

Major Themes in Imran Khan's UNGA Speeches: A Corpus Assisted Study

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p- ISSN: 2521-2982

e- ISSN: 2707-4587

L- ISSN: 2521-2982

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Abstract

Every year, the United Nations General Assembly holds a meeting of leaders from different countries. Imran Khan, prime minister of Pakistan, made speeches in the General Assembly of the United Nations twice. The first emphatic address he made at the United Nations General Assembly was on 27 September 2019, and the second was on 25 September 2020. This study aims to find out the major themes in both speeches and examine the frequently used words in the two speeches. For this study, his two speeches were taken from the internet and converted into plain text to compile a corpus. AntConc was used to find out the frequency of frequently used terms and to demonstrate the concordance of frequently used words. The results reveal substantial similarities and slight variations in the content of the two speeches. The major themes highlighted in the speech were India, RSS, Kashmir, Islamophobia, and climate change.

Key Words: Islamophobia, Islam, Kashmir, RSS, Climate Change, Pandemic

Introduction

This study explores the main themes and examines the words frequently used in Imran Khan's speeches at the United Nations General Assembly. Every year, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) holds a debate in which heads of state from various countries take part. Each year, various statesmen from different countries represent their countries and deliver their speeches in order to address and highlight different themes and issues. Like the leaders of other nations, Pakistan's prime minister also delivers his speech every year. Till today, several prime ministers and presidents of Pakistan have delivered their speeches to the United Nations General Assembly. Pakistan has gained tremendous geostrategic significance in the region as a frontline state in the war against terror. Pakistan's position continues to be more important, given the changing political situation in South Asia. Pakistan has waged a decisive battle against terrorism. The nation also plays a vital role in the Afghan peace process. As a result of all these roles, Pakistan is considered to be an effective player in the region.

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In the 2018 elections, Pakistan's Tehreeki Insaf (PTI) came to power in both the federal and provinces of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The PTI also established a coalition government in the province of Baluchistan. The people of Pakistan voted to support Pakistan's social, economic, and political rise. The 2018 election was unlike the previous general election since people voted for a new and different party this time, something unprecedented in the history of Pakistan. The people of Pakistan wanted a change, and, because of their high expectations from Imran Khan, they chose PTI. The chairman of PTI (the current prime minister of Pakistan) is renowned for his assertiveness, integrity, and leadership qualities as he proved to be a strong and trustworthy leader before the premiership in the field of cricket and as a social worker.

Like many other world leaders, Imran Khan also had the chance to address the UN General Assembly (UNGA). Imran Khan is currently Pakistan's Prime Minister and has twice delivered a speech at the United Nations General Assembly so far. The speeches given by Imran Khan to UNGA were among the most-watched on YouTube. Especially in the country, which also took social media to the storm, both his speeches were rated high. The political and security situation with India's rivalry was worsening when Imran Khan was to deliver his speeches, particularly due to the deteriorating situation in Indian occupied Kashmir. It was high time for Pakistan and Imran Khan to use the United Nations Assembly platform to inform the world of the situation in the region.

Language plays an undeniably important role in any form of discourse. The selection of words is of primary importance in the conveyance of a message. Moreover, the success of any message entirely depends on the language used for cladding the message. Imran Khan is known as an excellent orator who knows how to exploit language to get his message across convincingly and compellingly. The current study investigates the frequently used words in both speeches and highlights the main issues discussed in both speeches. This study also aims to find out the similarities and differences in both speeches.

Focus and Significance of the Study

Many world leaders have made historic speeches at the UNGA in history. Some of them are overrated and are still under discussion because of the content and style of delivery. Imran Khan's speeches at UNGA were also the most discussed, viewed, and rated. The present study explores the themes, the content, and the style of the two speeches made at the UNGA.

The study is significant in two ways. First, the study presents the main issues that Imran Khan discussed at UNGA. Second, the study also helps readers understand Pakistan's political stance on key issues in the international political context.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. Investigate the choice of words used in both speeches.
2. To investigate the key issues discussed in both speeches.

Research Questions

1. What are the frequently used words in the speeches of Imran Khan at UNGA?
2. What are the main issues highlighted by the speeches of Imran Khan at UNGA?
3. What are the similarities and differences in both of Imran Khan's speeches at the UNGA?

Delimitations

Due to time constraints, the study is delimited to the analysis of two speeches of Imran Khan (the prime minister of Pakistan) made at UNGA on September 27, 2019, and September 25, 2020, respectively.

Literature Review

The study of political discourse has always been of the centre of attention in research because of the possible implications that political narratives can have on the region in particular and on the world in general. The speeches delivered by heads of states at the United Nations General Assembly are particularly important because these speeches mirror the attitudes and policies of the states towards the regional and global issues. Therefore, the addresses made at the United Nations General Assembly by various leaders have been studied by many researchers. For instance, [Sultan et al.\(2019\)](#) conducted a study on the speeches of Nawaz sharif to the united nations assembly to compare his two speeches. During his last tenure as Prime Minister of Pakistan, he addressed the United Nations Assembly twice. According to the study, both of his speeches were almost identical, with almost the same content in both speeches. Issues such as the Kashmir dispute, terrorism, and the relationship with the neighbouring country, India, were highlighted in both speeches. He addressed internal and external issues, but in his second speech to the United Nations Assembly, he did not speak about the internal issues. The corpus tool Wmatrix was used to analyze the data. The study also discussed the use of personal pronouns in both speeches. The study showed the differences in his speeches and his stance towards rival India.

Similarly, [Dalman \(2017\)](#) conducted a corpus-based study of Donald Trump's political communications. This study focused on two things: finding the most commonly used words in Donald Trump's campaign speeches, and discovering the persuasive elements of pathos, ethos, and logos in his speeches. The study used a qualitative method to analyze twelve of his speeches. The study found that the word "will" had the highest frequency, which was 121, followed by Hillary 58, American 38, going 35, and some other words. The study also found the use of persuasive words in his speeches that could help him win the election.

Likewise, [Carreon & Svetanant \(2017\)](#) conducted a study in order to investigate the major elements in the political speeches of the Gen Prayuth Chan-Ocha (Thai Prime Minister). A corpus, composed of 10,672-word types and 325,398-word tokens, were analyzed. The analysis found that the keywords for the information communicated by the speaker accounted for 62.86 percent (N=154) followed by the keywords for the language features at 22.04 percent (N=54). According to the study, the high frequency of these words shows the agenda conveyed by the government. These frequently used words are the justification of the political, social, and economic agenda showed by the government during the speeches. Both qualitative and quantitative data were used for the analysis which showed that Thai language speeches and English language speeches target a different audience. The study also showed the dichotomous role played by the government, showing something else in order to please the international community and in reality, doing its opposite.

[Chen et al. \(2019\)](#) carried out a corpus-based study of Hillary Clinton's and Donald Trump's linguistic style. A corpus-based approach was used in order to compare the speeches of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton made during the campaign for presidential US election 2016. AntConc 3.2.4 was used in the study for the analysis of the data. The comparison of the speeches of both the leaders showed that Hillary Clinton used more diverse vocabulary than Donald Trump. The study also identified three major differences between Hillary Clinton's and Donald Trump's linguistic styles. The inclination of Hillary Clinton in these speeches was towards a rational discussion of public policy, while, on the other hand, Donald Trump inclined to stir up the emotions of the voters. The second difference was that Hillary Clinton was more positive and focused on the future, while Donald Trump's attitude was contrary to that of Hillary Clinton. The third difference was that Hillary Clinton was aiming to find commonality with the people of America, while Donald Trump was trying to find differences.

Similarly, [Shariffar & Rahimi \(2015\)](#) analyzed the speeches of Obama and Rouhani. The speeches were made by both leaders at the United Nations Assembly in September 2013. The study used Halliday's functional systemic grammar. The study was designed to examine the art of linguistics in both Obama and

Rouhani's speeches. According to this study, the sentences used by Obama were short, the words were simple, and the language was colloquial, which was understandable to people. On the other hand, the language used by Rouhani was formal and rather complicated, and the words were relatively difficult.

[Bhatia \(2006\)](#) conducted a critical discourse analysis of political press conferences. This study analyzed the textual data of the political conferences, including the press conferences of two prominent political figures in the world: former Chinese President Jiang Zemin and former US President George W. Bush. Both had differences in age, experience, socio-political influence, economic status, and political ideology. The study showed that there were three main themes. These themes were positive energy in order to strengthen the mutual interest, progress and trust, power and influence of persuasion, and to avoid media issues.

The above studies have highlighted the critical discourse analysis of the world's various leaders. The studies focused on their style of speech, the choice of words used in speeches and press conferences, and the frequency of words used in political speeches. Some of the studies were corpus-based. The present study focuses on the two speeches made at the United Nations General Assembly by Imran Khan (Prime Minister of Pakistan). Studies have been conducted on Imran Khan's political speeches, but a corpus-based study, as far as we know, focusing on his speeches to the United Nations General Assembly has never been conducted. The current study fills this gap by applying a corpus-based approach to Imran Khan's speeches at the United Nations General Assembly.

Methodology

The study follows a mixed-method approach, that means it is both qualitative and quantitative. The speeches of Imran Khan (delivered to the General Assembly of the United Nations) were examined by AntConc ([Anthony, 2014](#)). Both speeches were downloaded from the internet in plain text and used for the compilation of the corpus. The first phase in the compilation of a corpus is the selection of appropriate material. For this purpose, two speeches of Imran Khan were selected which are available online and can be accessed at [BR Web Desk, 2019](#), and the Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, respectively. The speeches were downloaded, cleaned and filtered of extra information. The text was converted into plain text format using online text converter. After that, the corpus was uploaded to the AnConc software ([Anthony, 2014](#)) and was analyzed using word frequency and concordance functions of the software. This software has multiple functions that can be used depending on the demand of the research. One of the functions of this software is frequency tool that can quickly search for the frequently used words in the corpus. We used corpus tool AntConc ([Anthony, 2014](#)) to explore the frequency of frequently occurring words. These frequently used words were presented in the form of graphs with their frequency in the data analysis section. We also used the concordance function of AntConc ([Anthony, 2014](#)) to examine the frequently used terms in their linguistic context. The words with linguistic context were clipped and explained in the data analysis section.

Conceptual Framework

Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics are both concerned with the use of linguistic units in different contexts. Corpus linguistic studies are based, in particular, on an analysis of all kinds of texts in the corpus that exercise quantitative measures in order to identify patterns of distribution that occur across texts ([Biber et al., 2007](#)). The use of computers has made research easier and helps researchers investigate the different patterns of language use within the text, e.g. lexical or grammatical. The use of modern technology has greatly facilitated research in the field of discourse analysis and significantly reduced both resources and time necessary for the identification of specific linguistic patterns and the arrangement of words in texts. Besides, apart from analyzing the linguistic features of the corpus, the content of the speech, the paralinguistic features, the expressions, and the diction of the speakers also have a significant impact on the audience.

Data Analysis

The graphs are given below to present the most used words with their frequency in Imran Khan's speeches. These most frequently used words were calculated using the inbuilt functions of Antconc software, as discussed in the methodology section. In Figure 1, we have presented the most frequently used words in his first speech at the United Nations National Assembly. In Figures 2, 3 and 4, the most frequently used words are presented from Imran Khan's second speech.

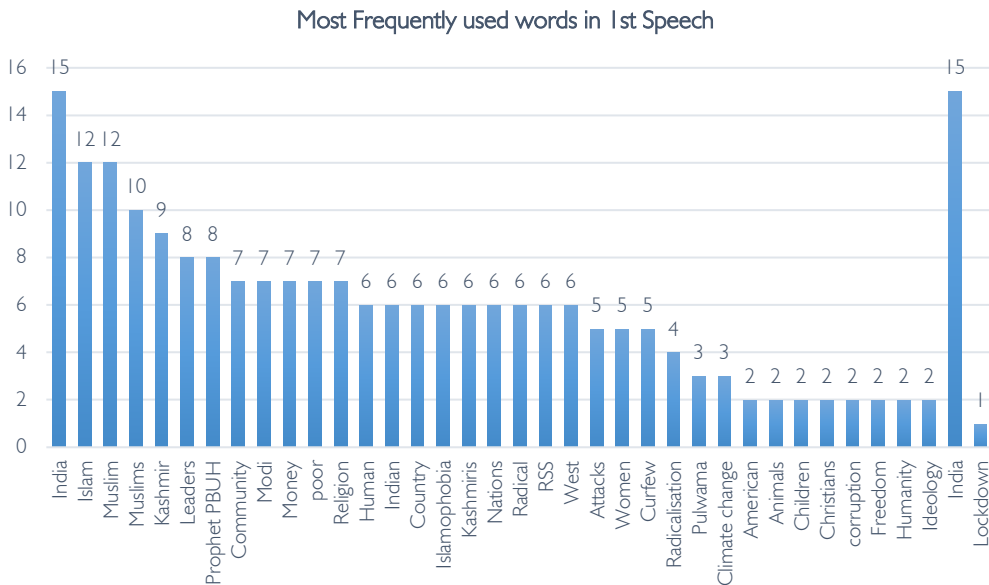


Figure 1: Frequency of words in IK's First Speech

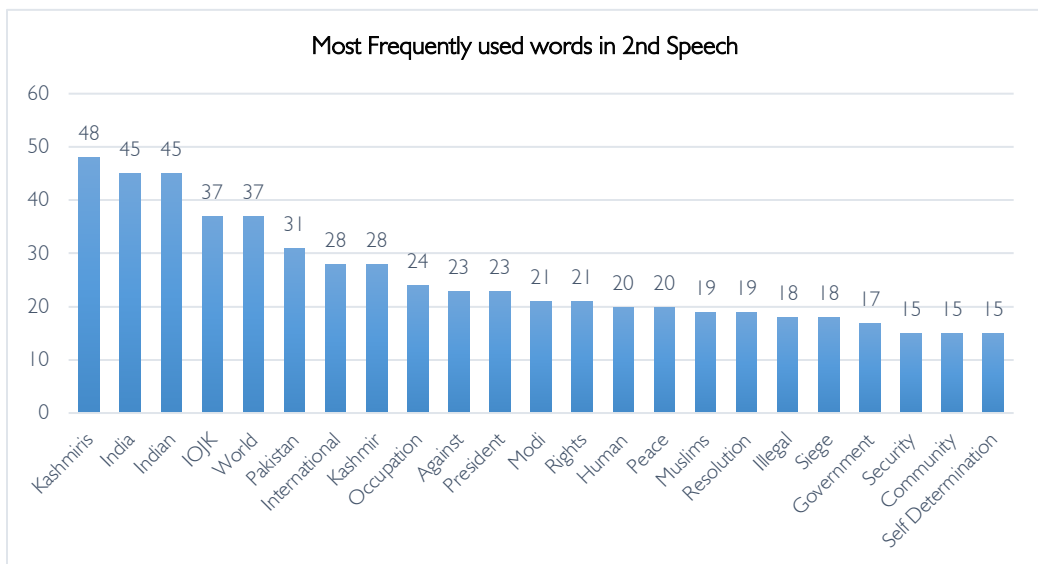


Figure 2: Frequency of words in IK's 2nd speech

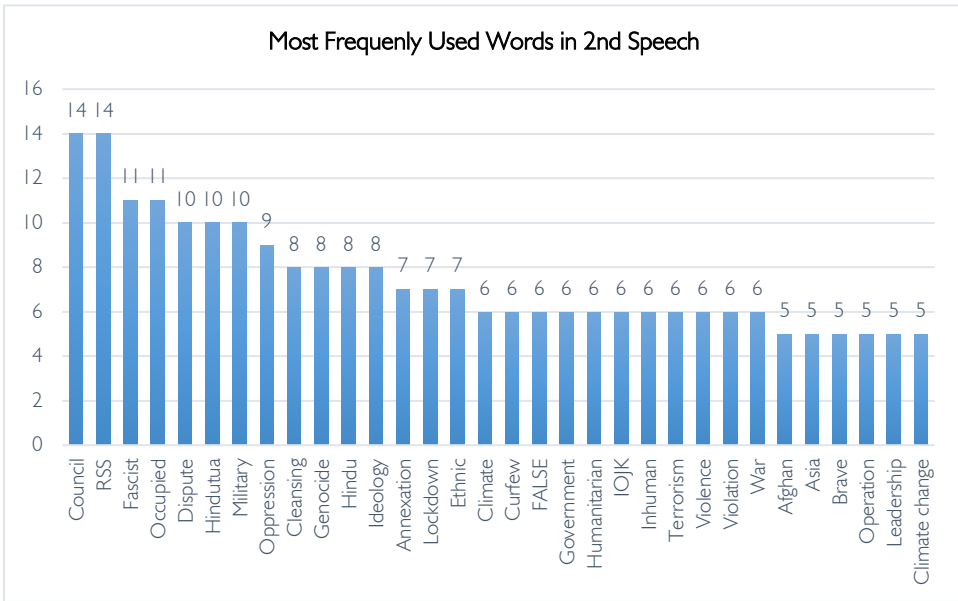


Figure 3: Frequency of words in IK's 2nd speech

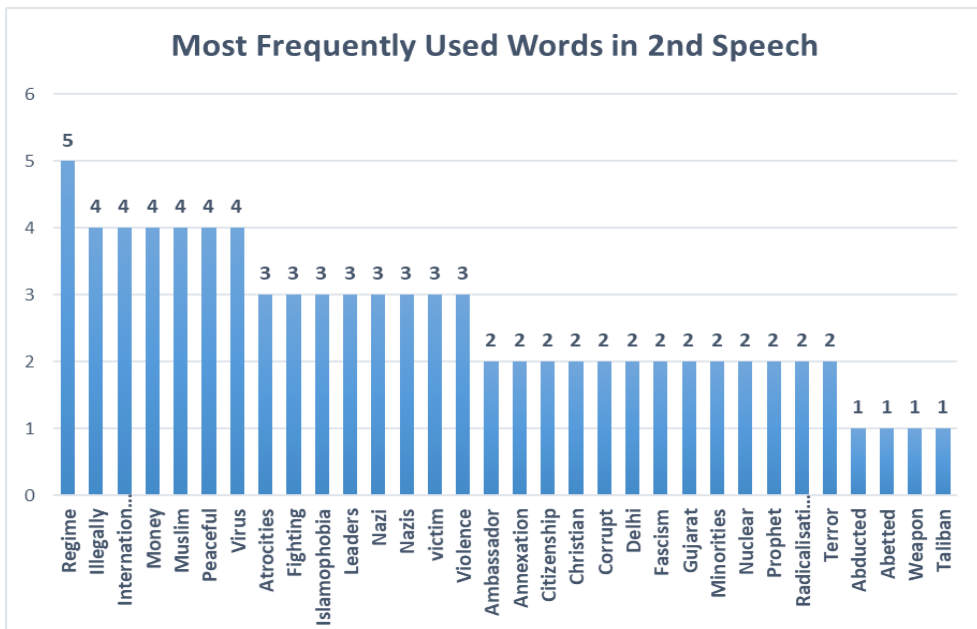


Figure 4: Frequency of words in IK's 2nd speech

The graphs above present a comparative picture of both speeches. In both speeches, many words are the same, which means that some of the words from the first speech are repeated in the second speech. A careful look at the graphs shows that there are many similarities between the two speeches. The contents of these two speeches are almost identical. In the first speech, the word "India" was the most

frequently used word (15 times), which shows that India was one of the target areas of Imran Khan's first UNGA speech. More interestingly, in Imran Khan's second speech, the word "India" was used 45 times. In his second speech, this increase in the mention of 'India' indicates a growing tension between the two countries and a deteriorating security situation. In addition, with an explanation, the issue of Kashmir, which has a direct link to the relationship with India, was also highlighted. In his first speech, the word "Kashmir" was used nine times; "Kashmiris" six times. On the other hand, the word "Kashmir" was used 28 times, and "Kashmiris" was used 48 times in the second speech. This high frequency of the words "Kashmir" and "Kashmiris" is an indication of the seriousness of the matter. There has been a massive increase in the frequency of words like India, Kashmir, and Kashmiris. In order to let the world, know about the brutality of the Indian government, the words Modi, curfew, IOJK (Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir), and RSS were frequently used. The use of these particular words has highlighted the issues of Kashmir, and the atrocious behaviour of the Indian government.

The second thing we found highlighted in the speeches was the issue of Islamophobia. Words such as Islam, Muslim, and Islamophobia have been used to highlight this issue. The word "Islam" was used 12 times in the first speech and the word "Muslim" 12 times, the word "Prophet PBUH" 6 times, and the word "Religion" 7 times. The word "Muslims" was used 19 times in the second speech. The stress on these words shows the suffering of the Muslims, their love for their religion and the prophet PBUH. In addition, words like climate, money, and the poor have also been used to talk about climate change, poverty, and money laundering. In the second speech, "COVID" was used four times. The content of the two speeches was almost the same. In the second speech, there may have been an increase in the frequency of words to highlight issues with a great deal of detail and emphasis.



Figure 5: Concordance of the word "Islamophobia" in both the speeches

In both of his speeches, he spoke of Islam and Islamophobia. He discussed Islam and highlighted the issue of Islamophobia with much more explanation in order to inform the world about the emotions, feelings, and love of Muslims for their religion. The context of the discussion on Islam and Islamophobia is vivid in the concordance of the above-mentioned words in the pictures. He talked about the misrepresentation of Islam and how it is illogically linked to terrorism. He also discussed that there is no radical Islam, that there is only one Islam, and that is the Islam of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. The concept of radical Islam was created in the West after the 9/11 attack. He also discussed the fact that people in the West do not know about actual Islam, and the propaganda against Islam is alarming. The fear of Islam

in the West increased after 9/11, but in reality, Islam has nothing to do with terrorism, it is a religion of peace.

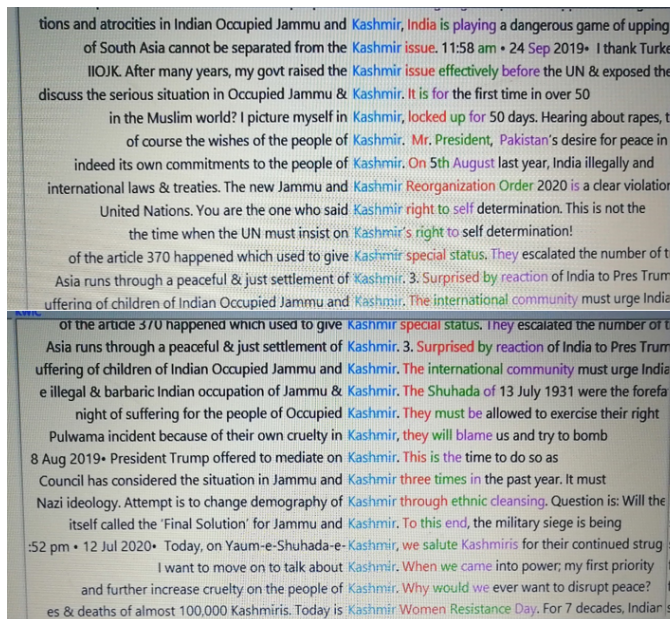


Figure 6:

Concordance of the word "Kashmir" in both the speeches.

The issue of Kashmir was at the heart of both speeches, and both the speeches addressed the issue with more energy, faith, and boldness. He reminded the United Nations of the Kashmir resolution. He spoke openly about the brutality and cruelty of the Indian government and its army. The unceasing and inhuman curfew of the occupied Indian Kashmir was severely condemned. He stressed the solution of the Kashmir issue and warned the United Nations of its deteriorating situation and its consequences. The main aim was to pressurize India to lift the inhuman curfew and give Kashmiris a right of self-determination. The greater frequency of words related to Kashmir in both the speeches demonstrates the seriousness of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan.

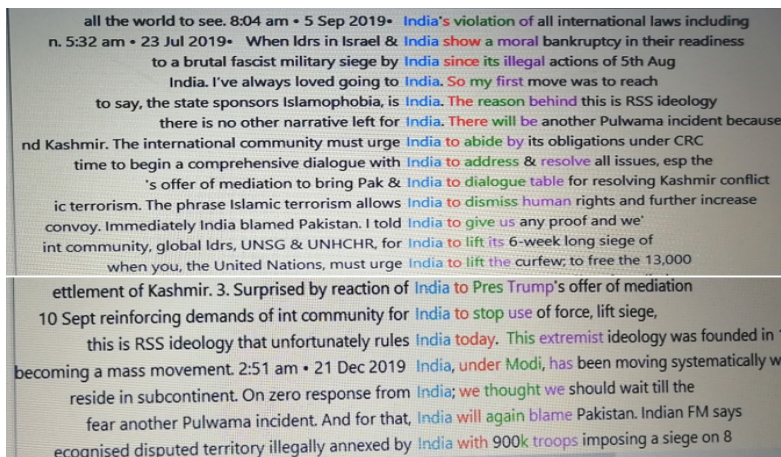


Figure 7: Concordance of the word "India" in both speeches

. The western world doesn't understand the RSS agenda inspired by Nazi Germany. I am
 . Mr Modi is a "life member" of RSS. An organisation inspired by Hitler and Mussolini
 in 2007, over 50 Muslims were burnt alive by RSS arsonists aboard the Samjhota Express Train. In
 the Aryan race. This is open knowledge. RSS believes in the racial superiority of Hindus.
 of Kashmiris. The fascist policies of the RSS-BJP combine are fraught with serious risks.
 brutal campaign is to impose what the RSS-BJP regime has itself called the 'Final
 statement that terrorists were being trained in RSS Camps. Modi was not allowed to travel
 llion Muslims and other minorities. In 1992, the RSS destroyed the Babri Mosque; in 2002, some 2000 Mu
 hate was directed at the Jews, the RSS directs it towards the Muslims and to
 extremist ideology was founded in 1920s. The RSS founding fathers were inspired by the Nazis
 Muslims, state-sponsored terror through police & RSS gangs is going to lead to radicalisation
 ily militarized occupied territory, sending in of RSS goons, complete communication blackout; with the
 ered Mahatma Gandhi. The hate ideology allowed RSS goons under Modi's CM ship in
 in IOJK is unfolding exactly acc to RSS ideology inspired by Nazi ideology. Attempt is
 Gujarat 9:56 pm • 14 Aug 2019• I am afraid this RSS ideology of Hindu Supremacy, like the Nazi
 , is India. The reason behind this is RSS ideology that unfortunately rules India today. T
 munication links. 4:07 am • 17 May 2020• Modi's RSS-inspired doctrine on IOJK very clear: First
 . President; I have to explain what the RSS is. Mr Modi is a "life member"
 that any attempt by the fascist totalitarian RSS-led Indian government to aggress against Pakistan
 just google the founding fathers of the RSS like Golwalkar. This ideology of hate murdered

Figure 8: Concordance of "RSS"

1 . These are humans. Arrogance has blinded PM Modi and BJP. This racial superiority; what does
 2 was under the watch of Chief Minister Modi; and in 2007, over 50 Muslims were burnt alive
 3 20 Nov 2019• 75 days & Occupation government of Modi continues the siege in IOJK. Modi is
 4 on orders of the Hindutva Supremacist Occupation Modi govt are well documented by UN, HR
 5 sistance. In fact the racist Hindutva Supremacist Modi Govt has ensured that Kashmiris are deprived
 6 sufferings have multiplied after 5 Aug siege by Modi Govt. I urge world community, esp women,
 7 of the ethnic cleansing agenda of the Modi Govt. & it's illegal annexation of IOJK.
 8 & exposed the Hindutva Supremacist fascism of the Modi Govt. 7:55 pm • 4 Aug 2020• I will address the
 9 them as they confront the brutal, fascist Modi govt's annexation & ethnic cleansing agenda in
 10 strongly condemn the racist Hindutva Supremacist Modi Govt's continuing attempts to illegally alter
 11 by the Indian Occupation Forces of the Modi Govt. Under cover of this siege, Indian
 12 938. The fascist, Hindu-Supremacist design of the Modi Govt with its ethnic cleansing & genocide of
 13 ass movement. 2:51 am • 21 Dec 2019 India, under Modi, has been moving systematically with its Hindu
 14 first move was to reach out to Modi & I said let's work our differences.

Figure 9: Concordance of Word "Modi"

The greater portions of both the speeches were specified for India, Modi, and RSS. Imran Khan openly criticized the Modi led government for its treacherous activities against Pakistan. He discussed the role of India in destabilizing the peace in the region, the Hindutva ideology, and the heinous role of RSS in conspiring against peace. The sufferings of Muslims in the Modi-led government were also highlighted. The Gujarat incident and the abominable incident of Babri masjid were among the long list of RSS's heinous acts. The Modi led government was compared to that of Nazis, and the similarities between Modi and Hitler were also elucidated. The role of RSS and Modi relation with it were questioned and brought to the notice of the international community. Apart from Muslims, the problems faced by Christians in the Modi led government was also discussed.

Hr KWIC
 1 take the lead as we consider addressing climate change a universal responsibility. We have launched
 2 of the increased threat of nuclear war, Climate Change, and sadly the rise of authoritarian
 3 people as we have similar problems; poverty & climate change. Highest number of people reside in
 4 must address. First let me talk about climate change; I have seen a lot of
 5 our contribution to mitigating the effects of climate change. Mr. President, The pandemic was an
 6 the threat posed to mankind due to Climate Change. Unprecedented fires in Australia, Siberia, Cali
 7 top 10 nations in the world affected by climate change. We depend on or rivers, we
 8 one of those countries most affected by climate change. Yet, we have decided to take

Figure 10: concordance of words " climate change" in both the speeches

Line	Text
1	are now going on against lockdowns during a pandemic - despite prov of medical, financial, communicati
2	r multilateralism. Mr. President, The COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated the oneness of humanity. In our
3	everyone is safe. Locking down to control the pandemic has triggered the worst recession since the Great
4	ness stories in controlling and responding to the pandemic. However, we are still not out of the
5	s to exploit the international focus on COVID19 pandemic to push forward BJP's Hindutva Supremacist agen
6	effects of climate change. Mr. President, The pandemic was an opportunity to bring humanity together. U

Figure 11: concordance of the word "Pandemic" in the second speech.

The figures above show the concordance of words like climate change and pandemics. In both his speeches, he spoke about the impact of climate change on the world as well as on Pakistan. He discussed his government's efforts to address climate change issues such as reforestation in the province of KP. In addition, in his second speech, he discussed the issue of COVID 19, the pandemic. In his first speech, he did not discuss the issue of the pandemic since there was no pandemic at that time. He informed the international community about his country's efforts to combat the pandemic and asked them to help the poor countries during the pandemic.

Conclusion

The contents of the two speeches were, to a great extent, the same, and the themes were also the same. There is one thing that makes the second speech different from the first is the use of frequency of the words which shows the focus and the seriousness of the issues highlighted. He spoke about Kashmir, the role of the RSS, Modi, the Indian Government, Islam, Islamophobia, and climate change in both speeches. In his second speech, he also discussed the issue of the pandemic. The only difference in both speeches, as far the issues are concerned, was the issue of the pandemic, as he did not speak about it in his first speech. It was discussed only in the second speech because it started in early 202. In both speeches, the frequently used words are shown in the graphs given above in the data analysis section. Some of the words that were commonly used were Islam, Islamophobia, Kashmir, India, Modi, RSS, ideology, Hindutva, climate change, corruption, money laundering and pandemics. The issue of Kashmir had substantial space in his speech and spoke eloquently about the sufferings of Kashmiri people and the atrocities committed by Indian forces. In both speeches, he appealed to the international community to do something to resolve the Kashmir issue. He also told the international community to take the issue of climate change seriously and to play their part in solving the problem. Additionally, Imran Khan, Pakistan's prime minister, spoke openly about Islamophobia and its impact on Muslims around the world. His main aim was to let the world know the true Islam and the love of the Muslims for their religion and their prophet.

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