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A Critical Discourse Analysis Of Gender, Power and Ecological Meaning In Pakistani Political Discourse



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Abstract

This study examines the interplay of gender, power and ecological meaning in Pakistani political discourse through a pragmatic and ecolinguistic lens. Drawing on selected English political speeches delivered by prominent Pakistani political figures, the research investigates how linguistic choices construct, negotiate, and reproduce power relations while simultaneously reflecting gendered ideologies and ecological orientations embedded in discourse. The study is grounded in pragmatic theories of speech acts, particularly focusing on how language functions beyond its literal meaning to perform social and ideological actions such as persuasion, legitimization, dominance, and resistance. In addition, an ecolinguistic framework is employed to explore how political language contributes to shaping socio-cultural "ecosystems" of meaning, including representations of gender roles, authority structures, and collective national identity. A qualitative discourse analysis approach is adopted to identify recurring pragmatic strategies and ecolinguistic patterns across political texts. The findings suggest that male and female political leaders employ distinct communicative styles in the construction of authority, with male discourse tending toward assertive and dominance-oriented speech acts, while female discourse more frequently incorporates mitigated, relational, and consensus-building strategies. However, both genders strategically adapt their linguistic choices to align with institutional power structures. Moreover, the ecolinguistic analysis reveals that political discourse in Pakistan not only reflects social realities but actively shapes ideological environments by normalizing certain power hierarchies and gendered expectations. The study contributes to the fields of pragmatics and ecolinguistics by integrating gendered analysis into political discourse studies and by highlighting the role of language in sustaining or challenging socio-political and environmental meaning systems. It also offers implications for critical discourse studies in South Asian political contexts and provides a framework for future research on ideology, language, and ecological meaning-making in political communication.

Keywords: Gender, Power, Political Discourse, Speech Acts, Ecolinguistics, Pakistani Political Discourse

1. Introduction

Political discourse is a powerful site where language is used not only to communicate ideas but also to construct, negotiate, and maintain systems of

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power and ideology. In multilingual and socio-politically complex contexts such as Pakistan, political language becomes an especially rich domain for examining how linguistic choices reflect and reinforce gendered identities, authority structures, and ideological positions. English, as a postcolonial and elite language in Pakistan, plays a significant role in formal political communication, parliamentary debates, media interactions, and public speeches, where it functions as a marker of prestige, education, and institutional power.

Within this context, gender emerges as a crucial factor shaping discursive practices. Male and female political leaders often adopt different communicative strategies, not only due to individual style but also because of socially constructed expectations regarding authority, politeness, and leadership. These differences are particularly visible in the use of speech acts such as assertions, directives, promises, criticisms, and justifications, which perform social actions beyond their literal linguistic meaning. Pragmatics, especially speech act theory, provides a useful lens for analyzing how such utterances function in real communicative contexts, revealing how speakers exercise power, manage face concerns, and influence audiences.

In addition to pragmatic concerns, this study adopts an ecolinguistic perspective to explore how political discourse contributes to the shaping of "meaning ecosystems" within society. Ecolinguistics, as a developing interdisciplinary field, examines how language influences the relationships between humans, society, and their broader ideological and cultural environments. From this viewpoint, political discourse is not neutral; rather, it actively participates in constructing social realities, including perceptions of gender roles, legitimacy of authority, and collective national identity. In the Pakistani political context, such discursive practices may either reinforce dominant ideologies or challenge existing power structures.

Despite growing research on political discourse, relatively few studies have integrated pragmatics, gender analysis, and ecolinguistics within a single framework, particularly in South Asian contexts. Most existing studies tend to focus either on gendered communication styles or on ideological analysis of political language, often neglecting the ecological dimension of meaning-making and its interaction with pragmatic functions. This study addresses this gap by examining how gender and power are linguistically constructed and how ecological meanings are embedded in English political speeches in Pakistan.

The primary aim of this research is to investigate how male and female political figures use English speech acts to construct power relations and

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gender identities, and how these linguistic practices contribute to broader ecological systems of meaning in political discourse. By doing so, the study contributes to the fields of pragmatics, critical discourse analysis, and ecolinguistics, while also offering insights into the socio-political dynamics of language use in Pakistan.

Ultimately, this research highlights the role of language as a tool of influence and ideological reproduction, demonstrating that political discourse is not merely a reflection of reality but an active force in shaping it.

2. Problem Statement

Political discourse serves as a powerful medium through which political actors communicate ideologies, influence public opinion, and negotiate power relations. Within the framework of Pragmatics, speech acts and politeness strategies play a crucial role in shaping how messages are delivered and interpreted in political communication. However, despite the theoretical significance of Speech Act Theory developed by J. L. Austin and expanded by John Searle, limited research has examined how English speech acts function within the political discourse of Pakistan.

3. Purpose of the Research

The primary purpose of this research is to examine how gender, power, and ecological meaning are constructed and represented through English political discourse in Pakistan. Specifically, the study aims to explore how male and female political leaders use pragmatic strategies, particularly speech acts, to perform communicative functions that reflect, reinforce, or challenge existing power structures within political settings.

4. Research Objectives

The aims and objectives of this research are;

- To identify and categorize the types of English speech acts used in Pakistani political discourse between 2021 and 2025.
- To examine the differences in politeness strategies employed by male and female politicians and analyze how these strategies contribute to the construction, maintenance, or contestation of political power.

5. Research Questions

1. How are gender identities and power relations constructed and negotiated through speech acts in English political discourse in Pakistan?
2. How do linguistic choices in Pakistani political discourse contribute to the construction of ecological meanings, ideologies, and socio-cultural narratives related to gender and power?

6. Importance of the Research

This research is significant because it provides a comprehensive understanding

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of how language functions as a tool for constructing gender identities, exercising power, and shaping ecological meanings in Pakistani political discourse. By examining the linguistic practices of political leaders, the study reveals how discourse influences public perceptions, social values, and ideological beliefs within the political sphere. The study contributes to the field of pragmatics by demonstrating how speech acts are strategically employed to achieve political objectives, establish authority, and persuade audiences.

7.Literature Review

Political discourse has long been recognized as a significant area of linguistic inquiry because it reflects and shapes social realities, ideological beliefs, and power relations. Political leaders strategically employ language to persuade audiences, construct identities, legitimize authority, and influence public opinion. According to John Searle and J. L. Austin, language is not merely a means of conveying information but also a form of social action through which speakers perform functions such as asserting, promising, commanding, and persuading. In political contexts, speech acts serve as powerful tools for establishing authority and achieving communicative goals. Research on gender and political discourse has demonstrated that language use is closely associated with socially constructed gender roles. Early studies by Robin Lakoff suggested that women's language tends to exhibit greater politeness and indirectness, whereas men's language is often characterized by directness and authority. Subsequent research, however, has challenged such generalizations, arguing that linguistic behavior is shaped not only by gender but also by institutional roles, social contexts, and power dynamics. In political settings, female leaders frequently adopt linguistic strategies traditionally associated with authority and leadership while simultaneously managing societal expectations regarding femininity and politeness. The relationship between language and power has been extensively explored within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Scholars such as Norman Fairclough argue that discourse functions as a mechanism through which social power and ideological dominance are produced and maintained. Political discourse is particularly significant because it allows leaders to construct narratives that legitimize policies, influence public perceptions, and reinforce existing social structures. Through lexical choices, rhetorical devices, and pragmatic strategies, political leaders negotiate power relations and shape collective understandings of social reality. In recent years, ecolinguistics has emerged as an interdisciplinary field examining the relationship between language, society, and the broader ecological systems of meaning. Arran Stubbe proposes that language plays a

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crucial role in sustaining or challenging the stories and ideologies that influence human behavior. Ecolinguistic research extends beyond environmental concerns to investigate how discourse constructs cultural values, identities, and social relationships. From this perspective, political discourse can be viewed as a site where ecological meanings are created, reproduced, and contested through linguistic practices. Studies on Pakistani political discourse have primarily focused on persuasion, ideology, rhetoric, and critical discourse analysis. Researchers have examined how political leaders employ language to gain legitimacy, mobilize supporters, and construct national identities. However, limited attention has been given to the intersection of gender, power, and ecological meaning within Pakistani political communication. Existing studies often analyze pragmatic strategies or gendered language use separately, while the ecolinguistic dimensions of political discourse remain largely unexplored. Therefore, a significant research gap exists in understanding how gendered speech acts contribute to the construction of power relations and ecological meaning systems in Pakistani political discourse. By integrating pragmatics, gender studies, and ecolinguistics into a unified analytical framework, the present study seeks to address this gap and provide a more comprehensive understanding of language, ideology, and power in the Pakistani political context.

8. Research Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive explanation of the research methodology employed in this study, which investigates politeness, power, and gender in English-language political discourse in Pakistan from 2021 to 2025. The chapter outlines the research design, population and sampling, data collection procedures, theoretical framework, and analytical strategies, ensuring that the study is both methodologically sound and aligned with the research objectives. By clearly detailing the methods used, this chapter establishes the credibility, validity, and replicability of the research. The study adopts a qualitative research design supplemented with a quantitative component, following the approach recommended by Creswell and Poth (2018). The qualitative aspect is particularly suited to the investigation of pragmatic and ecolinguistic features of political discourse, as it allows for a detailed exploration of meanings, strategies, and identities embedded in political speech. Through qualitative analysis, the research can uncover how politicians construct authority, negotiate legitimacy, and employ politeness strategies in contextually specific ways.

9. Research Design

The study employs a Faircloughian analytical framework that treats political

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discourse as a form of communication and ideological contestation. Discourse analysis provides an outstanding methodological framework to study the language, strategies, and relations of power that are involved in political communication. The constructs of Faircloughian language analysis enable the study of what construction of social identity, negotiation of legitimacy, and authoritarianism proxy, as well as what social architecture defines a community of conversation. The primary data for the analysis of discourse are the speeches of Pakistani politicians given during the campaigns in the years 2021 to 2025. Campaign speeches are made in English both in the United Kingdom and in the speech. The selection of campaign speeches for analysis is justified by the fact that speeches are made with the aim of convincing, mobilizing, and addressing the community, thereby making the speeches suitable for the study of communication strategies, political power relations, and the analysis of the speech acts and rhetorical strategies that are pragmatically and ecologically characteristic of the discourse.

10. Population and Sampling

The population of this study comprises English-language political discourse in Pakistan from 2021 to 2025, focusing on election campaign speeches as the primary site of analysis. These speeches provide rich material for examining speech acts, politeness strategies, and gendered communication patterns, as they reflect public attempts by politicians to assert authority, persuade audiences, and negotiate legitimacy. To ensure the data is relevant and illustrative, purposive sampling is employed, allowing the researcher to select speeches that best demonstrate interactions where language, power, and gender intersect (Palinkas et al., 2015). The study includes a total of 10 speeches, equally distributed between male and female politicians, providing a manageable yet representative sample for detailed qualitative and quantitative analysis. Speeches were collected from multiple authentic sources, such as official political party websites, news channels, and social media platforms, ensuring both reliability and diversity in discourse. By carefully defining the population and applying purposive sampling, the study ensures that the selected speeches are contextually relevant and capable of providing insights into the pragmatic, politeness, and ecolinguistic dimensions of Pakistani political communication. A qualitative analysis is used to decipher the meanings and layers of the implications of intentions and strategies manifested in political rhetoric within spoken and written discourse.

Source type	Total samples	Male politicians	Female politicians	Source of material
Election	10	05	05	Social media,

campaign speeches				news channels, political party websites
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Data collection during 2021 to 2025

11. Data sources and Data collection

The data for this study was collected from official transcripts and video recordings of election campaign speeches delivered by Pakistani politicians between 2021 and 2025, ensuring that both verbal and paralinguistic features such as tone, pauses, interruptions, and emphasis are captured for a comprehensive pragmatic and ecolinguistic analysis. Multiple authentic sources, including political party websites, news channels, and social media platforms, were used to ensure the validity, reliability, and diversity of the data. The data collection process involves selecting 10 purposively sampled speeches, equally distributed between male and female politicians, to facilitate gender-based comparative analysis. Each speech was carefully transcribed, and paralinguistic elements were noted to allow detailed interpretation of speech acts, politeness strategies, and ecolinguistic features. Ethical considerations, such as the appropriate use of publicly available material and accurate representation of the politicians' statements, are strictly observed. The collected data was then organized systematically for coding and analysis, using tools such as tables, matrices, and coding sheets to record speech acts, politeness strategies, and ecolinguistic patterns, providing a structured foundation for both qualitative interpretation and quantitative frequency analysis.

12. Speech Act Theory

The study is theoretically informed by Speech Act Theory and Ecolinguistics. **Speech Act Theory** is used to examine how political leaders employ language to perform social and political actions, while the ecolinguistic framework facilitates the exploration of underlying ideological narratives and meaning systems related to gender and power. **Speech Act Theory** was first conceptualized by J.L. Austin (1962) and was further developed by John Searle (1969). It helps analyze how language pieces are actions rather than merely semantic components. In relation to Pakistani political discourse, the theory helps the researcher study various speech acts like persuading, commanding, promising, declaring, and emotive speech, with special consideration to the differences in the usage of pragmatics. Speech acts are further divided into locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts.

Acts	Explanation
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Locutionary act	The literal meaning of the words spoken.
Illocutionary act	The speaker's intended purpose, such as making a promise, issuing a command, or stating a belief, categorized by Searle's five types: Assertives, Commissives, Directives, Declaratives, and Expressives.
Perlocutionary act	The effect the speech has on the audience, such as persuading, frightening, or inspiring them.

Data are analyzed through qualitative discourse analysis. The analysis focuses on identifying speech acts, examining gendered patterns of language use, and exploring how linguistic choices construct power relations and ecological meanings within political discourse. This integrated approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the role of language in shaping political identities, ideologies, and social realities in the Pakistani context.

13. Ecolinguistics Theory

Ecolinguistics, or ecological linguistics, studies the connection between language, humans, and the ecological and social systems (Stibbe, 2015, 2021). It argues that language structure is not independent and is interlinked with worldviews, cultural activities, and ecological systems that shape the understanding and the interaction of people and societies with the world. Ecolinguistics is useful in the Pakistani political discourse when analyzing the construction of narratives by politicians, the shaping of the general public's understanding of social and environmental issues, and the communication of ideas through the language of politics. Some of the important concepts in ecolinguistics are ideology, framing, metaphor, salience, and erasure. Framing is the structuring of messages by stressing one side of the argument over the others. This may involve considering some environmental policies as either an economic opportunity or as an environmental and social security threat (Stibbe, 2015). Metaphor in public discourse is seen when changing the focus of climate change from one of an imminent threat to an envisaged "battle" or "crisis" to incentivize social and political activism. Salience and erasure also deal with the language that is used to describe the environment to correlate social and political issues through the prioritization of some narratives over others (Stibbe, 2021).

Key features	Explanation
Ideology	Beliefs and assumptions about how

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Features of ideology: Standard Language Ideology: The belief that there is one "correct," "standard" variety of a language that is superior to all others. Linguistic Purism: The belief that a language should be "pure," free from foreign loanwords, slang, or slang, often viewing language change as corruption. Ideologies of Authenticity & Identity: Linking specific linguistic forms to a "true" or "authentic" culture or identity, often used to validate nationalist or traditionalist identities. Ideology of Anonymity: Associated with liberal nationalism, this perspective holds that language should be a neutral, accessible tool for broad communication.	the world is and should be. For example, the ideology of "economic growth" and the message that "more is better" is deeply embedded in many societies and drives environmentally destructive behavior.
Framing Types of framing: Semantic Framing: Focuses on lexical choices And the inherent meanings/implications of individual words (e.g., "rob" implies a perpetrator, victim, and illegal act). Cognitive Framing: Based on the work of Lakoff and others, this involves the mental schemas or "background knowledge" that interpret information. Communicative/Discourse Framing: Analyzes how language is used in context to emphasize certain aspects of an issue while hiding others to	The use of particular linguistic frames to shape our understanding of an issue. For instance, reframing the climate crisis as a "security threat" or a "supply chain challenge" affects how people perceive and respond to it.

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influence interpretation.	
Metaphor Types of metaphor: Conceptual Metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson): The foundational theory that metaphors structure our thoughts, not just language (e.g., TIME IS MONEY). Conventional Metaphor: Familiar, everyday metaphors used without conscious thought (e.g., "I'm feeling up today"). Structural Metaphor: Where one complex concept is structured in terms of another (e.g., ARGUMENT IS WAR- "He attacked every weak point"). Oriental Metaphor: Relates concepts to spatial orientation (e.g., HAPPY IS UP, SAD IS DOWN).	Using metaphorical language to influence how a subject is conceptualized. Terms like "battling" or "conquering" nature frame the human-nature relationship as one of conflict rather than coexistence.
Evaluation Types of evaluation: Eco-destructive Evaluation: Evaluates stories that encourage behavior damaging to the environment (e.g., consumerism, viewing nature as a mere resource, "growth" metaphors). Eco-beneficial Evaluation: Evaluates stories that encourage people to protect the ecosystems that life depends on (e.g., promoting sustainability, deep ecology, connecting with nature). Neutral Evaluation: Evaluates stories that do not have a direct impact on the environment, sometimes characterized by semantic vagueness or mixed messages.	Patterns of language that represent things as good or bad, such as describing a rise in sales as a positive event while using negative language for economic decline, regardless of the environmental impact.
Erasure and Salience	The theory analyzes which aspects of

Features of erasure and salience: Ideological Erasure (Language Ideologies): Proposed by Irvine and Gal, this involves creating a coherent, simple picture of language by disregarding inconvenient variations or inconsistencies. Ecolinguistic Erasure (Stibbe): In eco-critical discourse analysis, erasure is the omission of the natural world in texts that focus only on human concerns.	life are made prominent (salience) and which are disregarded (erasure) through language. For example, economic texts may erase the natural resources and ecological systems used in production, while texts focused on conservation may make them salient.
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14.Data Analysis

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis and discussion of the data collected from English-language political speeches of Pakistani politicians . Guided by the triangulated theoretical framework of Speech Act Theory, Politeness Theory, and Ecolinguistics, the chapter examines the types, frequency, and functions of speech acts, the politeness strategies employed by male and female politicians, and the ideological and ecological implications of language use in political discourse. The analysis integrates qualitative interpretation and quantitative frequency counts to provide a nuanced understanding of how language is strategically used to construct, maintain, or contest power, negotiate face, and influence public perception. By exploring the interplay between pragmatics, gender, power, and ideology, this chapter not only identifies patterns in linguistic behavior but also situates them within the broader socio-political and cultural context of Pakistan, thereby bridging micro-level discourse analysis with macro-level societal implications. The findings are discussed in relation to the research objectives and questions, highlighting both common trends and gendered differences, while also revealing the ecolinguistic dimensions that shape and reflect the political narratives and strategies of contemporary Pakistani politicians.

15.Frequency and Patterns of English Speech Acts (2021-2025)

Shahbaz Sharif (Election Campaign, Kasur, Feb 6,2024)

Shahbaz Sharif's campaign speech in Kasur serves as an example of the persuasive leadership style of communication that aims at enhancing allegiance among followers in the political party rank and file while enhancing the image of developmental promises. The speech begins with the speaker's

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close identification with the constituency as a Kasuri and a Kasuri only. Being a Kasuri and employing a local Kasur character, Shahbaz pushes himself as a steward to the legacy of the Pakistan Muslim League (N), as well as a growth supporter for the future under the helm of Nawaz Sharif. The introduction of the speech touches upon the audience's trust, moral duty, and religious leaning, with the "ticket as the trust of Nawaz Sharif" to spur loyalty and answerability. Shahbaz paints a picture of efficiency and trust, narrating the history of his accomplishments, national service delivery, and successful management of the crises. The speech captures the audience's concern by portraying the past successful outcomes of the government as the targets for the future, while juxtaposing them with the failures of a government's sworn opposition. The introduction, through a blend of local, national, and religious allusions, positions Shahbaz.'

This research identifies considerable employment of assertive speech acts by Shahbaz Sharif for the purpose of making a statement of fact, an indicative of a political accomplishment, or making a political analogy. **For example, Shahbaz Sharif says that Nawaz Sharif's active role during the 1990's crises management of the floods, or the management of an outbreak of dengue, included building temporary shelters and personally supervising the expedition.** Sharif also makes a political analogy by stating the total disappointment of the other political entities in the promise to put effort in the development of Karachi, while his party accommodates development on a broad national basis. These assertions maintain the credibility of the party leadership, provide performance and experience in leadership, and justify the accomplishments of the party leadership (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969).

The speech is rich in expressive speech acts and the use thereof provides an emotional connection, and provides an expression of a desire to be in agreement or is united with a common feeling with the audience. This is evident by the expression "**I tell you this humbly but without fear**", and by the expression of his youthful and his supportive audience, which create an impression of mutual esteem and provides an expression of relationship with the audience. That is an expression of the highest esteem and regard in relation to the audience, and also focuses on the collective and community esteem and regard, and relationship of the highest esteem and emotional in relation to the audience. Therefore, and in consideration of the preceding and given the nature of the speech, the emotional relationship is the highest expression of direct contact of a relationship with the audience and the desire to be in social relationship; and it creates the greatest emotional relationship. Shahbaz Sharif utilizes **directive speech acts** to promote political behavior

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and boost turnout of certain constituents. He encourages them to vote for PML-N candidates, and he promotes promises related to the construction of universities and the distribution of laptops, as well as scholarships for training and skill development. He gives the order, **"Choose progress, and end poverty. Choose prosperity and employment to be created in Pakistan."** These speech acts shift the responsibility to the audience, psychologically urging them to view social progression in the country as a result of their vote. Commissive speech acts are principally for Shahbaz Sharif, but he speech acts on behalf of the party. He has promised to give the youth education, employment opportunities, and skill development. The socially dignifying employment that he has promised, coupled with the speech act, **"we will make this District Kasur another Lahore"** and the promises of universities, hospitals, and industry, give his speech acts a degree of reliance, trust, and political instability, as well as promote and develop a considerable domain where economic activities are generated (Searle, 1969).

Shahbaz Sharif employs a considerable number of contrastive assertions to outline the differences between the leadership of the PML-N and the other parties. He contrasts the services of Nawaz Sharif with **"darknesses"**, attributing **"deception"**, and fraud, and lies" to the other parties, or contrasts sacrifice and greed, moderation and arrogance, and praying and swearing. These speech acts, with contrastive linguistic expressions, are evaluative and guide the audience and perception of the party and position to portray their party as superior, both politically and morally. He asks rhetorical questions in direct address. He asks youths under 30 to raise their hands and asks others to generate response. He names candidates one after another, and names local development projects. This type of address removes barriers and places him in the environment to the greatest extent. He would provide names of localities such as Khudian and Kasur, and even names of local supporters. This removes barriers and places him in the local community, demonstrating accountability and relevance of his promises.

Sharif's speech offers the combination of the four types of speech acts – assertives, expressives, directives, and commissives, to articulate his goals of recognizing the audience, inspiring, and mobilizing them. To his audience, the speech acts of praise and analysis show his credibility in the environment. The expressives build emotional connective right before the closure of the speech, the directives move the audience, and the commissives bind the speaker. The speech acts in combination show the multidimensional nature of the speech to the Pakistani English speech of the environment.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif

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In her election campaign speech in **Lahore on July 15, 2022**, Maryam Nawaz Sharif employed civic activism and familial symbolism by calling **“lion(s) and lioness(es)”** of her party to a rally to stimulate emotional loyalty. She commended the development initiatives of Shahbaz Sharif, appreciated the development of the city after its neglect, and laid claim on her family as the leaders of Lahore’s development. Her speech combines the critique of political opponents and the encouragement of the audience to vote by using critiqued moral and emotional appeals to reinforce the audience’s political attitudes.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif employs **assertive speech acts** to deliver her version of the facts concerning governance, outline the achievements of her party, and provide critical analysis of the opposition. **For example, she notes the neglect of Lahore, while Imran Khan was the head of the provincial government, and supports her argument by highlighting the rise of trash, stalled development work, and the lack of daily presence of leadership.** She juxtaposes this with the achievements of the PML-N that included the development of the Metro Bus service, road works, and the construction of the roads and buildings by Shahbaz Sharif. By making such assertions, she positions the PML-N as responsible, hands-on, and concerned about the well-being of the public, and in turn, she offers the public a sort of a blend of both the rational and the moral urges. Of course, these assertives present a case to the discrediting of the opposition by presenting them as ineffective and as the party that caused the public misery.

The speech contains a number of expressive acts which express pride, joy, as well as emotional synchronization. Optimism, hope, and a sort of personal connection with the audience are provided by the comment **“your passion tells me that on July 17th, the lion will roar”** and **“keep laughing, smiling, happy, and prosperous”**. The emotional bond rests in her shoulder to shoulder presence with the young people which fosters a strong sense of excitement, and a feeling of belonging. The presence of the young people mobilized her emotionally. The expressive speech acts are also present in her work where she complimented party leaders, and noted the tireless and transformational work of Shahbaz Sharif, and thus created the feeling of admiration and loyalty in her supporters.

Maryam gives presentation pieces containing direct speech acts to alter audiences’ behavior and political preferences. She repeatedly tells people to take part in the elections by saying **“no one will stay at home”** and by saying **“everyone friends, sisters, mothers, daughters, elders, youth will go out and stamp on the lion.”** She uses these directives to increase voter turnout and increase political activism, emphasizing the impact voting will

have on the political survivability of the PML-N. She also has her own directives to make Shahbaz Sharif complete local development projects.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif, in her speeches, offers promises for PML-N with the commissioner acts. She also promised improvements in education and infrastructure and technology, proposing the creation of universities and the provision of laptops for the youth, and the construction of stadiums. These acts are promises for future action and are initiatives with the objective of building the reputation of the party as a provider of public services and of good, accountable and responsive governance. Commissioner acts also enhance the persuasive quality of the speech, as they emphasize the tangible payoffs for the electorate.

The use of symbolism, family loyalty, and party legacy helps consolidate authority. The use of the label of **"the lion"** for Nawaz Sharif and party leaders and, them being referred to as "Shahbaz Sharif and Hamza Sharif" establish the legacy of PML-N leadership. The saying "lions among lions" predominantly refers to courage, strength, and the collective. By appealing to the cultural memory and collective political conscience of the audience, and by showing the party's successes, while noting the opposition's failures, she justifies her instructions and commitments.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif's use of rhetoric and most importantly repetition, helped her convey her message and garner the audience's attention. **"The lion will roar" and the "go out and vote"** lines set a very positive tone and spoke of the purpose behind the politics. The opposition and PML-N were most salient in the context of the opposition by saying, **"we were busy building motorways, they were busy in rhetoric"**. Involving the audience by requesting them to raise their hands or by asking them questions to guide and affirm their support, stimulated their interest and made the speech both performative and confident in nature.

16. Discussion

Language as a Tool of Communication

Political discourse is critical for understanding language as a tool for establishing authority and influencing perceptions, as well as a means of negotiating power. In this study, speeches presented by Pakistani politicians between 2021 and 2025 are analyzed for their contemporary Pakistani political communication. Three areas of analysis were identified, namely, the speech types and speech acts, the gendered use of politeness tactics and maneuvers for the Construction of Political Power, and the ecolinguistic aspects of English political discourse. It is a qualitative study that intends to examine trade speeches by Pakistani Male Politicians and female Pakistani Politicians, to

explain the trade off between the act of political leadership and the stance of ideology.

This section also answer the following search questions.

Q# 1:How are gender identities and power relations constructed and negotiated through speech acts in English political discourse in Pakistan?

Gender identities and power relations in Pakistani political discourse are constructed and negotiated through the strategic use of speech acts. Political leaders employ assertive, directive, commissive, and expressive speech acts to establish authority, persuade audiences, and project particular gendered identities. Male politicians tend to use more direct and authoritative language to reinforce power and dominance, whereas female politicians often employ inclusive and relational strategies to build solidarity and credibility. These linguistic choices not only reflect existing social and political power structures but also shape public perceptions of leadership, authority, and gender roles within the Pakistani political context.

Q# 2 : How do linguistic choices in Pakistani political discourse contribute to the construction of ecological meanings, ideologies, and socio-cultural narratives related to gender and power?

Linguistic choices in Pakistani political discourse contribute to the construction of ecological meanings by shaping public perceptions of gender, authority, and social values. Through specific lexical choices, metaphors, and speech acts, political leaders promote particular ideologies and socio-cultural narratives that either reinforce or challenge existing power relations and gender norms. These discursive practices create and sustain broader systems of meaning that influence how society understands leadership, identity, and power.

17. Speech Acts uses in Political Discourse between 2021 – 2025.

The first research question examines the most common English speech acts observed in Pakistani political discourse during the period of 2021-2025. Here, the primary focus is laid on understanding the possible predominant communicative actions in political speeches. The conception of speech acts was first introduced by John L. Austin and was later expanded on and further developed by John Searle. John Searle took the further step of suggesting that utterances not only serve the purpose of communicating information but that they also perform particular acts. John Searle organized speech acts into five different categories which are called "assertives, directives, expressives, commissives, and declarations". Each of these categories, in the realm of speech acts, encapsulate different communicative intents such as expressing a certain set of facts, advocating or urging a particular action, expressing commitment, or declaring a change of emotions or separating a shift of

thoughts on a particular subject of discourse, etc. Pragmatic studies of political discourse show that speech acts are of immense primary importance in political discourse since politicians use these speech acts not only in discourse to explain to their voters particular political position and sentiments of the politician but also to manipulate and control the mental orientation of the citizenship in a certain political climate and setting (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; Chilton, 2004).

Dominance of Assertive Speech Acts in Political Discourse

This study finds that assertive speech acts are one of the most common speech forms in the speeches of Pakistani politicians such as Shahbaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz. Shows assertive acts, such as statements, claims, and explanations, involve the speaker describing the speech in an assertive tone. In the context of political speech, assertives are often used to construct and frame different national discourse issues, explain and extol achievements, or on the contrary, attack and counter the political opposition. The need to construct credibility and authority by asserting claims to truth or trust is reflected in the candidate's recourse to the frequent use of assertive speech forms. Research on political speeches supports similar findings, and assertives are important elements that allow the speaker to introduce ideological positions and construct the speaker's political realities (Dylgjeri, 2017; Chilton, 2004). In the analysis of political speeches, the use of assertive speech acts is often seen to be encouraged, as they enable the speaker to reinforce their argument and consolidate the concept of national identity, good governance, and policy outcomes (Hashim, 2015).

18. Conclusion

This study explored the relationship between gender, power, and ecological meaning in Pakistani political discourse through a pragmatic and ecolinguistic perspective. The findings indicate that political leaders strategically employ speech acts to construct authority, negotiate power relations, and project gendered identities. The analysis further reveals that linguistic choices play a significant role in shaping ideological narratives and socio-cultural meanings related to leadership, gender, and power. From an ecolinguistic perspective, political discourse not only reflects social realities but also contributes to the creation and maintenance of broader systems of meaning within society. By integrating pragmatics, gender studies, and ecolinguistics, this research provides a deeper understanding of how language functions as a powerful tool in the construction of political and social realities in Pakistan.

19. Recommendations

Researching gender in political discourse in the variety of languages in

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Pakistan, including Urdu and regional languages as well as English, must continue.

- Comparative studies on the use of gendered strategies within these various linguistic contexts must be done to better grasp the relational strategies, the use of relational power and the vertical and horizontal forms of politeness exhibited by gendered political figures.
- Political discourse must be examined over long periods of time to determine the changes in reception and the implications of the relational strategies.
- Research must address the possibility of differing variations, the patterns of relational strategies between 2021 and 2025.
- Also required is the random collection of additional materials and discourse.
- This must include both verbal and audial elements, as well as all forms of political discourse (visual elements, social discourse, including social media, and political campaigning).
- Non-verbal, verbal, and visual elements of discourse provide the best description of the discourse ecology and the rhetorical nature of the political discourse.
- Additionally, researchers must study other political discourse communication systems and identify similar strategies to understand variations in cultural and systemic communication.

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