran Khan as a menace, while the "jackal" suggests cowardice and weakness in leadership. The reference to "Mir Jafars and Mir Sadiqs" likens contemporary politicians to historical traitors, implying they prioritize personal gain over national interests. Describing Khan as "Fitna" frames him as a source of chaos, discrediting his leadership. Overall, these metaphors shape public perception and convey ideological stances.

## Lexicalization

Lexicalization is the association of specific words with social, cultural, or ideological meanings. The choice of words influences perceptions and conveys particular messages.

- "Imran Khan a terrorist."
- "The watch stealer has not only stolen the watch" (Maryam Nawaz).
- "Absconder and criminal crooks" (Imran Khan).
- "Unguided missile" (Bilawal Bhutto).

By labelling Imran Khan a "terrorist," Maryam Nawaz invokes strong negative connotations to discredit him. The phrase "watch stealer" emphasizes his alleged misconduct, while terms like "absconder" and "criminal" suggest moral and legal inadequacy. Imran Khan's warning against the "crooks" rejected in the 2018 elections influences audience perceptions negatively. Bilawal Bhutto's "unguided missile" metaphor implies chaos and unpredictability in Khan's actions. Lexicalization thus shapes the ideological and emotional dimensions of discourse.

## Cognitive Analysis of Ideology

Wodak (2015) emphasises the importance of context in discourse analysis. Context has local and global dimensions—local pertains to immediate communication circumstances, while global relates to socio-political circumstances. These dimensions impact language use, with cognition playing a critical role in language production and comprehension (van Dijk, 1996).

- "Opposition leaders like Shehbaz Sharif, Nawaz Sharif, Fazl ur Rehman, and Asif Ali Zardari, called them 'dacoits' and 'traitors'" (Imran Khan).

- "Imran Khan had now become the biggest absconder in connection with the violation of law" (Maryam Nawaz).

- "Imran Khan is Mr. U-turn and the biggest liar" (Bilawal Bhutto).

In these statements, specific language choices reveal ideological bias and negative framing. For instance, "dacoits" and "traitors" label opposition leaders as corrupt. Each statement lacks concrete evidence, undermining their credibility and relying on hyperbolic language to enhance negative portrayals. Name-calling tactics focus on discrediting character rather than evidence-based arguments.

### **Mental Models**

Mental models play a significant role in perception and discourse comprehension (van Dijk, 20115). These subjective representations, influenced by past experiences, help categorize ongoing experiences (van Dijk, 2015).

- "Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz call the army bad while Shahbaz Sharif starts polishing whatever boot is seen" (Imran Khan).

- "Those who plundered the national exchequer... would be made answerable" (Imran Khan).

- "Pakistan: PML-N leader Maryam Nawaz questions courts for not punishing Imran Khan" (Maryam Nawaz).

- "Imran Khan is a cocaine addict who smoked charas every night" (Maryam Nawaz).

These statements reflect social cognition by shaping mental representations of individuals and their actions. They highlight power dynamics and reinforce negative perceptions. By engaging with social cognition, this analysis reveals how mental models shape discourse, influence opinions, and convey ideologies, illustrating the complexity of language in public communication.

### **The Social Analysis of Ideology**

This dimension includes the microstructure and macrostructure of ideologies, which play crucial roles in social control. Ideologies influence not only their followers but also shape interactions with other groups. A significant function of ideology is to protect the interests of those aligned with it, often empowering dominant groups over less privileged ones. As van Dijk (1998) noted, "ideologies have a dual purpose in dominant relationships—to uphold or validate the existing order and also to offer a fundamental cognitive structure for arguments aimed at convincing its members and others that this state of affairs is natural, divinely ordained or otherwise lawful." Such cognitive control is exercised through language, highlighting unequal power relations in society.

### **Power and Dominance**

- Maryam Nawaz Sharif referred to Imran Khan as a terrorist, asserting that he treats his party as a "terrorist organization."
- Criticising Imran Khan's claims regarding Toshakhana gifts, she stated, "The watch stealer has not only stolen the watch...he has wreaked havoc...and ruined the country's economy."



- Imran Khan commented, “An absconder and criminal should not be given the power to appoint the country’s army chief.”
- Bilawal Bhutto described Imran Khan as an “unguided missile” for the country.

### **Maryam Nawaz's Speeches**

- The term "terrorist" indicates an imbalanced power dynamic, aiming to undermine Khan's political stance and sway public opinion. This reflects her ideological viewpoint amidst ongoing power struggles.
- By labeling Imran Khan’s party as a “terrorist organization,” she seeks to mobilise support and discredit opponents, demonstrating ideology’s role in uniting supporters.

### **Imran Khan's Speeches**

- His statements about the army chief’s appointment challenge the authority of Nawaz Sharif and Asif Zardari, reflecting an ideological resistance.
- Calling for an “absconder and criminal” to be denied power illustrates a negotiation of authority and ethical leadership.

### **Bilawal Bhutto's Speeches**

- Using the metaphor “unguided missile” critiques Imran Khan’s leadership and reinforces ideological divisions.
- Associating Khan with negative outcomes strengthens his ideological stance against his leadership.

### **Possible Implications of Hate Speeches on Listener’s Mind**

Hate speech, defined as language intended to demean individuals or groups based on personal characteristics, can significantly impact listeners.

- Maryam Nawaz's labeling of Khan as a "terrorist" risks deepening political polarization. Her allegations of theft and economic devastation could tarnish his reputation, diminishing public trust in him and the government.
- Imran Khan's critiques of the army and the Sharif family may resonate with frustrated citizens but could alienate moderates. His stance might attract voters seeking anti-corruption measures.
- Bilawal Bhutto's strong rhetoric—calling Khan a "liar" and "hypocrite"—can cultivate negative perceptions and increase political tensions, potentially leading to a more hostile environment.

### **Discussion**

#### **Discursive Devices in Political Hate Speech**

The objective of the current study is to examine the utilization of discursive techniques in the selected political hate speeches. van Dijk's presentation of discursive devices offers a framework for analyzing the underlying ideologies within text, achieved through the complex manipulation of language. This analysis investigated how discursive

practices contribute to the formation, reproduction, and transformation of social representations and ideologies. When applying this perspective to the discursive analysis of ideology, researchers examine how language can be used in various ways to build and spread particular ideologies. Dijk's approach to analyzing discourse through a socio-cognitive lens is referred to as Critical Discourse Analysis is a comprehensive framework that takes into account the dynamic interplay between societal forces and the construction of meaning through discourse. The discursive analysis within this framework aims to uncover how language constructs and maintains these hegemonic ideologies, along with their associated power dynamics. The findings of study indicate that politicians have utilized various discursive devices to influence their audience. The study also reveals how political leaders have utilized presupposition, metaphor, the meaning of words, and lexicalization to shape public opinion.

In analyzing speeches by figures like Imran Khan, Bilawal Bhutto, and Mariyam Nawaz, one can discern how presuppositions influence their statements, potentially framing discussions in a particular light. For instance, Imran Khan's statement presupposes the occurrence of plundering without substantial evidence, leading to an oversimplified narrative. Such presuppositions can impact discourse by shaping underlying assumptions without thorough consideration. Moreover, the meaning of words is another critical facet in van Dijk's approach. Language carries not only literal information but also the speaker's attitudes and beliefs, affecting the audience's comprehension. Analyzing the speeches of these figures reveals how word choices, connotations, and presuppositions contribute to framing their narratives. The application of metaphor is equally significant, as it uses familiar imagery to convey abstract concepts. In this analysis, metaphors employed by figures like Mariyam Nawaz, Imran Khan, and Bilawal Bhutto offer insights into how language shapes discourse by aligning with specific ideological stances. Additionally, van Dijk's concept of lexicalization demonstrates how certain words become associated with particular ideological meanings. Analyzing statements such as "Imran Khan a terrorist" and "watch stealer," it becomes evident that lexicalization shapes the audience's perception by invoking powerful connotations and connections, ultimately molding the discourse's ideological dimensions. van Dijk's linguistics techniques provide a robust framework for analyzing how ideologies are embedded in text through language. By examining various linguistic elements such as presuppositions, word choices, metaphors, and lexicalization, researchers gain insights into how discourse constructs, disseminates, and normalizes specific ideological perspectives. These techniques offer a critical lens through which one can unravel the complex interplay between language and ideology within discourse.

### **Ideological Construction in Political Discourse**

Ideologies are not only expressed explicitly in political speech, but they are also deeply ingrained in language usage, framing, biases, and the overall effect of discourse. This research explores the complex process by which ideologies are created within the political environment through the use of given speech data as examples and a critical discourse analysis (CDA) lens.

Language is the main means through which ideologies are propagated, debated, and expressed. Ideological perspectives are mostly constructed through the use of certain language choices that are carefully chosen to elicit emotional reactions. Derogatory labels like "dacoits," "traitors," and "liar" cast people in an unfavorable light and reinforce pre-existing ideological biases. By appealing to emotions rather than reasoned speech, these linguistic strategies not only influence how people are regarded but also help to polarize beliefs. There is a definite bias that supports the speaker's ideological stance embedded throughout the speeches. The inclination to structure the conversation according to the speaker's political beliefs is revealed by the selective criticism of opposition figures like Imran Khan. Such ideological prejudice goes beyond linguistic expression and affects how information is presented and how the audience understands what is happening. How people

are framed inside a discourse affects how the audience perceives them. Language and description choices influence mental images, which in turn influence ideological beliefs. Negative framing depicts people as enemies or wrongdoers, frequently accomplished through the use of disparaging terminology and exaggerated rhetoric. This framing reinforces the separation between opposing viewpoints as well as the ideological positions that already exist. These speeches sometimes suffer from a lack of concrete evidence to support statements. This gap emphasizes how ideologies can be created based more on conjecture than on evidence. Without providing particular examples of misconduct, the use of pejorative adjectives like "liar" and "absconder" damages the credibility of the ideologies put forth. This reliance on unsupported assertions suggests that ideological construction may be based more on personal impressions than on objective fact. The speeches highlight how discourse shapes public perception and has an impact on decision-making. The speakers are aware of how their words can impact people's attitudes and change the ideological climate. This acknowledgment of discourse's influence brings to light the power relationships between political leaders and the general public as well as discourse's capacity to support or contradict ideological ideas. Investigating mental models is necessary to comprehend how ideologies are built. People interpret language via the prism of their preconceived notions, biases, and experiences. Differing interpretations of the same speech result from different mental models. Due to the fact that different people can derive different ideological positions from the same linguistic content depending on their mental models, subjectivity adds to the complexity of ideological production.

Hate speech refers to a form of communication or language that aims to belittle, offend, or assault people or communities based on their ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, race, or other traits that are personal. The use of hate speech can have a significant impact on the minds of listeners, causing various negative outcomes. The effects of political discourse involving hate speech on the minds of listeners can be profound and far-reaching, as evidenced by the intricate relationship between language, power, and ideology. Ideologies' structural components shape their effects. The present study explored the speeches made by Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Imran Khan, and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari have the potential to influence the listeners' minds significantly. However, their speeches could also cause political polarization, incite violence, and damage the reputation of political leaders. Maryam Nawaz Sharif's labeling of Imran Khan as a "terrorists" could be perceived as inflammatory and could potentially incite violence against Khan or his supporters. Furthermore, her claims that Khan has "wreaked havoc" from one corner to another" and "ruined the country's economy" could be seen as damaging to Khan's reputation and could fuel political polarization.

On the other hand, Imran Khan's accusation that Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz Sharif call the army bad while Shahbaz Sharif starts polishing whatever boot is seen could be seen as a way to undermine the authority of the army. Additionally, his statement that "Those who plundered the national exchequer and burdened the nation with financial woes would be made answerable" could be perceived as a threat to political opponents and could further increase political polarization. Similarly, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's labeling of Imran Khan as a "liar and a hypocrite" and "Fitna" (mischief) could be perceived as an attack on Khan's character and could damage his reputation. Moreover, his call for Khan to "bid farewell to politics" could be interpreted as an attempt to remove Khan from power, and this could also contribute to increased political polarization.

## **Conclusion**

The primary objective of this research was to investigate the intricate relationship between language, authority, and belief systems in political discourse, utilising van Dijk's (2008) socio-cognitive model as a framework. Through linguistic techniques and critical discourse analysis, this study has uncovered the systematic processes through which ideas emerge, proliferate, and become entrenched in language usage. The findings illustrate how

politicians strategically employ linguistic devices—such as metaphor, presupposition, lexicalization, and deliberate word choice—to shape discourse and influence public perception. These techniques are pivotal in constructing ideologies, as they present individuals, events, and narratives from particular perspectives. The analysis reveals a pronounced ideological bias in political speeches, reflecting the speakers' positions and aiming to consolidate support within their ideological constituencies. This underscores the manner in which language is wielded to promote and entrench specific viewpoints. Additionally, the research draws attention to the troubling prevalence of hate speech within political rhetoric, highlighting its role in exacerbating divisions between opposing groups. The choices made in political discourse carry significant consequences, shaping decision-making processes and contributing to the broader ideological landscape. However, it is important to note that language also possesses the potential for constructive use, enabling the shaping of societal norms and fostering positive change. By scrutinising language, researchers can reveal underlying biases, intentions, and prejudices that may not be immediately evident. This analysis can yield critical insights into the mechanisms that inform social beliefs and political behaviour. Ultimately, this study serves as a potent reminder of the power of language and the responsibility that comes with its use. Linguistic manipulation can enable politicians and leaders to shape perceptions, control narratives, and influence public sentiment. Understanding the interplay between language, power, and ideology is essential for fostering a more constructive and inclusive political discourse—one that promotes unity, progress, and social cohesion. As we navigate the complexities of contemporary political landscapes, an awareness of the linguistic tools at play can empower individuals and communities to engage in more meaningful and informed dialogues.

### **Recommendations**

Future research should delve into the psychological and cognitive components of how hate speech and ideology formation influence individuals' views and behaviours. By exploring the mechanisms through which political discourse affects cognitive functions and shapes ideological perspectives, we can better understand the broader societal ramifications of these discursive practices. Additionally, there is a pressing need to investigate the potential benefits of alternative discourses and counter-narratives in mitigating the negative impacts of hate speech while fostering productive conversations. This may involve examining the effectiveness of discourse that prioritises empathy, respect, and understanding, thereby addressing the polarising effects of hate speech. Furthermore, studying the evolution of language and discourse in the digital age, particularly on social media platforms, will yield valuable insights into how ideologies are created, disseminated, and amplified within contemporary political contexts. Incorporating a cross-cultural and cross-linguistic perspective could further enhance our comprehension of ideological construction across diverse linguistic and cultural landscapes, enabling scholars to investigate how such constructions influence public opinion and decision-making on a global scale. Overall, advancing research in this area holds significant potential to deepen our understanding of the intricate interplay between language, power, and ideology in political discourse.

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