



Advance Social Science Archives Journal

Available Online: <https://assajournal.com>

Vol.2 No.4, Oct-Dec, 2024. Page No. 11-22

Print ISSN: [3006-2497](#) Online ISSN: [3006-2500](#)

Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)



DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES USED AS AN ELECTIONEERING TOOL IN POLITICS; A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED SPEECHES OF POLITICAL LEADERS IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the discursive strategies employed by politicians during the 2018 election in Pakistan and their impact on the general public. The study aims to identify the prominent discursive strategies used by politicians, examine their effect on voters, and compare the use of these strategies by different political parties and candidates. The study uses Fairclough 3D Model to analyze the speeches made by two major political parties before the election. The study aims to fill the research gap in the area of discursive strategies in Pakistani politics and provide insights into the role of language and discourse in shaping electoral outcomes. The research questions focus on the prominent discursive strategies used by politicians, their impact on voters, and the relative use of these strategies by different political parties. The study is significant in understanding political discourse, the democratic process in Pakistan, and the impact of language on social and political change. The study is purely qualitative, and data is obtained from political speeches made by two major political parties in Pakistan.

Keywords: Discursive Strategies, Political Discourse, Electoral Impact, Fairclough 3D Model, Pakistani Politics

Introduction

Context and Background

Language profoundly influences human relationships and social structures, serving as a vital tool in communication within ethnic and cultural communities. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica (1768), language encompasses spoken, signed, or written forms that facilitate interaction and fulfill various functions such as personal communication, imaginative expression, and psychological relief. Discourse, the practical application of language, integrates the aspects of informing, action, and identity, making it essential to understand a speaker's intent and social identity to fully grasp their message. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) emphasizes that language is inherently political, carrying implicit intentions that can shape or disrupt social realities (Janks, 1997). CDA examines how discourse constructs, sustains, or challenges power dynamics and social norms, revealing how language functions as a mechanism for

societal transformation. Fairclough's (1989) CDA framework is pivotal in analyzing political discourse, focusing on lexical choices, sequencing, and formatting in texts, linking these elements to broader historical and situational contexts. This study utilizes CDA to explore how political leaders in Pakistan, such as Imran Khan and Nawaz Sharif, use language to reflect and influence political ideologies and power structures. Political communication, encompassing speeches and media appearances, relies on language as a strategic tool for shaping public opinion and guiding political processes (Fairclough, 2001). In recent years, populism has emerged as a significant force in global politics, often characterized by a division between the "pure people" and the "corrupt elite" (Mudde, 2004). This ideological framework promotes a political structure reflecting the general will of the populace but often conflicts with the pluralism fundamental to liberal democracies. Right-wing populism frequently employs exclusionary rhetoric, defining a narrow notion of "the people" and casting external "Others" as threats to national identity and cultural values. Recent discourse has targeted Muslims, capitalizing on fear and scapegoating. This study explores how such rhetoric marginalizes minority groups, focusing on Pauline Hanson's evolving rhetoric as an example of how language reinforces nativist and nationalist ideologies. Additionally, it examines how Imran Khan and Nawaz Sharif employ different discursive strategies to engage voters, with Khan's promise of change and Sharif's focus on respecting votes, analyzing their effectiveness in achieving political goals.

Problem Statement

Political rallies and speeches play a crucial role in shaping electoral outcomes by influencing voter decisions through persuasive communication. Despite the significance of discursive strategies, there is limited understanding of their specific use and impact on voters. This study addresses the gap in knowledge regarding the specific discursive strategies employed in the 2018 Pakistani elections and their influence on voter perceptions and behavior. While the general use of these strategies by politicians is acknowledged, detailed analysis of specific tactics and their effects is lacking. This research aims to fill this gap by examining how discursive strategies affect electoral outcomes and contribute to an informed political environment, especially given the unexpected results despite pre-election advantages held by prominent figures like Nawaz Sharif.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to systematically analyze the discursive strategies used by politicians during the 2018 elections in Pakistan and assess their impact on the electorate. Key research questions focus on identifying prominent discursive strategies, evaluating their effects on voter behavior, and comparing their application across different political parties and candidates. The study seeks to elucidate the nature of these strategies, their influence on voter behavior, and how they shape electoral outcomes in Pakistan. This understanding is crucial for enhancing our comprehension of political discourse and the democratic process in Pakistan, addressing existing research gaps in discursive strategies within Pakistani politics.

Significance of the Study

The study is significant for several reasons. It provides an in-depth analysis of political speech and the specific strategies politicians use to influence voter opinions. It explores how these strategies impact voter decision-making and the democratic process in Pakistan. Additionally, it offers valuable insights into the role of language and communication in politics, highlighting how discourse affects social and political change. By contributing to the understanding of political discourse, this research supports efforts to enhance democratic engagement and accountability.

Research Questions

The research is guided by the following questions:

1. What were the prominent discursive strategies employed by politicians during the 2018 election in Pakistan?
2. How did these discursive strategies impact voter behavior in the 2018 election?
3. How did the use of discursive strategies vary among different political parties and candidates?

Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify and categorize the discursive strategies used by politicians during the 2018 elections in Pakistan.
2. To assess the impact of these strategies on voters' perceptions and behaviors.
3. To compare the application of discursive strategies across different political parties and candidates.

This research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how discursive strategies influence electoral processes and voter behavior, thereby contributing to more informed political participation and decision-making.

Literature Review

Political discourse plays a crucial role in shaping electoral outcomes and influencing public opinion. Recent studies have increasingly focused on understanding how politicians use discursive strategies to impact voter behavior and perceptions. This review examines various research studies that explore the relationship between political discourse, discursive strategies, and electoral results.

Fairclough's (1992) foundational work on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) introduces the 3D Model, which provides a framework for understanding how political language reflects and perpetuates power dynamics. This model examines texts, discursive practices, and social practices, highlighting the impact of language on public perception and political engagement. Van Dijk (2006) extends this understanding by exploring how discourse functions as a mechanism of power and control. His research emphasizes how political language is used to shape ideologies and manipulate public opinion, offering valuable insights into the strategic use of language in political communication.

Lakoff's (2004) exploration of framing in political discourse illustrates how linguistic framing can influence public understanding and opinion. His study demonstrates that the way political issues are framed can significantly affect how voters perceive and respond to them. Entman (2004) provides a comprehensive analysis of framing theory,

detailing how the structuring of political messages affects public opinion and electoral outcomes. This work underscores the role of discourse in shaping voter behavior and political perceptions.

Borah (2010) investigates the effects of media framing on public opinion, extending the understanding of how discursive strategies in both media and political speech intersect. This study highlights the broader impact of framing on voter perceptions and behavior. Rizvi and Malik (2019) focus on the 2018 Pakistani elections, analyzing political speeches to assess how discursive strategies influenced voter opinions. Their research provides insights into the effectiveness of various language techniques in shaping public perceptions in the Pakistani context.

Hussain (2018) examines rhetorical strategies employed by Pakistani politicians, offering a detailed analysis of how these techniques are used to persuade and mobilize voters. This study contributes to understanding political communication practices in Pakistan. Rizvi (2017) further investigates how political speeches impact voter behavior in Pakistan, demonstrating that specific discursive strategies can significantly influence how voters perceive and respond to political messages.

Overall, these studies collectively highlight the importance of discursive strategies in political speech and their impact on voter behavior and electoral outcomes. They offer a comprehensive understanding of how political language can shape public opinion, with insights applicable to both global and regional contexts, including Pakistan. Despite these contributions, there remains a gap in understanding how discursive strategies uniquely affect voter behavior in specific electoral contexts, such as the 2018 Pakistani elections. While previous studies have explored general trends and theoretical frameworks, there is a need for more detailed analysis of specific discursive tactics employed by political leaders in Pakistan. This research aims to address this gap by systematically analyzing the discursive strategies used during the 2018 elections and assessing their impact on voter behavior. By focusing on the unique context of Pakistani politics, this study seeks to contribute a nuanced understanding of how political language shapes electoral outcomes in this region.

Methodology

The study have employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) utilizing Norman Fairclough's 3D Model (1992) to scrutinize the election speeches of Imran Khan and Nawaz Sharif during the 2018 Pakistani general elections. The research framework comprises three dimensions: *Textual Analysis*, which examines lexical choices, sentence structures, modality, pronoun usage, and transitivity to uncover how language constructs political ideologies; *Interpretation*, which situates linguistic patterns within broader socio-cultural and power contexts to reveal how discursive strategies shape public opinion and political attitudes; and *Explanation*, which connects linguistic and interpretive findings to socio-political implications, highlighting the impact of speeches on existing power structures and societal norms. The dataset includes six speeches sourced from YouTube—three by Imran Khan (December 17, 2017; November 3, 2017; December 8, 2017) and three by Nawaz Sharif (April 19, 2017; February 5, 2018; April 29, 2017)—selected for their relevance in illustrating each

leader's campaign strategies and their influence on voter perceptions. The analysis, adhering to ethical standards by using non-confidential, publicly available data and ensuring objective, accurate transcription, is conducted through qualitative content analysis. This method evaluates textual features, cohesion and coherence, and discursive strategies, justifying the use of Fairclough's model for its comprehensive approach to understanding how political discourse navigates and influences power dynamics and societal norms.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of Imran Khan's Speeches Using Fairclough's 3D Model

1. Text Analysis (Linguistic Features):

In analyzing Imran Khan's speeches through Fairclough's three-dimensional model of discourse, significant linguistic features reveal underlying social and political dynamics. Firstly, Khan employs *"direct address"*, as exemplified by his engagement with the audience: "The people of Okara, will you support me in giving rights to minorities? Raise your hands." This technique fosters a sense of collective agency among listeners. In addition, his use of *"mockery"* is evident when he asks, "Can a jackal start a campaign?" This comparison not only delegitimizes his opponents but also appeals to the audience's emotions by framing them as cowardly.

Khan further employs *"emotional appeals"* when he questions, "Did Imran Khan take a single loan from bank? Did Imran give the privileges to his own relatives?" These inquiries serve to bolster his position while evoking skepticism toward the opposition. The repetition of statements such as "I have given 60 documents" and "Prove at least one corruption in these four and a half years" reinforces his narrative of accountability and integrity.

In his second speech, Khan's *"accusatory language"* emerges strongly with his rhetorical question: "Who are the people who steal school money, money for clean water and money for their hospital and send it abroad?" This shift in focus onto systemic failures of governance is coupled with a strong appeal to *"sympathy and outrage"* when he states, "The number of women who die during delivery in this country is not seen in any other country." This positions him as a compassionate leader seeking to rectify injustices.

The third speech intensifies the call for justice through *"vivid descriptions"*: "In model town civilians were killed and about eighty people were shot." This imagery evokes a strong emotional response, underscoring the gravity of the situation. His *"moral framing"* surrounding the misallocation of funds is illustrated by the statement, "The money that was supposed to be spent on higher education for your education and drinking clean water was stolen," emphasizing a betrayal of public trust. The concluding *"call to action"*, "We will stand with you Tahir ul Qadri until justice is served," encapsulates a mobilizing effort aimed at enacting change.

2. Discursive Practice (How Discourse is Produced, Distributed, and Consumed):

Production and Distribution

In examining Imran Khan's speeches through the lens of Fairclough's three-dimensional model, particularly focusing on the discursive practice, we can gain

insights into how these discourses are produced, distributed, and consumed. The context of the speeches is crucial; they are delivered at political rallies and public gatherings across various locations, including Okara, Muzaffargarh, and Jaranwala. Each speech is strategically tailored to resonate with local audiences, addressing their specific experiences and grievances. For example, the first speech in Okara centers on issues of corruption and accountability, while the second speech in Muzaffargarh highlights the failures of previous administrations and calls for democratic reform. The third speech, delivered in Jaranwala, confronts past violence and advocates for justice.

Discursive Form

In terms of discursive form, Khan's speeches are designed for effective media coverage, employing dramatic and emotionally charged language to create memorable sound bites. A notable instance from the third speech is the claim that "The money that was supposed to be spent on higher education... was stolen," which not only articulates public frustration but also aligns with prevailing media narratives. Furthermore, the speeches actively engage the audience through direct questions and appeals. In the second speech, Khan prompts the youth of Kot Addu with, "Remember my Kot Addu youth... if we use our vote properly now, what can this country become?" This interactive approach enhances the emotional connection and encourages active participation.

Consumption and Reception

Regarding consumption and reception, Khan's speeches aim to elicit strong emotional responses from the audience, characterized by direct calls for action and pointed condemnation of the opposition. The culmination of the third speech with the declaration, "We will stand with you Tahir ul Qadri until justice is served," serves as a rallying cry that encourages collective action. Additionally, the crafted nature of these speeches ensures that they are impactful and newsworthy, facilitating widespread dissemination through media channels. This amplification reinforces public perceptions of corruption and advocates for political change, illustrating the potent interplay between discourse, audience engagement, and media influence in shaping public opinion.

3. Social Practice (Broader Socio-Political Context and Its Impact):

Broader Socio-Political Context

Imran Khan's speeches are set against a backdrop of political instability and widespread allegations of corruption against Nawaz Sharif and his government. This political climate of dissatisfaction reflects the public's frustration with the prevailing political status quo. In his first speech, Khan directly criticizes Nawaz Sharif's alleged corruption and perceived cowardice in facing political challenges, framing himself as a bold alternative. The second speech highlights systemic failures and corruption, contrasting these failures with his vision for democratic reform, thereby positioning his agenda as a necessary shift for the country's future. In the third speech, Khan addresses historical violence and injustice, further solidifying his image as a champion for accountability and justice in a country grappling with its troubled past.

Impact and Influence

Khan strategically uses his speeches to undermine Nawaz Sharif's credibility and consolidate his own political position. For instance, in the second speech, he asserts, "The prime minister is answerable to parliament. He lied to us and did not answer us," directly challenging the integrity of both Sharif and the political system. This tactic not only questions the legitimacy of his opponents but also bolsters Khan's claim to moral authority. His speeches also promote a vision of "Naya Pakistan" (New Pakistan), emphasizing the urgent need for reform and development. In the third speech, he reflects on the country's historical context, stating, "Fifty years ago, Pakistan was at the forefront of the entire subcontinent... I tell you the reason why we are left behind is that the cancer of corruption has come in this country." This narrative connects past prosperity to present decline, framing corruption as a pivotal issue that must be addressed.

Influence on Public Perception

The discourse in Khan's speeches contributes significantly to framing corruption as the primary obstacle to national progress. By positioning himself as a reformist leader capable of tackling these entrenched issues, Khan effectively shapes public perceptions of the political landscape. His repeated emphasis on transparency and moral integrity stands in stark contrast to the alleged corruption of his opponents, further reinforcing his image as a credible alternative.

In summary, Imran Khan's speeches are strategically crafted to resonate with the public's frustrations, mobilize support, and present himself as a reformist leader amid allegations of corruption and governance failure. The integration of direct linguistic features, discursive practices, and the broader socio-political context underscores the effectiveness of his rhetorical strategies in influencing public opinion and shaping political discourse.

Analysis of Nawaz Sharif's Speeches Using Fairclough's 3D Model

1. Text Analysis (Linguistic Features):

The first speech of Nawaz Sharif showcases a use of promissory language, designed to highlight Sharif's commitment to local development. He employs forward-looking statements to convey his dedication, as seen in his declaration: "Today I want to inform you that we have laid the foundation of Sui Gas Pipeline in Okara and 47 crore rupees will be spent on Sui gas." This statement not only provides specific details about infrastructure projects but also aims to build trust and credibility. The repetition of promises further underscores this commitment, with Sharif stating, "Motorway will be built, Insha Allah and Okara will be connected to Motorway." Additionally, emotive language is used to foster a personal connection with his audience, exemplified by his affection for the region: "Okara is my beautiful place, I like Okara very much." Such language serves to humanize Sharif and solidify his rapport with local constituents.

In his second speech he emphasizes solidarity and emotional appeal, particularly in the context of Kashmir. Sharif's use of emotive language, such as "Your Pain is Our Pain and the way you are bearing the oppression I am sure that you will be free one day," aims to build a strong emotional connection and demonstrate empathy with the Kashmiri people. His invocation of patriotic sentiments is apparent in his statements,

like "Today is Kashmir Day... Nawaz Sharif had a great wish that I would have served the mothers and sisters of Kashmir." This rhetoric not only reinforces his personal commitment to the Kashmir cause but also seeks to rally nationalistic support. Sharif also provides reassurance regarding continued support for Kashmir, stating, "Nawaz Sharif has done this work as the Prime Minister with great style... raises our voice for you, whether it is UN." This assertion aims to consolidate his position as a dedicated advocate for Kashmiri interests.

In his third speech he employs direct address and assurance to promise specific actions, framing these as entitlements rather than favors. Sharif's statement, "I will spend these 50 crores rupees on gas... this is not my favor to you people while it is your right," is intended to position his promises as a rightful expectation of the people, thus reinforcing his role as a responsive leader. He focuses on progress and development, highlighting ongoing and future projects with statements like, "Pakistan is developing very fast. Roads are being built everywhere and motorways are being built." This focus on development aims to project an image of dynamic progress under his leadership. Additionally, Sharif contrasts his achievements with the opposition's perceived failures, as seen in his criticism: "Those people have made a waste of electricity and they have given the gift of load shedding." This contrast serves to position his government as more effective and responsive compared to its rivals.

2. Discursive Practice (How Discourse is Produced, Distributed, and Consumed):

Production and Distribution

Each speech is meticulously crafted to cater to specific contexts and audiences, reflecting Sharif's strategic approach to communication. Speech 4, delivered in Okara, centers on promises related to local infrastructure and development. By highlighting specific projects such as the construction of a motorway, Sharif aims to address local development needs and bolster his reputation as a leader committed to regional progress. Speech 5, presented in Muzaffarabad, emphasizes solidarity with Kashmir, employing emotionally charged language to forge a connection with the audience. Phrases like "Your Pain is Our Pain" are designed to resonate deeply with the listeners, underscoring Sharif's commitment to regional issues and enhancing his image as a compassionate leader. In Speech 6, delivered in Shergarh, Sharif focuses on local development achievements while contrasting them with the opposition's perceived failures. This approach not only highlights the government's effectiveness but also aims to boost public support by demonstrating progress and addressing local grievances.

Discursive Form

The discursive strategies employed in these speeches are tailored to maximize media impact and public engagement. The first speech features detailed plans and commitments, such as the promise of connecting Okara to a motorway, to make the speech memorable and newsworthy. The second speech utilizes emotive language and expressions of solidarity to connect with a broader audience, leveraging media coverage to amplify its emotional appeal. The third speech underscores local development and critiques opposition shortcomings, using statements like "Pakistan

is developing very fast" to project a positive image of the government and reinforce its achievements. These speeches are crafted not only to convey information but also to engage audiences effectively through media channels, ensuring widespread dissemination and impact.

Consumption and Reception

The reception of these speeches reflects their targeted nature and strategic intent. Speech first of Nawaz Sharif resonates with local voters by addressing immediate concerns and demonstrating a commitment to development, thus reinforcing Sharif's appeal among regional constituents. Speech second strengthens Sharif's connection with the Kashmiri people, enhancing his image as a leader deeply invested in their welfare and garnering support through emotional engagement. The third speech addresses local grievances and contrasts the government's achievements with opposition failures, aiming to boost public support and portray the government as responsive and effective.

3. Social Practice (Broader Socio-Political Context and Its Impact):

Broader Socio-Political Context

Sharif's speeches are strategically crafted to address prevailing political challenges and counter opposition criticisms, while also underscoring his government's accomplishments. For instance, in Speech first, Sharif responds directly to local demands in Okara, emphasizing promises of development amidst heightened political scrutiny. This local focus serves to bolster his reputation as a leader responsive to regional needs. In Speech second, Sharif tackles the Kashmir issue within a context marked by increased national and regional tensions. His approach aims to solidify his stance on the matter and garner broader support by demonstrating commitment to national solidarity. Speech third further illustrates this strategy by concentrating on local development achievements and drawing contrasts with the opposition's perceived shortcomings. This contrast not only reinforces his government's effectiveness but also addresses public concerns about opposition failures.

Impact and Influence

Sharif's speeches are designed with a clear political strategy in mind, utilizing rhetoric to counter opposition narratives, highlight achievements, and forge emotional connections with the audience. In Speech first, he details specific infrastructure projects, positioning himself as a leader dedicated to regional development. This approach seeks to enhance his public image as a proactive and effective leader. Speech second, through its emphasis on solidarity with Kashmir and the expression of commitment, is aimed at reinforcing Sharif's political image and connecting with a broader audience on a national level. Similarly, Speech third focuses on development achievements and criticizes opposition failures, strategically positioning his government as more effective and responsive compared to its rivals.

Influence on Public Perception

The discourse in Sharif's speeches is heavily geared towards projecting his government as a beacon of progress and national unity. In Speech first, the emphasis on development projects is intended to bolster his image as a leader committed to

advancing regional interests. Speech second uses emotional appeals to reinforce his dedication to regional issues and national solidarity, thus enhancing his public image. Finally, Speech third highlights development successes while contrasting them with opposition failures, aimed at showcasing the government's effectiveness and responsiveness to public needs.

In conclusion, Nawaz Sharif's speeches, analyzed through Fairclough's 3D model, reveal a nuanced strategy to address local and national issues, affirm his government's achievements, and counter opposition criticisms. By leveraging development promises, emotional appeals, and contrasts with opposition failures, Sharif seeks to fortify his political position and sustain public support amidst a challenging political landscape.

Comparison of the Speeches of both Leaders

The speeches of Imran Khan and Nawaz Sharif represent two distinct approaches to political rhetoric in Pakistan, each shaped by their respective contexts and objectives. This comparative analysis, utilizing Fairclough's 3D model, explores the linguistic features, discursive practices, and broader socio-political contexts that characterize each leader's discourse. While Khan positions himself as a reformist championing accountability, Sharif emphasizes development and national solidarity.

1. Text Analysis (Linguistic Features) Both leaders employ strategic linguistic features to enhance their public personas, yet their approaches diverge significantly.

- Imran Khan employs emotional appeals and direct address to cultivate a sense of agency among his audience. His rhetorical questions, such as "Did Imran Khan take a single loan from the bank?" directly engage listeners and evoke skepticism toward his opponents. This approach not only highlights his narrative of integrity but also seeks to mobilize support against perceived corruption.
- Nawaz Sharif, conversely, utilizes promissory language and emotional solidarity. His statements, like "Today I want to inform you that we have laid the foundation of the Sui Gas Pipeline," serve to project an image of progress and commitment to local development. By emphasizing regional connections and nationalistic sentiments, Sharif aims to build trust and foster emotional ties with his audience.

While Khan often employs mockery and accusatory language to delegitimize opponents, Sharif's rhetoric leans towards reassurance and personal connection, exemplified by his declarations of shared pain with the Kashmiri people.

2. Discursive Practice (Production, Distribution, and Consumption)

The discursive practices of both leaders reflect their strategic intents in shaping public perception.

- Khan's speeches are crafted for high emotional impact, often delivered at rallies that directly engage local grievances. The production and distribution of his speeches emphasize accountability and the call for justice, resonating deeply with an audience frustrated by systemic corruption. His direct questions and

calls to action, such as "We will stand with you until justice is served," serve to foster a collective identity among his supporters.

- Sharif's discourse, however, is designed to reassure and project stability. His speeches are methodically structured to address specific regional issues, as seen in his promises of infrastructure development. By highlighting tangible projects and contrasting them with the opposition's failures, Sharif seeks to reinforce his image as a responsible leader committed to progress. The emotional appeal in his statements, such as "Your Pain is Our Pain," reflects a careful calibration aimed at broadening his appeal across different demographics.

3. Social Practice (Broader Socio-Political Context) The socio-political contexts in which both leaders operate further illuminate their rhetorical strategies.

- Khan's speeches arise from a backdrop of political disillusionment and allegations against Sharif's government. His critique of corruption and systemic failures positions him as a reformist alternative, resonating with a populace yearning for change. The historical grievances he invokes help to consolidate a narrative of urgency and moral superiority.
- In contrast, Sharif's discourse is embedded in a narrative of stability and development. Operating within a context marked by regional tensions, particularly concerning Kashmir, Sharif's emphasis on national unity serves to counteract opposition criticisms and reinforce his government's legitimacy. His focus on development reflects an attempt to navigate the political landscape by framing his administration as responsive to public needs.

Conclusion

The discursive strategies employed by Imran Khan and Nawaz Sharif during the 2018 Pakistani elections, highlighting how these tactics were used to engage and mobilize voters. Both leaders leveraged various rhetorical approaches, including populism, personal attacks, religious appeals, repetition, personalization, and persuasion, to influence voter behavior and secure electoral support. Imran Khan's speeches prominently featured populism, as he made commitments to address corruption and uphold religious values, positioning himself as a champion of the people's interests. His strategy also involved personal attacks on Nawaz Sharif to damage his opponent's credibility and religious appeals to connect with voters' Islamic values. Additionally, Khan's use of repetition and personalization aimed to strengthen his emotional bond with the electorate. Conversely, Nawaz Sharif focused on underscoring his past achievements and promises through repetition, which highlighted his ongoing commitment to infrastructure development and progress. Sharif's use of personalization aimed to foster familiarity and trust, while his persuasive appeals sought to reinforce confidence in his leadership. The effectiveness of these strategies demonstrated their crucial role in shaping voter perceptions and behaviors within Pakistan's electoral context. Populism, personal attacks, religious appeals, repetition, and personalization each played a significant part in mobilizing support and shaping political discourse. Future research should investigate the impact of these discursive strategies on voter perceptions across different regions and demographic groups, as

well as their long-term effects on public opinion and governance. Such studies would provide deeper insights into political communication dynamics and inform the development of effective strategies for future electoral campaigns.

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Appendix:

Imran Khan Speeches

1. <https://youtu.be/FMzxagPLzXo>
2. <https://youtu.be/g14eaU6dYyE>
3. <https://youtu.be/wmFKYKPKsjE>

Nawaz Sharif Speeches

1. <https://youtu.be/cvpzY3X6Y>
2. <https://youtu.be/BKrH-PPYZn8>
3. <https://youtu.be/eVQHZEI9MMg>