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## Ideological Underpinning of Political Slogans of Mainstream Political Parties of Pakistan: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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**Abstract:** *Language is not merely a means of communication; it is also a carrier of the ideology of the people who speak it though it may not be easily discernible at times. This implies that language and ideology bear a very close relationship with each other. The present study reports how language and ideology are interwoven in the form of slogans found in the political gatherings and rallies of three mainstream political parties of Pakistan: PMLN(Pakistan Muslim League, N),PPP(Pakistan People's Party) and PTI(Pakistan Tehreek –e– Insaf). To critically analyse the selected slogans, methods of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) offered by Van Dijk and Critical Linguistics (CL) have been employed. Besides, Transitivity Analysis was carried out by applying the Systematic Functional Linguistic analysis proposed by Halliday. In order to address the issue of lexicalization, help was sought from the ideas of Roger Fowler (1991). The primary focus of the study was to explore how structures of slogans present a specific ideology having specific meanings which are not clear to the ordinary audience. The present study also aimed at finding out how the hidden ideology manipulates the judgements and reaction of the public.*

**Key Words:** Slogans, Ideology, Power, Lexicalization, Transitivity, Systematic Functional Linguistics

### Introduction

Language has been used to attract people in the political history of mankind. Slogans used in public gatherings have been the source to serve the purpose of attraction. Such slogans are used over a period that not only do they affect day to day language of people but also influence the conscious and behaviour of people. Slogans are an important

language device which are exploited during mass gatherings in order to cement and solidify the relationship among the attendees of the gathering.

The sphere of slogans is not limited, as they are used in political, social, advertising, and religious spheres. Different techniques are used in each sphere to catch the attention of people. In the advertising sphere, techniques of puns, rhymes, word play, pictures, graphics, and colours are used. To raise

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social consciousness and social issues, social slogans are used. On the other hand, religious slogans are used to evoke religious feelings and sentiments. One of the important domains in the history of mankind is politics where such slogans are in abundance. Political slogans have not a single use. They are used in wars, protests, and political and electoral campaigns to draw the attention of people to a specific phenomenon or divert it from a specific phenomenon. In political history, revolutionary and freedom's slogans have also been in use. Such slogans can be traced in the political history of mankind. For example, during the Bolshevik revolution, 'Peace, Bread, Land' was the slogan of the revolutionary people (Lenin, [1903/1977](#)). During the independence of Pakistan, people demanding independence used the slogan "hum leke rahenge azadi" (we will take our freedom). Another slogan after the independence of Pakistan has been resounding all around the country, 'Pakistan Zindabad' (long live Pakistan).

Since the independence, political parties of Pakistan have been using many slogans in their political demonstrations, electoral campaigns, and public gatherings. These slogans not only keep supporters of a political party motivated but also help political parties build invisible ideology. To support and show loyalty and allegiance to a party, party workers and supporters chant these slogans. This gives a hint of power relation between political parties and people in a specific way. That is, slogans carry certain ideologies of political parties and people accept that ideology both unconsciously and consciously. The present study aims to reveal the ideology embedded in slogans used by main stream political parties of Pakistan.

Political slogans apparently seem simple in display but the case might be quite the opposite. The present study also aims at revealing specific meanings delicately wrapped in slogans by their makers. The study has been carried out in a bid to understand the role of ideology and power relation between audience and political parties in a socio-political context.

### **Research Objectives of the Study are**

- To reveal specific meanings slogan carry,

- To find out how political parties embed meanings in their political slogans,
- To explore the linguistic features present in these slogans, and
- To find out the interplay of ideology and language to achieve the certain political purpose by the selected political parties.

### **The present Study Aims to Answer the Following Questions**

1. What are the linguistic choices made by political parties for political slogans?
2. How do the mainstream political parties use two discursive techniques 'lexicalization and transitivity' to present their ideology?
3. How does ideology reflect the power structure between political parties and audience?

### **Delimitation**

The current research is delimited to the slogans of three main stream parties of Pakistan (PMLN, PTI, and PPP). In terms of analysis of the selected political slogans, only the techniques of transitivity and lexicalization have been employed to reveal the invisible ideology in these slogans. Furthermore, CDA as a method is employed to have a broader view of power structures and discourse structures to understand the use of language in the slogans and its social meanings.

### **Literature Review**

Considering language as a social process, it influences human affairs in all domains of life. Two aspects can be identified in studying language from a social point of view; ideology and power relations. Ideology constructs the junction of humans and language in the social world, such that it is a mediating link between forms of speech and social forms (Woolard, [1998](#)). According to him, ideology and language are interlinked. An important query here is, how ideology is grafted in language? It is achieve, perhaps, through the dialectical relationship between the two. In other words, both language and society are conditioned by dialectical relation (Fairclough, [1989](#)).

In a democratic country, slogans serve the purpose of political parties or demonstrators show a tilt towards a democratic setup. In a few cases people show their tilt towards undemocratic regimes. As Begum (2015) has studied that constructed invisible ideologies through slogans, accepted by people sometimes show a tilt towards powerful groups and an undemocratic setup.

As for ideology, there is a wide range of the usage of this term in academic disciplines not only in linguistics but also in many other social theories. This wide range of usage makes the notion of ideology one of central and important to the present study with respect to Critical Discourse Analysis. Ideologies construct and share the beliefs of a specific group of people and socially represent them within a society and across different groups. Longman Dictionary: Dictionary of Contemporary English defines ideology as "A set of beliefs on which a political or economic system is based, or which strongly influence the way people behave" (2009, p.805).

One of the roles of ideology is to shape the feelings, thoughts and perceptions of the people within a social circle. On many occasions, our expression of thought about any specific matter is affected by our ideological background and the set schema that influences our thought process. Fairclough names it Member's Resource which governs one's judgments, thoughts, and interactions. The influence works as a controlling instrument by submitting the thought process according to a set pattern. The controlling instrument is the language that is accepted socially by all the members of a social group. Likewise, Kress and Hodge believe that language is "an instrument of control as well as communication" (1993, p.6). In other words, ideology is dependent upon the language of a social group. According to Van Dijk, ideology is one kind of framework that is "assumed to specifically organize and monitor one form of socially shared mental representation, in other words, the organized evaluative beliefs-traditionally called attitudes are shared by social groups" (1996, p.7). Looking at the above-mentioned definitions, it can be safely claimed that ideas, values, and beliefs are dependent upon the system of ideology, which

is adopted consciously, sub-consciously, and unconsciously. In other words, it occupies a place in the cognition of an individual as well as in the social domain. In the present study, ideology is considered as a discursive practice and refers to the set of values and beliefs which not only constitute the world view, but also influence the interpretation and understanding of events and facts.

With this as the background, the present study aims to analyze the ways lexical choices of chanted slogans within a Pakistani political scenario manifest an ideology. It is an obvious point that language has a very crucial and important role in the expression of an ideology which gives a hint that language and discourse cannot be separated. In other words, language is the tool that develops a discourse that expresses an ideology in a specific social circle. As has been mentioned that ideology manifests itself in language, and CDA follows a critical approach to study the language, therefore, the ideological meanings are embedded in language which can be understood by studying the language of ideological beliefs and value within the scope of CDA. For further explanation of this point, Puurtinen believes that "CDA aims at revealing how ideology affects linguistic choices made by a text producer and how language can be used to maintain, reinforce or challenge ideologies" (2000, p.178). It is obvious that linguistic choices made in the slogans are not accidental but have a certain ideological stance on the part of the text producers. This ideological stance and its contents can be uncovered by following the framework of CDA. Moreover, it helps to understand the process of constructing and reinforcing of certain ideology in the texts/slogans. For instance, in the present study, the framework helps in identifying the linguistic manifestations of ideology in the text by revealing the usage of specific lexical units.

One of the terms that relates to ideology is power, which comes once the ideological stance is accepted by the members of a social group. Van Dijk (1996) explains that individual cognition develops certain ideologies and is usually affected by social power existing within a social group. This cognition needs a discourse, either in the written or spoken form, to fulfil its manifestation. According

to him, the expression and reproduction of ideologies in a discourse can be achieved using lexical items having fixed connotational meaning. These connotations are expressed using modals, phrases, clauses, presuppositions, cohesion and so on. With this view, it is quite clear that spoken and written articulations have some ideological position and the same thing can be said in different ways. The difference and choice of articulation is not random or accidental, but "differences in expression carry ideological distinctions and thus differences in representation" (Fowler, 1991, p.4).

Political slogans can be analyzed, interpreted and reshaped in different ways. Nordlund (2003) suggests that political slogans can be simplified, personified, polarized, and intensified. Furthermore, "a transformation of the original account of the event in question is presented to the reader in such a way that it may affect his/her view of the world." (Nordlund, 2003, p. 8). Ideology and dominance hidden and wrapped inside slogans can only be reached at if studied critically. In this context, Van Dijk (1996) explains the relationship of Critical Discourse Analysis with the term dominance. According to him, dominance is a way of exercising social power by dominant groups, elites and institutions that set up a system of inequality: including political, cultural, ethnic, racial, class, and gender inequalities. He is of the view that Critical Discourse Analysis can help understand the nature of social power and dominance that are based on the privileged access to social resources: income, position, status, force, membership, education and knowledge. It can be said from this view that dominant social groups have access and control over certain valued things which are not equally accessible to other groups of society. In this way, social dominance and power are imposed on the minor and the less powerful groups. In a similar fashion, ideologies in many ways establish desired meanings within texts and slogans which help to keep the dominance over minor groups.

### Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Primary goal of discourse analysis is to study the relationship between context and the language that is used in that context. Critical Discourse Analysis

is one of the influential approaches of discourse analysis. The term Critical Discourse Analysis was first proposed by Roger Fowler and his few colleagues in their work based on language and ideology. This term gained popularity and linguists accepted it these terms that discourse analysis needs to be studied critically. Van Dijk (2004, p.17) argues in that context that critical analysis should have a dimension that is critical. He further explains the point that the target of CDA is to study the relation between power structures and discourse structures that deal with the relationship between language and social meanings through critical analysis (Van Dijk, 1998).

Like Van Dijk, Halliday's functional approach to language has an influence on critical discourse analysis. His approach tends to focus on both the social functions of language and the thematic and informational structure of speech and writing which further helped him to develop systemic functional linguistics. Critical Discourse Analysis thus examines the relationship between ideology and power and credence to language that further illustrates the way talk and text are framed ideologically which further direct hearers in the reality. The target of Critical Discourse Analysis is to investigate the relation between text and context. Context can be both social and political in both talk and text. Critical Discourse Analysis investigates how social context is created to use in speech and writing. It helps to understand the thinking and believing process by studying language as social practice. It also helps in studying the influence of language in imposing power in social practice by manipulating the thought and belief of the audience. Fairclough (1995) highlights this point by claiming that the use of language as a form of social practice is the discourse, and discourse analysis studies the work of text within sociocultural practice.

According to Fairclough (1995), Critical Discourse Analysis has three main nodes: text production, discourse practice and sociocultural practice. Critical Discourse Analysis tries to focus on the relation among these three nodes in analysing spoken or written text critically. Critical Discourse Analysis tries to explore power relations grafted in

discourse and further relates to wider social and cultural contexts. Critical Discourse Analysis empowers the analyst to understand the relation between discourse and social structures. Apart from giving an opportunity to investigate the relation between text and context, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) also helps analysts in studying the social structure and discursive structures including language, power and ideology. In other words, it uncovers the invisible ideological assumptions in discourse and the power these assumptions carry. These assumptions also carry bias and inequality apart from power and dominance. CDA helps to reveal them as well as those sources that produce, reproduce, maintain, and transform these assumptions within specific historical, social, and political context (Van Dijk, 1988).

Power and ideology bear a strong connection with each other. According to Van Dijk (1996), ideologies always form in individual cognition and are influenced by social power. Discourse either in speech or written form having ideologies is recognized by individual cognition. Ideologies he says, are expressed and re-expressed in a discourse by making certain lexical choices with specific ideological connotations. These choices can be modals, presuppositions, clause structure and cohesion etc. Fowler (1991) points out that ideological position is important for those who write and speak. He views that the same thing can be written or said differently and these differences are not accidental alternatives. These differences in talk and text carry ideological distinctions, hence carrying differences in representation. The distinct language of political slogans makes it necessary to interpret them in different ways, Political slogans having a distinct language can be interpreted in different ways as Nordlund (2003) pointed out that political slogans can be summed up, polarized, simplified, personified and intensifies.

## Methodology

### Theoretical Framework

The focus of this study is on the theories of critical discourse analysis and critical linguistics. Wodak and Meyer (2001) believe that critical linguistics is a

branch of discourse analysis that helps to investigate discourse beyond the level of description. It explains why and how discourses are produced and what purpose they serve. The term was first coined by Fowler, who thinks that initially the text is interpreted linguistically, later by analysing the linguistic structures, and social meanings are recovered in the light of interactional and social context (Fowler et al., 1979). Halliday (1978) has discussed that critical linguistics analyses the grammar of discourse to reveal the invisible ideology. Thus, grammatical functions such as 'Actor' and 'Patient' and passivisations are spotted and connected to ideological positions which are acquired by the writer when facing the reader. He further makes the point that the critical approach to discourse analysis analyses the data such as political interviews, patient-doctor interaction, news reporting.

The present study focuses on two analytical methods: Critical Discourse Analysis and Discourse Analysis following the theories of Fowler, Van Dijk and the approaches of M.A.K Halliday to understand language use. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) according to Halliday (1994) describes that language performs certain functions. Speaker uses language to speak something for a reason and to achieve the target he makes certain linguistic choices. SFL aims to investigate these linguistic choices, not only the meanings but also the wordings used to express such meanings. Halliday calls them metafunctions of language i.e. "Ideational", "Interpersonal", and "Textual". His model helps to understand and point out presence and absence of certain lexical items. The researchers tend to focus mainly on Lexicalization in the present study because the speaker uses lexis according to his choice which perform a function. Fowler (1991) points out that there is no limitation bound to lexical items to fixed phrases, idioms, and vocabulary items. Lexical items also perform a function when people describe distinct elements around them by naming them. This description and naming of each group differ from other group due to the presence of different ideologies. Political parties make distinct lexical choices in slogans having different invisible

ideologies. Analysis of lexical items helps to reveal invisible ideologies of political parties.

## Data Collection

The researchers collected 15 slogans of three mainstream political parties (PMLN, PPP, PTI) that were chanted during their electoral campaigns, and public gatherings. The said slogans were collected from different newspapers, magazines, social media, and websites of political parties that are in the public domain.

## Data Analysis

### Lexicalization

#### Power Based Lexical Choices

To raise enthusiasm, many slogans are framed to accomplish such a task. Political parties use slogans to give identity to the party and implant the same identity into the minds of the audience. This also indicates the attitude of people chanting such slogans which they adopt from their respective political party. In the slogan "دیکھو دیکھو کون آیا، شیر آیا شیر آیا / dekho dekho kon aya – sher aya, sher aya/ look who has arrived, the tiger has arrived" lexical choices are exemplified in metaphoric word شیر /tiger with an enthusiastic indication of آیا/arrived. The same occurs in the slogan, "دیکھو دیکھو کون آیا، شیر کا شکاری آیا / dekho dekho kon aya, sher ka shikari aya/ Watch the hunter of lion arrived". To glorify the power structure, lexical choice 'tiger' is made that metaphorically depicts strength and power. Lexical choice of شکاری /"hunter" is made in response by PTI, indicating the strength possessed by the leader. In the slogan, "کون بدلے گا پاکستان؟ عمران خان عمران خان / kaun badly ga Pakistan? Imran Khan Imran Khan/ who will change Pakistan? Imran Khan Imran Khan", the power to change the country is assigned to the leader of the political party by using the proper noun 'Imran Khan'. The power depicted in the slogan indicates that the existing system of the state is not fulfilling the needs of people that requires change. Same occurs in the slogan "ایک زرداری سب پہ بھاری / aik Zardari, sab pey bhari/ Zardari outweighs everyone". The use of the word بھاری for the leader of PPP with positive connotation indicates strength

for the party. Positive power based lexical choices in each slogan imply that parties use these slogans in their favour, and negative power-based lexical choices imply that parties use these slogans against their opponents.

## Metaphors

Metaphors reflect not only bright but also dark images dealing with different ideological issues. The slogan of single word "سونامی / Tsunami" is used metaphorically by PTI to determine the power of the party. Lexical choice سونامی /Tsunami is a borrowed word from Japanese language meaning 'harbour wave'. Ideologically this word points towards the powerful showcasing of the party. In the slogan "دیکھو دیکھو کون آیا، شیر آیا شیر آیا / dekho dekho kon aya – sher aya, sher aya/ look who arrived, tiger arrived", the use of the word " شیر / tiger" is a metaphorical choice for the leader of PMLN, ideologically indicating power and strength which obviously is not held by the audience but the leader.

## Overlexicalization

The purpose of overlexicalization in slogans is to set social and political demands. Ideologically, overlexicalization is used to stress a certain idea that is accepted by most of the audience as a common issue. In the slogan, "روتی، کپڑا اور مکان / roti, kapra aur makan/ bread, cloth and house" lexical choices are made consistently to indicate that these basic needs were never fulfilled earlier by the ones in power. Access to these things has been limited to a few in power. PPP introduced this slogan to frame the idea that once they get the power, they will make it possible for the audience to have access to these basic needs. In the slogan "پڑھا لکھا پنجاب ہمارا / parha likha Punjab hamara/ our literate Punjab", lexical choices لکھا لکھا means 'literate'. The use of two words in Urdu is to set the idea that the political party in power (PMLN) has made it possible for the people of one province to have better access to education which others do not have. In the slogan "انصاف، انسانیت، اور خودداری / Insaf, insaniyat, aur khuddari/ Justice, humanity and self-esteem", lexical choices made by PTI develop an ideological understanding among people to

stand for justice and humanity which are not possible without having self-esteem.

### Pronouns

The use of most pronouns is made to refer to the people chanting the slogans having affiliation to any political party and the leader of that party and often the party itself. In the slogan "قدم بڑھاؤ نواز شریف ہم" /qadam bhrao Nawaz Sharif, hum tumhare sath hain/ move ahead Nawaz Sharif, we are with you", the use of pronoun ہم 'we' refers to the people and possessive pronoun تمہارے " (with)you" refer to the leader Nawaz Sharif as further indicated in the slogan. The use of the pronoun 'we' is used to show faithfulness to the leader by using the possessive case of pronoun. In the slogan "بدل دیا ہے پنجاب، ہم بدلیں گے پاکستان" /badal diya Punjab, badlain gey Pakistan/ we changed Punjab and will now change Pakistan", use of pronoun ہم " /we" refers to the government run by PLM(N). The pronoun 'we' is employed positively to show power they hold to change the things.

### Generalization

Generalized words like 'پاکستان/Pakistan' used in the slogans: "کون بدلے گا پاکستان؟" /who will change Pakistan", "ہم /Pakistan khapay /God bless Pakistan", "ہم بدلیں گے پاکستان/hum badlain gey Pakistan/ We will change Pakistan", "مضبوط معیشت، مضبوط پاکستان" /mazboot maeshat, mazboot Pakistan/ strong economy, strong Pakistan" refer to the sense of inclusion of all the sections and groups of the society to make the ideas of political parties more credible. The credibility keeps the political parties alive in the mind of the listeners and shows that the political parties feel the pain and want to do better for every section of the society. In the first slogan the use of 'پاکستان/Pakistan' triggers the mind of the listeners that the change is possible in one situation when the leader of PTI will take the powerful seat of the country. On the other hand, second slogan provides a credibility of PPP in the minds of the listeners. The last slogan focuses on the economy that can make the country strong, but the prerequisite of the slogan is to help achieve the most powerful office of the country.

## Syntactic Level

### Transitivity

Transitivity analysis helps in understanding

different responses of audience which a writer tries to evoke by making specific choices at syntax level. Slogans are framed to illustrate ideologically the dominant and powerful position of political parties and the less dominant and powerless position of people. The influence of powerful occurs in various slogans, as in the slogan "کون بدلے گا پاکستان؟/ عمران خان عمران خان" /kaun badly ga Pakistan? Imran Khan Imran Khan/ who will change Pakistan? Imran Khan Imran Khan" or in "کون بچائے گا پاکستان؟ عمران خان عمران خان" /kaun bachaye ga Pakistan? Imran Khan Imran Khan/ who will save Pakistan? Imran Khan Imran Khan". In both cases keeping Imran Khan, the leader of PTI on the dominant position and the audience at the powerless position. Same is the case with the slogan "قدم بڑھاؤ نواز شریف ہم تمہارے ساتھ ہیں۔" /qadam bhrao Nawaz Sharif, hum tumhare sath hain/ move ahead Nawaz Sharif, we are with you", giving the dominant position to Nawaz Sharif, the leader of PMLN, and powerless position to the people only standing to support him in achieving the power. In above slogans, leaders are placed in actor position.

In few slogans, actor is unknown or slogan writer willingly hides the actor to raise the imagination of hearer, as in a slogan introduced by PPP /Modi ka jo yaar hey, ghadar hey ghadar hey/ Modi ka jo yaar hey, ghadar hey ghadar hey/ The friend of Modi is traitor", the use of "غدار /traitor" is assigned to the leaders of other parties to put responsibility on them by placing them in expected position of actor if they show friendly attitude towards Modi, the prime minister of India.

### Repetition at Rhetorical Level

Repetition stresses on certain idea and gives a strong impression to a slogan. Repetition is vivid in the slogans: "زندہ ہے بی بی، زندہ ہے بی بی" /zinda hey BB, zinda hey/ BB is alive, BB is alive", "دیکھو دیکھو کون آیا، شہی آ یا شہی آ یا" /dekho dekho kon aya – sher aya, sher aya/ look who has arrived, tiger arrived, tiger arrived", "کون بچائے گا" /kaun bachaye ga Pakistan? Imran Khan Imran Khan/ who will save Pakistan? Imran

Khan Imran Khan”. Repetition not only draws attention but also provokes the enthusiasm of reader and listener.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

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The present study shows that in a democratic country like Pakistan political parties use the tool of slogans to influence the imagination of people. The study reveals that language used in slogans has invisible ideologies. The study mainly focuses on the kinds of relationships between language and ideology in a political discourse and the way these relations are reflected in textual analysis following Systemic Functional Linguistics of M.A.K Halliday with focus on Transitivity and on Roger Fowler's Lexicalization.

Furthermore, the study suggests that the textual structure of the slogans has certain ideology which may not be evident for ordinary audience. The study also shows how textual structure of slogans influence the imagination and perception of hearers. Transitivity analysis reveals how ideology is reflected by using the technique of 'actor' and 'patient' highlights few characters and undermine others. This shows that the less powerful is always in weak position. The analysis of slogans in the present study show that each slogan has ideological meaning that shows the glorification of one party and nullifying other parties. Lexicalization process is employed by using the techniques of generalization, over-lexicalization in slogans to serve the ideology of political parties. Positive

power based lexical choices are made to describe the positioning of one party by creating a positive image in the mind of listeners and negative lexical choices are made to create a negative image of the opposing party. The goal of each slogan is to achieve certain ideological position where the listeners have sympathy towards one political party and a strong concept of negation for other political parties. Generalization is done to make slogans publicly credible. The study reveals that it helps the political parties to show their care and feeling for every section of the society. Lexical choices also show power and dominance of political parties over the audience. Use of pronouns in slogans by political parties serves their ideology against other ideologies which indicates Van Dijk's phenomenon of 'Us' and 'Them'. Metaphors are used in slogans of one party to draw their positive and bright negative and dark image of opposing parties.

Based on the study, the researcher would recommend that translation and interpretation of slogans need the knowledge of culture and language of the society to know the implied meanings of words used in the slogans. Categories of slogans can also be made in chronological order based on social, political and economic issues for better understanding of ideological spheres of political parties. Furthermore, the study of tonic change of slogans over the period is necessary for the in-depth knowledge of ideology of political parties. Slogans of political parties can also be studied using the lenses of Marxist and post-colonial theories to study the ideologies of political parties.



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