

The Use of Personal Pronouns in Imran Khan's Political Speeches: A Corpus-Based Study

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Abstract

One of the most powerful ways for leaders to affect public opinion, build political identities, and connect with audiences is through political speeches. In the rhetoric of such discourse, personal pronouns are among the linguistic instruments that have a decisive impact on formulations and correspond to rhetorical purposes. A Corpus-based Analysis of the Usage of Personal Pronouns in the Speeches of Imran Khan, the Ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan. There are three main aims underpinning the research of this study: to find out the most used personal pronouns including I, we, they in the selected corpus of the speeches by Imran Khan, to analyse the lexical clusters of regarding their use, and the analysis of their referents and role in the construction of political narratives. Using quantitative methods, this study explicates how pronouns facilitate collective identity, define opposition, and emphasize individual leadership within the context of another country. The discovery reveals how personal pronouns influence political rhetoric, showing how language gets weaponized in political discourse to manipulate specific audiences and shift their ideologies. This research also informs the fields of political linguistics and discourse analysis, offering a lens to study the intersectionality of language, power and ideology in political leader rhetoric.

Keywords: Political Discourse, Pronouns, Corpus Linguistics, Leadership Communication.

Introduction

Language is a powerful element in political communication, building opinion, bringing people together, consolidating power. Personal pronouns are one of the various tools employed in political discourse and crucial in establishing political identity and relations between followers, leaders, and adversaries. Pronouns such as “I,” “we,” and “they” are intentionally deployed by politicians to stage their Position, build rapport with the public, or mark a divide from their opponents. Imran Khan, Former Prime Minister of Pakistan and chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), is known for his oratory, populist rhetoric, and charismatic leadership style in Pakistan. His speeches are often punctuated with national identity, governance, and political reform. In studying how the personal pronouns he uses in his speeches help frame political narratives in a way that brings unity among his supporters but also contributes to defining antagonistic groups. While there has been considerable research on political discourse and pronoun use in Western contexts, scant attention to analysis of Pakistani political rhetoric is available through a corpus-based linguistic framework. Using a quantitative corpus analysis to catalogue the use of personal pronouns in Khan's speeches, this research endeavours to contribute to this critical gap in scholarship by investigating their frequency, contextual patterns and referential meanings.

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Statement of the Problem

Political leaders exploit personal pronouns to commandeer authority, cultivate inclusiveness and cement differentiation from opponents. This is especially so for political speeches in Pakistan, such as those delivered by Imran Khan. Agendas in politics are often set by pronouns, yet few empirical investigations exist on the pronouns used in political speeches in Pakistan. Although he is perhaps the most influential figure internationally, no systematic study has yet considered:

1. The most frequently used personal pronouns in his speeches.
2. The lexical patterns (clusters) in which these pronouns commonly appear.
3. The referents associated with these pronouns in different contexts.

This study aims to fill these gaps through carrying a corpus based linguistic analysis of Imran Khan's speeches, thus contributing to the more general fields of political discourse analysis and corpus linguistics.

Rationale of the Study

This study is important as it offers a data-driven analysis of pronoun usage in Pakistani political discourse. The study provides broader implications for linguistic strategies in political communication by investigating the impact of pronouns on the construction of political messages, audience engagement, and power dynamics. A quantitative corpus-based approach is applied to guarantee the objectivity and statistical evaluation of linguistic patterns. Furthermore, this allows for a better realization of political communication strategies at not only the level of Pakistan but also globally. Through frequencies, lexical clusters, and referents of personal pronouns, this research will show how Imran Khan constructs his political persona, appeals to the public, and obfuscates opposition politicians.

Research Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Identify and analyse the most frequently occurring personal pronouns in a selected corpus of Imran Khan's speeches.
2. Examine the lexical clusters in which these pronouns frequently appear to uncover patterns of association.
3. Determine the referents of personal pronouns and explore their role in constructing political narratives.

To achieve these objectives, the study will employ corpus linguistics techniques, including word frequency analysis, cluster analysis, and concordance analysis.

Research Questions

1. Which personal pronouns does Imran Khan use most frequently in his speeches?
2. What lexical clusters commonly appear with personal pronouns in his speeches?
3. Who are the referents of these pronouns, and how do they contribute to his political discourse?

Significance of the Study

This research contributes to both linguistic and political studies by offering a systematic, quantitative analysis of pronoun usage in political speeches. Its significance lies in:

- *Linguistic Insights:* Providing a deeper understanding of the function, clustering, and referential meanings of pronouns in political discourse.
- *Political Communication:* Exploring how Imran Khan employs pronouns to shape his leadership image and engage with different audiences.

- *Practical Applications:* Offering valuable insights for political analysts, media professionals, speechwriters, and linguists studying political rhetoric.
- *Cross-Cultural Understanding:* Allowing comparisons between Pakistani and Western political discourse, contributing to global research on language use in politics.

Limitations of the Study

- The study is confined to a selected corpus of Imran Khan's public speeches delivered during his tenure as Prime Minister (2018–2022).
- It focuses solely on personal pronouns, excluding other rhetorical strategies such as metaphors, repetition, and tone.
- The research does not examine the psychological or emotional effects of pronoun usage on audiences.

Literature Review

The role of pronouns in political discourse has been widely investigated across numerous different languages and political contexts. Words such as “I,” “we,” and “they” are used like tools, strategically, by politicians to define their celebrity status, create group identification for their supporters and frame enemies in the larger narrative. Personal pronouns are not just grammatical constructions, they are rhetorical weapons that show the speaker either wishing to associate with or distance themselves from groups, ideas or policies. We compile existing research on personal pronouns in political speeches, their lexical patterns, and referent identification. It also emphasizes the gaps already existing in the field that this very study attempts to fill. This research will highlight the speeches of Imran Khan, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, to add valuable of a non-Western election to the existing literature on political discourse analysis. The use of personal pronouns is also key in political language as it allows leaders to frame themselves towards their public and opponents (Fairclough, 2003). As observed by (Wilson, 1990), the pronoun “I” implies personal authority or responsibility, while “we” functions to create or to create a base for inclusion or one's alignment with a certain category of people. On the other hand, “they” is used periodically to establish an identity opposed to the others, as a tool for showing that the speaker is different from the competitors (Dijk, Discourse as Social Interaction, 1997). These pronouns do not represent neutrality but instead are designed to shape how the public understands and interfaces with an ideological viewpoint, and are put in place for maximum disconnect with the citizenry and power.

Many studies have examined how politicians use personal pronouns when creating narratives. For example, (Beard, 2000) examined British political discourse and noted that during election contexts, first-person plural pronouns (“we,” “our”) were heavily utilized in order drive individuals toward an imagined sense of unity and collective action. Likewise, (Bull, Anne-Marie, & Simon-Vandenberg, 2006), also noticed that politicians deploy the “we” pronoun in a way in which they highlight themselves as the ones who represent people, creating a bond and promoting national identity. These results highlight how the use of personal pronouns can play an influential role in political situations and how they can create and shape collective identities.

Yet, while much research has been conducted on the use of personal pronouns in political rhetoric, there are relatively few studies pertaining to Pakistani political discourse, particularly with respect to the speeches of Imran Khan. This study aims to fill this gap through a corpus-based analysis of personal pronoun frequency, lexical patterns and referents in his speeches. A research on non-Western context is filling this gap which diversifies political linguistics and helps understand the strategies deployed by political leaders within South Asia.

Cluster Patterns of Personal Pronouns in Political Speeches

Cluster analysis takes us to these recurring associations between personal pronouns and different words, showing us thematic patterns of political rhetoric. In an analysis of the use of personal pronoun clustering in Canadian political speeches, (Lillian, 2008) found that “I” clusters frequently with action-based verbs (e.g. “implement”, “promise”), demonstrating the emphasis of leadership and responsibility in that context. Likewise, the pronoun “we” often appears in conjunction with statements that evoke a sense of national identity, such as “we must build” or “we need to work,” to create and amplify a sense of shared responsibility. This illustrates the role of personal pronouns that are intertwined with certain narratives or ideologies, that embedded within them.

In his analysis of U.S. presidential debates, (Charteris-Black, 2014) noted that “they” is often grouped with negative descriptors like “corrupt,” “failed,” and “dangerous,” which served to establish an adversarial position with respect to opponents. Such patterns can reveal ideological biases and strategic positioning in political discourse. This can serve as an example of how lexical clusters associated with personal pronouns help to understand the framing used by politicians, which can shape public perception of their policies and actions.

While studies focusing on Western contexts have offered valuable insights, research using corpus-based methods has yet to investigate the clustering of personal pronouns in Pakistani political discourse. This study intends to explore that gap in finding the words that are usually linked with personal pronouns in the speeches of Imran Khan. This analysis will provide a quantitative insight in the linguistic strategies driving his political messaging. To take one example, it will see if “we” in Khan’s addresses is often paired with words associated with national unity or economic mobilization or social justice, which would be consistent with his populist rhetoric and policy goals.

Referents of Personal Pronouns in Political Rhetoric

The analysis of personal pronouns is a fundamental aspect of multilingual discourse analysis, as it allows one to identify which social actors are included or excluded in political discourse (Wodak, 2009). Politicians frequently tinker with pronoun usage to design identities and registries. According to (Dijk, 2006), the use of the pronoun ‘we’ can fulfil different experiences. It could be inclusive, describing a whole country, or exclusive, representing solely the speaker’s party, depending on the context. This fuzziness permits leaders to step between different identities strategically, according to their rhetorical aims.

In addressing the use of we, (Bramley, 2001) examined Australian political speeches and found that leaders often deploy an ambiguous we, appearing to move from a governmental or party-based identity to that of a national one. In a similar fashion, (Chilton, 2004) described how George W. Bush deliberately employed the pronoun “they” to establish a clear contrast between the United States government and its foreign enemies. These studies illustrate the significance of scrutinizing pronoun referents as a means of comprehending the strategies employed by politicians to create in-groups and out-groups, thereby instilling a sense of community among followers and promoting the alienation of adversaries.

In the case of Imran Khan’s populist rhetoric, it is worth exploring the application of personal pronouns, and whom he refers to as “we” and “them”. This research would also help us whether “we” in his speeches is represented by the Pakistani people, his political party (PTI) or a certain group of supporters. Also, looking at the referents of “they” will tell you something about how he makes narratives of opposition about political opponents. For example, do “they” refer to corrupt politicians, foreign powers or economic elites? Using personal pronouns as the basis for detection of the referents, this analysis will explore how Khan writes himself into or out of political narratives in relation to different stakeholders.

Research Gaps and Contribution of This Study

There is a vast body of research on the use of personal pronouns in discourses of the West, whereas no corpus-based studies of Pakistani political speeches exist. This research seeks to add to the body of existing literature through the following aims:

- Search for the vital personal pronouns in Imran Khan's political speeches.
- Studying cluster of these pronouns finding out about their theme.
- The referents of personal pronouns: Imran Khan's construction of identity and framing of opposition.

Using methods from quantitative corpus linguistics, this study will provide an empirical and data-driven perspective of how language building blocks are used in Pakistani political discourse. This will add to literature on the linguistic and political discourse in Pakistan which has yet been able to fully document the nuances in political communication in the region. Additionally, this study will contribute a methodological framework for the analysis of the rhetorical devices used by other political leaders in South Asia, shedding light on the dynamics of the strategic shift in their speeches.

Research Design and Approach

By adopting a corpus-based approach, this study investigates and analyses the employment of personal pronouns in the political speeches delivered by Imran Khan, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan. Corpus linguistics is a methodological framework which offers a systematic and data-driven approach to investigating linguistic patterns within large collections of texts. We examine the network of their commonalities, using AntConc corpus analysis software (Anthony, 2020), which facilitates frequency analysis, concordance searches, and cluster analysis. Utilizing AntConc, this research aims to reveal the strategic role of personal pronouns like "I," "we," and "they" in Imran Khan's speeches, providing insights into how political discourse is constructed and manipulated within these speeches. The sections to follow detail the process of the research, including collection of data, preparation of the corpus, and analytical procedures.

Step 1: Data Collection – Gathering Imran Khan's Political Speeches

Step one in this study is upon the collection of relevant textual data around Imran Khan's political discourse. This research covers mainly speeches given during his time as prime minister (2018–2022), given how central speeches are to the weapons of political communication. Speeches were chosen based on their relevance to the political discourse of the time and in the context of broader commonalities of rhetorical strategy.

Identifying the Sources

To ensure the authenticity and reliability of the data, speeches were collected from reputable and authoritative sources. These sources include:

Government websites: Official platforms such as the Pakistan Government Portal, which provide transcripts of policy addresses and public statements.

News agencies: Established media outlets like Dawn, The Express Tribune, and BBC, which offer accurate and timely coverage of political events.

Official transcripts: Documents from high-profile engagements, such as Imran Khan's address to the United Nations General Assembly.

Public speeches: Recordings and transcripts of campaign rallies, press conferences, and other public appearances.

By drawing from diverse sources, this study ensures a robust and representative dataset that captures the breadth of Imran Khan's political rhetoric.

Selection Criteria for Speeches

The dataset comprises 67 speeches delivered during Imran Khan's tenure as Prime Minister. These speeches were selected based on their thematic relevance and significance to political discourse. The selection criteria include:

Policy addresses: Speeches outlining government policies on key issues such as governance, the economy, and national security.

International engagements: Addresses delivered at international forums, reflecting Pakistan's foreign policy and global positioning.

Campaign rallies: Public speeches aimed at mobilizing supporters and communicating political agendas.

The dataset spans a wide range of themes, including economic reform, social justice, national security, and foreign relations, ensuring a comprehensive analysis of Imran Khan's rhetorical strategies.

Data Storage and Formatting

To facilitate compatibility with AntConc, all speeches were saved in plain text format (.txt). This format ensures that the software can process the data efficiently, enabling accurate linguistic analysis. The use of plain text files also eliminates potential formatting issues that could arise from more complex file types, such as Word or PDF documents.

Step 2: Corpus Preparation – Cleaning and Formatting Speech Transcripts for AntConc

Before conducting linguistic analysis, the collected speeches underwent a thorough preprocessing phase to ensure consistency and accuracy. This step is critical for minimizing noise in the data and ensuring that the analysis focuses on meaningful linguistic patterns.

Formatting for AntConc

Since AntConc is designed to process plain text files, all speeches were converted into this format. This conversion involved removing any formatting elements, such as headers, footers, and page numbers, that could interfere with the software's ability to analyse the text. The resulting plain text files were then organized into a single corpus for analysis.

Removing Non-Linguistic Elements

To ensure that the analysis focuses solely on linguistic content, non-verbal elements such as timestamps, speaker labels, and audience reactions (e.g., [applause], [cheers]) were removed from the transcripts. For example:

Before Cleaning: "My fellow Pakistanis, today [applause] I want to address the nation. In our country, we need..."

After Cleaning: "My fellow Pakistanis, today I want to address the nation. In our country, we need..."

This cleaning process ensures that the analysis is not skewed by extraneous elements, allowing for a more accurate examination of personal pronoun usage.

Compiling the Corpus

Once the speeches were cleaned and formatted, they were compiled into a single corpus file. This corpus, comprising 67 speeches, serves as the primary dataset for the analysis. By combining the speeches into a single file, the study enables a holistic examination of trends and patterns across Imran Khan's political discourse. The compiled corpus was then imported into AntConc for further processing and analysis.

Analytical Procedures

There are three major steps that we must take for this corpus analysis:

Frequency Analysis: Determining the most common personal pronouns used in the corpus (i.e. “I,” “we,” and “they”). This step gives a quantitative overview of how much Imran Khan uses pronouns to highlight his usage of pronouns in speeches.

Cluster analysis: To look for repeating patterns and themes, explore lexical clusters related to personal pronouns. So, for example, this step examines if terms related to national unity, or collective action are often paired with “we.”

Referents Analysis: The process of finding out which referents personal pronouns take in order to analyse how they help building political narratives That means discerning who are the people or things for which the pronouns “I,” “we” and “they” stand in different contexts, revealing how Imran Khan casts himself and his enemies.

Through triangulation of these analytical techniques this study delves into meticulous exploration of personal pronouns in Imran Khan’s political rhetoric. These results add to our understanding of political linguistics and show how language, power, and ideology interact in the political arena.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

In this chapter, the results of the corpus-based analysis of Imran Khan’s political speeches, specifically the use of personal pronouns, are reported. Through analysis, we hope to reveal linguistic features that align with political rhetoric, audience impact, and identity construction. Using frequency analysis, cluster analysis, and reference analysis, this study explores the strategic role that personal pronouns have in framing political discourse.

The section opens with a breakdown of the most commonly employed personal pronouns identified in the dataset, revealing this to be a notable characteristic of Imran Khan’s speeches. It includes an example on cluster analysis, which identifies common words that appear alongside these pronouns to demonstrate recurring rhetorical themes. In conclusion, the chapter investigates reference analysis, ascertaining who the referent of various pronouns is in terms of distinct social actors, and how those referents both appear and end up constituting political discourses.

By quantitatively analysing these linguistic markers, this chapter sheds light on how elements of Imran Khan’s speech reflect and contribute to his overall construction of leadership, inclusivity and political opposition. The results also add to existing debates in both political discourse analysis and corpus linguistics, revealing information on the ways that political language constructs identities and shapes public perceptions.

Frequency Analysis of Personal Pronouns

The word list tool in AntConc generated a list of the most frequently used personal pronouns.

Table 1: Frequency of Personal Pronouns in Imran Khan’s Speeches

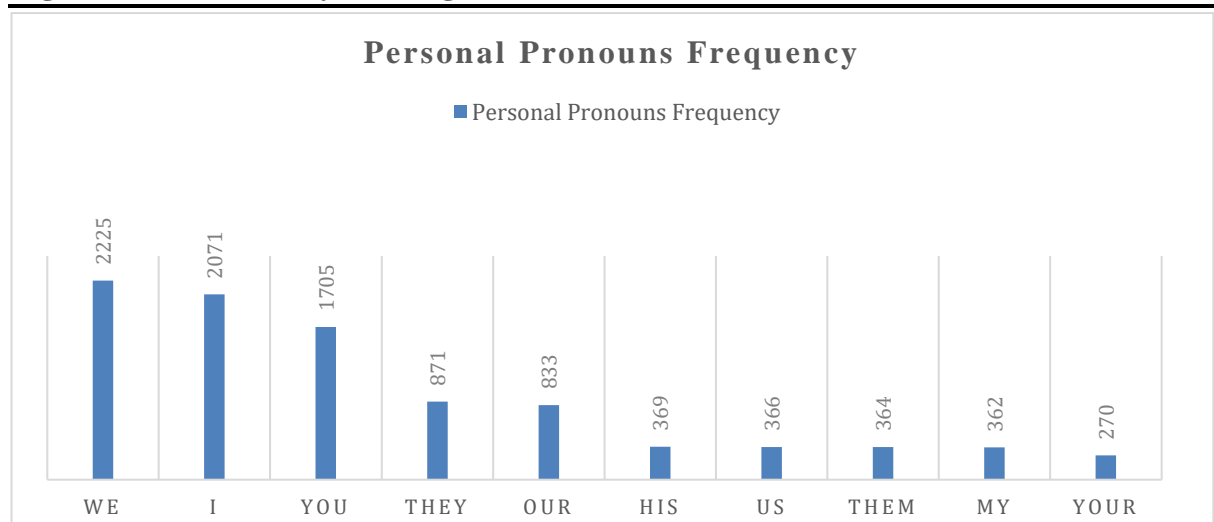
Pronouns	Frequency
we	2225
I	2071
you	1705
they	871
our	833
his	369
us	366
them	364
my	362
your	270

Key Observations

- First-person pronouns (“I”, “we”) were the most dominant.
- “I” was the single most used pronoun, highlighting Imran Khan’s personal leadership stance.
- “We” indicated a collective national identity.
- Second-person pronouns (“you”, “your”) suggested strong audience engagement.

Figure 0-1: Bar Chart – Personal Pronoun Frequency

Figure 1: Cluster Analysis Using AntConc



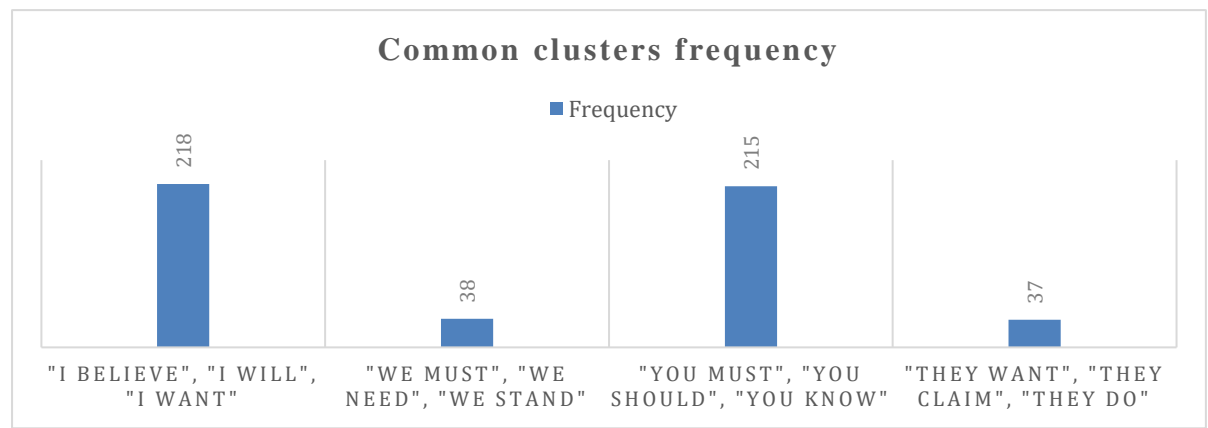
Using the Cluster Tool, we extracted top Clusters (words appearing near personal pronouns).

Table 2: Top Clusters of Personal Pronouns

Pronoun	Common Clusters	Frequency
I	“I believe”, “I will”, “I want”	218
we	“we must”, “we need”, “we stand”	38
you	“you must”, “you should”, “you know”	215
they	“they want”, “they claim”, “they do”	37

Key Findings

- “I believe” and “I will” reflect Imran Khan’s confidence and vision.
- “We must” and “we need” highlight collective responsibility.
- “You must” suggests direct motivational appeals to the audience.
- “They want” is used for opposition references, emphasizing political rivalry.

Figure 2: Common Clusters Frequency

Reference Analysis Using AntConc. Using the Concordance Tool, we analysed the referents of pronouns.

Table 3: Pronoun Referents in Context

Pronoun	Common Referents	Example Usage
I	Self (Imran Khan)	"I will bring it."
we	Government/Public	"We need fix."
they	Opposition	"They are collecting money"
you	Citizens	"You must understand."
our	Nation	"Our people deserve better."

Key Insights

- "I" frequently refers to Imran Khan himself, reinforcing personal leadership.
- "We" is used in two contexts: government and public.
- "They" refers to political opponents, creating an in-group vs. out-group dynamic.
- "You" directly addresses citizens, increasing engagement and mobilization.

Summary of Findings

- "I" is the most frequently used pronoun, emphasizing individual leadership.
- Clusters reveal strong rhetorical strategies, using motivation, assertion, and opposition framing.
- Referent analysis confirms the strategic distinction between "we" (inclusion) and "they" (opposition).

Discussion

In this section, a holistic interpretation of the results obtained through frequency analysis, cluster analysis, and reference analysis of Imran Khan's political speeches based on AntConc would be presented. The conversation explores how his strategic deployment of personal pronouns informs his rhetoric, leadership identity and engagement with his audience. Using these linguistic patterns, the chapter delves into the implications of pronoun choices for self-representation, the construction of group identity, and the identification of political opposition. Additionally, the results are discussed in the context of prior research on political discourse, providing insight into pronoun usage in political communication. In so doing, this discussion outlines both some of the unique characteristics of Imran Khan's speech patterns and

generalizable features of political rhetoric through comparisons and contrasts with other work in the field. The chapter will then explore the role of language in shaping political narratives, as well as its impact on public perception, providing further insights into the underlying mechanisms that drive political discourse.

The Dominance of First-Person Pronouns (“I” and “We”)

As showing the frequency analysis, the presence of first-person pronouns, in fact highlighting his use of “I” and “we”, are an exceeding number when compared with his other words and speeches. This pattern reflects a conscious rhetorical strategy aimed at two main goals: highlighting individual leadership and creating a sense of national unity. These sentiments reveal a clever balancing act on Imran Khan's part, wherein he consolidates power as an individual while maintaining a sense of collective responsibility enabling a strong while inclusive narrative in his political messaging.

The Role of “I” in Political Speech

The pronoun “I” was the second most frequently occurring word in the corpus, appearing over 2,071 times. This high occurrence reflects a tactical focus on personal leadership, accountability, and straight engagement with the audience.

Key Observations

Common Clusters: Phrases such as “I believe,” “I will,” “I promise,” “I want,” and “I know” dominate the corpus.

Interpretation: These clusters propose a speech style considered by confidence, promise, and a forward-looking vision. By using “I,” Imran Khan positions himself as a significant leader who accountable for governance and policy implementation.

Rhetorical Strategy: The use of “I” personalizes the discourse, making it more direct, authoritative, and relatable for the audience. It creates a sense of immediacy and accountability, reinforcing his role as a hands-on leader.

Example from Speech: “I will never let corruption destroy this country.” This statement exemplifies how Imran Khan uses “I” to assert personal accountability and leadership, positioning himself as a guardian of national integrity and progress.

The Role of “We” in Nation-Building

The pronoun “we” was the most frequently used term in the corpus, appearing approximately 2,225 times. Its prevalence highlights Imran Khan's focus on fostering collective identity and national unity.

Key Observations

Common Clusters: Phrases such as “We must,” “We will,” “We stand,” “We need,” and “We can” are recurrent.

Interpretation: These clusters emphasize collective responsibility, shared goals, and a call to action. By using “we,” Imran Khan aligns himself with the people, creating a sense of inclusivity and shared purpose.

Political Function: The pronoun “we” serves to bridge the gap between the government and the public, reinforcing the idea that progress is a collaborative effort.

Example from Speech: “We will build a stronger Pakistan together.” This phrase encapsulates the essence of Imran Khan's rhetorical strategy, emphasizing collective action and optimism while fostering a sense of national solidarity.

The Role of Clusters in Political Messaging

The analysis of pronoun clusters reveals that specific word pairings play a pivotal role in shaping how audiences interpret political messages. These patterns are instrumental in reinforcing leadership, collective action, and political contrast.

“I” and Future Commitments

Common Clusters: “I will,” “I promise,” “I believe,” “I know.”

Interpretation: These phrases convey a strong sense of direction, leadership, and vision. They reinforce Imran Khan’s personal role in driving change and his commitment to future policies.

Example from Speech: “I will ensure that no child is left without education.”

Effect: This statement strengthens policy commitment and enhances leadership credibility by framing Imran Khan as an active decision-maker dedicated to national development.

“We” and Call to Action

Common Clusters: “We must,” “We need,” “We will,” “We can.”

Interpretation: These word pairings emphasize urgency, responsibility, and collective action. They serve as a rallying cry for national unity and civic engagement.

Example from Speech: “We must stand against injustice.”

Effect: This phrase encourages citizens to take ownership of national challenges, positioning progress as a shared responsibility.

“They” and Opposition Framing

Common Clusters: “They oppose,” “They refuse,” “They are corrupt.”

Interpretation: The pronoun “they” is strategically used to create a clear division between the speaker and his political opponents, establishing an in-group vs. out-group dynamic.

Example from Speech: “They do not care about the people.”

Effect: This framing reinforces political polarization by contrasting Imran Khan’s leadership with that of his rivals, shaping public perception of opposition parties.

“You” for Direct Address

Common Clusters: “You must,” “You should,” “Your responsibility.”

Interpretation: The pronoun “you” is used to directly engage citizens, making them feel personally involved in national matters.

Example from Speech: “You must hold your leaders accountable.”

Effect: This approach enhances personal involvement, making the speech feel interactive and participatory while encouraging civic responsibility.

“Our” for National Identity

Common Clusters: “Our people,” “Our country,” “Our responsibility.”

Interpretation: The use of “our” fosters a sense of collective belonging and shared identity.

Example from Speech: “Our Pakistan is strong because of our people.”

Effect: This reinforces national pride and unity, strengthening the bond between the leader and the nation by emphasizing shared values and responsibilities.

Strategic Implications of Pronoun Usage

The patterns identified in this analysis reflect how language is a tool strategically used to mobilize citizens, create collective identity, cultivate moral purpose. Imran Khan employs pronouns that signify the participants in a conversation to convey a sense of familiarity and inclusivity. Imran Khan oscillates between ‘I’ and ‘we’ to effectively assert personal authority

and build body of collective solidarity. His use of pluralization to refer to “they” and “you” makes powerful distinctions between whom he deems as followers and whom he sees as enemy combatants; his language works well to identify them and remind the audience that they are directly engaged. This reflects the power of language in shaping political narratives, and the importance of strategies in successfully engaging in political discourse. As such, this work sheds light on the relationship of language to power and ideology in the context of political discourse. It shows how Imran Khan’s speeches are not just policy statements but a sophisticated series of narratives designed to inspire, unify and galvanize the nation.” These results add to our understanding of political rhetoric and provide a framework for analysing the linguistic techniques of leaders in different contexts.

Conclusion

Using AntConc, this study analysed the political speeches of Imran Khan and investigated the strategic use of personal pronouns and their crucial role in political rhetoric. The results show that pronouns are more than just elements of human language: they are also potent tools for performing leadership, nurturing group belongingness, and demarcating political foes. This study's main takeaway is how pronouns are strategically employed to shape shaping opinions.

Dominance of First-Person Pronouns (“I” and “We”)

The pronoun “I” takes on a prominent role in Imran Khan’s speeches, highlighting personal leadership, accountability, and decision-making. The abundance of “I” helps Khan establish his authority and present himself as a man in charge, able to pull the country out of crisis. In contrast, “we” can be a bonding agent, a reminder of shared responsibility and national cohesion. The use of the inclusive ‘we’ places the speaker in solidarity with the masses; it is a collective identity that supersedes even self-interest, emphasizing the goals of the group as a whole.

Rhetorical Strategies Revealed Through Clustering Patterns

The “I will” cluster exemplifies Khan’s commitment to leadership and his vision for the future. It's a phrase that brings progress and a sense of assurance that he will deliver on his word. In parallel, “we must” acts as a call to action, galvanizing the public's support and inspiring the joint endeavour for national advancement. This cluster serves to highlight the speaker’s capacity to inspire and galvanize his listener.

Alternatively, “they oppose” is used strategically, in order to create a clear partisan division, defining the opposition in relation to the speaker's position. This interpretation thereby reinforces narratives of opposition itself, wherein adversaries are framed as impediments to progress and unity.

Shaping Political Identity and Audience Engagement

“You” is the pronoun that engages the audience directly and creates a sense of involvement in the political process. The direct address of the audience establishes a dialectic that invites participatory engagement in the national conversation. The use of “they” also serves to construct and reinforce counter-narratives, creating a binary division between political comrades and enemies. This pronoun strategy not only clarifies the speaker’s position, it also works to strengthen in-group solidarity by explicitly defining an identity of the “other.” These results highlight the nuanced ways that pronouns are used to create leadership personae, bring supporters together, and position political opponents. The study proves that language, specifically, the use of personal pronoun is an intentional and tactical element of political communication. Through the analysis of Imran Khan’s speeches, this work provides a window into the rhetorical devices that shape political discourse and sheds light on the movement

between language, power, and ideology. This study ultimately adds to an understanding of how political elites use linguistic tools for the purpose of building relationships with the masses, mobilizing populations toward common goals, and utilizing the rhetoric and tools of persuasion to achieve measurable outcomes.

Limitations and Future Research

Future Research

There are many ways a further research can take to overcome these restrictions and build on this work. Firstly, the rhetorical strategies could be understood through comparisons to speeches of other Pakistani political leaders such as Nawaz Sharif or Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. One would be able to judge better how personal pronouns are used across the political divide in Pakistan. Secondly, applying sentiment analysis in political speeches may also be considered in future studies as rewards of political speeches should be well-aligned with the emotional appeal. Investigating the emotional tone related to pronoun use might help researchers better understand the way leaders communicate with their constituents on an affective level. Third, cross-linguistic studies on political rhetoric could identify patterns of pronoun usage across languages and cultural contexts. If, on the other hand, you were able to compare, for instance, between the speeches of leaders from South Asia, Europe, and the Americas, you might find commonalities in patterns of political communication, and areas of cultural tendency exacerbating them.

Final Thoughts

As such, this research provides an intricate linguistic lens through which we can view political speeches, elucidating the importance of the use of personal pronouns in effective political messaging. Using discourse analysis, the study shows how simple language choices, “I” vs. “we” vs. “they,” can have far-reaching effects in politics and public perceptions. Utilizing the analytical capabilities of AntConc, it is demonstrated that political rhetoric is not random, but instead ordered, intentional and very impactful.” For researchers, speechwriters, and political analysts wanting to further examine political language and discourse analysis, the results offer valuable insights. In short, this study highlights the importance of linguistic strategies in political communication, demonstrating their role in shaping leadership narratives, constructing collective identities, and mobilizing the public. The study of the evolution of political discourse provides insight into how language shapes public opinion and political engagement. In doing so, this study furthers that understanding while laying the groundwork for future investigations of the complex relationship between language, power, and ideology in political rhetoric.

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