

DISSEMINATION OR DYSFUNCTIONALITY OF DISCURSIVE PRACTICES IN THE POLITICAL MANIFESTO OF THE PTI

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at analyzing political discourse with the help of critical discourse analysis. Its focus is on the use of language used to achieve dominance by the politicians to influence public opinion. Hence it explores the strategies and manipulation exercised through discourse and for this the political manifesto of Pakistan's third largest party known as Tehreek-e-Insaf has been analyzed. This study examines the Election Manifesto of PTI preceding 2013 General Elections. The purpose to apply CDA is to uncover hidden socio-political issues and agenda behind the language used in political discourse. The data analysis indicates that the PTI has used the same kind of words as are used by other politicians to make promises before elections. However, some of their ideas are really new and revolutionary like setting up of a 'Modern Islamic State' and unlike research done by other researchers in the past this study shows that language is not always used to manipulate, and words are not always used to deceive. The awareness brought through this study would empower the readers and language users to analyze the discourse beyond the surface level to get a deeper understanding of how can be used in a positive way.

Keywords: discourse, political discourse, critical discourse analysis, discursivity, political manifesto, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf.

INTRODUCTION

Critical discourse analysis which is a multidisciplinary approach helps us understand pressing social issues. The fundamental problems of social dominance, power and inequality considered complex issues are understood in a better way with the help of theories underpinning these theoretical issues. They help to understand not only the current issues but also provide understandings and more general insights of the consequences of such matters on a larger scale. Discourse means expressing ourselves by using words. However, critical discourse analysis deals with the relationship between language and power. Its basic purpose is to study power abuse, dominance and inequality in society. It is concerned to analyze 'how social and political inequalities are manifested and reproduced through discourse' (Woolffitt, 2005). In the present scenario where the whole Pakistani society is politically charged and involved in politics it is important not to get carried away by the political discourse but to make opinions pragmatically. This means awareness and the ability to take a stance and get insight into the role of discourse which is not limited only to verbal or written expressions.

An overview of history reveals that critical discourse analysis is a method as well as an approach, however, it should be noted that it is not just one method or approach. In fact, critical discourse analysis is an umbrella term under which different methods and approaches are included. These methods vary in their focus and style, but one thing is common that they observe how power relation are used through language to exploit and manipulate. Hence, this discipline of critical discourse analysis has emancipatory agenda. Major researchers associated with critical discourse analysis are Norman Fairclough, Teun. A van Dijk and Ruth Wodak

Critical discourse analysis specifically examines the strategies of manipulation and discursive ways that are used to influence or control the minds of people that are in the interest of the powerful elite ruling the country (Dijk, 1991). He is of the view that adequate CDA requires 'good theories of the role of discourse in the enactment and reproduction of social dominance and resistance'. He calls CDA 'a scholarly program of research'. In his article 'Aims of Critical Discourse Analysis' he sketches out theoretical framework for analyzing discursive reproduction of dominance and resistance.

Patterns of discourse control and access are closely related with social power (Dijk's, 1991). He maintains that ordinary people only have an active control on the type of discourse such as normal conversation with their family and friends. They have a passive control on the discourse of an institute or on media discourse. Politicians, judges and bureaucrats have control in their discourse and not only they control people but have access to other genres of discourse. In other words, elite and direct control over discourse. Critical Discourse Analysis focuses on abuse of power, critically studies focus on forms of control and access. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is 'a field that is concerned with studying and analyzing written and spoken texts to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias' (it would be a difficult task (Dijk, 1998)). Similarly, CDA is a discipline:

'which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how practices, events and texts arise out of ideology shaped by relations of power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony' (Fairclough, 1993).

In other words, CDA seeks to make connections between discourse and social practices and brings such connections to the forefront that are hidden from a common person. This is why this study has used Van Dijk's approach to analyze the political discourse. Third major model in this field is 'Discourse Sociolinguistics' which is proposed by Wodak. This model is based on sociolinguistics in the Bernsteinian tradition, and 'on the ideas of the Frankfurt school, especially those of Jürgen Habermas' (Wodak, 1995). According to her context plays an important part in the study of the text to understand the mechanism that goes behind and contributes to disorders that are embedded in discourses. Therefore, it is important to be aware of the context in order to understand the text.

The present study has attempted to apply the model of critical discourse analysis suggested by Teun van Dijk to analyze the manifesto of *Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf*. The purpose of using this model is to uncover discursivity and the underlying strategies used by politicians to influence public opinion. There are many different approaches and methods used in critical discourse analysis as it is a vast discipline but the reason to use Van Dijk's model is that this model is more appropriate to deal with media discourse. In fact, patterns of social discourse are closely associated with social power (Dijk, 1991). Hence understanding these patterns through critical discourse analysis is essential for emancipation which is the agenda of CDA.

Background of the Study

The *Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf* (Pakistan Movement for Justice) was founded in 1996 by Imran Khan who is a former well-known cricketer and a philanthropist. Over the years, the PTI has become the third largest political party in Pakistan. In fact, this is considered to be the fastest growing political party. Initially it was founded as a sociopolitical movement, but it got a lukewarm response by the people, however, later on its popularity plummeted. In the beginning, Imran Khan supported General Musharraf against the other two parties of the feudal backgrounds considering that he (Musharraf) will lead the country towards prosperity. Because the other two parties (Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz and Pakistan People Party) had failed to do so. Later on, Imran who was disappointed and disillusioned parted his ways and became General Musharraf's vehement critic.

In 2002, Imran Khan contested the elections and won a seat from Mianwali, his hometown, and became a Member of Parliament (MP). In the same year, he supported the government and as a result of referendum Pervaiz Musharraf got selected for five years. Meanwhile Khan remained critical of the government policies as he thought the whole political system was riddled with corruption and he wanted a clean, clear and pristine system which needed to redo the entire system. This urged him to start a grassroots level campaign for which he struggled for more than a decade and throughout this journey

he pointed out that the main reasons why Pakistan could not progress include corruption and insincerity of the politicians.

Imran reiterated that military dictators and the elites of a few families have taken over the country and there never was true democracy in the country. He considered the youth to be the most important asset for the country and inspired a staggering number of youngsters to join politics by his own charismatic personality. Hundreds of thousands of young and old joined the PTI and became its strength. However, the PTI did not participate in the general elections of 2008 which was won by the PPP but due to the PTI's policies it remained popular especially its promise to make a 'welfare state' which would be free of any foreign influence, and everyone will be treated the same way under the law. The PTI continued its struggle to bring a change in overall infrastructure of the country's system in hope of making what they call 'a new Pakistan'. And their slogan had been 'tabdeeli (change)'. It was an uphill climb and the party had to face diatribe, it was marginalized, and the party leader was even ridiculed and fulminated. But he along with diehard fans and devotees-maintained equanimity and kept on working which resulted in new fervor and vigor to participate in the election of 2013. A lot of disillusioned but seasoned politicians who had quit their parties or even politics joined hands with PTI and with the force of the youth of Pakistan together they started preparations for the next election. The PTI claimed to be a democratic party but the archrivals (PML-N and PPP) accused it to be a party ruled by one man calling it 'a one man show'. Hence, the party set a new tradition of holding elections within the party which was also unprecedented. Though some people still consider Imran Khan to be immature in the field of politics, he has won over millions of hearts by his hard work and with a special affinity with the younger generation that was never taken seriously by any other party in the past. So the party organized itself and chose its members on the basis of merit or so they claim.

Political parties try to seek heavy mandate from the people by presenting well adumbrated manifestoes addressing the current issues and presenting different ideology that seem to be very attractive and represents their feelings and emotions. They do it by using different slogans and catchy phrases. They also pledge to follow their promises and achieve their objectives after winning the elections. In order to find out the hidden meaning under such promises this study was designed and it attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What linguistic patterns are used in PTI's Political Manifesto and why are they used?
2. Does this party really hold a different political agenda? If, yes, why and how is it different?
3. What discursive practices are used to influence the minds of people?

Theoretical framework

The lens of critical theory has been used to perform critical analysis in the present study. Teun van Dijk is an influential name in the field of critical discourse analysis and the present study has incorporated his ideas of media discourse because his theories are quite influential. Talking about the mind control he writes that social actors engage less powerfully in discourse and thus limit their freedom by controlling their discourse first and then they control minds or convince people to oblige them to engage in their desired discourse. In his model of Discourse analysis which is widely used in critical studies he has laid some principles for this type of analysis. He has described how analysis of the text should be done at micro and macro level in order to reveal how power and dominance is displayed and produced through discourse (Dijk, 1993). By microstructure analysis he means that the focus should be on the semantic relations. This includes relationship between preposition, syntactic, lexical and rhetorical elements. These elements are used to provide coherence in the text. Secondly, finding the elements that give authenticity and factuality to the text, for example, direct and indirect speech and quotations. In this study, however, the focus remained on the use of modals and auxiliaries in case of microanalysis of discursive practice, hence, the analysts examined the processes underlying discursive production, dissemination, and assimilation to interpret the discourse in relation to this contextual understanding.

Analysis at the macrostructure, includes the thematic or topic structures. This study has focused more on the macrostructures as the purpose is to analyze the overall structures and get the bigger picture that emerges. For this purpose data has been collected from the political manifesto provided by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf before the elections in 2013. Hence, the analysis has been made with the help of tools provided by critical discourse analysis by taking a critical stance.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The data for this research is taken from the PTI manifesto.

3.1 Micro Analysis

The most frequently used modals verbs in the PTI manifesto are: will, would, shall, can, must and is. For example,

1. The PTI *can* restore...
2. Human development *would* remain our highest priority.
3. Education *cannot* be ignored.
4. The PTI *would* restore...
5. The PTI *is* determined to...
6. The PTI plans to...
7. The PTI *will* revamp...

Like any other political manifesto, the modals and auxiliaries that are frequently used are *would* and *will* which show the party's will and determination to do something. However, they have also used 'can' quite a number of times to show their ability to deliver which they plan to do. It also shows conviction and the possibility of doing something. These words are used to show their commitment. However, these words are used by all politicians to impress and allure people to vote for them. They also make pledges and promises before elections. So, we do not find much difference. In a nutshell, promises have been made to bring about the change by highlighting the ability of the party to perform well by coming in power.

Macro Analysis

The PTI Manifesto starts with the vision of a 'Modern Islamic Republic'. A state where there is tolerance, moderation and freedom to practice any religion of one's choice. It gives the hope of a country that would be politically stable and there would be social harmony and economic prosperity. In this way, the PTI agenda is presented addressing the 'neglected aspirations' of the citizens. It would be a difficult task in a country where people from the same religion do not tolerate the other sect and wage war against others openly. The PTI claims not only to be a party but a massive and 'broad based movement' which represents the common goals and aspirations that are the representations of different sects of society. Moreover, it claims to be the representative of the entire society. The idea of a 'Modern Islamic Republic' seems to be paradoxical at first glance. But a deeper analysis of the term shows that they want to make a state which would be Islamic but at the same time modern where extremism in the name of religion would not be tolerated. They have used this term to deal with so called religious groups who are, in fact, not aware of the true spirit of the religion Islam which literally means 'peace'. This also shows their acceptance and tolerance of other religions and hence a mature approach.

Secondly, it promises to mobilize and use the entire cornucopia of human sources to lead the country towards the road to self-reliance under 'credible leadership'. It emphasizes the active participation of the people which is necessary to get the financial freedom at individual as well as collective level. There is a message for the people that you have the ability to create your future which will lead to abundance. On the surface level it all seems too good but why are they doing it? This is an important question. In fact, people have lost their trust in the previous governments as they have depended too much on the foreign aid and that is why they never became independent. Hence, the PTI wants them to feel their own worth and favor that political party which would make them a self-reliant nation free of foreign aid.

While presenting the ideology the PTI ensures that 'dignity and self-respect' that the whole nations crave for could be achieved by following the golden principles given to us by the Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. In fact, that is the right way to pursue our dreams and achieve our goals. Functional autonomy of the provinces as envisaged in the Constitution of 1973 is favored 'as the principle of fundamental democracy'. This would allow minorities to benefit from every opportunity as it is their basic right. Similarly, health care for the women of Pakistan who are in a large number and a whopping number of them lacks basic facilities. Also, facilities for children are considered to be the priority as the PTI wants to focus on human development. Critical discourse analysis reveals that they are promising to follow the principles laid down by the founder of Pakistan- Muhammad Ali Jinnah who is the most revered and non controversial personality in Pakistan. By reiterating what was said by the Quaid-e-Azam they want themselves to sound less political and restricted to a single party but think

and act as a whole nation which is quite encouraging because people do not seem to agree on what the controversial politicians say.

'Rule of law' would be the priority of the government and the goal would be to make Pakistan a 'true sovereign state'. The important thing is to notice that 'merit based system', 'job opportunities' and 'rule of law' are to be given priority. These are the terms used and show the vision of the party that wants to bring about the reforms in the whole system and set an example of simple living by replacing the VIP culture with 'an austere lifestyle'. Critical discourse analysis of these terms shows that 'rule of law' and 'an austere lifestyle' are the ideas which most of the common people would appreciate except a few. Therefore, these are used to attract maximum people who are poor and would love the politicians to live simple lives.

Considering institutional reforms to be necessary for strengthening the vital state institutions it is emphasized that 'Constitutional, Judicial, Election and Administrative Reforms' would be carried out. Once again, the empowerment of the provinces has been stressed which is according to the constitution of Pakistan but never ensured in the past. Some suggestions have been made to make sure that all the citizens of the four federating units are treated equally and none of them feels deprived. Therefore, the stance is that one formula for funds sharing needs to be changed and modified considering the needs and problems of different provinces. Some provinces are overly populated but receive the ration of funds which does not fulfill the needs of that particular province. This would create harmony and understanding among people of different regions. The reason to stress this kind of relation is to create unity among the four provinces. This is important for the party to get maximum votes from all the provinces.

A very important step would be taken to make sure that local bodies are delivering their services honestly by setting up 'Citizen and community boards'. This would bring government closer to the people and a constant accountability check would make the whole local body system work efficiently. The PTI is stressing this because the purpose is to ensure people that they can hold the government responsible if they are not satisfied with the performance. Majority of people would love to have an interaction because they would have an easy access to the government personnel. This step is considered necessary by the PTI because the local bodies election were not held by the previous governments for a decade. The centralized type of system which holds the power in a few hands is rejected and the new system sounds good to the people who find it hard to reach MPA's and ministers for solving their issues.

The topics addressed by the *PTI* include health issues, education, Economic Policy and National Security. The role of military in government affairs has not been discussed in the Manifesto. However, a very important issue of terrorism has been discussed by clearly stating that the PTI wants to have good relationships with the neighboring countries but on an equal level. It is necessary for the peaceful environment not only in the region and but for the whole world on a larger scale. The PTI also wants to have a clearly defined foreign policy which the country did not have in the past. This has been stressed to form a soft and favorable image of Pakistan in front of the whole world and ensure good healthy relations with other nations and to resolve the tension between Pakistan and other countries. This has been emphasized by reiterating 'good relations with neighbor' to ensure the peace not only in Pakistan but also in the whole region.

The reason for choosing political discourse and analyzing it with the help of CDA was to examine if there was a power abuse through discourse. In the PTI manifesto the researchers find the promises made by the politicians and the claims that they would change the nation by leading it to the road of prosperity. This is something not unusual because all the politicians use such language to attract public and influence them with their rhetorical skills. But this party has given hope to the people by its slogan of 'change'. In fact, some of the neglected issues like women empowerment, education, religious tolerance, Modern Islamic State, and a balanced foreign policy have been addressed. Therefore, the PTI seem to be determined to bring about a real change.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of dominant and subordinate discourses reveal that the party has addressed some very important issues which are of great interest to a common person including the assurance of a peaceful state by the government. This is the most pressing need of the people living in some troubled areas of Pakistan where military operation is going on and also in the rest of the country. To ensure the implementation of law and providing justice for all by bringing reforms in the police system the party

has promised to de-politicize the police department which would be a great relief to every citizen. The roadmap given by this manifesto has also got something to offer to the youngsters by investing more money on their education and has special attraction for them because they feel neglected even after getting degrees. New and more jobs and educational opportunities for all sounds great and inspires more students than ever before. To conclude it can be said that the determination to bring about the change by introducing justice at all levels which is the true spirit of the teaching of Islam is what makes this party different and they seem to be honest in their convection. Hence, the language used is not to deceive but the ideas and the plans support their claims to bring about 'tabdeli' (change) so does the words used by them.

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