

The Rhetoric of Partnership: A Critical Discourse and Semiotic Analysis of Chinese President Xi's Address on CPEC Launch in Pakistan

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Abstract: *The paper presents a Critical Discourse Analysis of the Chinese President Xi's powerful rhetoric delivered on 21 April, 2015, during his visit to Pakistan to launch China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The speech served many purposes but mainly it played an instrumental role to convey a strong brotherly connection the both countries share. The paper analysis the semiotic perspective as well. The choice of words in the speech also represents power relationship. Since, the speech proved to be a sensation in town not only in China and Pakistan but all over the world, it has been marked as one of the most impactful rhetoric by him. The present study intends to explore the underlying discursive strategies, socio-political construction and de-construction of the political frames in Xi's speech, in the mirror of Critical Discourse Analysis. The speech has been analyzed under the framework of Van Dijk's (1993) Socio Cognitive Approach to investigate the ideological (macro) structures operating in the rhetoric to emphasize in-group and de-emphasize out-group members to influence the Chinese and Pakistani audience. In a semiotic perspective, this study analysis the images taken from the video of the speech, to suggest how factors contribute in an image to convey multiple meanings to make the speech appealing, motivating and powerful. The images carry codes and signs to convey the implied meaning. This is known as politics of representation. This research has been conducted under multi-modal approach of visual semiotics (2006) by Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen to identify and analyze these codes. The study will guide the future researchers who desire to research and learn CDA and semiotics as the main research discipline.*

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Chinese President Xi, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Semiotics, Socio-political construction, Politics of Representation

Introduction

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) by China saw the beginning of its flagship project, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. With an estimated length of about 3,000km, the network consists of pipelines, railways, other infrastructure projects, and roads that link Pakistan's Gwadar Port with Xinjiang Province in China. The expected completion date for CPEC is 2030 with a maximum cost of \$62 billion (Durrani, 2020).

Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has given this relationship an added impetus by bringing in extraordinary prospects of not only bilateral cooperation but also regional integration and development

to both countries (Hameed, 2017). For Pakistan as well as China have recognized how vital that is CPEC. In 2015, they signed a strategic partnership agreement which included a pledge to cooperate on CPEC. Further special economic zone for CPEC was set up by government Pakistani which provides tax holidays and other incentives to businesses investing into the project. The current study examines ideological construction of discourse around Xi Jinping's speech on China Pakistan relations focusing specifically on China – Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Critical Discourse Analysis, being a multidisciplinary domain of linguistics serves to meet the objectives of the study as it examines how language communicates on different levels of socio-political interface. Richardson while elaborating the basic role of CDA argued that CDA creates a bridge between the language and society, construction of social perspectives and social issues (Richardson, 2006, p. 26). Van Dijk's (1993) Socio Cognitive Approach pays attention to uncover the linguistic and ideological structures in a text which mark the basis for socio-political relationships, inequalities or groupings among people on the basis of power, dominance, discrimination, and imposition. Socio-cognitive theory allows the interpretation of discourse on two levels; micro and macro. Micro level refers to the local meaning of the text, i.e., lexical, grammatical and linguistic choices that go into the formation of a discourse. Since Van Dijk (1993) believes that any discourse has its roots in ideology, macro level deals with the global meaning of the text which intends to explore the actual ideological interpretations and hidden power relations working behind those linguistic choices. The study aims to provide an ideological account of President Xi's speech using Van Dijk's (1993) Socio Cognitive model to explore the macro-structures employed in the speech for the representation of in-group and out-group members to meet socio-political interests. Additionally, these strategic narratives under his leadership are designed with a particular emphasis on how the speeches are crafted to resonate with a variety of audiences, both domestically in China and globally (Lams, 2018; Yang, 2020; Brown, 2021). Images from the speech broadcast video were selected and examined using the systemic functional grammar of English developed by Michael Halliday. Kress and Leewan adapted its general semiotic principles to visuals, rather than focusing on its specific linguistic features, to create a foundation for visual grammar. The analysis of any visual narrative emphasizes various semiotic sources such as participant actions, scene production, event sequencing, religious and social connotations, settings, groupings, opinion conflicts, geographical significance, national narratives, expressions, cinematography, and other contributing factors. According to Halliday's systemic model, every semiotic resource serves three functions: 1) The Ideational metafunction, 2) The Interpersonal metafunction, and 3) The Textual metafunction. Representation involves the symbols and codes in images that assign meaning to groups, their social practices, events, and social and ecological conditions. This perspective suggests that meaning is not inherent in perceived reality but is constructed through these representations.

Statement of the Problem

Xi Jinping's 2015 speech during his visit to Pakistan, which launched the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), has significant global implications. The study intends to expose the ideological structures and power dynamics interwoven in President Xi's speech. The main aim of this research is to examine how language and visual images can combine to communicate complex socio-political messages to influence people's opinions on them. In this regard, the current study will apply the Van Dijk's Socio Cognitive Approach for the linguistic analysis and Kress and van Leeuwen framework for visual semiotics to uncover the multi-layered meanings and ideological underpinnings within rhetoric. The results will deepen our knowledge about discourses' role in international relations, while becoming an important source for future scholars interested in CDA and semiotics as primary analytical tools.

Research Objectives

- 1- To identify and analyze the discursive techniques employed in president Xi's speech to

construct ideological power dynamics between China and Pakistan?

- 2- To investigate the visual elements in the image from President Xi's speech that reflects socio-political messages.

Research questions

- 1- What discursive techniques according to Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach have been employed in president Xi's speech to construct ideological power dynamics between China and Pakistan?
- 2- How do the visual elements in the image from President Xi's speech reflect socio-political messages, as investigated using Kress and van Leeuwen's framework in visual semiotics?

Literature review

Theoretical framework

Critical Discourse Analysis

CDA is a research oriented discipline in discourse analysis that mainly deals with the study of the ways social the practice of power structure in society, ideology, supremacy, prejudice and inequality are depicted, executed, recreated , imitated and turned down by using text and talk in the context of society and politics. Critical Discourse Analysis is a strong tool to identify the underlying ideological prejudices within the text and attempts to expose the social inequalities. So it is concerned with critically analyzing that how language, society and ideology are connected. (Van Dijk, 1993; Widdoson, 2008).

Van Dijk (2006) suggests raising the concern of studying ideology from the perspective of discourse analysis and its approach. Since being the main spring in text and talk, Van Dijk (1993) asserts that most of the time ideologies are usually portrayed in one of these sources. He considers CDA to be the most significant approach to help studying this bone of contention. Therefore he calls his own study a multidisciplinary approach which is critical when compared to the conventional approaches about ideology. In his view, if ideology is mainly belief, systems and ideas, this definition is lacking fundamental elements. Van Dijk (1993) introduced the new dimension of socio cognitive nature of ideologies and their discursive representation in his framework to explain the relationship between ideology and discourse; that were overlooked by the previous approaches to ideology. Further he explains that there is no such concept of personal or private ideology of one's own, ideology is always mutually shared between the members of a group. In spite of having a personal and private ideology, an individual may follow a set of opinions and directions that can represent an ideology. He believes that it not essential for everyone to have some ideology but it somewhat varies from group to group.

Socio-cognitive Model

Van Dijk's (1993) Socio-cognitive Model stands among one of the pioneers and popular research in the field of CDA. A large portion of his work deals with the prejudice, ethnicity, racism and discrimination, exploitation of lower class, imbalance and inequality in society, hidden in discourse. He majorly contributed to the issue that how Netherlander and Californian Caucasian race discussed the ethnic minorities as a part of his early works in which he explored how language played its role in their debates, conversations and discussions to reproduce the ideology. It mainly investigates the representations of the ideas and thoughts that exist within the minds of the people. Van Dijk (1993) sees these things as the psychological and individual believes that happen to exist about ethnic occasions. He trusts that the real premises in discussing others incorporate positive self-portrayal and negative other-portrayal. Van Dijk (1993) offers some proficient rules that help in doing critical discourse analysis and states that he has no exceptional approach. He denies considering the fact that CDA is a branch of discourse analysis rather he called it an interdisciplinary field which he took as a base and labeled it as socio-cognitive discourse analysis, this highlights the importance of cognition in CDA. Though, CDA does not limit

itself to social and cognitive analysis only; rather, it also deals with real life issues, its complications and peoples personal's needs, CDA must cover these approaches as well, e.g. cultural, logical, historical, socio-economical, philosophical, neurological etc.

Discourse, Society and Cognition

Van Dijk (1993) admits the fact that social structures have no direct link to discourse structures; rather, they are buttoned up through personal and social cognition. He proposes the triangle of society discourse and cognition because he felt this cognition as the missing fragment of numerous critical linguistic studies and critical discourse analysis. Since Van Dijk (1993) greatly emphasizes on cognition, he considers as the nature of discourse is lingual, CDA calls for a slight need not only of linguistic foundations but also of cognitive foundations. According to Van Dijk's (1995) triangle, any communicative event can be taken as discourse including written text, pictures, oral interactions, visuals, body gestures and postures other semiotic signifiers. Here cognition indicates the individual and social insight, convictions, values, objectives, feelings, goals and other mental structures. Society is a combination of global and local structures, i.e., macro and micro structures respectively. These are described as relationships between different groups like those of power structure, dominance, social exploitation and inequality. In this triangle, social and cognitive directions are assumed while defining the context of discourse. Context can be analyzed on two levels, macro and micro. The macro level of context deals with social structure, history, culture and politics in which communicative events take place, it is basically the function of language, that is to explain topic and theme represented in the text; on the other hand, micro context deals with the verbal structures it analyzes the form of language used in text and speech to explore the hidden macro structures. Production of text and its understanding both are controlled by this cognitive model and it studies topic, idea, subject matter, and cohesion and coherence along with speech act, its manner and imagery. This cognitive model is a part of people's long-term memory, in which their information, knowledge, opinions and views are secured. So, it can be said that discourse may change in a specific situation and this cognitive model explains how discourse indicated its own personal and social characteristics. In other words, discourse and society are not directly connected. This mental model explains and clarifies the way social structures influence and affect the discourse. (Van Dijk, 2008)

Semiotics:

Semiotics is typically defined as the 'scientific study of signs.' Eco (1976) states that 'semiotics deals with everything that can be interpreted as a sign.' Swiss linguist Saussure (1916) and American logician and philosopher Peirce (1992) made notable contributions to this field. Saussure (1916) referred to the study of signs as 'semiology,' while Peirce (1992) called his systematic study of signs 'semiotics.' Danish linguist Hjelmslev (1961) replaced the idea of the sign with the term "sign function," which describes the relationship between content and representation. Hjelmslev (1961) regarded semiotics as "a science that examines the life of signs within society".

The focus of semiotics is on the contrast between digital symbols and analog modes. The distinction between these two types of signs can be described as natural versus artificial. Users tend to prioritize the analog mode and view digital symbols as less connected to reality. When comparing digital codes to analog codes, digital codes are capable of communication, whereas analog codes are not used to convey information directly. Analog codes express emotions that users use to communicate, such as gestures, facial expressions, posture, intonation, and so on. Eco (1976), an Italian semiotician, has strongly criticized terms such as arbitrary, digital, and conventional. He stresses that common pairings of these terms can misleadingly imply that they are synonymous (p. 190). Different forms of representation, such as photography and audio-visual media, are often regarded as more reflective of reality. Kress and Leeuwen (1996) assert that 'the material manifestation of the text is always meaningful; it is an independently variable semiotic characteristic' (p. 231).

Codes and Multimodality:

Signs in movies possess a unique socio-political significance, dependent on the socio-ethnic and cultural context of the community. Chandler (2000) emphasizes that social, cultural, and ethnic norms and conventions give meaning to various symbols within social networks. In each sign system, symbols are organized into coherent units based on certain conventions, known in semiotics as "codes." These codes suggest that meanings and signs can be categorized into significant units, enriching the overall text. Fiske (1989a) differentiates between broadcast and narrowcast codes. Broadcast codes are understood by the entire public, including almost every community member, while narrowcast codes are limited to a specific audience. 'Broadcast codes are learned through experience, while narrowcast codes often require more intentional learning' (cited in Chandler, 2000). How viewers perceive the everyday world depends on the code or convention. Reality is a complex sign system that can generate inferences and interpretations from cultural members as represented by the media. 'Our perception of reality is always mediated by the codes with which our culture organizes it, categorizes its significant elements or semes into paradigms, and relates them meaningfully to syntagms' (Fiske & Hartley, 1978, p. 65-66).

Multimodality is an interdisciplinary approach that focuses on representation and communication rather than just text and language. In recent years, it has evolved to address the changes and variations in society brought about by advances in media and technology. Multimodal methods offer various techniques, concepts, and frameworks for collecting and analyzing audio, visual, representational, and spatial aspects of interaction, communication, settings, and their interrelationships.

Visual narratives depict diverse multimodal texts. Similarly, visual modalities portray the social environment. In multimodal films, the primary text comprises not only images but also other elements such as language and music. A comprehensive systematic examination of semiotic resources aims to explore multiple layers of meaning.

The prevailing visual discourse is currently influenced by global cultural and technological powers in mass media. These entities propagate the practices established by influential designers and, through the proliferation of image repositories and computer-based imaging technologies, exert a 'standardizing' rather than overtly 'normative' impact on visual communication worldwide (Kress & Leeuwan, 2006, p. 5).

The concept of "sign" is central in semiotics. Signs encompass various semiotic elements including language, with visual narratives being one such element capable of conveying multiple meanings simultaneously. Those who create signs utilize diverse semiotic approaches, aiming to articulate meanings in the most concise and relevant manner possible.

In social semiotics, this implies that the sign is not simply a pre-established combination of a signifier and a signified, a readily accessible sign to be recognized, selected, and used in its existing form, as signs are typically perceived to be 'ready for use' in semiology (Kress & Leeuwan, 2006, p. 7-8).

Previous researches on CDA and Semiotic Analysis:

CDA provides wide implications in exploring various aspects of the discourse. A critical discourse analysis of King Martin Luther's speech was conducted by Sipra and Rashid (2013) to explore the sociopolitical implications of the speech. Aschale (2013) carried out a research based on CDA of a number of speeches by Barak Obama to understand manipulation in politics through language. Shahbazi and Rezaee (2017) employed the framework of CDA to understand the role of micro, meso and macro structures in establishing power relations while translating a discourse to the target language. Anwar, Razaullah, Ahmad and Ali (2015) put forth a collaborative effort in Research Journal of South Asian Studies which specifically analyzed the speech delivered by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on August 11, 1947 in the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. This research revealed the hidden ideological structures, meanings and impact of the speech through CDA. Another research was

conducted by Kazemian and Soomro (2015) which explored the discursive patterns of speech by Liaqat Ali Khan in USA about Pakistan and the modern world. Asghar, Ghilzail and Ayaz (2017) came up with the CDA of Imran Khan's First Speech in the Parliament of Pakistan and explored the ideologies residing in the text. Hussain (2016) studied the speech delivered by Egyptian President, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, at New Suez Canal Inauguration Ceremony, by placing it in the context of society and culture. Moreover, the modality and transitivity patterns in Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's address at the Security Council was studied and published by Munawar (2016) in IJAR.

For multimodal semiotic analysis, Hayes (2011) investigated how visual imagery influenced the fight against apartheid in South Africa during the 19th and 20th centuries. Focusing on Omar Badsha's photography from 1960 to 1980, Hayes (2011) argues that these visual images were utilized in local venues and international solidarity networks to rally support for the struggle (p. 544). Abdullahi-Idiagbon (2013) explored the application of multimodal discourse analysis in interpreting the meanings conveyed through political campaign advertisements. Kulikova and Detinko (2014) also conducted a multimodal analysis of political cartoons in the British press, revealing how these texts construct political 'others.' Tehseem and Bokhari (2015) observed that political cartoons in Pakistani newspapers often undermine one political party or leader while favoring another (p. 11).

Methodology

Data collection and Sampling

The manuscript of president Xi's CPEC launch speech during his visit to Pakistan in 2015 has been collected from the official website of Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad <https://issi.org.pk/> and the images have been taken as screenshots from the speech broadcast by CCTV (China Central Television) news. The analysis of the selected speech has been done in the light of Van Dijk's (1993) Socio-cognitive approach and the discursive strategies suggested by him and the visual analysis has been done through multimodal semiotic approach by Kress and Leeuwen (2006).

Delimitations

- The analysis of the study limits itself to the selected chunks of a particular speech delivered by Present Xi during his visit to Pakistan.
- The analysis is carried out on the macro level of discourse and only the macro structures have been taken into consideration.
- Van Dijk's (1993) Socio-cognitive approach proposes a large variety of possible discursive techniques present in a political discourse, out of which the analysis sticks itself to a particular number of techniques that happen to occur in the selected fragments of speech.
- For semiotic analysis, only one relevant image, taken as screenshot from the video has been selected for the semiotic analysis.
- The systemic multimodal approach has been used for the analysis of image.

Data analysis

The main idea of analysis is to show how ideologies are expressed being covered under various structures as mentioned by Van Dijk's (1993) model of ideological analysis. The framework provides a close insight to the primary agenda of any political discourse is to have its grounds on the ideological square of emphasizing one's good and other's bad, and de-emphasizing one's bad and other's good. This ideological square can be achieved by observing and addressing a number of discursive strategies that go beyond the linguistic choices governing the structure of any political discourse, i.e., speeches, interviews, texts, talks. These strategies can be realized at any point or level in the discourse; form, meaning or action. A number of such techniques have been observed in President Xi's powerful rhetoric while analyzing the substance of speech,

Actor description

A speaker's description of the actors in a discourse depends on the ideology of the speaker through which he represents them (Van Dijk, 1993). Traditionally in political speeches, which happen to be a battlefield between two opponents or parties, the speakers describe in-group members in a positive or neutral manner and tend to look down upon the out-group members. Speaker's description of the people involved in his speech plays a significant role in looking into his ideology and intentions behind that description. President Xi can be found utilizing the same technique while introducing the two main subjects of his speech around whom his speech revolves, which are enduring friendship leading to future vision and highlighting mutual support against external threats. President Xi, By the very start of his speech he says,

"The Parliament of Pakistan's invitation to me to address you today fully testifies to the profound friendship you cherish towards the Chinese people."

"The moment we arrived in your beautiful country, my colleagues and I have been overwhelmed by your warm hospitality."

- "The Pakistani people are a kind, brave, dignified and confident people with an indomitable national character."

- "The Pakistani government and people have, in the face of intricate domestic and international developments, risen up to various challenges and made remarkable achievements."

Here, president Xi has given the very first glimpse of his ideology through the descriptions he made for China and Pakistan strong bond and the use of phrases like: "profound friendship", "brotherly people", "reunion with an old friend" and inclination towards promoting friendship and cooperation time and again. And then the words specifically used by president Xi for the outer group in his speech were "foreign aggression", "imperialist and colonialist aggression and oppression", This distinction made by Present Xi between the descriptions of the two groups mark an intended strategy which speaks much about his ideology that he wants to induce in his audience. He made his political and socio economic preferences quite evident at the very beginning of his speech.

Comparison

The comparison drawn between in-group and out-group members happens to be a popular discursive device employed in a political discourse; where out-groups are reflected negatively and in-groups positively (Van Dijk, 1993). Such a comparison is also carried out by president Xi in his rhetoric where she marked the boundaries between the attitudes of the two opponents throughout the election campaign,

Positive Comparison of In-group vs. Out-group:

- "Our friendship is truly unique."

- "The Chinese people will always stand together with the Pakistani people in your great endeavor."

- "Whenever Pakistan is in need, China has come to its help."

"Our friendship is genuinely one-of-a-kind." The phrase "our friendship" characterizes the bond between China and Pakistan, depicting it positively and highlighting its intimacy. "Truly unique" underscores the exceptional quality of this relationship, distinguishing it from other international connections. This expression aims to elevate the significance of the bilateral relationship, presenting it as unparalleled and extraordinary. It emphasizes the distinctiveness and importance of the China-Pakistan relationship, portraying both nations positively for maintaining such a rare and valuable bond. This statement conveys a sense of pride and achievement, suggesting that the relationship serves as a

model of international collaboration.

"The people of China will always stand in solidarity with the people of Pakistan in your noble pursuits." "The people of China" and "the people of Pakistan" are portrayed as united and supportive, indicating a bond of solidarity and mutual respect. "Your noble pursuits" highlights Pakistan's endeavors as significant and honorable, offering moral encouragement and acknowledgment. This statement promotes a sense of unity and shared commitment between the two nations, suggesting that China and Pakistan align in their aspirations and challenges. It implies that China's support for Pakistan remains steadfast and enduring, reinforcing the notion of a reliable and lasting partnership.

"Whenever Pakistan requires assistance, China has consistently offered its support." "Whenever Pakistan is in need" portrays Pakistan as occasionally requiring help, without diminishing its autonomy or dignity. "China has come to its help" depicts China as a dependable and generous ally, always ready to provide assistance when needed. This statement underscores China's role as a supportive and trustworthy partner, enhancing its reputation as a compassionate and altruistic nation. By emphasizing China's readiness to lend a hand, it highlights China's dedication and dependability, further enhancing the positive perception of the China-Pakistan relationship.

These lines from the speech contribute to presenting the China-Pakistan relationship positively, highlighting its distinctiveness, unity, and reliable backing. They aim to shape a narrative of a robust, supportive, and exceptional partnership, strengthening mutual regard and collaboration. By underscoring the unique qualities and resilience of the China-Pakistan bond, there is an implied comparison with other international relationships that may not possess the same level of uniqueness or supportiveness. The statements subtly imply that the connection between China and Pakistan surpasses other alliances, although without explicitly mentioning or critiquing other groups. Together, these lines reinforce the overarching theme of a special, supportive, and enduring friendship between China and Pakistan, strategically employing language to construct a favorable and mutually advantageous alliance.

Positive self-presentation

Van Dijk (1993) devised a macro-strategy observed by the speaker to emphasize on the constructive role and positive characterization of his own group or party in the development of society. This technique is basically ideological, as it is grounded on the positive self-schema that explains the ideology of the groups by highlighting the incidents of one's tolerance, compliance with the law, dedication and support for human rights. Almost half of Michelle's speech covers the milestones of grandeur marked by Hillary while serving the country and its people to convince the audience,

- "China firmly supports Pakistan's efforts to uphold sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity."

- "China will provide free assistance to Pakistan for reconstruction in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and for undertaking projects for the improvement of people's livelihood."

- "China is committed to the principle of non-interference in others' internal affairs."

These lines demonstrate China's favorable portrayal of itself as a steadfast and principled supporter of Pakistan. The statement in the first line emphasizes China's consistent dedication to upholding its ally's independence and security. In the second line, China presents itself as a benevolent supporter, committed to Pakistan's progress and well-being. The adherence to "the principle of non-interference in others' internal affairs" underscores China's regard for national sovereignty and its principled stance in global diplomacy. Together, these statements shape a narrative of China as a supportive, respectful, and generous partner, bolstering its reputation as a positive influence in international relations and a dependable ally to Pakistan.

Consensus

Van Dijk (1993) observed a political strategy employed by the speakers to claim that country is threatened by or some act of cross-party; either by an outside attack or identity distortion. In the CPEC launch speech, president Xi continues to call out Trump and his ideology to be a disgrace to the national identity and cautions the audience of the dangers that she can foresee,

Threats and Consensus-building:

- "We should support each other on issues involving our respective core interests and major concerns, firmly uphold sovereignty, territorial integrity and national dignity."

- "China will assist Pakistan in strengthening its capacity for fighting terrorism and ensuring security."

- "China supports Pakistan in playing a constructive role on the Afghan issue and will work with Pakistan to advance the reconciliation process and smooth transition in Afghanistan."

In these passages, the theme of agreement is highlighted through an emphasis on mutual support and common objectives between China and Pakistan. The first statement establishes a basis of unity and mutual respect by calling for solidarity on matters concerning core interests, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national dignity, portraying both nations as aligned in their dedication to these fundamental values. The second statement emphasizes a collaborative approach to addressing shared challenges, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and teamwork in maintaining regional stability by pledging China's support to enhance Pakistan's capabilities in combating terrorism and ensuring security. The third statement illustrates China's endorsement of Pakistan's regional influence and its cooperative stance in promoting broader geopolitical stability by backing Pakistan's positive role in addressing Afghan issues and working together to promote the reconciliation process and smooth transition in Afghanistan. Together, these passages convey a narrative of common challenges and joint efforts, reinforcing the idea of a robust and unified partnership between China and Pakistan in pursuit of shared objectives and regional harmony.

Evidentiality

A powerful move observed in argumentation is providing examples, often in the form of short stories, illustrating and making a general point more plausible and relatable by the speaker. This technique is argumentatively more persuasive as it casts an emotional impact (Van Dijk, 1993). President Xi's speeches are well known for quoting historical references or around to make things more relatable for the audience.

- "In 2008, when the devastating earthquake struck Wenchuan, China, Pakistan responded immediately and sent all its transport aircraft to ship its entire reserve of tents to China."

- "Today, thousands of Pakistanis are working side by side with Chinese engineers and workers on projects undertaken by China in Pakistan."

- "In the most recent evacuation mission in Yemen, the Chinese navy evacuated 176 Pakistanis from the Port of Aden, and the Pakistani navy evacuated eight Chinese students from Mukalla Port."

Within the context of evidentiality, these statements illustrate the reciprocal and concrete demonstrations of support between China and Pakistan, strengthening the portrayal of a profound and pragmatic friendship. The initial statement underscores Pakistan's immediate and significant response to the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake, when Pakistan dispatched its entire stock of tents to assist China, demonstrating tangible support during emergencies. This specific example serves as tangible proof of Pakistan's dedication and solidarity. The subsequent statement shifts the narrative to the present day, highlighting ongoing collaboration where thousands of Pakistanis are working alongside Chinese engineers on projects within Pakistan. This serves as a current testament to the enduring and practical cooperation that benefits both nations. The final statement recounts a recent evacuation mission in

Yemen, showcasing mutual assistance as the Chinese navy evacuated Pakistanis while the Pakistani navy reciprocated by evacuating Chinese students. These detailed instances of cooperation and assistance provide robust evidence of the strong, action-oriented partnership, emphasizing that the China-Pakistan relationship is grounded in substantial, tangible actions that support their diplomatic discourse.

Metaphorical phrases

The use of metaphors is a significant rhetorical strategy due to their strong and lasting impact as they are catchy and easily reminiscing for the people. Van Dijk (1993) found this technique quick in grabbing people's attention as the metaphors attach some emotion, meaning or reference to people or phenomena being characterized which stays in the audience's memory for a long time.

- "Meeting a good friend for the first time is like having a reunion with an old friend."
- "Our friendship is a pacesetter for amicable relations between countries."
- "Our two countries have forged an all-weather friendship and pursued all-round cooperation."
- "Strong wind reveals the strength of grass, and genuine gold stands the test of fire."

Within the theme of figurative expressions, these lines employ vivid and memorable language to convey the depth and durability of the China-Pakistan relationship. The first statement, "Meeting a good friend for the first time feels like reconnecting with an old friend," uses the metaphor of reunion to highlight the inherent familiarity and longstanding connection between the two nations, suggesting a friendship that feels destined. The second statement, "Our friendship sets the standard for friendly relations between nations," uses the metaphor of a "pacesetter" to position the China-Pakistan relationship as a model of excellence and leadership in international diplomacy, establishing a benchmark for others to emulate. The third statement, "Our two countries have established an enduring friendship and pursued comprehensive cooperation," employs the metaphor of "all-weather" to emphasize the resilience and adaptability of the partnership, capable of enduring various challenges and thriving in diverse conditions. Finally, "Strong winds reveal the resilience of grass, and genuine gold withstands the test of fire," utilizes natural and elemental imagery to convey the idea that true strength and value are demonstrated through adversity, reinforcing the concept that the China-Pakistan friendship is robust and enduring. These metaphors construct a compelling and emotionally resonant narrative, portraying the bilateral relationship as not only strong and dependable but also exemplary and inspiring.

National self-glorification

In political discourses, speakers tend to praise and glorify one's own country, nation, its principles, history and traditions (Van Dijk, 1993). President Xi has utilized this technique several times in her rhetoric to make his audience aware of their national brilliance and worth. He continues to empower them to uphold their dignity and embrace fair treatment.

China champions a right approach to principles and interests. We believe that to help Pakistan is to help ourselves."

"China will continue to pursue win-win cooperation and enhance friendship and cooperation with other countries."

From a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective, the selected lines under the theme of national self-glorification can be analyzed as follows:

China is depicted as an ethical leader and a righteous country in the first line. The term "champions" indicates an active role and it indicates that China leads in pursuance of noble principles and alignment of interests in international relations. This not only glorifies China's image, but also portrays its foreign policy as naturally beneficial and selfless. Similarly, the phrase "to help Pakistan is to help ourselves"

shows that Pakistan is a strategic ally where mutual benefits accrue from being aligned with each other. This statement shows China to be selfless and wise, where it considers helping another nation as a part of itself glorifying national values and diplomatic philosophy.

The second line reiterates this theme by highlighting how China seeks mutual gains in its international engagements, which amounts to national self-glorification. A good example of this metaphor is “win-win cooperation.” This makes China look like a reasonable partner who is beneficial to others globally and therefore contributing to it becoming seen as positive participant worldwide. Additionally, the repetition of enhance friendship and cooperation strengthens China’s point of being mediator for peace while referring her as a peace-loving country that fosters positive interactions between nations.

Semiotic Analysis:



Description

This image taken from staring Chinese president Xi Jing Ping, addressing the join parliament on the official launch of CPEC during his visit to Pakistan on 21 April, 2015. His visit to Pakistan served many purposes for both the countries like strengthening bilateral relationships, reginal stability and development and economic collaboration through CPEC. In the image, President Xi is represented in the Western attire in front of a dark black background with a rusty-golden lining pattern in it. His tie matches the same color scheme and pattern of the background, but the lines are horizontal. The president is standing behind a podium, decorated with red and white flowers, that represent unity, peace and remembrance. The cameras are capturing the podium, President Xi’s half upper body is visible in the frame, which is a mid- close shot. A glass of water can be seen placed on the left side on the podium and a few mikes are placed on the podium with a few visible logos of Pakistani and Chinese National Tv channels.

Ideational Metafunction

In the image, a strong vector is observed through the gaze of represented participant. President Xi is looking straight at the viewers. The visual representation of this image in terms of its structure is ‘narrative’ as there are only one represented participant, who is involved in action process of speaking.

A powerful contrast of light and dark is dominant in the image, making it more influential for the viewers. The background of the image is dark black and rusty golden lines and the present Xi is standing straight in open body posture, which connotes his high confidence and worth. RP is the president Xi here and IP is the audience watching him live and over the TV. The interactional system is overtaken by the gaze of the RP in this image as it constructs an immediate, fictional and personal sort of social relation between him and the audience.

Interpersonal metafunction

The live broad cast of the speech on the national news channels of both countries PTV and CCTV targets a huge number of educated viewers from around the globe as it is highly watched and reliable news channels to look forward to international affairs, world politics, and renowned figures. President Xi's eye line connects him with the viewers by creating a direct address implemented in its visual form. The image suggests that his gaze 'demands' to take interest into him as an influential and inspiring figure, which successfully keeps the audience engaged to him in a constructive relation with her. President's facial expressions are lenient and congenial that influences the viewers to enter with him into a space of social empathy. President Xi's body posture represent himself to be a dignified personality and a role model for the audience. Malala is shot in 'Eastern' attire deliberately to make her look close to eastern traditional and social values.

In the image, President Xi is visible at a waist up position that suggests that he is at 'far personal distance' with the IPs. This distance determines his social interaction and everyday communication with the audience at which the matters of national interest like diplomatic relations and economic impacts on trade can be discussed internationally. The image is shot at 'frontal angle' on a horizontal plane which indicates president Xi's stronger involvement with the audience and suggests that he belongs our world and one of us and is really concerned for both the nations. The vertical angle of this image is 'mid shot' that implies equal power relation between both countries as president is Chinese and his live audience in the parliament is Pakistani.

Textual Metafunction

The president Xi in the image is the nucleus in this frame as he is placed in the center of the frame and grabs all the attention of the audience. The image is high in salience as the president Xi is in the foreground in the frame, wearing a selected palette of dark shaded color with a grand size covering almost whole frame from top to the bottom. The president is shot with a sharp focus, that brings all the attention towards him, making the image more signified.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the research justify Van Dijk's (1993) observation of the close relationship between discourse, politics and ideology considering the discursive nature of the discourse. Van Dijk's (1993) frame work of Socio-cognitive ideological analysis successfully explored the macro-structures involved in President Xi's speech each unfolding socio-political aspect of her ideology. The ideological patterns have been observed through a number of discursive devices involved in the rhetoric, which apparently seemed to be neutral but looking through the mirror of CDA magnifies various underlying hidden structures that actually make them implied. His speech highlighted particular historical events, future plans and a strong friendship between both countries that magnified the positive agenda of his visit and his powerful symbolic rhetoric that gave a strong message to the whole world. Thus, critical discourse analysis of President Xi's speech reveals the involvement of various macro-structures embedded in his linguistic choices like actor description, consensus, positive self-presentation, evidentiality, comparison, national self-glorification etc., in constructing a positive and political relation between in-groups. These strategies reflect Van Dijk's (1993) ideological square being practiced on various levels in this political speech, implying president Xi's interest in the social construction of reality by supporting stability and peace, mutual benefits, strong friendship and strategic partnership to cast an

envisioned impact on the audience. These macro-structures played a significant role in understanding the formation of his discourse to meet the socio-political needs and motives of both the countries.

The semiotic analysis of the image of President Xi Jinping during the official visit to Pakistan on the launch of CPEC in 2015, brings out a precisely created visual description that highlights his influence and the importance of the event. The pictorial harmony between his outfit and the background accentuates his dignified presence. His direct gaze towards audience and poised posture creates a guiding association with the addressees, both the live audience and people watching through national media outlets. The framing, the horizontal and vertical angles and the salience, all seems working together to place Xi as a prime and powerful figure, supporting themes of common goals and association between China and Pakistan. This study emphasizes the role of visual and representational components to suggest a underlying message of collaborative leadership and purposeful partnership.

Semiotic and CDA analysis combined provided a multilayer understanding of the speech made by president Xi. This combined approach has a practical approach that is apparent in political and media discourse. where it can be critically examined how political officials and news channels use both speech and visuals to form viewers opinion, create identities, and show case influence and power.

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