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An Analysis of Discursive Manipulative Strategies and Rhetorical Devices in Political Interviews of Ousted Prime Minister Imran Khan

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses Imran Khan's conversation by focusing on discursive manipulative strategies, polarisation strategies and rhetorical devices with Marc Fennell of ABC Australia, his Interview on CNN with Becky Anderson and Sky News U.K. and his response to losing the government and accusing the U.S. of his regime change. The study aims to evaluate the potential impact of such strategies on public opinion and discourse and to help develop awareness to counter manipulative practices in political interviews. Using a qualitative approach and integrating social identity theory and self-categorisation theory, the study identifies logical fallacies, emotional and loaded language, and diversionary techniques as the most frequently used manipulative strategies. It also highlights the effectiveness of emotionally charged language and rhetorical devices in swaying public opinion. The study concludes that politicians worldwide use similar techniques and rhetorical devices to persuade, guide, or manipulate the public and provide insights into the nature of political discourse in Pakistan.

| KEYWORDS | Critical Discourse, Discursive Manipulative Strategies, Polarisation Strategies, Rhetorical Devices |

Introduction

Politicians utilise language to transmit their views and ideas to the audience to obtain popularity, notoriety, and support. They employ language in media debates with their opponents. Through the power of their words, they also dominate public opinion and the populace's minds. As Zarifovna (2023, p, 626) remarks that "In the 21st century, we can think of words as a kind of "weapon," a way to influence others, accomplish our goals, or even express ourselves". Imran Khan, Pakistan's former top cricketer-turned- prime political leader was elected in 2018 on a tsunami of populist emotion, speaking out against the west and Pakistan's politically powerful dynasties, who had been accused of corruption. His charm and political rhetoric always attracted large crowds to his rallies. However, he also governed over a time of severe financial turbulence and inflation that wrecked the economy. After losing the backing of the powerful establishment, the opposition stepped in with a vote of no confidence, supported by several members of the prime minister's alliance who had lost faith in him.

Khan has kept pushing the narrative that the no-confidence vote that ousted him resulted from a "foreign conspiracy" by the west, referencing diplomatic correspondence with the United States as evidence. On the streets of Pakistan's cities and towns, the notion

that Khan was the victim of a western conspiracy has been ubiquitous, and tens of thousands have continued to protest in support. International media frequently reach Pakistani political leaders for interviews about their political doctrines and objectives.

Pragmatics studies the narrator's meaning and how more is communicated than said and expressed (Yule, 2014). Grundy and Grundy (2019) states that Pragmatics is related to explaining how we produce and comprehend unremarkable conversation but moderately great uses of language. In recent years, there has been a notable increase in scholarly interest in the role of emotions in political communication. Scholars have focused on understanding the strategic and institutional ways emotions are used and disseminated in political discourse (Hissu & Beck, 2018; Jutel, 2017; Moss et al., 2020). This growing body of research highlights the importance of emotions in shaping public opinion and the potential for emotional appeals to be used manipulatively by politicians to achieve their goals. As such, it is crucial to critically analyse the emotional content of political communication and be aware of the potential for manipulation. The study's primary objective is to analyse the political interviews of ousted Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan regarding how he uses emotive language to communicate his ideas and thoughts on international forums.

This study analyses Imran Khan's conversation with Marc Fennell of ABC Australia, his Interview on CNN with Becky Anderson and Sky News U.K. and his response to losing the government and accusing the U.S. of his regime change. This study also sheds light on our politicians' rhetoric, face-saving skills and how he protects their reputations in foreign forums. The media has a significant impact on the shaping of public opinion. Political T.V. talk shows provide viewers with only surface meanings. Besides the interviewer present at the scene, the answers' receivers are the public represented by their leaders (Bhatia, 2006). A comprehensive investigation and study of the language are necessary to determine the meaning, interpretation, purpose, and implication of a speaker's words. This research will aid in evaluating political discourse to look for discursive strategies of manipulation and rhetorical devices and encourage linguists, academics, and ordinary readers to note the complexity level of political discourse to comprehend it entirely and correctly.

Literature Review

Previous research has found that metaphor is a powerful tool for conveying meaning in political discourse (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Grady, 1997; Sweetser, 1997). Metaphors can create shared frames of reference between the speaker and the audience. They can also create vivid mental images that evoke emotional responses. People frequently employ metaphors to describe their emotional condition (Kövecses, 2003). The present study looks for metaphor usage in the political interviews of Imran Khan.

Previous research has explored the implications of Pakistani political discourse (Hassan, 2015; Khan & Zaidi, 2017). Specifically, Hassan (2015) examined the language used in Pakistani political discourse and found that politicians often use language intended to manipulate the public's opinion and influence their votes. The researcher probes for language's manipulative function in the political discourse of Pakistani politicians.

Masroor et al. (2019) remark that the form and functions of political discourse have undergone a considerable transformation due to the evolution of communication methods. Understanding the relationship between language and social behaviours necessitates critically evaluating linguistic patterns and techniques when analysing the political

discourse on Twitter. The study reveals latent ideological structures and strategies in the selected tweets through various rhetorical manoeuvres. The cognitive dichotomy of positive self-presentation and negative other presentation is utilised to achieve political dominance and legitimise political acts by manipulating public opinion. The current study uses a similar framework for discourse analysis, but data is collected through political interviews. It explores the positive self-presentation and negative other presentations in I.K.'s interviews.

The researcher concludes from reviewing the previous literature that the analysis of the discursive manipulative strategies, logical fallacies and employed rhetorical devices in the interviews of ousted prime minister Imran Khan is untouched for research. Furthermore, the functions of positive self and negative others presentation and polarization through pronouns are also attractive for the present study. This study is being carried out to fill this gap.

Material and Methods

The present study is qualitative, and textual interpretation and argumentation are potent instruments for qualitative data. Current work deals with secondary data analysis. After the regime change, three political interviews of ousted Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan constitute the study's population. This study's sample consists of three interviews; the first interview on CNN with Becky Anderson on May 23, 2022, available on the official website of CNN and downloaded from https://edition.cnn.com/2022/05/23/asia/pakistan-imran-khan-exclusive-interview-intl-hnk/index.html second with Marc Fennell of ABC Australia on June 22, 2022, and the third with Sky News U.K. on May 30, 2022, downloaded from their official YouTube channel from the following link https://youtu.be/ua5bjbCGbwg.

Integrating Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Hogg, 1992; Tajfel, 1978; Turner & Giles, 1981) with Self-Categorization Theory (SCT) (Turner et al., 1987) provides a valuable paradigm for comprehending the operation of positive self-presentation and negative other presentation in political discourse. According to SIT, individuals seek to maintain a favourable self-image by identifying with and favouring their in-group while discriminating against out-groups. This signifies, in the context of politics, that individuals may identify with a particular political party, philosophy, or candidate and see members of other parties or ideologies as inferior or wrong. On the other hand, SCT proposes that people have many social identities that they can activate or deactivate depending on circumstances. This means that, in politics, individuals may assume different identities based on the political situation they find themselves in, such as identifying as a supporter of a particular politician or topic.

Integrating these ideas enables us to comprehend how individuals may engage in positive self-presentation and negative other presentations in political discourse by activating their political identities and connections. This paradigm can also explain the emergence of political polarisation and intergroup conflict. Individuals may become more entrenched in their political identities and more prone to participate in negative other presentations to preserve a positive self-image. This study utilises the socio-cognitive analytical approach of van Dijk (2006b) as a theoretical framework for understanding the dynamics of positive-self and negative-other representation strategies. This approach focuses on the role of cognitive processes in constructing social representations, such as categorisation, identification, and interpretation. The framework further emphasises the social nature of the representations and the context in which they are formed. It proposes that the positive-self and negative-other strategies are a result of social interaction, in which

individuals are actively engaged in constructing representations of themselves, as well as representations of others. Through this approach, this study explores how these strategies are formed and how they manifest in different contexts.

The study also draws on the work of van Dijk (2006), who argued that discourse is a form of power and that language in discourse can be used to manipulate and control the audience. This framework emphasises the importance of looking at the power dynamics present in discourse and how they are used to manipulate the listener. Finally, the study draws on the work of Fairclough (2001), who argued that discourse analysis should examine how language is used to construct and reinforce social inequalities and how political discourse can shape public opinion. This framework emphasises the importance of examining how political discourse can be used to influence public opinion and the implications of this influence. This study uses these theoretical frameworks to examine the rhetorical moves and strategies employed by the ousted Pakistani PM in their interviews. The analysis focuses on how these strategies manipulate, control, and influence the audience.

Procedures

The English subtitles of selected interviews were retrieved from the official websites of these media channels on the internet, and their lengths and sentence counts vary.

1. Interview May 1 23, 2022　　　　　(Time: 23:49)

2. Interview June 2 22, 2022　　　　　(Time: 10:18)

3. Interview May 3 30, 2022　　　　　(Time: 13:31)

The interviews of ousted Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan were chosen purposively because they reveal a distinctive language style used during the regime change in Pakistan, which included protests, riots, strikes, demonstrations, and marches against social, economic, and political corruption. Secondary data is used for the study, and all relevant chunks are chosen for analysis based on relevance sampling, which contributes to the answer to research questions (Krippendorff, 2018). The techniques for analysing the collected data are as described: first, all the selected interviews of the ousted Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan were downloaded from the internet. The acquired data were transcribed from oral to written format through subtitles from official websites where these interviews are located. Finally, data is analysed by applying proposed theoretical frameworks to find the answers to research questions. The frequency count of repeated words and phrases is carried out via AntConc software.

Results and Discussion

Manipulative Strategies in Pakistani Ousted PM's Political Interviews

Politicians commonly use manipulative strategies to influence public opinion. In the political interviews of Imran Khan, he utilised several manipulative strategies, including the use of logical (informal) fallacy, emotive and loaded language, and diversionary tactics. Zurloni and Anolli (2013, p, 245) explicate that how many informal fallacies, including but not limited to argumentum ad baculum (appeal to force), argumentum ad hominem (personal attack), the argument from analogy, and argumentum ad consequentiam (appeal to consequences), are astutely employed by politicians with the intent of proffering cogent and forceful stances.

These informal fallacies are employed as strategic tools to advance their positions and gain support from their audience. Politicians may seek to persuade their listeners by appealing to their emotions rather than their reason or logic by utilising these fallacies. For example, an argumentum ad baculum may use the threat of force to intimidate the listener into accepting the politician's position. In contrast, argumentum ad hominem may attack the credibility or character of the opposition rather than address their argument directly. Using such tactics, politicians may attempt to appear more confident, assertive, and convincing to their audience, even if their argument is flawed or logically unsound. Some of the fallacies employed by Imran khan are appended below:

Ad hominem: Imran Khan used personal attacks to discredit the current government. He refers to prime minister Shahbaz Sharif and his son as corrupt and accuses 60% of the cabinet of being on bail. This is done intentionally to discredit the current government and project its negative image.

"60 percent of the cabinet which is sitting right now is on bail the prime minister was about to be sentenced in a corruption case of billions of rupees and his son".

(I. K's Interview 1, Time 01:38 and 20:32)

Further, the I.K. attacked the opposition parties by implying they were corrupt and incapable of handling the economic crisis (I. K's Interview 2, Time 02:29).

Red herrings: The rhetorical devices that attract people's attention away from the primary point of an argument or conversation by bringing up a side issue unrelated to the main point or deceptive. Politicians use red herrings in speeches and debates to divert attention from unpopular or divisive subjects or avoid responding to probing inquiries. By bringing up an unrelated subject, they can divert attention from the main subject and focus it on something more straightforward to address or that presents them in a better light.

Politicians might react to a question concerning their position on a contentious policy matter by discussing another topic they feel more at ease discussing, such as their support for a specific charity or their personal history. Because it enables politicians to avoid addressing contentious issues while appearing active and sensitive to the public, this strategy can succeed in political debates. However, because it entails purposely misleading the audience or diverting attention from crucial concerns, red herrings can also be perceived as manipulative and dishonest. The I.K. diverted attention from the issue of the government's handling of the economic crisis to regime change and his removal from power by employing red herrings.

Straw Man - The speaker uses a straw man argument by suggesting that the U.S. is involved in regime change in Pakistan without presenting any credible evidence to support the claim. Politicians may attribute their ouster from power to other powerful governments. By pointing the finger at foreign countries or powerful external actors, politicians can develop a narrative that presents them as the victims of external intervention instead of the architects of their downfall. This can be a practical approach for sustaining their support base and uniting their supporters against a familiar foe.

Appeal to Emotion: Politicians frequently employ emotional manipulation to elicit an emotional response from their audience. In this interview, I.K. played on the audience's emotions by portraying a dire image of the situation in the nation and making an impassioned call to the populace to stand up and act. Imran Khan uses the appeal to emotions when he talks about how the elected prime minister was removed by a conspiracy

and how it is insulting for a country of 220 million people (I. K's Interview 1, Time 07:24; I. K's Interview 2, Time 04:16). The I.K. employs the appeal to emotion fallacy by claiming that the government's actions represent a *"huge injustice done in a society"* (I. K's Interview 1, Time 00:30) and *"what bigger injustice in a society than this"* (I. K's Interview 1, Time 01:54) to evoke an emotional response from the audience. He further employed the appeal to pity tactics to imply that he was a victim of a foreign-backed plot to remove him from power.

I.K. used emotive language to describe the situation in Kashmir, saying that brutality is going on and that the people there are *"put under siege"* (I. K's Interview 1, Time 15:45). He indicated that the U.S. and its allies are hypocritical by not condemning these actions and are turning a blind eye to human rights violations. The word Kashmir was repeated 12 times in the interviews to stress the issue's importance and align himself with the populist cause. I.K. appealed to the emotions of the audience by using a language like and tried to mobilise public support for his protest march.

"Never have the people of this country come out in such large numbers protesting against this regime change as right now" (I. K's Interview 1, Time 05:50)

The speaker used this strategy by claiming they wanted to show the whole country that the people want elections and not a foreign-imposed government. Using phrases such as "foreign-imposed government" and *"bought by million dollars each"* (I. K's Interview 1, Time 17:52) appeals to the audience's emotions and ppatriotism and creates a sense of national pride and sovereignty.

Diversionary Tactics: I.K. redefined the situation by portraying the current government as criminals who came into power through a conspiracy to remove the democratically elected government. He used this narrative to justify the need for a protest march and may influence the audience's perception of the government negatively. I.K. deflects the interviewer's question about his intentions to run again as prime minister in the next elections by blaming the economic crisis on Pakistan's past 3-4 decades of mismatch between imports and exports instead of addressing his plans and solutions for the crisis (I. K's Interview 1, Time 04:32).

Rhetorical Devices in Pakistani Ousted PM's Political Interviews

I.K. employed rhetorical strategies like hyperbole, allusion, metaphor, and euphemism to persuade the public and effectively convey his message. These strategies evoke strong feelings, demystify complex issues, and set oneself apart from the competition. While allusions and metaphors can evoke powerful feelings in the audience, hyperbole is frequently used to make a substantial impact. Euphemisms are employed to simplify and soften sensitive or complicated issues so that they are more understandable.

To Abrahams (1999, p, 120), the rhetorical figure known as hyperbole, derived from the Greek term for "overshooting", entails the deployment of bold and exaggerated statements that stretch the limits of factual or potential reality. This trope may be employed for severe, ironic, or comedic purposes, to create a dramatic or humorous effect through extravagant overstatement. I.K. employed the strategy of exaggeration by claiming that each member of their party was offered a million dollars to switch sides, which is a large sum of money and could influence the audience's perception of the situation.

"A million dollars each to buy my other members of parliament" (I. K's Interview 1, Time 17:50)

"*Million dollars each was offered to them to switch sides*" (I. K's Interview 3, Time 00:47)

This statement exaggerates the amount of money offered to lawmakers to convince them to switch parties. I.K. used hyperbole when he said that the upcoming protest "One of the biggest ever protests in our history." (I. K's Interview 1, Time 00:43) Which is also an exaggeration to emphasise a point. I.K. claimed to exaggerate the level of corruption in the government.

"*60 per cent of the cabinet which is sitting right now is on bail*" (I. K's Interview 2, Time 01:46; I. K's Interview 3, Time 13:04)

To David (2014, p, 166), the deployment of allusion, an indirect or passing reference to a historical or literary figure, event, or object, represents a powerful rhetorical device. This technique, which often employs the quotation of a memorable phrase or idea already known to the audience, is a formidable linguistic strategy aimed at sidestepping direct confrontational acts.

Fernández et al. (2020, p, 1) remark that World commodity prices follow long cycles, referred to as commodity price super cycles, with a 20 to 30-year periodicity characterised by a significant increase in commodity prices followed by a sharp decline. When I.K. mentioned the "*Commodity super cycle*" (I. K's Interview 1, Time 05:07; I. K's Interview 2, Time 00:27) He alluded to the global economic trend after the 2008 financial crisis and the Pakistani currency depreciating. Politicians may blame the opposition for inflation after being ousted from office because it allows them to shift the blame for economic issues onto their opponents, factors and avoid accepting responsibility themselves. Inflation is a complex economic issue with multiple causes, including government policies, global economic conditions, and natural disasters. Politicians may mobilise their fans and construct a narrative that depicts them as the victims of unfair treatment by blaming the opposition. This can be an effective strategy for maintaining their support base and positioning themselves for a future return to power.

I.K. referenced the release of classified government documents by Wikileaks to describe the importance of the secret cypher they received from the U.S. ambassador. He successfully linked the cypher issue to the WikiLeaks scandal that gained significant attention and hype due to its controversial releases of classified and sensitive information from governments, political parties, and organisations worldwide.

"*Like in WikiLeaks, you know*" (I. K's Interview 1, Time 17:12)

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable to imply comparison. Metaphors are often used to convey a meaning beyond the literal words spoken and can be used to convey powerful political messages. I.K. used several metaphors to make his point. For example, I.K. uses the phrase "*Pulled the rug*" (I. K's Interview 1, Time 05:41) That means a rapid and unforeseen change or disruption that might have harmful repercussions. Politicians may use this expression to describe a circumstance in which they feel their support or power has been abruptly withdrawn, such as when a scandal or controversy results in a loss of public support or when they are ousted from office. By using this expression, they might emphasise the suddenness and unpredictability of the circumstance and possibly imply that they were not given a fair opportunity to defend themselves or prepare for the consequences. By employing this metaphor, I.K. described the removal of his government and evoked a sense of instability and chaos.

I.K. used the metaphor of a "*meltdown*" (I. K's Interview 2, Time 01:01) to describe the current economic crisis in Pakistan. In addition, he used.

"*The economy has gone in the tailspin*" (I. K's Interview 1, Time 05:43)

This phrase uses the image of an aeroplane spiralling out of control to describe the state of Pakistan's economy after the government's removal. Previous research has found that metaphor is a powerful tool for conveying meaning in political discourse (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Grady, 1997). Metaphors can be used to create shared frames of reference between the speaker and the audience, and they can also be used to create vivid mental images that evoke emotional responses. This is particularly effective when combined with other persuasive techniques, such as rhetoric (Holland, 1999). I.K.'s use of metaphor in his political interview demonstrates the potential for a metaphor to be a powerful tool for conveying meaning and evoking emotion in political discourse.

Euphemism: Politicians routinely employ euphemisms to tackle sensitive or unpleasant topics and criticise their opponents while avoiding adverse audience reactions. Al Noori (2021) claims that when addressing their constituents, politicians resemble actors who seek to project a sense of compassion while serving their purposes. Politics is a discipline with achievable and predetermined goals. So, it is possible to claim that using euphemisms in politics may be deceptive to the public. This phenomenon is usually known as "Doublespeak" (ibid).

I.K. employed this euphemism in his interview "*Cheap oil from Russia.*" (I. K's Interview 1, Time 13:01). The phrase "cheap oil from Russia" can be considered a euphemism because it uses mild or indirect language to refer to a potentially controversial or sensitive topic. In this context, "cheap oil" refers to oil priced lower than the market rate, which could be due to various factors, such as subsidies or lower production costs. Adding the phrase "from Russia" could be seen to avoid discussing the potential geopolitical implications of relying on oil imports from a specific country.

Euphemisms can also obscure important details or facts relevant to a discussion. Geopolitics and the environmental impact of energy sources can be complex and controversial topics. Using a euphemism may be a way to avoid stirring up those debates or presenting the information more positively. Alternatively, I.K. could use the term to avoid taking a strong stance on a contentious issue or offending any country. I.K.'s use of euphemism for his intention to establish stronger economic connections with Russia could be interpreted as an attempt at U.S. unfavourable reactions to such a move, resulting in his ouster from the PM office. He may have framed the issue in a way that was more appealing to his audience and helped him acquire public support.

Negative Other-Presentation and Positive Self-Presentation

The speaker, Imran Khan, engages in both negative other-presentation and positive self-presentation.

Playing the Blame Game

I.K. claimed that his removal from office was due to a US-backed regime change, which he believes was a conspiracy (I. K's Interview 1, Time 05:36; I. K's Interview 2, Time 01:35). The phrase "regime change" was mentioned 15 times in interviews.

Figure 1. Frequency of Phrase 'Regime Change' in the Interviews of Imran Khan

Politicians may use negative portrayals of the opponent to organise their base and appeal to their supporters. They may invigorate their base and foster a sense of in-group solidarity by insulting members of opposing parties or ideas. I.K. further argued that the military's political intervention is a problem for democracy in Pakistan. He skilfully shifted the blame of his ouster from office to U.S. conspiracy by mentioning *"foreign intervention"*, *"blatant interventions"* and *"blatant interference"* (I. K's Interview 1, Time 01:15, 08:08 and 19:00) without providing credible evidence even insisting from the Becky Anderson for providing hard evidence.

The "Other" Is a Criminal

Politicians may engage in negative other presentations to delegitimise and undermine the credibility of their opponents. They may be able to discredit their opponents and gain a strategic advantage in political arguments by portraying them as incompetent, corrupt, criminal, or immoral. I.K. used loaded language to manipulate the emotions of the audience. For example, he uses words like "injustice" and " bunch of criminals" (I. K's Interview 1, Time 01:33, 03:42) to create a negative image of the current government and labelled opposition as a bunch of criminals.

From Prosperity to Despair: How 'Others' Squandered the Nation's Wealth

I.K. engaged in negative other presentations by criticising the current government and the previous regimes for their corruption and inability to handle Pakistan's economic crisis. In the interviews, I.K. used a popular rhetorical move to demonise his opponents. He stated that the previous government was "corrupt" and "destroyed the economy" (I. K's Interview 1, Time 21:55). By painting his opponents in this negative light, Khan can present himself as a saviour and a hero to the Pakistani people. The 11 repetitions of the term "economy" in these interviews indicate that it is a central issue of discussion and significance in the analysed political discourse. Inflation is a complicated issue that cannot be assigned to a single source, and governments should be held accountable for their economic policies and judgements.

"The first year we inherited a bankrupt economy" (I. K's Interview 1, Time 02:53)

The initial description of the economy as "bankrupt" casts a negative light on the issue and implies that the previous government was responsible for the poor economic state.

"We left one of the fastest-growing economies in Pakistan's history" (I. K's Interview 1, Time 03:26)

The second remark, which emphasised the accomplishment of the current government of I.K. in producing the "fastest growing economy," acts as a counterweight to the negative tone of the first reference.

"When they pulled the rug now, the economy went into a tailspin" (I.K., December 11 2016)

"Since we have been removed by the way the economy has gone in the tailspin" (I. K's Interview 3, Time 03:40)

However, subsequent references to the economy emphasized negative repercussions and the responsibility that the economy is in a "tailspin" due to external reasons beyond the current government's control; subsequent mentions attribute the economic collapse to the administration's withdrawal from power. The repeating of "in a tailspin" promotes the negative framing of the economy and underlines the failure of the government to maintain economic stability.

Polarization Strategy of "Us" and "Them"

The polarization strategy of "us" and "them" in the data is evident in the way I.K. describes his government as "my government". At the same time, he refers to the current government as "these people." He also implies that the current government is backed by the United States, which is "them." In contrast, his government was independent and autonomous. Moreover, he talks about "*the two families*" (I. K's Interview 2, Time 01:53 and 04:54) that ruled Pakistan for 30 years and how his government replaced the "*two-party system*" (I. K's Interview 2, Time 02:00). This polarisation strategy creates an "us versus them" narrative, where his government is seen as the good guys. The current government is seen as corrupt and incapable. This narrative can effectively create a sense of solidarity among his supporters and demonise the opposition.

Polarization through Pronouns

Polarisation through pronouns in the data refers to using pronouns that divide people into groups or indicate a bias towards one group. Pronouns are often used to convey a speaker's political stance and to polarise audiences. In political interviews, Prime Minister Imran Khan has frequently used pronouns to convey his viewpoint and rally support for his policies. I.K. has used first-person pronouns such as "I," "me," and "my" to emphasise his commitment to the country and his policies. He has also used second-person pronouns such as "you" and "your" to emphasise the importance of his audience engaging in the same commitment. Khan has also used third-person pronouns such as "he," "she," and "they" to refer to his opponents, which has created a strong contrast between his policies and those of his opponents. These pronouns are used to create a strong sense of polarisation between the ousted prime minister and his opponents and emphasise the importance of his policies.
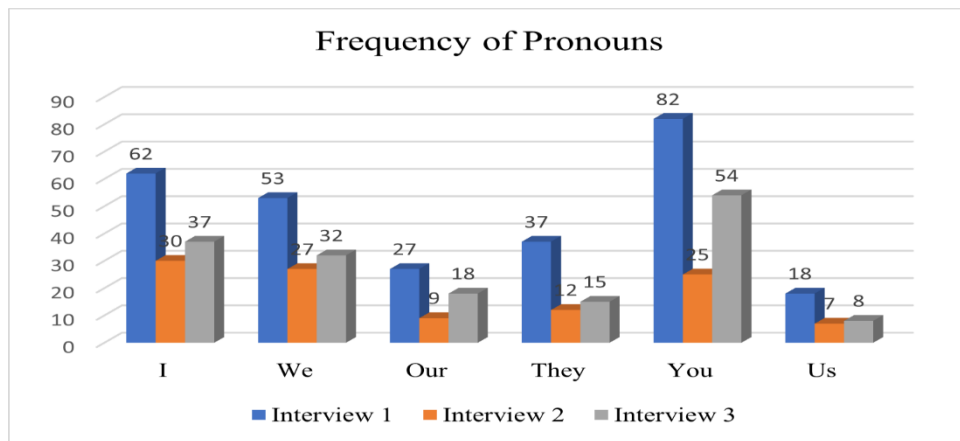
Figure 2. Frequency of Pronouns in the Interviews of Imran Khan

In the interviews of I.K., the pronouns "they" and "we" were used to create a sense of polarization in the conversation. For example, Khan's use of the pronoun "they" when referring to the people who ousted him was intended to create a distance between himself and them. He emphasized his perceived difference from the people who ousted him by using the pronoun "they" to refer to them, thus creating a sense of us vs them. Similarly, Khan used the pronoun "we" when referring to the people who supported him, thus creating a sense of inclusion and solidarity among his supporters. The pronoun "we" is used several times throughout the text, suggesting a collective identity and inclusive language. I.K. used the pronoun "we" to refer to himself and his political party, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). This pronoun choice reinforced Khan's position as the PTI leader and legitimized his party's political stance. In the case of I.K.'s interview, his use of pronouns conveyed his position of power and authority and reinforced his party's legitimacy. I.K.'s use of pronouns in this interview likely increased polarisation among his supporters and opposition and further mobilized his supporters.

Positive Self-Presentation: The Salvation of the Nation Lies Solely Within the 'Self'

On the other hand, I.K. engaged in positive self-presentation by presenting himself as a capable leader who managed to keep prices down and maintain good sentiment during the pandemic. He also presented his party, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), as a new and better alternative to the previous two-party system. He claimed that his government's policies led to growth in agriculture and industry. He wanted free and fair elections for the people of Pakistan to choose their leader (I. K's Interview 2, Time 02:36). Overall, his interviews reflected a mix of negative other-presentation and positive self-presentation.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that ousted Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan frequently employed manipulative techniques in his political interviews, particularly those involving logical fallacy, emotional and loaded language, and diversionary techniques. The study highlights how politicians frequently use informal fallacies to resonate with the public, who may be more receptive to emotional appeals than logical arguments. Politicians in political debates aim to resolve differences in their favour and often prioritise the struggle to impose a social and political representation, which can be more important than the truth or falsehood of a proposition. Argumentative strategies are employed to achieve this effect (Zurloni, 2013). In addition, it has been observed that emotionally charged and loaded language can be particularly effective in swaying public opinion, as it can appeal to people's values, fears, and aspirations.

Imran Khan used rhetorical devices in his public discourse to bolster his message and persuade the public to accept his viewpoint. However, it is essential to note that politicians can use such rhetorical devices to obscure and distort the truth. Despite their diverse backgrounds, politicians worldwide use similar techniques and rhetorical devices to persuade, guide, or manipulate the public (David, 2014, pp, 168-169). Imran Khan engaged in negative other and positive self-presentation. Politicians frequently employ such strategies to deflect blame and responsibility from themselves, using pronouns to create a "us" and a "them," they also employ a polarisation strategy based on "in-group" and "out-group" (Masroor et al., 2019). This tactic is well-known for its success in rallying support and consolidating power.

The study notes that Imran Khan utilised a positive self-presentation, emphasising that the nation's salvation depended solely on the "self." This strategy can be particularly effective in fostering national identity and unity and improving the public's perception of the leader.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Politicians may employ rhetorical strategies to persuade and sway their audience to support their position and establish a distinctive and recognisable brand. However, it is crucial to assess the content being conveyed critically and spot instances where the audience is tricked or misled by rhetorical strategies. The study concludes that discursive manipulative strategies are used in political interviews of Imran Khan for various motives, such as legitimising the political agenda, deflecting questions, and creating a positive impression. Moreover, strategies were employed, such as reframing, exaggerating facts, discursive positioning, and using loaded language to gain an edge in the interviews.

Furthermore, the study concludes that I.K. has used various rhetorical devices to emphasise his points and create a powerful and persuasive message. Furthermore, the study showed that the most used rhetorical devices in the political interviews of Imran Khan were appeals to emotion and loaded language. These findings have implications for both political communication and the media, as they can be used better to understand the communication strategies of politicians during interviews.

Rhetorical devices effectively enhance written or spoken communication's power, persuasiveness, and impact. These rhetorical devices have enabled him to emphasise his points and create a strong emotional response from his audience. This study highlights how language and framing can influence perceptions of economic performance and assign responsibility for economic consequences. The continuous references to the economy, regime change, and a bunch of criminals, coupled with shifting framing and attribution of blame, demonstrate the significance of political language in shaping public opinion on these matters.

In conclusion, the present study demonstrates that politicians, including Imran Khan, use manipulative strategies extensively to influence public opinion. These strategies are beneficial for consolidating power and enhancing political capital. Therefore, it is crucial to analyse political communication critically and be aware of possible manipulation.

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