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Use of Slang Language in Imran Khan's Political Speeches



Mehnaz Bibi *

Shakir Ullah †

Kainat Rafi ‡

Corresponding Author: Shakir Ullah (Lecturer, Department of English, University of Buner, KP, Pakistan. Email: shakirsbbu@gmail.com)

Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to find out the slang expressions that are used in the path of political speeches of former Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan, who has been the Prime Minister from August 18, 2018 to April 10, 2022. The study was based on the qualitative method where the researchers aim to discover and detect Imran Khan's informal impressions taken from his political speeches. There are two types of language expression; one is standard language expression and other is non-standard language expression and non-standard language is also known as slang language expression. To fulfill the objectives of the present study, the research collected data from Imran Khan's political speeches. The data was examined through the theory of Allan and Burrige (2006), which divides slang expressions into 5 types. They are fresh and creative, 2) flippant, 3) imitative, 4) acronyms, and 5) clipping. The results showed that there were many slang words that are totally inappropriate in public, but were still used by him. Among them, the most used words are fresh and flippant types.*

Key Words: Political Speeches, Imran Khan, Slang Expression

Introduction

Language is a set of communication through which people share or express their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and emotions with each other in any situation. As language is a God-given possession of man. Therefore, language makes them unique and special among other organisms (Yule, 2010). Leech (1983) stated that language use can vary in different situations. In some cases, people use language to inform someone of facts, sometimes to express feelings and emotions about something, and necessarily to command someone to do certain actions. On the other hand, use language to get the attention of other people and

also use language to describe the art and beauty of nature and things.

People's communication is an essential process of information sharing and understanding and can take traditional and non-traditional forms, intentional or unintentional, and linguistic and non-linguistic forms. In communication, the way in which language is used by one individual differs from another, it can also vary from one social group to another, even depending on the context, because language also consists of different dialects (Wijaya, 2014). According to Akmajian et al (1998), linguists are interested in language variation; lingua franca, pidgin, creoles, jargon, slang, and taboo of language. There are

* BS Graduate, Department of English, University of Buner, KP, Pakistan.

† Lecturer, Department of English, University of Buner, KP, Pakistan.

‡ BS Graduate, Department of English, University of Buner, KP, Pakistan.

Citation: Bibi, M., Ullah, S., & Rafi, K. (2023). Use of Slang Language in Imran Khan's Political Speeches. *Global Social Sciences Review*, VIII(I), 53-60. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2023\(VIII-I\).05](https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2023(VIII-I).05)

DOI: 10.31703/gssr.2023(VIII-I).05

URL: [http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2023\(VIII-I\).05](http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2023(VIII-I).05)

two types of language expression: formal expression and informal expression. Straker (1980) in his study divides language into two main categories: standard language (formal) and black language (informal). Richards et al (1997) state that formal language and formal speeches are used in situations where the speaker takes great care in choosing the right words, sentence structure and pronunciation. This type of language is mostly found in authentic communication and educational settings such as schools, seminars, news reports, official documents, and business letters.

Kraut et al (1990) believe that informal language is used in a friendly environment where the speaker is not bound by the rules and hierarchies of the language. This means that this type of language does not follow rules and produces spontaneous language words. This research deals with the slang language used by the political leader of Pakistan; e.g., Imran Khan.

Slang is a phrase or words that anyone can recognize but no one can properly define. It is one of the expressions adopted for various aspects of society and for the purpose of social prestige. It is like a fashion that is popular mostly among young people who belong to the same social group or work together. Although it is not suitable for formal contexts as it is not taught in the curriculum and changes rapidly over time (Wijaya, 2014). According to Brown and Fraster (1997), there is a possibility that formal language will shift to informal language. This happens when the speaker has the opportunity to interact with his audience several times a day. Hence, their relationship changes from stranger to a stranger and their communication also changes from formal to informal.

Purba, Herman, and Purba (2019) stated that slang can be defined as a collection of everyday language used by speakers to express a social identity associated with trends or trends in a group or society. The usage and words that make up the colloquialism are heavily influenced by the culture and traditions of a particular place, community or group. Slang is a very informal language that sometimes does not include polite words and meanings, and is often used by certain groups of people and is not usually used in serious speech or writing (Sinaga et al, 2020).

Slang shows us the closeness and solidarity between members of a particular speech

community. However, it is not a common everyday language (Yousaf, 2017). Politicians use rhetorical language (metaphor, simile, simile, etc.) to persuade and capture the attention of public citizens or audiences. Through language, politicians use their power to change or divert the thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs of citizens. As political language fluctuates between illusion and persuasion (Jones & Wareing, 1999), politicians use indecent language targeting the opposition or other political leaders. The focus of this research remains on the use of expressions that are used in the public sphere that affect the prestige of both sides.

Like other international political leaders, Pakistani political leaders also use informal language in social media, news conferences, talk shows and political public gatherings. Therefore, the researchers are interested in knowing the expression of slang language in public communication of Pakistani political leader Imran Khan.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the research study;

- 1: To explore the slang language expression of Pakistani political leader.
- 2: Knowing about the slang language of former Prime Minister Imran Khan.
- 3: Exploring colloquial expressions in formal contexts by political leaders.
- 4: Knowing the meaning of the slang words used in Imran Khan's speeches.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions:

- 1: Which colloquialism is used by the political leader of Pakistan?
- 2: How is slang language used by former Prime Minister Imran Khan?
- 3: How are slang expressions used in formal contexts?
- 4: What is the meaning of these slang expressions in his speeches?

Delimitation of the Study

Nowadays every young generation like students, teenagers, actors as well as political leaders

around the world use colloquial speech but the study is limited only to the speeches given by Pakistan's political leader Imran Khan. The focus has been given on the use of colloquial or informal language expressed in his speeches, which he made on various occasions.

Literature Review

According to Chaer and Augustin in Antoro (2018: 2), slang is used by certain or the same social groups to communicate so that others are not aware of it. Young people commonly use profanity in everyday conversation. This is in line with the opinion of Yule (2010) who defines slang as a word or phrase that is used by young people or certain groups more frequently than everyday words. No one knows the origins of the slang word. Generally, slang words are new words that are created by expanding the meaning of existing words without following the formal rules of the language and are used by certain groups (Per & Gaynor in Alwasilah, 1990: 56).

According to Joos (1998) in Zulaekho (2010), language styles are divided into five categories based on the degree of formality. These types of language styles are frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate styles. Therefore, Mandell and Kirszner (2003:17) divide language styles into four types, they are slang, colloquial, formal and informal styles. It is a way of expressing yourself to communicate with another person.

Slang is a part of the informal expression of language and is usually used in spoken communication rather than written. According to the Oxford dictionary, the literal meaning of slang is those words and expressions of a language that are more informal and commonly used in speech than in writing and are limited to a particular context or group of people. Slang became a part of informal language, secondly adopted by people as popular fashion trends like clothing or music which changed very quickly and thirdly only a certain group could understand it (Finegan, 2008). Men use colloquial words or phrases more than women in everyday communication in society because it is a patriarchal society. However, women express polite and soft language.

Slang can be used as a kind of jargon having a high degree of informality, and

vocabulary richness and used mostly in informal situation and not suitable for formal contexts (Burdova 2009:8). Slang does not survive for a long time but changes very rapidly and belongs to a particular age or social clique and acquire it like a fashion to define in-groups and out-groups (Coleman, 2004). Slang can be used as a type of jargon that has a high degree of informality. It is mostly used in informal situations and is not suitable for formal contexts (Burdova 2009:8).

Students also use informal language words or phrases during lecture time and school time to avoid stressful or boring situations and to keep themselves fresh and active and are often used in friendly conversation. Although they are not taught slang or informal expressions in the curriculum, they still use it (Wijaya, 2014). Slang is a collection of colloquial words or phrases. It is an integral part of adolescent communication because it is the identity of the youth's expressive style. The young generation uses it for multifaceted purposes such as being used as a secret code so that other generations cannot understand their thoughts and generally for entertainment in friendly conversation (Namvar, 2014).

Slang words are also used in movies and songs. A study on a film called Rush Hour 2 in which there are three types of slang found in film scripts: society slang, workman slang, and public house slang and also states that society slang is most often used. In the film, people in a society adopt slang language as a new fashion or trend and create their own words and phrases that cannot be understood outside of their group and can only be understood by them (Sari, 2010).

Similarly, slang language is used in politics at the international level as well. As we know very well that language and power are intertwined and politicians use language very artfully to change public opinion and beliefs. According to Adedimeji (2005:6) "Language and politics meet at the threshold of power". Therefore, language is considered a powerful weapon and politics itself is concerned with the exercise of power (see Bolinger, 1980; Fairclough, 1989). Therefore, this research has been done on the political speeches of the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan.

Research Methodology

The study only focused on the slang expressions used by former Prime Minister Imran Khan. The data was taken from his political speeches. The nature of this study is qualitative for data collection and representation and is based on the theory of Allan and Burridge (2006). The main objective of this study is to explore slang expressions and their hidden meanings in a political context with the help of Allan and Burridge (2006). This data is taken from former Prime Minister Imran Khan's (September 2021 to September 2022) political speeches. As the national language of Pakistan is Urdu, all the speeches and data are available in Urdu, but the speeches were translated into English for data analysis.

The framework for this study is the theory of Allan and Burridge (2006), which divides the slang vocabulary into 5 solutions: 1) fresh and creative vocabulary that did not exist before, but created from the results of imagination, creativity, informal forms, 2) flippant, slang which is a combination of two or more words that creates a new semantic meaning and has nothing to do with the literal meaning of the word, 3) imitative,

which is a colloquial word that imitates or forms from a word that is in standard English but has many meanings, 4) acronym, which is the word that comes from two or more word and pronounces as a separate word, and 5) clipping is a slang word which is reduced to a single syllable.

Researchers looked at how politicians use language rhetorically (slang expressions) and enforce their ideas on public citizens. This data is collected from Imran Khan's speeches which were delivered during his political career. The researchers listened to the speeches and focused on the words that were used in a negative context, especially colloquial words. Most of these words targeted the opposition and tried to defame them.

Data Analysis and Discussion

In this part of the research, there are the slang expressions used by Imran Khan in his political speeches which were totally against the opposition. He criticized them through negative expressions, but he also used a profanity that was inappropriate in public places and affected the personality of the speaker. The following Table 1 shows the slang expressions used by Imran Khan in various speeches.

Table 1.
Slang Expression Used by Imran Khan

Words	Uses
Thieves	We are ready to negotiate with everyone and solve our problems peacefully, be it the people of Baluchistan or the people of Waziristan, but not with <i>thieves</i> .
Bow down	It does not make a leader <i>bow down</i> to anyone, but Nawaz Sharif was trembling when he sat in front of the American President and he had a kind of paper in his hand so that he would not do anything wrong and for fear of angering the American President.
Three mice	<i>Three mice</i> have come out to hunt me, you will see them hunting, God willing.
Fourth artist	The <i>fourth</i> artist is sitting in London.
Diesel	<i>Diesel</i> , you are doing politics in the name of Islam but in a real sense, you have not done anything for religion only worked for your own interest.
liar	A <i>liar</i> and coward leave the country whenever he faces any problem, it is a disgrace to the country.
Money disease	This is a man who has a <i>money disease</i> called Zardari and he dominates the PML-N and makes a lot of fun and makes all the taunts about inflation, the falling value of the rupee, and the stock exchange, and he is on the federal government as well as on Sindh.
Jackal	Used again for Asif Zardari, I would say that the <i>jackal</i> runs to town when it dies.
Boot polish	In this art, he had to <i>polish</i> two kinds of <i>boots</i> very well, so he finally got the position; one must be a military boot and the other from the US Embassy.
Cherry Blossom	If Pakistan succeeds in the no-confidence vote against Imran Khan, then all problems will be forgiven if <i>cherry blossom</i> comes to the government.

Showbaaz	<i>Showbaaz</i> wears a suit when he meets the European and American embassies and shows them how to wear a suit like them, speak English, etc., and get relief from the courts.
Reading from paper	They are holding slips in front of the American president, one was to be held by Islamophobia, and the other was to be held by Kashmiris, but who are slave people. They tremble or tremble at the feet of the President of the United States.
Mir Jaffar	You are <i>Mir Jaffar</i> , what I say to you and like him. Now, you are the Prime Minister of Pakistan.
Looty	We are grateful to the Supreme Court for the verdict against dacoits or <i>looty</i> because they sold their votes and demoralized the country, betraying their people, the constitution because the court rejected their vote.
Robbers	Are you all ready, I have to call you, you have to walk with me on a long march to defeat these robbers.

Politicians use slang language to achieve desired goals and easily persuade their audience. The word '*thieves*' was used repeatedly by Imran Khan in his speeches and referred to the Nawaz and Zardari groups who ran the government so many times and committed so much corruption during their tenure and refused to face court hearings and the situation as Imran Khan clearly said that our government is ready to negotiate with everyone, but not with these corrupt people.

Another word to describe Nawaz Sharif's position at the international level is '*bow down*', how he met and coped with the conditions of international politics. Whenever he met American presidents, he did not speak confidently but kept shaking his feet in front of them and was unable to convey the problems of the nation properly. He was always nervous that's why he used to read from the paper in front of them without making any small mistake and didn't want to offend them and behaved very well in front of them.

The '*three mice*' refer to a coalition of parties known as the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), which consists of about 13 parties and was founded in September 2020. The movement was against Imran Khan, accusing his government of poor governance, political vendetta, targeting of opponents, and mismanagement of economy and foreign policy. They were of the view that the Prime Minister should be removed from his position of Prime Minister in the Assembly to get a vote of no confidence in the Assembly to get rid of various cases on which the ruling party made many corruption cases against them. Actually, they did illegal activities and caused a lot of damage to the country.

The '*fourth artist*' in London referred to Nawaz Sharif saying how the court opened cases

against him and put him in jail and now he is in London because he fell ill and wanted abroad for treatment and his brother Shahbaz Sharif gave a guarantee in the court that he will come after treatment. But he never came back and is still in London controlling his political party.

Word '*diesel*' represents Maulana Fazlur Rehman and how he is doing politics in the name of Islam to gain public support while using the religious card against Imran Khan and his supporters to undermine their values in public, but he did nothing for Islam. He said a few words for religion on international forums that Islam is not the way you present it but is truly a peaceful religion. He didn't convey a clear message about Islamophobia, but focused only on self-interest and the struggle to get high position in any government.

The phrase '*money disease*' was used by Imran Khan for Asif Zardari because he is the biggest dacoit among other corrupt leaders of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and also shows how he is involved in illegal activities. He committed mistakes, but no one has this ability to bring him to court. As he is one of the crooks and now, he is a part of two governments, one federal and one of Sindh province and controls almost all the institutions either the police department or NAB, FIA etc.

Another word '*jackal*' was used for Asif Ali Zardari which directly tells him that when a jackal dies, he runs to the city. This shows the hidden meaning behind of that, he used his sources to get rid of NAB and FIA cases and not to face such cases and hearings in courts. For these purposes, he is trying to convince other members of the party to vote for their members in elected bodies such as MNAs and PMAs to vote for his member

in case of selecting a Chief Minister and Prime Minister. Now recently a no-confidence case against Imran Khan came up in April 2022 and in this process, they were successful and nominated Shahbaz Sharif against Imran Khan.

In his speech, Imran Khan used the word '*boot polish*' for Shahbaz Sharif to describe how skillfully he polished two types of shoes; one should be a military boot and the other should be a US embassy boot. This refers to how skilled he is in dealing with the military and also refers to his attitude towards the United States of America. As the elder brother curses the army and the younger brother starts polishing every boot without even noticing whose it is. This means that he deals with the military at the back door.

Another word '*cherry blossom*' was used for Shahbaz Sharif which is somehow related to boot polish and Imran Khan used it in the context of how much he campaigned for the post of prime minister in the no-confidence movement. Here he also quoted US Embassy Secretary Donald Low as saying how the Americans were involved and how *cherry blossom* convinced them. He also opined that there would be a change in the Prime Minister.

Imran Khan's speech also used the word '*showbaaz*' for Shahbaz Sharif which means how he acted in front of the Americans and in front of the Supreme Court to get relief from various cases by doing such actions want to adjourn his hearings in court. By stating that he was unwell and unable to appear in court, and at times his lawyer made excuses in front of the judges. The fact is that he is afraid of the government (Imran Khan) because his government did not agree to deal with *Showbaaz*. In fact, he was afraid of the government.

'*Read from the papers*' means how immature Nawaz Sharif is and shows his lack of political skills which he does not have and does not know that how to deal with other countries as a Prime Minister. That's why, he reads or holds papers when he interacts with dignitaries of other countries and does not know how to communicate. He doesn't know what important issues that need to be raised in different forums of the world.

Another word in Imran Khan's speech is '*Mir Jafar*' which is also used repeatedly for Shahbaz Sharif and in one of his speeches he directly

mentioned him saying 'Shahbaz Sharif you are Mir Jafar who killed Siraj-ud-Dawlah' (governor of the Mughal Empire), when he was fighting against the British. Mir Jafar betrayed him and in return he was rewarded and given high positions by the British Empire, similarly to Shahbaz Sharif. He violated the constitution of his country and played a key role in a movement of no-confidence vote against PM Imran Khan and now he is the current Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Since the no-confidence vote against Imran Khan on 8 March 2022 and his removal from his seat, a new informal expression (*looty*) was added to his speeches which got viral on social media. Imran Khan used it for those members of the assembly who voted against him even though they belong to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. So, he lost his position because they betrayed not only his party, and his people but also the country's constitution and democracy. As other parties offered them various positions for exchanging vote voting against Prime Minister Imran Khan. But later, the Supreme Court rejected the vote of these members, Imran Khan openly praised the court decision and called them *looty*. He also said that they sold their votes for money because the court rejected the *looty* votes. They brought down the morale of the country and the Supreme Court saved the morale of Pakistan by rejecting their votes.

The last one informal expression is when he used the term 'robbers' for PDM as the Pakistan people party, Pakistan Muslim league (N) and for other parties as well. When he used to attract and capture the attention of the public by saying are you ready all, when I have to call you for a long march, have you go with me for my support and for your freedom rights to defeat these robbers, are you ready!! And the crowd gave them a positive response. He wanted to get the support of the public as the court does not punish them and the power of the public is huge or no one has the ability to easily defeat power strength.

Another informal expression is when he used the term 'robbers' for the PDM. He also used to attract the attention of the people by saying, are you all ready, when I call you for the long march, will you come with me for my support to defeat these robbers and for the right of freedom and shouted 'are you ready'. The crowd gave him a positive response.

Conclusion

To conclude this study, the researchers revealed the hidden meanings of slang language used in various speeches delivered by Imran Khan. The main purpose of this study was to find out the slang expressions that were used in his political speeches. He remained the Prime Minister of Pakistan from August 18, 2018, to April 10, 2022. The study was based on the qualitative method. To fulfill the objectives of the present study, the data was collected from the speeches he delivered during and after his tenure. The collected data were examined through the theory of Allan and Burridge (2006), which divides slang expressions

into 5 types. They are fresh and creative, 2) flippant, 3) imitative, 4) acronym, and 5) clipping. The results showed that there were many slang words that are totally inappropriate in public, but were still used by him. The results showed that he used slang language for opposition frequently. The results also showed that he used less informal expressions in speeches when he was Prime Minister of Pakistan and used more informal expressions when addressing the public after his tenure as a former minister. Among them, the most used words are fresh and flippant types. This research also showed that Imran Khan used slang language and used his power for his own interests and achievements.

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