



## FRAMING POLITICAL NARRATIVES IN PAKISTAN (2018-2024): A CORPUS-ASSISTED DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL SPEECHES OF PM IMRAN KHAN IN THE DIGITAL AGE

**Muhammad Attique**

MS Scholar, University of Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: [ranaatique576@gmail.com](mailto:ranaatique576@gmail.com)

**Malik Kinza Iman**

MS Scholar, University of Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: [imannawaz186@gmail.com](mailto:imannawaz186@gmail.com)

**Seerat Yaqoob**

MS Scholar, University of Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: [seeratyaqoob33@gmail.com](mailto:seeratyaqoob33@gmail.com)

**Dr Ayesha Zafar**

Associate professor, University of Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan. Director Post Graduate Research Centre University of Sialkot Punjab Pakistan

Email: [dr.ayeshazafar@uskt.edu.pk](mailto:dr.ayeshazafar@uskt.edu.pk)

### **Abstract**

Political narratives are carefully crafted stories that politicians and parties use to influence how people see events, policies, or leaders. These narratives help shape public opinion by offering a particular version of reality. At the same time, media framing plays a powerful role in deciding how these messages are shared and understood. Because speeches are more than just words they're strategic tools political leaders use them to control the story, while the media acts as a filter, often reshaping these messages to fit broader ideological, editorial, or commercial agendas. In Pakistan, from 2018 to 2024, this study has applied a Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis (CADA) to systematically analyze linguistic patterns, key themes, and rhetorical strategies used in political speeches and their corresponding media coverage. The study investigates how political leaders framed his governance, opposition, and post-ouster political struggles and how media narratives either reinforced or countered those discourses. By examining speech transcripts, media reports, and digital content from key platforms, this research uncovers evolving trends in political rhetoric, media bias, and digital amplification of political messages. It also explores the role of social media in challenging or reshaping mainstream narratives, highlighting its growing influence in Pakistan's political landscape. The deep analysis of the research reveals significant shifts in narrative framing, illustrating the strategic use of language, populist appeals, and ideological positioning in political communication. The study contributes to the understanding of discourse strategies in contemporary Pakistani politics, offering insights into the dynamic interplay between political actors and media representation in the digital era.

**Keywords:** Political Narratives, Media Framing, Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis, Political Communication, Digital Media, Pakistan (2018-2024).

### **CHAPTER 1**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

.In communication language is not only used as tool for exchanging ideas and information. Based on different fields of study and context, it is used as a medium to shape the ideologies narratives, concepts and different perspectives. In politics narratives examine how political



communication, political language, or context are used to explore the political circle. Narratives are power hubs that can be used to frame public opinion, shape ideological positions, and maintain or challenge political power. In Pakistan, from 2018 to 2024, political discourse has undergone drastic change, largely shaped by Imran Khan's leadership, his subsequent dissolution, and the complex interplay between traditional media and rapidly expanding digital platforms. Political leaders strategically use speeches to construct narratives around governance, national identity, economic reform, and foreign policy; on the other hand, media outlets interpret, develop, or counter these messages through their framing.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Imran Khan's government (2018-2022) made clear concepts of anti-corruption, Islamic welfare state ideals (Riyasat-e-Madina), and a nationalist foreign policy. His speeches consistently framed him as a reformer of Pakistan. With his removal in 2022 by the process of "Regime change Operation" lead by PDM through a "No confidence vote" his popularity amongst the country and all around the world increased, which increased his political carrier and rhetoric strategies Hence He shapes his narratives to "imported Government" and accusation of foreign interference. At this time both, the mainstream and digital media becomes the battleground where different political stories clashed with each other and are competed for public support. In the favor of PTI Social media platforms like, Twitter Facebook and YouTube play central role to communicate with public and rally support. Now this Study focuses on how political strategies were not only applied by Imran Khan to shape narratives but also how they were interpreted and reshaped across various digital media platforms like TV, News channel, Twitter, and YouTube from 2018 to 2024.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The Era of Imran Khan has been marked for the contribution to political transformations, heightened Biasness and polarization and unbelievable dependence on both mainstream and digital media platforms for political communication, This is just because of Imran Khan wants to have a smooth and clear system of Governance, but opposition do not allowed him to do so, this is the only reason during his PM period and after when his government was dissolved, his political journey spark intense and often controversial speeches and competitions across both traditional news outlets, and social media arosed which heightened the polarization in the country. While political messaging during this time became louder and more frequent, what's missing is a clear, data-based on understanding of how these narratives were actually shaped through language and how the media presented them. This study addresses that gap by focusing on the way political stories were built, framed, and spread during this period. Several qualitative studies have examined political rhetoric in Pakistan, but few have utilized Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis (CADA) to uncover patterns, recurring themes, and linguistic strategies within political speeches and their media representations. Furthermore, there is limited scholarship on how media framing and digital platforms (Twitter, YouTube, Facebook) have influenced or reshaped these narratives, particularly in the post-truth era, where misinformation, propaganda, and media manipulation are pervasive.

**The problem this research addresses is twofold:**

- The lack of comprehensive corpus-based studies that analyze how political leaders, use language for their accounts and the interplay between power structures and opposing



characters that frame and build narratives during this period, from 2018 and 2024 in speeches and media appearances.

- The underexplored role of mainstream and digital media in shaping, contesting, or reinforcing these narratives is often influenced by political bias, suppression, and the strategic use of digital media for mass mobilization.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

- 1 To explore and analyze the process of construction of political narratives in speeches by Pakistani politicians in the digital age.
- 2 To analyze the contribution of media in shaping, reinforcing, or challenging political narratives.
- 3 To Examine the logical connection between language and power in political arena.
- 4 To explore and investigate about linguistic choices rhetorical strategies used in political speeches and represented by media.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

- 1 How do politicians frame/construct their narratives in public speeches?
- 2 How do media outlets frame political speeches and, in what ways does digital media influence the framing and reception of political narratives?
- 3 How language and power contribute and connected in political narratives?
- 4 What are the dominant linguistic choices and rhetorical strategies used in Imran Khan political discourse?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The study offers a new way to political communication research in Pakistan, By applying a mixed method research i-e Corpus Assisted Discourse Analysis in which corpus studies sheds the light on linguistic choices, use of language, lexical attributes, rhetorical strategies etc, Beside that discourse studies explain the hidden ideologies, power relations, connection between language and power etc. By focusing on specific period of time in which a totally new system of government emerged in Pakistan which leads to unrest political stances and media division, using this method of study the research reveals how populism, nationalism, and resistance expressed through rhetorical strategies and also highlight the contribution of digital platforms which act as a powerful tool for challenging mainstream media in the time of censorship. The current study is going to fill these gaps by using complex method of research i-e Corpus assisted Discourse Analysis, (CADA) which reveals that how linguistic choices and rhetorical strategies are used, and how media plays its role. The aim of the study is to explain and contribute for the growth and development of the country by understanding how political narratives are constructed, declared, advertise, and contested during one of the most critical period in Pakistan's recent history. The ultimate results of the research offer valuable insights for journalist's policymakers and political actors emphasizing the importance of ethical usage of media platforms and thoughtful political communication for the growth and development of democratic country.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter consists of connected literature related to political communication, narratives, media representation, framing strategies, contribution of discourse studies and the method used to study the facts, it simply set the stage for the research. Furthermore, the chapter highlights the broader concept of political structures and role of social and digital media. It also sheds the light on how digital media has transformed, the way politics is discussed, and



perceived between specific time i-e 2018 and 2024. By exploring, examining and analyzing the past studies the chapter highlights where current research falls short specifically in the combination of data-driven analysis with discourse theory and explain how this study fills those gaps and offer new insights into the evolving relationship between language media and politics in Pakistan.

Noam Chomsky in his research conducted in 1988, states that language acquisition, power, and politics are closely related to each other. He explained it as, Speech is the most powerful tool for gaining influence in political and social circles, it can be used as a mean of interaction and participation. His studies on language power and politics centered on how language functions and plays its role in political system, specifically in democracies and how language is used to influence and shape public opinions including population control (1988). Chomsky points highlight the importance of understanding that language is not neutral it shaped society, or society shapes language in political and judicial structures.

As Foucault (2000) states in his research that narratives are the core centered or hub of social and historical contexts, are often used to construct information, knowledge and measure the accuracy of truth, simply focuses on what is accepted as truth and why it is accepted. Similarly, Barthes in (1975) highlights the process that how narratives are built with the help of sign and symbols expressed in cultural and ideological meanings. In this arena the most critical example of narrative manipulation is seen in Orwell's novel 1984 where the word "New Speak" is used by "authoritarian regime" which control thoughts and limited them also spreads opposition by limiting language itself the example shows the horrible structures of narratives when it is used to twist reality and silence dissent. The research proves that narratives are not just only the stories in political communication they are powerful tools that shape how we understand things world around us, Narratives are more than just stories they're powerful tools that shape how we understand the world, influence beliefs, and reinforce power structures. In addition to these studies' cognitive linguist Lakoff (2003) states that narratives help people to make the sense of complicated issues often triggering emotional responses which make them effective in shaping opinions and driving political agenda.

Blommaert and Bulcaen (2020) and Fairclough CDA model also explain these deeper structures in society by analyzing how language work with in social and political settings. In addition, Wodak (1995) also explain that main important and centralized aim of CDA is to exploring the ideologies in between the surface lines of context that is how language is used to maintain dominance, express control, or reinforced. bias Fairclough Three-dimensional model breaks it into three constructed levels: In first level the language itself is used, for example word choices, grammar, structure and rules regulations etc. In second level texts are produced and interpreted, also consist of influence from other texts and cognitive process and in the third level it explains how the discourse is used in larger social system by fulfilling its requirements and also reveals ideological impacts and process of power like hegemony. In the result critical discourse analysis is not just neutral language, it's a powerful tool that is used to reveals the belief system of social circle intentions of people and the hidden forces shaping their communication.

Due to motives and missions expressed in political communication of Imran Khan his mostly speech is consisting of populist elements, discussive strategies, including the use of nationalism, religion, and moral polarization. When the context of populist politics is



analyzed, his narratives invoke binary opposition which means “pure people versus corrupt elite” (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017).

The narratives in Imran Khan speeches in between the time period of 2018 to 2024 reflects his populist rhetoric which repeatedly appeals the themes of nationalism, sovereignty, and anti-corruption. But in trend the political narratives and structures in Pakistan are shaped and controlled by state censorship and elite media ownership and it's the historical circle In Pakistan. The 2018–2024 period saw a paradigm shift, with political leaders, especially Imran Khan, leveraging digital media platforms to bypass traditional gatekeepers. Imran Khan's speeches and social media messages post-2022 reflect a distinct shift toward framing himself as a victim of foreign conspiracies and elite betrayal, mobilizing mass protests under the slogan "Haqeeqi Azadi".

Framing is about how certain parts of reality are highlighted in communication to guide how people understand a situation whether it's defining a problem, assigning blame, making moral judgments, or suggesting solutions (Entman, 1993). In politics, framing is especially powerful because it shapes how the public sees events, leaders, and issues (Iyengar, 1991). The media plays a big part in this, influencing how people interpret political developments (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). In Pakistan, the mainstream media has often been accused of taking sides, especially in its coverage of Imran Khan. Channels like ARY News tended to present him in a positive light, casting him as a reformer and national savior, while others like Geo News were more critical and questioned his leadership. Meanwhile, social media introduced a new layer of influence, where digital campaigns, online activism, and even bots contributed to shaping public opinion by promoting alternative narratives and counter-framing dominant media stories.

As Corpus Analysis is the process of analyzing large collection of texts, and when it is combined with linguistics it means that, within the language, it is the systematic analysis of patterns, keywords, collocations, word frequencies and concordances. For “Corpus Assisted Discourse Analysis” (CADA) Bakers and his colleagues, 2013 were the first who combine “Corpus Linguistics” (CL) with “Critical Discourse Analysis” (CDA) and explore the mechanism, that when the language is used in political context it reflects power, ideology, and social inequality. His most influential work consists of analyzing keywords, pattern and context through concordance lines to reveal biases in media and in parliamentary language. This mixed method technique now is commonly known as Corpus Assisted Discourse Analysis and now the researcher used this technique to provide more solid interpretations with data making their research more qualitative and evidence based. Based on this idea, Partington 2010, introduce the “Corpus Assisted Discourse Analysis” framework which explain how language is used in political rhetoric, especially when it is used for delegitimizing opponents or reshaping and constructing ideological messages. And now Corpus Assisted Discourse Analysis is widely used to explore the language used in variety of settings, consist of digital media, analyzing political and election campaign speeches. In addition, there are three more linguists (Partington et al., 2013; Baker et al., 2008; Khosravini, 2010), that work on same complex method and offers the reliable way to study how language shape and reshape political life. In Pakistan there is a limited Corpus Assisted Discourse studies (CADS) on political discourse, and now is the current research is going to identify the key patterns systematic analysis concordances and also explain how linguistic choices are used to construct and frame nationalist and populist appeals.



Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman in his most famous book “Manufacturing consent” (1988) states that media is not just the medium of news, reports, and entertainment. It works on instructions given to them by the power domains that funds and influence them. These power hubs allow them, what to show, and what not to show, express things in such a manner that it looks like natural and guide public opinions by controlling, what get attention, and what does not. Such role of media sometimes working for interest’s frame issues in a way favors certain sides highlighting the wrong-doings of opponents while downplaying or ignoring the faults of his own allies. He explained this is not just a coincidence, the power domain does this deliberately by suppressing and narrowing public debate, reinforce dominant ideologies and silence and silence alternative perspectives.

In Pakistan populist parties especially PTI in the supervision of Imran Khan used social media effectively not only for engaging youth but for election campaigns spreading narratives and for the development and success of elections and the party missions. From 2018 to today PTI’s online strategy played a major role in its success. As Eijaz 2013 highlight in his research that using media outlets by PTI was a game changer, furthermore “Pew Research Center” (2019) explain this phenomenon as mobile phones and Internet services is now commonly used by the billions of people around the world so engaging and spreading political communication and public mobilization shaping political narratives through media platform act as a powerful tool.

As social media is evolving and developed channel used for communication, amusement and information exchange, having a strong and significant impact on different societal spheres which consist of politics, business and interpersonal relationships. After the election of 2018 when PTI emerged as a ruler party this, was the turning point where political system is mostly interrupted with digital media, both the PTI outlet platforms and social media celebrated the party’s electoral triumph, but from the opposite parties election related scandals which consist of electoral manipulation, and tampering, surrounded the results. These anomalies, disruption according to opposition parties and detractors weaken and corrupt the electoral process. The discourse around the elections' legitimacy and voting process' openness was greatly influenced by social media, which served as a forum for arguments on these issues.

Social media's ability to effect political results and public opinion was demonstrated by its involvement in drawing attention to and intensifying these issues. In the face of these difficulties, Khan's ability to use digital media and manage it highlighted the increasing significance of internet platforms for contemporary political campaigns and governance. Today, the influence of the media is best understood through the idea of social constructionism the concept that media doesn't just report reality, it helps shape how people see and understand it (Scheufele, 1999). The media presents events and issues in a consistent and structured way, creating a specific picture of the world (McQuail, 1994). According to Gamson and Modigliani (1989), the way media tells stories plays a big role in how people make sense of things. At the same time, public opinion influences how journalists frame stories, creating a cycle of shared meaning. Entman builds on this by explaining how media framing connects to other powerful tools like agenda setting, priming, and bias. Agenda setting determines which issues get attention and are seen as important enough for government or public action. Priming refers to how the media subtly shapes the way people



evaluate those issues by focusing on certain aspects more than others it's often the goal behind strategic framing (Entman, 1993).

Even when it's not intentionally biased, agenda setting still happens. But when combined with priming, it can lead to widespread bias. Entman defines this bias as the repeated and patterned ways media frames issues to support one side over another—especially in debates about how power should be used in society. Media representations significantly influence public opinion and political legitimacy (McNair, 2017). In Pakistan, the media's role in constructing narratives around political events like Khan's election in 2018 and his ouster in 2022 has been contentious. Social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube have become essential arenas for political communication in Pakistan. PTI effectively used these platforms for agenda-setting, mobilization, and countering mainstream media narratives. Digital media campaigns post-2022 emphasized themes of conspiracy, betrayal, and freedom, with slogans like "Imported Hakoomat Namanzoor".

Pakistan's political discourse from 2018 to 2024 reflects a complex interplay of traditional themes and evolving communication strategies. In the results of 2018 election a new party emerged in the country which before has only succeeded in KPK, with the help of established power dynamics the party becomes the central disruption reason in Pakistan political system. Several allegations on this party trends in that era consist of: electoral legitimacy which is the central point of contention, anti-corruption rhetoric trends in the country but the opposition party framed these efforts as political victimization. Then digital platforms spread the political communication and mobilization especially with Twitter became the significant site for this mobilization. The COVID-19 was another significant infection point that reveals how in even the curse situation of developing country which was looted by Corrupt elites is still be make able by the party to facilitate his people. At that time the country becomes the battleground in between the government and opposition leaders, Critical discourse analysis (CDA) shows that how in the critical period of country the ruler government and opposition parties shape his rhetorical strategies to establish group solidarity and out group differentiation. These linguistic choices become the central allies by government in defining the national identity, establish political legitimacy, and mobilize public support. The evolution of political discourse during this period demonstrates both continuity with historical patterns and adaptation to changing social, technological, and political circumstances.

### **Research Gaps**

Previous discourse studies on political narratives in Pakistan have predominantly focused on historical events. However, there is a significant lack of corpus-assisted discourse analysis that examines the period of Imran Khan's leadership (2018–2022) and the evolving media landscape post-Khan. This study fills that temporal gap by concentrating on how political narratives were framed during and after this pivotal period in Pakistan's political history.

**Lack of Corpus-Based Studies in Pakistan:** While CDA studies exist, few have employed corpus linguistics to analyze political speeches and media coverage in Pakistan.

**Digital Media Focus:** Much research focuses on traditional media, with limited attention to the interplay between social media and political discourse post-2022.



**Temporal Focus:** Existing studies often analyze isolated events; this study offers a comprehensive analysis spanning from Khan’s premiership to the aftermath of his ouster.

This study also integrates:

1. Framing theory explains that how linguistic choices are used in the favor of party and how narratives are structured and presented.
2. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is the study of language beyond the surface level in political communication it is used to uncover hidden ideologies, power relations, strategies, beliefs, and values that shape how people think and react in a real situation. It also explains how dominant ideologies are suppressed and how the perspectives are left out. By the exploration and deep analysis of Critical Discourse the study gives the idea How people think? How they believe? and how society is structured?
3. Along with critical discourse analysis corpus linguistic provide the in depth analysis of linguistic choices, keywords, and communication patterns in political communication.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **METHODOLOGY**

##### **3.1 Introduction**

As methodology explain the process of collection and instructions of data, this chapter consists of how the current research is going to be done, what kind of methods are used to explore the political speeches that are going to analyze in the process. It also explains how digital and mainstream media is playing his role for providing the data, and reflecting political narratives in a specific period of time in between 2018 and 2024. For this process of research, a Corpus Assisted Discourse Analysis (CADA) approach is used that brings together the Corpus Linguistics (CL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to give the data-driven precision and interpretive insights of CDA simultaneously. By mixed method research, the study offers a well-balanced process of exploration of patterns in language, also explaining the meanings and power relations behind them with logical connections. The chapter also discuss, from where the data is collected, interpreted, constructed, and presented, and what type of tools are used in the process. Each process is followed by stepwise strategical construction.

##### **3.2 Research Design**

In accordance with data this research consists of mixed method research design in which Corpus Linguistics (CL) provide the interpretation of data through the quantitative patterns of identification. When it combines with critical discourse analysis the results offer the use of language in the real-world contexts. By using Corpus Assisted Discourse Analysis (CADA) method the researcher is able to find what actually he is trying to achieve through the words of datasets.

Critical Discourse Analysis also explain the hidden agendas, beliefs, power dynamics which shapes the way of people communication.

This research covers a specific period of time, in which the period from 2018 to 2022 consists of political speeches, and after that Al Jazeera news and Twitter tweets are analyzed systematically spanning 6 years from 2018 to 2024.



### 3.3 Corpus Construction

#### 3.3.1 Data Sources

##### 1. Political Speeches Corpus (PSC)

✚ **Source:** Transcripts are downloaded from Kaggle website that consist of collection of 67 speeches of Imran Khan, across various events, both domestic and international. Out from 67 speeches only 10 speeches are analyzed, consist of topics, including governance, foreign policy, welfare, economic development, and the socio-political landscape of Pakistan. The data provides valuable insights into Imran Khan's political stance, leadership style, and the themes he emphasized during his tenure. This dataset offers a valuable window into the ways language, politics, and society interact. It provides meaningful insight into how political leaders use rhetoric to shape their messages, influence public opinion, and build powerful narratives.

✚ **Period:** 2018–2022

✚ **Volume:** Approx. 25,000–30,000 words

##### 2. Media Corpus (MC)

✚ **Traditional Media:** Article from leading news sites and from Research Gate (AL Jazeera) YouTube Videos are also analyzed manually.

✚ **Period:** 2018–2024

✚ **Volume:** Approx. 1000–2000 words

### 3.4 Analytical Framework

#### 3.4.1 Corpus Linguistics Tools and Techniques

##### Software used:

✚ AntConc is use to explore keywords, examine how words are used in context through concordance lines, and identify patterns of words that often appear together, helping to uncover deeper meanings and connections in the text.

✚ Lancy Box for deeper statistical analysis.

##### Key analyses:

✚ Keyword Frequency Analysis

✚ Collocation Analysis

✚ Concordance Lines

✚ Frequency Lists

✚ Emotion Detection

✚ Lexical Diversity

✚ Rhetorical Device usage

✚ Comparative Analysis

✚ Time Series Sentiment

✚ Analysis of Themes

#### 3.4.2 Critical Discourse Analysis Approach

The Discourse-Historical Approach (Wodak, 2001) was employed to interpret corpus findings in sociopolitical context, Focus areas:

✚ Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity

✚ Nomination and Predication Strategies

✚ Argumentation Strategies

✚ Ideological Square

Combined with Fairclough's three-dimensional model, the study connects:



- ✚ Textual analysis (linguistic features)
- ✚ Discursive practice (production and consumption)
- ✚ Social practice (power, ideology, politics)

### 3.4.3 Data Preparation

There are two main data sets one consists of corpus of political speeches, and other consist of corpus of media. The corpus of political speeches consist consists of 10 speeches which are collected from the overall collection of 67 speeches presented on Kaggle website. The speeches are mostly consisting of critical national and international events and are works on the lessons of governance, welfare, foreign policy and social socio-political landscape of Pakistan. furthermore, the speech EHSAS ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP CEREMONY addressed by PM Imran Khan on 26 November 2019 is discussed in detail by quoting the statements from the speech directly. However, the Twitter tweets are directly quoted in this research and analyzed manually. Consisting of at least 25,000 to 30,000 words, this data set provides a depth insights on Imran khan leadership style, ideological focus and rhetorical strategies overtime. Besides that, Al Jazeera News, BBC News and Twitter tweets are quoted directly and analyzed manually. This data set consist of apparently small data but it frames the Imran khan political narratives and offers a comparative view between self-representation and external portrayals in both digital and mainstream media.

### 3.4.4 Data Procedure

The data sets are critically analyzed by the process of mixed method research, Corpus Assisted Discourse Analysis (CADA) which gives together the strength of number as well as meanings combining the statistical tools used in Corpus Linguistics (CL) in analysis the software Ant Conc is used for keyword analysis, concordances, frequencies lists, and LancsBox is used for clusters and graphs, keyword lists are generated by sketch engine. The whole data when analyzed together gives a sense of emotional tone and rhetorical strategies across time. The analysis with the help of tools reveals and highlight the repeated themes and shifts in language across both political data set and media data set. Along with corpus analysis the Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach (2001) is used which analyze the underlying ideologies with references from religious history and focus on how people and ideas are labeled described and argued about. Together these methods craft fact-based picture that describes how politically narratives are built and also reflect the change in context reflecting the power struggle and media dynamics shaping the political landscape of Pakistan.

### 3.5 Ethical Considerations

- ✚ All the data consist of Political Speeches Corpus (PSC) and Media Corpus (MC) is collected from authentic online resources that are publicly available
- ✚ Social media content consists of political actor's name but carefully analyzing where these are needed used in the context and anonymized where necessary.
- ✚ The study main focus is to present the context in academic principle without favoring any party or section.

### 3.6 Limitations

- ✚ **Access constraints:** Some archival speeches or news transcripts may be incomplete or unavailable.
- ✚ **Media bias:** Pakistani media is polarized; therefore, balanced sampling was prioritized.

## CHAPTER 4

## DATA ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION, AND FINDINGS



#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter consist of interpretation and presentation of the outcomes of analyzed data by applying Mixed method research i-e Corpus assisted discourse Analysis (CADA) Based on collection of data sets.

After election 2018 Imran Khan in his first speech constructed himself and gives the strong messages which will lead to move his government moving forward. By using most critical references related to religion and powerful rhetorical techniques that are named by scholar as “framing narratives” are “prediction strategies” Imran Khan constructed himself as the reformer of Pakistan by constructing a country which is destroyed and influenced by deep rooted challenges. He drew attention to the country’s debt crisis with a sense of urgency, warning the public that continuing on the same path would lead to disaster. Khan also tapped into the emotions and values of his audience by blending religious and civic responsibilities encouraging people to treat paying taxes with the same sincerity and spiritual commitment as giving Zakat. By connecting governance with faith, he sought to inspire a sense of shared purpose and moral duty among citizens, strengthening support for his reform agenda.

A critical discourse analysis of Khan's UN General Assembly speech in September 2019 revealed similar patterns in his international rhetoric. According to researchers, the speech demonstrated "great respect to humanity" and attempted to highlight perceived injustices toward Muslims, consistent with his domestic positioning as a defender of national dignity and Islamic values.

The chapter is structured around three core areas of analysis:

1. **Corpus analysis** of political speeches and media reports.
2. **Critical discourse analysis** of dominant narratives.
3. **Comparative framing patterns** before and after Imran Khan's ouster in April 2022.

Each corpus is further segmented into:

- **Phase 1: 2018–2022** (During Premiership)
- **Phase 2: 2022–2024** (Post-Ouster Period)

The findings are presented with supporting textual evidence from the corpora, visualized where relevant, and interpreted within broader political and sociocultural contexts.

*When Imran Khan took office in 2018, he stepped into leadership at a time when Pakistan was facing serious economic challenges. Once known for his cricket stardom and glamorous lifestyle, Khan had since reinvented himself as a devout, populist leader with a mission to fight poverty and bring meaningful change. Promising to build a “new Pakistan,” he positioned himself as a reformer ready to tackle the country’s deep-rooted issues and lead it toward a more just and self-reliant future (BBC News, 2018).*

##### **Analysis:**

BBC News (2018) highlights the carefully crafted narrative surrounding Imran Khan’s political transformation. It reflects how his personal journey from a celebrated cricket hero to a populist reformer was strategically framed to resonate with the hopes of a struggling nation. The portrayal of Khan as a “pious, populist, anti-poverty reformer” aligns with the kind of ideological and discursive positioning often seen in political storytelling, where personal credibility is tied to national revival. This framing is crucial in understanding how political legitimacy is built and communicated through media discourse.

The agenda of Imran Khan as PM of Pakistan,



Corruption free, antipoverty, sovereign and economically developed, equality, justice, welfare, Islamic values, a country where law and order are same for both elite and lower-class people.

#### 4.2 Corpus Overview

Corpus	Size (Tokens)	Time Frame	Source
Political Speeches Corpus (PSC)	28000	2018–2022	Imran Khan's speeches, interviews, and addresses
Media Corpus (MC)	5200	2022–2024	Newspapers, Twitter posts, digital media

**Table 1:** Presenting Corpus Overview.

#### 4.3 Keyword Analysis

Using **AntConc** keywords were extracted by comparing each sub-corpus to the **British National Corpus (BNC)** and an Urdu/English political reference corpus.

Term	Term	Term
1 pm imran	35 special economic zone	69 historic rally
2 prime minister imran khan	36 parade ground	70 big mother
3 imran khan	37 chinese investor	71 brave leader
4 overseas pakistani	38 kashmir issue	72 dangerous place in the world
5 pm imran khan	39 bigg boss	73 entire muslim world
6 amr bil maroof	40 chinese investment	74 negative freedom
7 prime minister imran	41 need of the people	75 pml-n leader
8 shaukat khanum	42 federal minister	76 i repeat
9 prophet peace	43 other port	77 islamabad high court
10 health card	44 wealth creation	78 pti government
11 holy prophet	45 foreign minister	79 national assembly member
12 dams fund	46 public gathering	80 people in the west
13 prime minister's office	47 place in the world	81 hospital in the world
14 level of violence	48 tape ism	82 commerce minister
15 no-trust move	49 situation in afghanistan	83 building dam
16 srinagar highway	50 people of afghanistan	84 small elite
17 pti supporter	51 foreign-funded conspiracy	85 economic zone
18 basic need of the people	52 imran's statement	86 security dialogue
19 mr prime minister	53 red tape ism	87 bad picture
20 capital administration	54 special cancer hospital	88 cancer hospital
21 pti leader	55 go other port	89 no-confidence motion
22 united nation	56 corruption by the elite	90 slip of the tongue
23 insha allah	57 churail sarwat	91 sort of action
24 pakistani territory	58 called ramatulla	92 televised address
25 green area	59 holy prophet peace	93 second thing
26 independent foreign policy	60 pakistan's soil	94 import substitution
27 visa regime	61 special cancer	95 refugee problem
28 prime minister	62 center of buddhism	96 master plan
29 women right	63 vibrant population	97 good environment

**Figure 1** shows Keyword analysis from Imran Khan Speeches.



### 4.3.1 Political Speeches (2018–2022)

#### Top Keywords:

- Corruption, Governance, Naya Pakistan, Madina, Islamic welfare, sovereignty, dollar, IMF, Policy, Development, Action, Finance, people, Environment, Health, Cooperation, Law and Order, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Iran etc.

#### Corruption:

The screenshot shows the AntConc interface with a concordance view for the keyword "corruption". The table displays 103 instances of the keyword, with columns for "File", "Left Context", "Hit", and "Right Context". The text in the concordance view includes phrases such as "only bring money to Pakistan when they need it", "All the ministers of Pakistan were given an on average, 55", "statements against the country", "a one of his biggest crusades has been against corruption", "people and yet on the other side you have generosity", "What we have signed the MOU to protect against our", "five years have been committed on corruption just behind jail", "he could shake hands with Modi, but not the opposition", "in writing but we will not compromise on national interest", "then, what do you mean to me about your 44", "part of the speech for striking the right notes", "Angeer's one of his biggest crusades has been against", "we learned from China is the way China has tackled", "It is a way of getting hard money/capital money and", "the President had also emphasized for the transparency of him", "not take place in the country due to the virus", "and the other countries get rid of the virus ministers", "When our leader talks, their seats get up in", "When the Lashkari Mubarak comment was made, the reason", "What they are asked about why they are in", "and then what I hear correct me if I", "and I also feel that this is great", "and then this is also very important because it", "and then you know I read in the paper", "As we discussed the prime minister of having said", "the chance to be in possession of evidence 20", "It is the administrator of 20 percent of the assets, 45", "the government's effort to tackle shared", "and then what I hear correct me if", "President is being a one of his biggest", "when I have the opportunity of May can", "I don't give them NRC because my President", "I can that an attempt will be made to", "that that it is, whenever I read it"



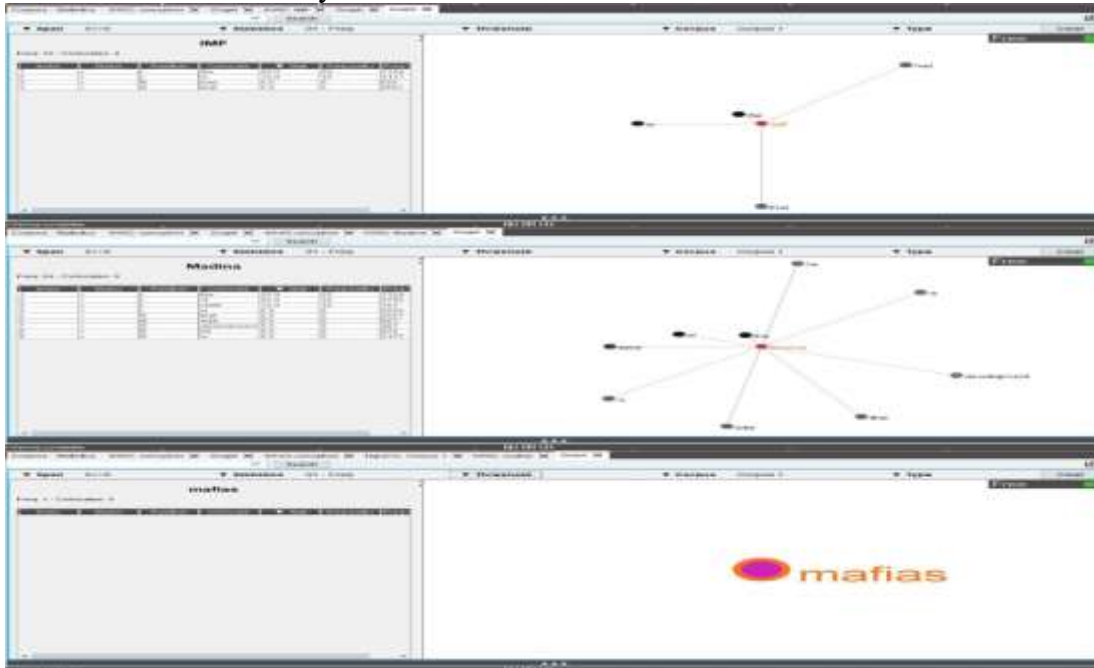
visualization by SKETCH ENGINE

**Figure 2: Analysis corruption in different contexts.**

Figure 2 shows a *Key Word in Context (KWIC)* analysis generated using **AntConc**, a corpus analysis tool. The keyword "corruption" was searched across political speeches and the software retrieved 103 instances. The display provides a concordance view with the keyword "corruption" in the center ("Hit"), and surrounding words ("Left Context" and "Right Context") offering insight into how the term is used discursively. This allows researchers to observe recurring patterns, collocations (e.g., "tackled corruption", "accused of corruption"), and narrative framing strategies. In this case, it highlights how corruption is not only used as a central theme but also intertwined with self-legitimation ("showcased his efforts"), delegitimization of opponents ("accused", "greed"), and international comparisons (e.g.,



"learned from China"). This KWIC view supports discourse analysis by revealing how the word functions ideologically in context, aligning well with Wodak's and Fairclough's models of critical discourse analysis.



**Figure 3: Analysis of Islamic Welfare, Sovereignty, Naya Pakistan, in different contexts**  
Figure 3 shows a Node Word (Keyword) List view from AntConc, highlighting how specific terms like "Islamic welfare," "sovereignty," "dollar," "regime change," and "Naya Pakistan" are repeatedly used across the corpus. These keywords are central to the political discourse analyzed, likely drawn from speeches by Imran Khan. The tool organizes these terms to reveal how frequently and in what contexts they appear, helping the researcher identify dominant themes and ideological constructs. For example, "Islamic welfare" suggests the promotion of a moral governance model, "sovereignty" reflects concerns over national autonomy, and "Naya Pakistan" frames the vision of political reform. This analysis supports Critical Discourse Analysis by uncovering recurring narratives and rhetorical strategies used to construct political identity, legitimacy, and opposition.



**Governance:**

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
1 Attique...	provided directions for participants making their way to the venue. [	governance]	The Islamabad deputy commissioner added that all roads were
2 Attique...	the opposition would not be permitted to extend its stay. [	governance]	The Islamabad High Court on Saturday warned the JUI-
3 Attique...	t happen. [law and order] We are sitting right here."" [	governance]	The minister also predicted that the opposition would be
4 Attique...	it." [policy] Read: Why is the PM in election mode? [	governance]	The minister asked crowd to support the prime minister
5 Attique...	your area. [governance] The time allotted to you is up. [	governance]	The PML-N has asked for this place on
6 Attique...	the last nail is the coffin of the PTI government. [	governance]	The PML-N said the POM&C's long march
7 Attique...	jailed, no one could have imagined [it could be done]. [	governance]"	The judiciary is free today. [governance] The NAB chairman
8 Attique...	it could be done]. [governance]" "The judiciary is free today. [	governance]	The NAB chairman is not ours [...] we didn't
9 Attique...	things about foreign conspiracy which will be shared very soon."" [	governance]"	The nation wants to know who the man sitting
10 Attique...	to plant forests and every ginger has its own importance. [	governance]	The officer is present here in connection with Mohan
11 Attique...	should himself come to the parliament to make a statement. [	governance]	The opposition gathered in front of the speaker's
12 Attique...	administration to act against violators in accordance with the law. [	governance]	The organisers of the JUI-F public gathering assured
13 Attique...	governance]" "This is a battle for the future of Pakistan."" [	governance]	The premier urged supporters to reach the venue early
14 Attique...	having said previously that the Pakistani military had created militants. [	governance]"	The prime minister has committed diplomatic blunders," the PML-
15 Attique...	Mian Nawaz Sharif jailed Zardari twice during his two tenures. [	governance]"	The problem we [PTI] are facing is how to
16 Attique...	cooperation] We hope this will build confidence between us. [	governance]	The rumpus started when PML-N MNA Khuram Dastagir
17 Attique...	Highway should be kept open. [governance] Stay within your area. [	governance]	The time allotted to you is up. [governance] The

Cluster	Rank	Freq	Range
1 governance the	1	19	1
2 governance i	2	17	1
3 governance he	3	16	1
4 governance and	4	11	1
5 governance we	5	10	1
6 governance this	6	9	1
7 governance if	7	7	1
8 governance it	7	7	1
9 governance prime	7	7	1
10 governance so	7	7	1
11 governance but	11	6	1
12 governance action	12	3	1
13 governance because	12	3	1
14 governance in	12	3	1
15 governance now	12	3	1
16 governance she	12	3	1
17 governance a	17	2	1
18 governance all	17	2	1

Figure 4: Analysis of Governance strategies in different contexts



Figure 4 shows a concordance output from AntConc, a software tool used for corpus linguistics. The keyword analyzed here is “governance,” as seen in the “Hit” column. AntConc searches a collection of text files (in this case, probably news articles or political speeches) and displays each instance of the keyword along with the words that come before and after it called “left context” and “right context.” This helps researchers see how the word is used across different contexts, identify patterns in discourse, and study themes or biases. In simple terms, this analysis lets us understand how the term "governance" appears in real language use, revealing what topics it’s often linked with like political figures, legal actions, or public statements helping us gain insights into how governance is talked about in these texts.

### Policy:

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
1 Attique ...	this trade and connectivity will increase between the two countries [	policy]	and for that it is imperative that the level
2 Attique ...	authority who coordinate with muslim scholars all over the world [	policy]	and one of the objectives of this uh remember
3 Attique ...	governance] Like he always protects these people in his foreign	policy	and point for policy, just institute life in life
4 Attique ...	with a road map by the end of this evening [	policy]	and that road map not only should be pushed
5 Attique ...	late [general] the ofan winter everyone knows is extremely severe [	policy]	and these uh preconditions the taliban have to uh
6 Attique ...	people due to the policies we have made till date. 127. [	policy]	And today I tell you that our biggest cost
7 Attique ...	in coordination with all the muslim scholars we will respond [	policy]	and we would like the oic secretary general also
8 Attique ...	speech earlier that] there is an external interference in Pakistan ... [	policy]	I will speak about it later. [policy] [First], you
9 Attique ...	confidence motion. [policy] ""Why did these people bring the motion?]	policy]	I will tell you today," he said. [corruption] ""Because,
10 Attique ...	someone strange. 5. [general] is that first of all that juice. 6. [	policy]	I congratulate you. 7. [governance] Let me present a bad
11 Attique ...	out and I want you to listen to me quietly. [	policy]	I invited you for Amir Bil Maroof to emphasise.
12 Attique ...	and because of our stomach and we did it right. 67. [	policy]	I mean valuation, but have there ever been discussions
13 Attique ...	you made me happy and I am proud of you.' [	policy] ""	I want to speak my heart out and I
14 Attique ...	different the culture to the district adjoining the afghanistan border [	policy]	so I give you an example we give spends
15 Attique ...	general what he had to say the figures he gave [	policy]	so the point is that if the world does



The screenshot shows the AntConc software interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'KWIC', 'Plot', 'File View', 'Cluster', 'N-Gram', and 'Collocate'. Below these, a status bar indicates 'Cluster Types 55', 'Cluster Tokens 92', and 'Page Size 100 hits'. The main window displays a table with the following data:

	Cluster	Rank	Freq	Range
1	policy and	1	7	1
2	policy i	1	7	1
3	policy he	3	5	1
4	policy so	3	5	1
5	policy the	3	5	1
6	policy we	6	4	1
7	policy because	7	3	1
8	policy it	7	3	1
9	policy but	9	2	1
10	policy pm	9	2	1
11	policy they	9	2	1
12	policy this	9	2	1
13	policy which	9	2	1
14	policy will	9	2	1
15	policy a	15	1	1
16	policy as	15	1	1
17	policy at	15	1	1
18	policy be	15	1	1

Below the table, the 'Search Query' is 'Policy', with options for 'Words', 'Case', and 'Regex'. The 'Cluster Size' is set to 2.

**Figure 5: Analysis of policies in different contexts.**

Figure 5 shows another concordance analysis in AntConc, by reading these snippets, we can see how “policy” is discussed in real conversations or texts, whether it’s about foreign affairs, national security, or economic plans. The analysis helps researchers, journalists, or students understand patterns in language use and identify what kinds of topics or emotions are frequently associated with “policy.” It gives a clearer picture of how policies are framed and talked about in a specific set of texts, offering deeper insights into political or social discourse.



File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
1 Attique ...	has suffered as much as afghanistan [governance] 40 years of conflict [	development]	and then add to it recently prolonged drought [welfare] 75
2 Attique ...	when we studied, we were looking for a model of	development	and then we saw that curve going down in
3 Attique ...	of the fastest growing countries in Asia in the 60s [	development]	and we heard that China learnt a bit from
4 Attique ...	easier for investment investors to come in to Pakistan [finance][	development]	and we will warn them to make profits at
5 Attique ...	major cities of Pakistan are connected with air routes now [	development]	and actually to vote for the Chinese business community
6 Attique ...	Process From One Connected To You Also Discard. [health, welfare,	development]	And I congratulate you and Shradhha, who, like the
7 Attique ...	made in your area that more money is needed for	development	and inshallah, when your natural resources will be available
8 Attique ...	the water of iron and water is now going down. 81. [	development]	And the Ravidra has become a sewerage drain, so
9 Attique ...	are now especially concentrated concentrating on our special economic zones [	development]	and where do we want Chinese investment we would
10 Attique ...	are developing those hilly areas which are now developing rapidly. [	development]	And while being in Pakistan, we did this now,
11 Attique ...	many things are small things like importing glass over tiles. 50. [	development]	The business has to be stopped to make it
12 Attique ...	make money [finance] China concentrated on their special economic zones [	development]	the export zones they brought in investment from outside
13 Attique ...	to move ahead, South Korea told Pakistan to move ahead. 6. [	development]	The first five year plan of Pakistan is that
14 Attique ...	of all let me welcome all of you to pakistan [	development]	the irony is that 41 years ago the extraordinary meeting
15 Attique ...	for fight. [general] I also tell you about this. [health,	development]	The latest is our certificate and Shaukat Khanum is

Cluster	Rank	Freq	Range
1 development and	1	10	1
2 development the	1	10	1
3 development we	3	7	1
4 development pakistan	4	5	1
5 development when	4	5	1
6 development if	6	3	1
7 development will	6	3	1
8 development but	8	2	1
9 development i	8	2	1
10 development in	8	2	1
11 development it	8	2	1
12 development of	8	2	1
13 development so	8	2	1
14 development they	8	2	1
15 development what	8	2	1
16 development apart	16	1	1
17 development bank	16	1	1
18 development because	16	1	1

Search Query  Words  Case  Regex Cluster Size

Development]

Figure 6: Analysis of developmental strategies in different contexts



Figure 6 shows a concordance analysis in AntConc focusing on the keyword “development.” By reading these snippets, we can see what issues are linked with “development” in the texts like economic growth, investment, infrastructure, or natural resources. This analysis helps reveal the main themes or concerns surrounding development in a specific corpus, letting researchers, students, or analysts better understand how the topic is discussed and what priorities or challenges are highlighted.

By the Analysis of figure 2,3,4,5,6 Imran Khan’s tenure as Prime Minister of Pakistan (2018–2022), is a variety of interconnected political narratives were strategically constructed to frame his governance philosophy and policy direction.

**Core Quotes:**

***“It’s not a civilized society where such poverty exists... and rich keep getting richer.”  
“Our whole mindset has to change.”***

Imran Khan’s political messaging consistently created a stark divide between two groups: the powerful, corrupt elite and the suffering, ordinary people. He positioned himself as a reformer fighting on behalf of the masses, promising to overhaul a deeply flawed system. At the heart of his message was a strong anti-corruption stance a populist theme that blamed the country’s economic and institutional decline on decades of unchecked corruption by those in power. He often vowed to bring these “looters” to justice, portraying opposition leaders as the face of a morally decayed establishment. This narrative was not just rhetoric it was woven into the identity of his movement through the slogan “Naya Pakistan,” which stood for a complete moral and political transformation of the country. It symbolized a hopeful vision of fairness, accountability, and a clean break from the injustices of the past.

**Core Quotes:**

***“I was inspired by a Prophet (PBUH)... who set up the first welfare state in history.”  
“As Muslims, we are told to follow the example of the Prophet.”***

Imran Khan strategically grounded his governance vision in the religious and historical symbolism of “Riyasat-e-Madina,” drawing on the Prophet Muhammad’s model of an Islamic welfare state to legitimize his social policies and reform agenda. Khan in his PM period works on the themes of moral obligations instead of just political choices and fame. His most influential initiative is Ehsaas program, Sehat card, and Panagahs with Islamic values of compassion and justice effectively makes his government a welfare effort for country. This framing strategy enhanced the emotional appeal of his reforms and allows people to be dependent on public interest in his intent. This strategy consistently shaped in his discourse as institutional reconstruction, transparency, and austerity. By comparing his administration with past regimes that work for themselves by ignoring even the basic rights of peoples he neglected the luxurious reforms in state and promoting digital governance and advocating for cost effective reforms. Based on his economic strategies he frames his narrative as the country is disrupted, robbed and looted by corrupt leaders by gaining debt from the IMF he presented himself and declared his narrative in this manner that “foreign debt and IMF agreements are the symbols of national humiliation”. When he engaged with this situation, he again rebuilds his narrative as, “This is the country’s survival, instead of submission”. After his ouster when the dollar rates increased and inflation in country increase, he again built his narrative as he is the only leader that will reform the country’s financial dignity independence under this critical condition. By this multilayered view Khan



presented himself as the only leader with moral renewal self-dependency and national pride of the country.

**Core Quotes:**

***“This Ehsaas program is the beginning.”***

***“We won’t throw money without a credible system of distribution.”***

***“Our top priority is to lift our women out of poverty.”***

Framing Ehsaas not just as a policy initiative but as a moral imperative and institutional transformation. He positioned youth and the people as central to reform. His speeches repeatedly stated that Pakistan's "youth bulge" was a resource, not a burden, and launched initiatives such as the *Kamyab Jawan Program*, skill training centers, and youth volunteerism campaigns during crises like COVID-19 (Naseer, 2021).

Khan also elevated environmental protection as a key aspect of his leadership image. The "10 billion Tree Tsunami" initiative, bans on plastic use, and participation in international climate forums were all framed as part of making Pakistan a “climate leader” among developing nations (Ghauri, 2019). His government’s Green Pakistan efforts were tied to both job creation and Islamic responsibility toward the planet. In the health sector, the Sehat Sahulat Card became a major pillar of his social welfare narrative. Khan claimed it was a revolutionary initiative offering up to Rs. 1 million in free medical treatment per family, and linked this directly to his promise of an Islamic welfare state (PIDE, 2021).

In foreign policy, Khan consistently emphasized dignity, sovereignty, and mutual cooperation. He promoted a “Pakistan First” approach and framed the country as an equal partner not a client state to global powers (Castells, 2009). He advocated cooperation with nations like Iran, China, and Turkey, especially in trade, energy, and healthcare (Lodhi, 2022). In his meetings with Iranian leadership, he emphasized border security cooperation and shared regional concerns like Afghanistan (Yusuf, 2020). On Afghanistan, Khan portrayed himself as a peace facilitator, highlighting Pakistan’s role in brokering Taliban–U.S. dialogue and presenting peace as essential to regional stability (ISSI, 2021). On the Kashmir issue, Khan adopted a vocal stance, especially after India revoked Article 370 in 2019. At international platforms, including the UN General Assembly, he described the Indian occupation as fascist and illegal, framing himself as a global advocate for Kashmiri rights and calling for UN action (UNGA Speech, 2019).

In terms of law and order, Khan maintained a firm law-and-order discourse, praising security forces for dismantling terrorist networks and reducing street crimes. He regularly invoked imagery of “mafias,” “land grabbers,” and “dacoits,” framing his leadership as one that protects the common man through strict justice (Rehman, 2022). This complemented his earlier corruption narrative and helped sustain his populist persona. Through a mix of traditional media framing, televised speeches, and a savvy social media presence, these narratives were amplified and embedded in public discourse often through simplified frames and emotionally resonant hashtags such as #NayaPakistan, #RiyasatEMadina, and #ImportedHakoomatNaManzoor (Moffitt, 2016; Lakoff, 2004).

**4.3.2 Discursive Themes:**

Between 2018 and 2024, Imran Khan’s political discourse underwent a significant shift from a focus on anti-corruption and moral reform to narratives of resistance and victimhood. As discussed in the second last paragraph of the literature Khan emphasized the cleansing of political system from corrupt mafias invoking religious legitimacy with the



references of “Rayasat e Medina” to frame his leadership as morally superior. This phase is dissected by populist binaries as “Corrupt Elite” versus “Honest Leadership” as seen in statements like,

***“Hum in corrupt mafias go kabhi maaf nahi karenge”***

later on, after his ouster in 2022 his rhetoric converted into more confrontational and defensive tone and the strategy was that ***“Imported Hakoomat”*** imposed by external conspiracy the reason of this discursive strategy was the removal of Imran Khan from government through no confidence vote and reforms towards a narrative of betrayal by both external and internal actors. In external actors The US is included while in internal actors the military and judiciary was included that frames his ouster as he dissolved assemblies unconstitutionally.

phrases such as,

***“Yeh Hakoomat kisi awaam nay nahi baahir kisi sazish sy ai hai”***

in this phrase he victimized himself and mobilized the nationalist sentiments, that he was working and the country was developing but due to foreign conspiracy this governance is imposed.

***“Pakistan became an independent state in 1947, but the freedom struggle begins again today against a foreign conspiracy of regime change,” Khan tweeted on Sunday.***

***“It is always the people of the country who defend their sovereignty & democracy.”***

***Thank you to all Pakistanis for their amazing outpouring of support & emotions to protest against US-backed regime change abetted by local Mir Jafars to bring into power a coterie of pliable crooks all out on bail. Shows Pakistanis at home & abroad have emphatically rejected this. Imran Khan (@ImranKhanPTI) April 10, 2022***

***Analysis***

As this tweet clearly explain the emotional tone and strategic use of language to build a narrative that “Pakistan is the state that emerged on the map of the world in 1947 but the struggle for real freedom starts today as we are not puppets that any Dictator can rules on us.” Khan clearly demonstrated by declaring that it is the responsibility of every citizen to struggle for his sovereignty and for the dignity of a country” furthermore he states that there are internal allies which along with the foreign powers intertwined the governance of an independent state. He called them as local Mir Jafar’s by using the historical strategy to build a narrative of “Strong Leadership”.

#### **4.3.3 Media Corpus (2018–2024)**

In his earlier stages media frame Imran Khan as a real leader and representative of nation, not only the popular leader of Pakistan, but due to his advocacy in foreign platforms like UNGA he advocated for Taliban, Afghanistan, Kashmir, and further he conveys the concept of Islamophobia and united the Muslims of the world. After his ouster this coverage increased and pro PTI outlets such as ARY reinforced that Khan is a heroic leader, savior, and reformer by relating his discourse of resistance and national revival, furthermore journalists like Arshad Shareef and Imran Riaz Khan which speaks openly in the favors of Imran Khan. As in his Interview Imran Riaz Khan speaks like,

***I know Imran khan is right.***

***I know there was a regime change operation against him***

***I know the Institutions of Pakistan worked against him by opening the courts in the mid night and after tiding him and by spending lot of money to buy his people he is ousted.***



*I know there was the influence oof US in this regime change.*

As in the interview clearly states that how Pro PTI out-lets speaking in the defense of Imran khan after his ouster. But in Contrast the Channels Like Geo News and Dawn remain neutral adopted a more skeptical tone, frequently describing Khan as a populist and characterizing his rhetoric as filled with accusations and controversy, often questioning the lack of substantiated evidence behind his claims.

#### 4.3.4 Keyword Analysis in Media Corpus (2022-2024)

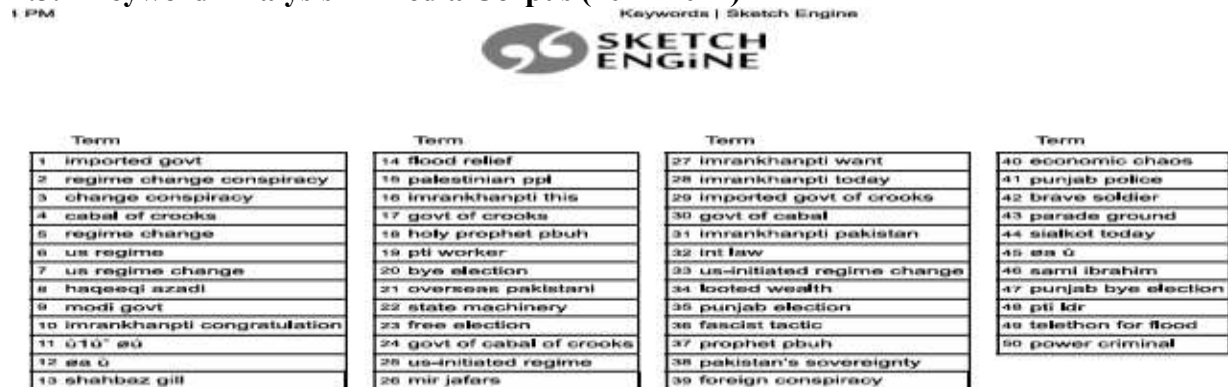


Figure 7: shows keyword analysis in Media Corpus

For instance,

*Dawn (April 2023) noted, “Khan continues to frame his ouster as a conspiracy, while offering little evidence,” signaling journalistic distancing from his narrative.*

*ARY (May 2023) proclaimed, “Khan’s call for real freedom resonates across Pakistan,” reinforcing his mass appeal.*

On the other hand, social media campaigns burst like a blast in speeding and mobilizing the political polarization by the usage of hashtags like **#ImportedHakoomatNamanzoor**, **#HaqeeqiAzadiMarch**, and **#EstablishmentExposed** in the favor of Imran khan by spreading his populist message and exposing the hypocrisy of those who are not included in this favor This strategy foster the digital resistance and consistency on confrontational narrative of a most popular leader.



#### 4.4 Concordances Analysis

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
1 Attique ...	who. 118. [governance] Like he always protects these people in his	foreign	policy and point for policy, just institute life in
2 Attique ...	against his government over his refusal to have Pakistan's	foreign	policy be influenced from abroad. [governance] He made these
3 Attique ...	prime minister said ""Attempts are being made to influence our	foreign	policy from abroad. [corruption] We have been aware of
4 Attique ...	at a new state of our Pakistan, that our independent	foreign	policy has not started, the patience of our devotees
5 Attique ...	the third judge was Kudari, why is this pattern of	foreign	policy necessary? #5; [policy] Now let us look at a
6 Attique ...	Tom is made when independence for policy will be found	foreign	policy which according to com gives priority to both
7 Attique ...	among others. [governance] Recently, in his address in the Senate,	foreign	Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi ruled out the possibility of
8 Attique ...	stand. [general] A post shared by Churail Sarwat (@sarwatg) [corruption]	foreign	Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi claimed that the joint opposition
9 Attique ...	soil," Dastagir said, adding that only a day earlier, "the	foreign	ministers had stated that terrorists had entered from Iran
10 Attique ...	of all my the one time i met the taliban	foreign	ministers he categorically said that they they wanted to
11 Attique ...	and finally because i have this platform of the oic	foreign	ministers i would just raise two more points [people]
12 Attique ...	7:00:00:00 PM Imran Khan Address OIC Summit 2021 19 12 2021," [general] respected	foreign	ministers ladies and gentlemen [general] first of all let
13 Attique ...	the economy sustainable [action] i would look forward to the	foreign	ministers that you will come up with a mad
14 Attique ...	opposition's no-trust move is part of an alleged ""	foreign	funded conspiracy"" hatched against his government over his refusal
15 Attique ...	It is due, and it is due."" "15 2022-03-26 19:00:00," PM Imran says!	foreign	funded conspiracy' suit to topple his govt, claims to

KWIC	Plot	File View	Cluster	N-Gram
Cluster Types 9 Cluster Tokens 14 Page Size 100 hi				
Cluster	Rank	Freq	Range	
1 azadi imrankhanpti	1	4	1	
2 azadi march	2	2	1	
3 azadi that	2	2	1	
4 azadi cannot	4	1	1	
5 azadi coming	4	1	1	
6 azadi from	4	1	1	
7 azadi jalsa	4	1	1	
8 azadi movement	4	1	1	
9 azadi will	4	1	1	

Figure 8: Analysis of political resistance in post ouster period in different contexts

#### 4.5 Key Collocations in Speeches (Post-2022)

Node Word	Frequent Collocates
<i>conspiracy</i>	foreign, US, regime, plot, army
<i>Traitor</i>	Nawaz, Zardari, handlers, puppets
<i>freedom</i>	march, haqeeqi, struggle, revolution

Table 2: Collocations in Speeches (Post-2022)

These collocations highlight a shift toward nationalist resistance, polarization, and delegitimization of opponents.

*On July 8, 2022, Imran Khan expressed his frustration and concern over what he saw as resistance to fair democratic practices. He accused the PDM parties of being deeply experienced in election rigging, suggesting they had no real interest in holding transparent elections. He also pointed a finger at the country's establishment, implying that they too*



were not supportive of a truly free and fair electoral process. His statement reflected a broader narrative of mistrust and dissatisfaction with the political and institutional status quo, framing himself as a lone voice calling for genuine democracy.

#### 4.6 Framing Strategies and CDA Findings

There is a strategic use of language in shaping identities and public opinions in Khan’s speeches as analyzed by examining the speeches through Wodak’s Discourse Historical Approach and Fairclough Three-dimensional model, in his speeches he frequently uses strong labels like “mafias” “corrupt elites” and “puppet rulers” to describe his opponents, the linguistic terms, that not only criticize and discredit them but also suggesting that they are not working for the interests of people they are working under the dictators and outside influences. At the same time, he uses terms like “Saadiq” “leader of youth” and “visionary” for himself and his party that they are only the hope which is capable for change as they are honest and revolutionary. Such kind of using language makes him a “true leader” while casting his rival as the threats to Pakistan’s future. The deliberate use of language in this sense demonstrates a clear divide between “us” and “them” in political narratives.

Argumentation strategies are also central, with recurring use of *topoi* such as the *topos of threat* (depicting Pakistan as vulnerable to foreign conspiracies), the *topos of justice* (presenting PTI as defenders of the people's rights), and the *topos of history* (evoking the Islamic golden age through references to Riyasat-e-Madina) to strengthen political claims and moral authority. Additionally, Van Dijk’s ideological square is evident in the consistent positive self-presentation of PTI as honest, patriotic, and victimized while negatively portraying the opposition as corrupt, traitorous, and self-serving. These discursive strategies, when analyzed through Fairclough’s model, demonstrate how language is used at the textual, discursive, and socio-political levels to shape public perception and sustain political power.

#### 4.7 Comparison: Pre- and Post-Ouster Discourses

Dimension	2018–2022 (PM Period)	2022–2024 (Post Ouster)
Core Narrative	Reform, accountability, Islamic governance	Resistance, conspiracy, anti-establishment
Enemy Framing	Political opposition and ‘status quo’	Hybrid regime, military, foreign actors
Lexical Focus	Development, policy, faith	Freedom, betrayal, revolution
Tone	Assertive but diplomatic	Defiant, populist, aggressive

Table 3: Comparison of Pre- and Post-Ouster Discourses

#### 4.8 Phase 1&2: Comparison Table

Speech /Event	Dominant Narrative(s)	Key Themes	Framing Technique	Digital Amplification	Target Audience
UNGA 2019 Speech (Sept 26)	Kashmir Conflict, Global Conscience, Islamophobia	Nuclear threat, curfew, Indian aggression, Western hypocrisy, Islam	Emotional appeal, urgent warnings, moral contrast	Viral clips, hashtags (UNGA, ImranKhanVoiceOfKashmir)	Global leaders, Pakistani diaspora, domestic base



<b>China Council Address (Oct 8, 2019)</b>	Economic Development, Anti-Corruption, Learning from China	SEZs, CPAC, poverty reduction, meritocracy	Admiration, case studies (China), economic realism	Shared in CPAC groups, Chinese media highlights	Chinese investors, business elite, local reformists
<b>Dams Fund Appeal (Sept 6, 2018)</b>	National Unity, Crisis Management, Patriotic Funding	Water scarcity, foreign debt, diaspora duty	Urgency, patriotic obligation, crowd-sourcing heroism	Online donation platforms, diaspora WhatsApp groups	Overseas Pakistanis, water policy critics
<b>Climate Ambition Summit (Dec 11, 2020)</b>	Green Development, Renewable Future, Climate Justice	Clean energy, tree planting, ending coal	Scientific logic, moral leadership	Shared on environmentalist networks, YouTube snippets	Climate activists, UN forums, Pakistani youth
<b>Axios Interview (June 18, 2021)</b>	National Sovereignty, Anti-Imperialism	“Absolutely Not”, drone policy, US bases	Categorical refusal, historical injustice	Mass Twitter trends, meme culture (AbsolutelyNot)	PTI base, youth, critics of US policy
<b>UNGA 2021 Speech (Sept 24)</b>	Islamophobia, Anti-Corruption, Kashmir	Taliban recognition, elite hypocrisy, foreign conspiracy	Direct accusation, contrast with West	Speech watched live, Twitter threads, opinion polls	Global South, Muslim world, domestic supporters
<b>RCCI Address (April 1, 2022)</b>	Economic Revival, Foreign Plot, Resistance	Regime change, lettergate, sovereignty	Conspiracy narrative, nation-vs-elite binary	Hashtags (ImportedHakoomat), TikTok snippets	Middle-class voters, working-class base
<b>March 2022 – Islamabad Rally</b>	Foreign Puppet Allegations & NRO Denial	Letter referencing someone in London, refusal to grant NROs	Struggle narrative, hero vs corrupt elite	Strong hashtags (Letter Evidence, Not ANRO), echo in opinion polls	PTI voters, middle-class, nationalists
<b>June 2022</b>	Economic Distress &	Inflation, IMF	Urgency, blame	Clips and infographics on inflation widely shared	Urban middle-



<b>Onwards Economic Crisis Speeches</b>	Accountability	austerity, rising debt, social burden	attribution, empathy		income, business class, critics of govt
<b>Various 2023-2024 Public Addresses &amp; Interviews</b>	Election Politics, Elite Failure, Foreign Meddling	Calls for fresh polls, elite corruption, constitutional crisis	Mobilization rhetoric, resilience theme	Social media mobilization (#Election2024, #RestoreDemocracy)	PTI base, youth, general electorate

**Table 4:** Comparison Table of Political Narratives from Imran Khan Speeches (2018–2024)

#### 4.9 Narrative Trends Across Speeches

Narrative Theme	Persistence Across Years	Medium Used	Emotional Register	Political Function
<b>Anti-Corruption &amp; Elite Betrayal</b>	High in all speeches	Jalsa speeches, UNGA, interviews	Anger, moral superiority	Mobilize base, discredit opposition
<b>Islamic Welfare State</b>	Consistent from 2018–2022	Domestic addresses, manifestos	Compassion, justice	Legitimacy via religio-political values
<b>Kashmir Advocacy</b>	Peaked 2019–2021	UNGA, Twitter diplomacy	Grief, defiance	Regional leadership, moral high ground
<b>National Sovereignty</b>	Intensified post-2021	Axios, RCCI, rallies	Pride, defiance	Justify resistance to foreign pressure
<b>Development &amp; SEZs</b>	Common 2019–2020	China speeches, CPEC talks	Pragmatic, aspirational	Attract investment, show competence
<b>Climate Responsibility</b>	Moderate (2020–2021)	Summit addresses	Ethical leadership	International branding, youth appeal

**Table 5:** Narrative Trends Across Speeches

#### 4.10 Theoretical Overview

Imran Khan discourse in between 2018 to 2024 based on the sophisticated rhetorical strategies that combine the themes of religion politics and economy and structure of populist compelling narrative by using Fair clough three-dimensional model this is clear that in his speeches the language choice patterns and linguistic terms are carefully crafted to connect with diverse audiences by combining together intertextual references such as historical and Islamic ideals international global forums and global media and interdiscursive shifts based on the context and situation.



In the corpus analysis the terms like “Absolutely Not” Axios interview and the “Foreign Funded Conspiracy” in Islamabad reveals recurring lexical choices that are connected with the themes of “National Sovereignty” “economic hardships” “moral struggle” and with Islamic duty, the other phrase like foreign interference, national interest, inflation, IMF, welfare state, and Islamophobia are used consistently to link with the national independence, anti elite sentiments, financial instability and religious responsibility. These patterns allowed Khan’s rhetoric to resonate simultaneously in local political rallies and on international platforms, reinforcing his image as a morally upright leader defending Pakistan’s sovereignty and Islamic values against both internal corruption and foreign pressure. This framing served to unite his supporters under a shared sense of victimhood, moral urgency, and national pride.

Khan's rhetoric is grounded through intertextuality and interdiscursivity, which serve to enhance the reliability and cohesion of his political discourse. For instance, he invokes Islam’s foundational *Riyasat-e-Madina* while also citing the IMF, OIC, UN, EU as part of his speeches to frame them in a web of religious, diplomatic, and expert authority which intertextually legitimizes and further morally justifies his leadership. Moreover, also interdiscursively, Khan shifts his focus and tone towards the audience and occasion, using aggressive, conspiratorial language at domestic rallies and humanitarian, diplomatic tones at the OIC and UNGA, while also adhering to reasoned, data-driven populism during economic conversations. Although he presents these different angles, he still opts for unifying yet harsh phrasing such as “conspiracy,” “sovereignty,” “Islamophobia,” “poverty,” which corpus analysis suggests recur alongside “letter evidence,” “foreign,” “welfare,” “loans.” These uniform patterns across his discourse uphold diverse disputes such as political turmoil, economic impoverishment, and religious identity crisis in a cohesive framework devoid of fragmentation. This linguistic coherence helps frame Khan as a leader capable of addressing Pakistan’s multifaceted crises through a morally and ideologically consistent vision.

Through the perspective of Wodak’s Discourse-Historical framework, Imran Khan’s addresses are closely tied to particular historical circumstances and national concerns, including the ramifications of the U.S. exit from Afghanistan, ongoing oppression in Kashmir, and the economic challenges linked to water shortages and rising debt. These circumstances are not referenced in isolation but act as significant contexts for his narrative of crisis and resistance. Khan utilizes specific nomination strategies to create a moral contrast: his political rivals are consistently referred to as “thieves,” “foreign-funded conspirators,” or “elite power brokers,” and are morally denounced with expressions such as “stashing money abroad” or “ruining the country.” Conversely, he positions himself, PTI, and his supporters as patriotic defenders of the nation, portraying them as the “we” responsible for creating a “New Pakistan” and a contemporary Islamic welfare state, founded on principles like sovereignty, honesty, and integrity. He combines an emotional appeal (“our economy shattered,” “people are dying”), logical arguments (citing IMF statistics, debt numbers, UN vulnerability indexes), and an ethical appeal (Islamic moral authority, references to welfare traditions). The rhetorical approach frequently follows a triadic structure: identifying an existential crisis → assigning moral blame to both external and internal adversaries → rallying moral-action groups (PTI, devout voters, Islamic scholars, protestors).



**Applying Fairclough’s three-dimensional model provides deeper analytic layers:**

- **Textual Analysis**

The Analysis centers on linguistic characteristics: choices at the clause level (active voice “We will not submit”; passive for defiance “are being threatened”), modality (“we must,” “we will,” “absolutely not”), rhetorical techniques (triads, parallelism, repetition e.g., “Absolutely not,” and nominalizations such as “sovereignty,” “development,” “conspiracy”). The speeches employ contrasting structures (“we vs. they,” “foreign vs. local,” “Islam vs. Islamophobia,” “welfare state vs. elite state”) to portray a Manichean perspective.

- **Discursive Practice**

This context deals with how these speeches are created and received. Khan tailors his rhetoric for various platforms, including state televised addresses, international forums, and party rallies, adjusting his intertextual references and language style accordingly. The uniformity of key messages across different contexts enhances perceptions of authenticity and trustworthiness. On the consumption side, digital platforms like PTV channels, YouTube clips, and Twitter amplify each rhetorical element (e.g., **hashtags #AbsolutelyNot, #ForeignConspiracy, #LetterEvidence, #Elections2024**). Data from social media conversations indicate that these keywords trend when Khan’s videos are shared, demonstrating the digital replication of textual elements.

- **Social Practice**

Social practice examines issues of power, ideology, and politics. Khan's discourse represents a populist ideological framework that delineates a divide between “the virtuous people” and various antagonists, both external and internal. The recurring narrative of foreign conspiracies supports a sovereignty-oriented populism, reinforcing the notion that Pakistan should be rebuilt free from Western influence or elite control. The framing of the economic crisis, along with the blaming of the IMF, inflation, and elite corruption, positions him as the defender of everyday Pakistanis, separate from elite corruption. His moral Islamic narratives regarding welfare and the rule of law lend religious legitimacy within a diverse electorate.

Through these discursive strategies, power is exerted: Khan presents himself as both a moral leader and a beleaguered democrat, aiming to undermine his adversaries as adversaries of the populace or complicit with foreign or elite interests. Utilizing a blended methodological approach of Corpus Linguistics, Wodak’s Discourse-Historical Approach, and Fairclough’s three-dimensional model reveals that Imran Khan’s speeches transcend standard political communication. They serve as influential discursive acts that actively mold and remold the dynamics of power and ideology in Pakistan. His words not only mirror the political landscape but also shape it, influencing how the public perceives leadership, loyalty, and national identity. These speeches interweave a rich array of intertextual references, linking Islamic principles like prophetic welfare and anti-colonial sovereignty with global populist discourse and international entities such as the OIC, UN, and IMF. Through careful nomination and predication, Khan consistently depicts his supporters as morally upstanding and patriotic, while portraying his opponents as corrupt and aligned with foreign interests, solidifying clear political divisions. His arguments generally follow a well-organized moral framework: identifying a crisis, attributing blame, offering ethical assessments, and suggesting emotionally resonant solutions aimed at rallying the populace. Central to this discourse is the ideological square, which simplifies societal conflicts into a binary moral



struggle, thus uniting diverse groups under a common populist identity. Linguistically, his strategic employment of strong modal verbs, first-person pronouns, and repetition disrupts standard political dialogue and enhances emotional resonance. In the digital era, these rhetorical strategies gain further momentum through social media, enabling his message to disseminate quickly and become ingrained in the collective consciousness. Khan’s discourse mirrors and addresses deeper national challenges concerning sovereignty, democratic integrity, and the intersection of religion, establishing it as a transformative force in shaping the political narrative of Pakistan.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of presentation of analyzed results with discussions and the conclusion of the study by summarizing key findings, representing the research objectives, and discussing the wide range of implications of the corpus-assisted discourse analysis. It also provides recommendations for policymakers, media practitioners, and future researchers, particularly in the domains of political communication, media framing, and digital discourse in Pakistan.

#### 5.2 Shifting Narratives Pre- and Post-2022

Period	Narrative Focus	Linguistic Markers
2018–2022	Reform, Islamic ethics, anti-corruption	<i>Riyasat-e-Madina, Naya Pakistan, tabdeeli</i>
2022–2024	Victimhood, conspiracy, anti-establishment	<i>Imported hukoomat, freedom, traitors, regime change</i>

**Table 6:** Shifting Narratives Pre- and Post-2022

This evolution illustrates how discourse adapts to context from a position of governance to one of resistance and mobilization.

#### 5.3 Political Discourse in the Digital Age

##### 5.3.1 Personalization and Virality

After 2022, Imran Khan’s political discourse took on a more performative and emotionally charged tone, especially across digital platforms. He began using direct-to-camera videos to speak intimately to his audience, often appealing to the emotions of the youth and invoking symbolic gestures like holding public rallies, using specific hand movements, or referencing the Quran to strengthen his message. These carefully crafted digital performances weren’t accidental; they reflect what Moffitt (2016) describes as mediatized populism, where political leaders stage crises in real-time and use media spectacle to build a devoted online following. Khan effectively turned digital space into a stage, blending politics with performance to rally support and maintain visibility.

##### 5.3.2 Hashtag Movements as Narrative Frames

Social media hashtags like **#ImportedHukoomatNamanzoor** **#HaqeeqiAzadi** functioned as frame amplifiers. They condensed complex grievances into simple, repeatable slogans, enhancing digital mobilization.

This framing strategy mirrors the simplification principle in Lakoff’s (2004) cognitive framing theory: people resonate with narratives that reduce complexity to moral binaries.



#### 5.4 Discourse, Power, and Resistance

Khan's post-ouster discourse reveals how political actors use discourse as resistance. Framing his removal as a foreign-backed conspiracy helped re-legitimize his leadership and delegitimize rivals even in the absence of conclusive evidence.

This reflects Fairclough's (1995) idea that language isn't just a way of communicating it's a powerful tool that shapes how we see the world, reinforcing certain beliefs and power structures. According to him, the way people speak or write is deeply connected to social and political systems, often reflecting who holds influence and what ideas are being promoted. So, when political leaders use specific words or frames, they're not just making a point they're actively shaping ideologies and influencing how society thinks and reacts. Khan's discursive repositioning portrays him not as a failed prime minister but as a patriot betrayed, thus preserving his populist capital.

#### 5.5 Polarization and the Erosion of Neutral Discourses

The findings also point to the increasing polarization of political language. Terms like *traitor*, *puppet*, and *jihad* were not just symbolic they intensified public emotions and undermined political dialogue.

This polarization reflects discursive closure (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999), where opposing viewpoints are not debated but demonized. The result is a fractured discursive public sphere where political consensus becomes harder to achieve.

#### 5.6 Reflection on Methodological Insights

The corpus-assisted methodology proved effective in revealing both quantitative patterns (e.g., keyword shifts, collocations) and qualitative insights (e.g., framing, ideology). It allowed for a data-driven yet interpretive analysis, balancing textual rigor with critical depth. However, it also faced challenges:

- **Multilingualism** (English-Urdu code-switching)
- **Textual variance** across platforms (formal vs. informal speech)
- **Rapid digital shifts**, where narratives can change hourly

#### 5.7 Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the literature by:

1. **Extending corpus-assisted discourse analysis** into South Asian political discourse, where CADA is under-utilized.
2. **Demonstrating the performative nature of populism** in digital contexts.
3. **Exploring narrative evolution** across shifting political roles (incumbency vs. opposition).

#### 5.8 Conclusion

This research explored how Imran Khan has constructed and disseminated political narratives from 2018 to 2024 through an analysis of his speeches and media portrayals using corpus-assisted discourse methods. The results indicate a notable change in Khan's rhetoric, moving from focuses on anti-corruption, Islamic governance, and national revival during his time in office to themes of victimhood, sovereignty, and resistance after his removal from power. This transition signifies a shift from constructive populism to a more confrontational approach. The media landscape displayed a fragmented portrayal of these narratives, with traditional outlets revealing ideological splits, while digital platforms such as Twitter and YouTube evolved into counter-public spheres that contested the prevailing discourse. The investigation further uncovered that Imran Khan's political messaging heavily depended on a clear "us vs. them" dichotomy, emotionally charged terms, and popular hashtags to shape



public perception of the political landscape. These linguistic choices were not arbitrary; they were intentionally selected to evoke emotions, foster a strong sense of identity among supporters, and mobilize public backing, particularly in online spaces. This strategic language use effectively generated support for his narrative and facilitated greater engagement, sharing, and a sense of belonging to a broader movement. The research contributes to the expanding domain of corpus-assisted CDA within South Asian contexts by demonstrating how political discourse evolves in reaction to shifts in politics and media environments. It also highlights the performative and divisive characteristics of political communication in the digital era, wherein language not only reflects political realities but also plays an active role in shaping them.

### 5.9 Recommendations

For political communicators, there is a pressing need to adopt more ethical and inclusive discourse strategies that avoid divisive binaries and prioritize accountability through evidence-based messaging. Media practitioners are encouraged to uphold journalistic integrity by strengthening editorial independence and investing in rigorous fact checking, especially during crises or elections. Educators and civil society must work toward promoting media literacy and digital civic awareness, particularly among the youth who dominate online political spaces. Future researchers are advised to expand this line of inquiry through multimodal and multilingual analyses that incorporate visual and vernacular forms of political expression, as well as comparative and longitudinal approaches to track narrative shifts across different populist democracies.

### References

- Al Jazeera. (2019, July 25). *Pakistan opposition holds 'black day' protests against PM Khan*. Al Jazeera.
- Al Jazeera. (2022, April 10). *Imran Khan: Why was Pakistan's prime minister ousted?* Al Jazeera. <https://aje.io/m3fjyu>
- Al Jazeera. (2022, November 4). *Imran Khan blames PM Sharif, minister Rana Sanaullah for shooting*. Al Jazeera. <https://aje.io/13dbnp>
- BBC News. (2022, April 10). *Pakistan parliament ousts PM Imran Khan in no-confidence vote*. BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-61055210>
- Baker, P. (2006). *Using corpora in discourse analysis*. London: Continuum.
- Baker, P., Gabrielatos, C., Khosravini, M., Krzyżanowski, M., McEnery, T., & Wodak, R. (2008). A useful methodological synergy? Combining critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to examine discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press. *Discourse & Society*, 19(3), 273–306.
- Barthes, R. (2004). Introduction to the structural analysis of narratives. *Narrative theory: Critical concepts in literary and cultural studies*, 65-116.
- BBC News. (2018, August 17). *Imran Khan: From cricket hero to Pakistan prime minister*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-45219455>
- Cissel, M. (2012). *Media framing: A comparative content analysis* [Master's thesis, University of Oregon].
- Castells, M. (2009). *Communication power*. Oxford University Press.
- Chilton, P. (2004). *Analysing political discourse: Theory and practice*. Routledge.
- Chouliarakis, L., & Fairclough, N. (1999). *Discourse in late modernity: Rethinking critical discourse analysis*. Edinburgh University Press.



- Eijaz, A. (2013). Impact of new media on dynamics of Pakistan politics. *Journal of Political Studies*, 20(1).
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51–58.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. London: Longman.
- Foucault, M. (2000). *Power: Essential works of Foucault, 1954–1984, Volume 3* (J. D. Faubion, Ed.). Penguin Books.
- Government of Pakistan. (2019, November 26). *PM Imran Khan addresses Ehsaas Economic Partnership Ceremony – 26 November 2019*
- Herman, E. S., & Chomsky, N. (1988). *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media*. Pantheon Books.
- Iyengar, S. (1991). *Is anyone responsible?: How television frames political issues*. University of Chicago Press.
- Khan, M. Q., Shahzad, A., & Altaf, F. (2023). Counter-narratives and activism: Social media's role in shaping political awareness. *Global Digital & Print Media Review*, 6(2), 324–333.
- Lakoff, R. T. (2003). Narrative in the construction of social and political identity. University of California, Berkeley. [https://books.google.com.pk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=44rDJkdgIT4C&oi=fnd&pg=PA135&dq=Lakoff,+R.+T.+\(2003\).+Narrative+in+the+construction+of+social+and+political+identity&ots=IZHrdiixCe&sig=Jy5H3Ug5TnGLt1OveGmgsWceWU#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com.pk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=44rDJkdgIT4C&oi=fnd&pg=PA135&dq=Lakoff,+R.+T.+(2003).+Narrative+in+the+construction+of+social+and+political+identity&ots=IZHrdiixCe&sig=Jy5H3Ug5TnGLt1OveGmgsWceWU#v=onepage&q&f=false)
- Lakoff, G. (2004). *Don't think of an elephant!: Know your values and frame the debate*. Chelsea Green Publishing.
- McNair, B. (2017). *An introduction to political communication*. Routledge.
- Moffitt, B. (2016). *The global rise of populism: Performance, political style and representation*. Stanford University Press.
- Mudde, C., & Kaltwasser, C. R. (2017). *Populism: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Partington, A., Duguid, A., & Taylor, C. (2013). *Patterns and meanings in discourse: Theory and practice in corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS)*. John Benjamins.
- Rehman, Z., & Akhtar, M. (2023). Framing political dissent: Media coverage of Imran Khan's protests after his removal from office. *Journal of South Asian Media Studies*, 12(3), 201–218.
- Reisigl, M., & Wodak, R. (2001). *Discourse and discrimination: Rhetorics of racism and antisemitism*. Routledge.
- Scheufele, D. A., & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 9–20.
- Siraj, S. A. (2009). Critical analysis of press freedom in Pakistan. *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, 1(3), 43–47.
- van Dijk, T. A. (1997). *Discourse as social interaction*. London: SAGE.
- van Dijk, T. A. (2006). Ideology and discourse analysis. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 11(2), 115–140.
- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2001). *Methods of critical discourse analysis*. London: SAGE