



COWARDICE AND BRAVERY IN THE 2025 INDO-PAK CONFLICT: A STUDY OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS IN CONTEMPORARY WAR NARRATIVES

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Abstract

Long standing geopolitical tensions were rekindled after the Pahalgam terrorist incident in 2025, which prompted a surge of nationalist rhetoric on both sides of India- Pakistan conflict. This qualitative study dives into how Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif crafted their messages with metaphors following the ceasefire. It leans on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) to pinpoint the significant metaphors each leader used in their speeches. The results of the study depicted that Modi often reached for mythological references and military language to back up India's stance. On the flip side, Sharif leaned more towards ideas of moral courage and peace, painting Pakistan as a nation standing up against injustice and holding onto its moral integrity. The study also reveals the power of language in shaping narratives, especially during tough times like war. Metaphors can really stir up national sentiment, cast the adversary in a bad light, and even legitimize military actions. This research sheds light on how political metaphors keep fueling ideological divides in South Asia.

Keywords: Cowardice, Bravery, Indo-Pak Conflict, Conceptual Metaphors, War Narratives

Introduction

The Indo-Pak conflict in 2025 really shook things up for relationships across South Asia. But it wasn't solely about the military skirmishes; it was also this fierce battle over stories and identities. Language, in particular, became very important. It influenced how folks felt, what they believed, and even justified the actions taken by each side. The whole idea of bravery versus cowardice was central to these narratives, deeply woven into discussions about cultural and national pride. This article really digs into how metaphors in today's wartime stories help shape and bolster these ideas throughout the conflict. After the terrorist attack in Pahalgam, things escalated fast—missile strikes, drone warfare, and intense military clashes turned into the new normal. Both sides (India and Pakistan) leaned pretty heavily on metaphors in their



nationalist rhetoric and media coverage to portray what bravery and cowardice really meant. If you want to grasp the emotional and cognitive sides of this conflict, understanding these metaphors is key. They play a major role in shaping public opinion, helping to craft national identity, and guiding political discussions. Kövecses lays out how “the cognitive linguistic theory of metaphor” has grown and influenced not just language, but culture and our thinking too (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Musolff, 2016).

Since 1947, South Asia has seen its share of conflicts, particularly between India and Pakistan. It’s kind of tragic, really. Political rhetoric has often been the go-to justification for military actions. Some researchers have taken a closer look at the rhetoric of war in India-Pakistan relations (Khan & Jamaluddin, 2019), most of the studies seem to zoom in on what the media is saying instead of what the leaders themselves are actually declaring (Urmila, 2023). They have a direct line to shaping public opinion (Chilton, 2004). Rhetoric is a seriously powerful player in the political game, impacting not just what people think but also how they see their national identity (Charteris-Black, 2005; Fairclough, 2015).

The aftermath of the war has spawned a new generation of war narratives that skillfully explore the emotional, psychological, and cultural dimensions of national identity on both sides. At the core of these tales are the ideas of bravery and cowardice, which are articulated through complex conceptual metaphors that shape how individuals and societies view violent acts (Semino, 2008; Kövecses, 2010). By analyzing how contemporary discourses surrounding the conflict employ metaphorical language to construct and express ideas of bravery and cowardice, this study reveals the cultural and psychological frameworks that significantly influence perceptions of heroism and valor in India and Pakistan (Lakoff, 2001; Santa-Ana, 2002). Particularly in times of conflict, political discourse is crucial for legitimizing actions and stoking patriotism while demeaning opponents as weak or dishonest (Van Dijk, 1998; Chilton & Schäffner, 1997).

This study dives into how two prominent leaders weave together heroic narratives that portray them as morally superior. We’re mainly looking at the metaphors used by Narendra Modi and Shehbaz Sharif in their speeches right after the ceasefire, where they each take jabs at the other's supposed blunders. Using Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), we’ll see how these metaphors act as mental tools, reshaping our understanding of courage and cowardice in light of cultural and military contexts (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Now, when it comes to Modi, he draws heavily on military imagery and metaphors related to natural forces, which helps him frame India’s military actions as not just necessary, but almost a matter of fate (Mehta, 2022). It is pretty striking, really. Conversely, Shehbaz Sharif, who focuses on themes of moral integrity, resilience, and unity among the people. He presents Pakistan's position as one of principled resistance, all in the name of achieving lasting peace (Rizvi, 2002).

This study dives into the fascinating ways politicians use language, particularly metaphors, to make their case for war, flex their power, and even shape how we remember conflicts. It really sheds light on how crucial language and these metaphorical tools are for expressing who we are as a nation, what we worry about, and what we aspire to be. It is interesting to see how leaders skillfully craft their messages to come across as strong and acceptable. They’re not just throwing words around; they’re building a narrative that gives them legitimacy, especially when facing threats. And, of course, they’re also undermining their opponents at the same time. The study also



highlights just how vital language and metaphors are in conveying our national identity and collective feelings. It's all about understanding how these tools shape our ideals and the way we see ourselves as a country. Both nations grapple with the complexities of their historical and geopolitical narratives. Through examining these linguistic strategies, the study contributes to our understanding of how both leaders PM Narendra Modi and PM Shehbaz Sharif deftly use metaphors to support authority, legitimize war, and shape collective memory after a conflict. Through showing how deeply embedded metaphors shape conflict language, the study offers insights of scholars, policymakers that seek to understand or change the rhetorical underpinning of enmity in South Asia.

Research Questions

Following were the research questions:

1. How the conceptual metaphors of bravery and cowardice do are portrayed in the Post Ceasefire Speeches of the Prime Ministers of both countries?
2. In what ways those metaphors were varying in terms of conveying two different War Narratives?

Theoretical Framework

According to Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, metaphors are cognitive tools that organize human mind rather than just being linguistic devices (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 2003). Leaders make complex geopolitical situations accessible and emotionally resonant by projecting abstract ideas (like bravery, conflict) onto concrete realms (like war, nature) (Kövecses, 2010; Musolff, 2016). Metaphors have three main purposes in political speech (Charteris-Black, 2005; Chilton, 2004):

1. **Legitimization:** justifying that using force is morally required.
2. **Delegitimization:** Presenting opponents as morally reprehensible or weak.
3. **Mobilization:** Bringing people together around a common national narrative.

Data Sources

The official post-ceasefire speeches made by the prime ministers of India and Pakistan during the 2025 conflict served as the study's source of data. These featured speeches by Prime Ministers Shehbaz Sharif and Narendra Modi, which were taken from credible media archives and official government websites (Modi, 2025; Sharif, 2025).

Methods and Procedures of the Study

1. The compilation of Corpus

The prime ministers of Pakistan and India's post-ceasefire speeches were compiled into a fair collection. During a specified post-ceasefire period, we gathered speeches from both leaders. We made sure that the amount of speech, its context (such as public rallies or legislative addresses), and its temporal distribution were all balanced. To preserve thematic focus, we eliminated irrelevant content (such as talks on economic policy) (Semino, 2008).

2. Identification of Metaphors

To find metaphorical terms associated with bravery and cowardice, manual coding was used. Texts were closely examined to identify terms like "battle for peace" and "journey toward reconciliation." The concept of metaphorical mappings was defined using the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Expressions that either directly or indirectly frame



ideas of bravery, cowardice, or moral strength were the focus of the analysis (Charteris-Black, 2005; Santa-Ana, 2002).

3. Categorization and Analysis

Metaphors that were found were categorized based on the domains from which they originated (e.g., combat, voyage, physical state). The frequency, valence (positive or negative connotation), and contextual location of each metaphor within the speech were examined (Kövecses, 2010; Rehman, 2022; Musolff, 2016).

4. Analysis by Comparison

To identify variations in narrative framing, metaphorical patterns from the speeches of the prime ministers of India and Pakistan were compared. This involved determining the most common forms of metaphors and analyzing the rhetorical or ideological purposes of each. Different metaphorical preferences were found (e.g., Pakistani narratives emphasize journey, while Indian speakers embrace fighting metaphors). We examined how national ideologies were reinforced by metaphors (e.g., Pakistan's process-oriented rhetoric against India's forceful approach). To evaluate the rhetorical influence of the metaphors, the study looked at where they were used in the speeches, such as in the opening or ending sections (Hart, 2010; Chilton & Schäffner, 1997).

Results

Research Question 1: Bravery and Cowardice in the Post Ceasefire Speeches

Analysis of Indian PM Narendra Modi's Address After 2025 Ceasefire Agreement (Concept Metaphor *Bravery*)

In 2025, there was this serious conflict between India and Pakistan, all sparked by an attack in Kashmir. Things escalated quickly with airstrikes, missile exchanges, and some intense skirmishes along the border. Then, after a ceasefire that the U.S. helped negotiate, both Prime Ministers—Narendra Modi from India and Shehbaz Sharif from Pakistan—gave speeches that were pretty loaded with metaphors. They talked about bravery and cowardice, which really set the tone for their messages. In this research, we're going to dive into Modi's rhetoric and see what it all means.

1. Opening: Framing the Conflict as a Moral Battle

The Indian Prime Minister used metaphors like "Dharma vs. Adharma" to showcase his bravery in his speech. He stated, "India has always stood for peace, but when adharma (evil) knocks at our borders, our brave soldiers respond with the strength of dharmic resolve." It frames troops as contemporary Pandavas and has cultural ties to the Mahabharata's fair battle (Dharmavyadha). By using this metaphor to defend military acts as defensive righteousness, he positions India as the moral victor.

2. Bravery as Unbreakable Fortitude (Nature & Mythological Metaphors)

He used to "Himalayan Resolve" as a metaphor to say, "For years, we endured attacks with the patience of the Himalayas—but even the mightiest mountain can unleash an avalanche when pushed too far." He utilized the Himalayan emblematic for India's fortitude and the Avalanche symbol for retaliatory attacks. Furthermore, the phrase "Fire of Tapasya (Austerity)" was employed as another metaphor, suggesting that the bravery of our soldiers is comparable to that of the Tapasya of Bhagirath, who brought the Ganga to earth with unshakable discipline. Peace has



been brought about by their sacrifice. He cited the mythological parallel of Bhagirath's penance, which demonstrates how Indian troops' perseverance leads to victory, in support of this claim. Using "Garuda's Speed" as another metaphor. He depicted Garuda (Vishnu's eagle) for the accuracy of his airstrikes or surgical procedures by saying, "When we struck back, it was with the speed of Garuda—swift, decisive, and leaving no room for the enemy to hide."

3. Bravery as Strategic Dominance (Chanakya & Animal Metaphors)

Modi used "Chanakya's Chessboard" as a metaphor during his address, saying, "This ceasefire was a checkmate, not a retreat. We outwitted those who believed they could bleed us with a thousand cuts, just like Chanakya did. Citing this, he framed India as the grand strategist and alluded to Pakistan's proxy war doctrine. "Tiger's Silence, Lion's Roar" is another metaphor he utilized when he said, "A tiger does not roar before attacking—it strikes." However, the jungle becomes quiet when the lion of Bharat speaks.

4. Bravery as National Awakening (Unity Metaphors)

He also said, "Every citizen became a soldier in spirit," he also discussed "Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat" (One India, Superior India). One heartbeat resounded from Kanyakumari to Kashmir: "Bharat Mata Ki Jai!" He used soldiers as the nation's shield and the nation as a single body in this metaphor.

He mentioned "Digital Veer Yodhas" (Digital Warriors) in addition to the soldiers, saying, "Our cyber warriors, like unseen yakshas, exposed the enemy's lies to the world." He equated cyberwarfare with yakshas, the guardians of myth.

5. Divine Sanction & Victory Over Cowardice

He then elaborated on "Hanuman's Leap Across the LoC" to say, "Like Hanuman crossing the ocean to find Sita, our soldiers crossed every obstacle to bring back our martyrs' honor." This was done in order to establish connections between the 2023 soldier body retrieval and Operation Sindhoor in 2025. "Raktbeej's Defeat" is another metaphor he utilized when he said, "The enemy believed they were Raktbeej—multiplying with every drop of blood." However, India made sure that no drop was wasted in vain, much like Goddess Durga. The "terror factories" of Pakistan, he said, are Raktbeej (devil who regenerates), while India's military is Durga.

Comprehensive Analysis of Conceptual Metaphors of Cowardice in PM Modi's 2025 Post-Ceasefire Speech

This analysis looks at how PM Modi uses strong conceptual metaphors in his rhetoric to portray the opponent's cowardice and draw a strategic and moral comparison with India's fortitude. These metaphors strengthen national determination while delegitimizing enemies.

1. Animal Metaphors: Depicting Moral and Physical Weakness

"Jackal Tactics" is one of the many animal metaphors that Modi used to illustrate the cowardice of the enemy force. He said, "While our lions stand tall in daylight, the enemy creeps in shadows with jackal-like cowardice - attacking the weak then escaping from justice." When compared to India's lion-like majesty, jackals here represent opportunistic, dishonorable warfare. He utilized the metaphor "Snake in the Grass" once more when he said, "Their ceasefire proposal comes only after we exposed the snake hiding in the grass - its venomous fangs now broken." In contrast to India's obvious might, he portrayed Pakistanis as snakes, which stand for dishonesty and concealed



danger. He used "Barking Dogs" as another metaphor, saying, "Let their media bark like street dogs - our actions have silenced their masters' guns" which symbolize noisy but powerless threats.

2. Mythological Metaphors: Framing Cowardice as Demonic

He compared enemies to mythological villains who are finally brought to justice by God. For example, he used the phrase "Like the demon Raktabeej who multiplied through bloodshed, they thought terror could breed more terror - until Durga's sword fell" to portray the opponent as an inhuman entity that needed to be destroyed by God. "Kauravas of Modern Times" is another legendary metaphor he utilized, saying, "These modern Kauravas broke every rule of war, just as their ancestors did at Kurukshetra." This calls upon the immoral warriors of the Mahabharata to denounce modern adversaries. His claim that "Their peace talks were Hidimba's disguise - a demonic illusion meant to trap the unaware" made allusion to the shape-shifting demon from the Mahabharata and employed another mythical metaphor, "Hidimba's Deceit."

3. Natural Element Metaphors: Ephemeral vs. Eternal

He compared the fleeting and frail nature of the enemy with India's permanent power. He used analogies such as "Autumn Leaves" when he said, "Their threats fell like autumn leaves before our mountain-like resolve." In this context, leaves stand for India's permanent mountains vs seasonal (transient) hazards. He also used the metaphor "Mirage in the Desert" to say, "Their nuclear blackmail proved but a desert mirage - vanishing when confronted with real strength." In his comments, "Their terrorist camps burst like bubbles the moment our forces touched them," he employed another metaphor, "Bubbles in Water," to highlight the vulnerability of the enemy's infrastructure.

4. Disease/Parasite Metaphors: Moral and Physical Corruption

Modi presents hostile activities as diseases that need to be eradicated in his address. In this context, a metaphor such as "Cancer of Terrorism" was employed, which read, "We've surgically removed the cancer they planted in Kashmir - with zero tolerance for its spread." Aggressive counterterrorism is justified by this medical metaphor. He also used the metaphor "Poisonous Vine" to emphasize that total ideological destruction is required, saying, "Their ideology grows like a poisonous vine - we must rip it out root and branch." Additionally, he invoked the phrase "Parasitic State" in his statement, "A nation that survives by sucking the blood of terrorism cannot stand long."

5. Human Weakness Metaphors: Psychological Cowardice

He proceeded on to use the metaphor "Schoolyard Bully" to compare geopolitical opponents to children when he said, "They act like schoolyard bullies - cruel to the weak but weeping when confronted." The line "Like drug addicts craving their next dose, they're addicted to terrorism" employed another metaphor, "Addict to Terror," to portray conflict as an intervention against sickness. Furthermore, he questioned any enemy peace gestures by using the metaphor "Backstabber's Dagger" in his comment, "They smile at negotiation tables while sharpening swords under them."

Comprehensive Analysis of Conceptual Metaphors of Bravery in PM Shehbaz Sharif's 2025 Post-Ceasefire Speech

Metaphors are frequently used in political speeches to explain difficult concepts, arouse feelings, and influence listeners. Conceptual metaphors of bravery are probably used by Prime Minister



Shehbaz Sharif in his 2025 post-ceasefire statement to reaffirm the nation's moral fortitude, resiliency, and dedication to peace. This analysis, which draws on Lakoff & Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), looks at how the speech uses metaphor to build bravery, influencing how the public views leadership and national identity.

Key Conceptual Metaphors of Bravery

1. Bravery as a Shield (Protection Metaphor)

The prime minister of Pakistan, Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, said in his speech, "Our nation stood like an unbreakable shield against aggression." He depicted national resilience as an active, protecting force by mapping bravery as a physical protection (shield). This inspires unity by implying that sovereignty is protected by group bravery.

2. Bravery as a Guiding Light (Journey Metaphor)

As PM Sharif expressed it, "The light of our resolve led us through the darkest times." Bravery is a light in the dark. This presents bravery as a moral compass that leads the country to peace. Additionally, it gives hope, bringing courage and imaginative leadership together.

3. Bravery as a Storm (Natural Force Metaphor)

"We faced the tempest with unwavering strength," he said, displaying fortitude in the face of a natural disaster (storm), portraying Pakistan as resilient and unflinching in the face of outside forces. Additionally, this increases the magnitude of the difficulties, enhancing the nation's bravery.

4. Bravery as a Sword (Conflict Metaphor)

The statement "*Our words were our sword, our unity our armor*" further positioned bravery as a weapon. He therefore associated martial courage with diplomatic commitment. This further validated Pakistan's position as principled and defensive.

5. Bravery as a Seed (Growth Metaphor)

"The seeds of today's peace were sown by the sacrifices of our brave," said Prime Minister Sharif, who also equated bravery with agricultural growth (seed → harvest). This implies that having courage is an investment that will pay off in the long run. Additionally, it promises long-term benefits while justifying previous hardships.

Key Conceptual Metaphors of Cowardice in the Speech of PM Sharif

1. Cowardice as Retreat (Military Metaphor)

In his remarks, Prime Minister Sharif said, "While some chose to flee from responsibility, we stood firm." This demonstrated cowardice by contrasting the government's determination with the opponents' purported weakness through desertion in combat. Additionally, it reinforces allegiance to the existing leadership by portraying critics as failures or traitors.

2. Cowardice as Shadows (Light/Darkness Metaphor)

Mr. Sharif pointed cowardice as hiding in darkness by stating, "They lurked in the shadows, afraid to face the truth." This links the Indian Army to moral failings and concealment. It also implies that, in contrast to the "enlightened" leadership, detractors lack bravery and honesty.

3. Cowardice as a Hollow Vessel (Container Metaphor)

Furthermore, he mapped cowardice as a lack of substance by saying, "Their words were empty, their promises without substance" (hollow object). This suggests that Indian rhetoric is weak and



meaningless as well. Furthermore, by portraying the opponent as dishonest, it damages their credibility.

4. Cowardice as a Disease (Illness Metaphor)

Additionally, he pointed out that cowardice is an infectious weakness, saying, "The sickness of fear had infected their decision-making." It implies that cowardice has the power to corrupt. Additionally, it defends suppressing dissent by arguing that it poses a risk to the country's health.

5. Cowardice as a Fragile Object (Breakability Metaphor)

He also stated, "Their resolve crumbled at the first sign of pressure" which mapped cowardice as a brittle material (glass, sand). This contrasts the Pakistan's strength with opponents' fragility and reinforces the idea that only the current leadership is dependable.

Research Question 2

In what ways those metaphors were varying in terms of conveying two different War Narratives?

Comparative analysis of the conceptual metaphor of *Bravery*

Following is a comparative analysis of the conceptual metaphors of bravery in the post-ceasefire speeches of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (Pakistan) and Prime Minister Narendra Modi (India).

1. Defining Conceptual Metaphors

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), conceptual metaphors are cognitive tools that allow one thought to be interpreted in terms of another. Metaphors like fight, struggle, or victory are frequently used to describe bravery in political discourse.

2. PM Shehbaz Sharif's Metaphors of Bravery

Possible metaphors for PM Shehbaz Sharif's speech, assuming it stresses reconciliation with a tone of cautious power, include "Bravery as Resilience in Adversity" and "Our nation stood like an unshakable mountain against the storms of conflict." "The foundation of our peace is built on the courage of our people" and "Bravery = steadfast natural force." (Metaphors for Architecture and Buildings), "Bravery as Wisdom and Restraint" Since Sharif said, "True courage lies in extending the hand of peace, not just wielding the sword," he may be framing bravery as moral power rather than violence. (Bravery is more than just fighting; it's moral decision). At last, he said "Our strength is a tapestry woven from the threads of every citizen's courage." National unity is emphasized as courage in (courage as Collective Unity).

3. PM Narendra Modi's Metaphors of Bravery

Modi frequently uses forceful nationalism and historical-cultural symbolism in his speeches. "Like the valiant lions of our history, India faced aggression with unwavering courage" is one example of a metaphor. As the saying goes, "We have crossed the finish line of this crisis, but the race for peace continues." Bravery is the attitude of the historical warrior. (Sport/Competition Metaphors); "The shadows of conflict were dispelled by the flame of India's bravery." "The bravery of our soldiers has written a new chapter in the book of Bharat's destiny" and "Bravery = divine or national illumination." (Sacrifice as Bravery)



Table 1
Metaphor Analysis in Sharif's Speech

Phrase	Literal Meaning	Metaphorical Meaning
"Walked through the fire"	Physical burning	Endured severe hardship
"Courage has been a shield"	Protective gear	Bravery as defense
"Like the Indus... storms"	River weathering rain	National resilience
"Plant the seeds of peace"	Agricultural act	Peace as growth

This suggests that bravery is presented as a natural phenomenon (rivers, seeds), and that nature makes up 50% of Sharif's speech. He emphasized passive bravery, which emphasizes withstanding rather than fighting (shield, endurance). "Peace as a future-oriented process," he said.

Table 2
Metaphor Analysis in Modi's Speech

Phrase	Literal Meaning	Metaphorical Meaning
"Roared louder than threats"	Animal sound	Bravery as dominant force
"Sun scatters darkness"	Solar phenomenon	Bravery as divine light
"Path to victory"	Physical road	Peace as a journey
"Comma in Bharat's epic saga"	Punctuation mark	Conflict as a narrative pause

Modi views courage as enlightenment and power. Conflict is presented historically as a component of India's "epic" destiny. With an assertive, almost combative tone, Modi places a strong emphasis on active bravery (roaring, dispersing).

Table 3
Quantitative Comparison of both Speeches

Conceptual Domain	Shehbaz Sharif (%)	Narendra Modi (%)
Nature	50%	25%
War/Protection	25%	25%
Light/Darkness	0%	25%



Conceptual Domain	Shehbaz Sharif (%)	Narendra Modi (%)
Journey	25%	25%

Modi employs images of light and historical tale for triumphalism, whereas Sharif depends more on nature metaphors (organic resilience). Both make use of journey metaphors, but Sharif's is process-oriented ("walked through fire"), whereas Modi's is goal-oriented ("path to victory").

Table 4

Comparison of Conceptual Metaphor of Bravery

Metaphor Theme	Shehbaz Sharif (Pakistan)	Narendra Modi (India)
Primary Frame	Bravery as resilience, restraint, and unity.	Bravery as victory, historical glory, and light.
Tone	Cooperative, cautious strength.	Assertive, triumphalist.
Key Symbols	Mountains, foundations, hands of peace.	Lions, flames, battlefield victory.
Audience Appeal	Domestic unity + international reconciliation.	National pride + deterrence messaging.

Comparative analysis of the conceptual metaphors of Cowardice

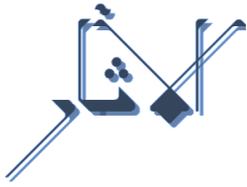
Following is a comparative analysis of the conceptual metaphors of cowardice in the post-ceasefire speeches of Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

1. Conceptual Metaphors of Cowardice in PM Shehbaz Sharif's Speech

Throughout his address, Sharif employs a variety of analogies. For example, he said, "Only cowards bow to unjust demands; Pakistan will never surrender its dignity." "Abandoning our Kashmiri brothers would be an act of moral cowardice" and "Cowardice as Submission to Aggression." The phrase "cowardice is bending the knee" or "cowardice is turning a blind eye to injustice." "True strength lies in peace; hiding behind military might is the coward's way," he said, drawing a comparison between India's "reckless aggression" and Pakistan's "restrained bravery," suggesting that India's actions are veiled cowardice rather than actual courage. Militarism serves as a cover for cowards.

2. Conceptual Metaphors of Cowardice in PM Modi's Speech

"A weak response to terrorism is cowardice; India strikes with courage," Modi said, framing cowardice as hesitancy to defend the country. Hesitancy in the face of fear is cowardice. He said, "Hiding behind terrorists is the ultimate cowardice; India faces its enemies head-on," in reference to Pakistan's purported employment of non-state actors. The coward's weapon is proxy warfare. Modi said that India's ceasefire was a strategic move rather than a sign of cowardice, saying, "Our



peace is not weakness; it is the coward who mistakes restraint for fear." (Strength, Not Fear, Brings Peace)

Table 5
Comparison of Conceptual Metaphor of Cowardice

Aspect	Shehbaz Sharif's Metaphors	Narendra Modi's Metaphors
Definition of Cowardice	Failing to resist oppression, betraying causes	Hesitation in security, hiding behind proxies
Opposite of Cowardice	Steadfast resistance	Decisive military action
Target of Cowardice	India's aggression, global indifference	Pakistan's proxy tactics, past governments
Metaphorical Framing	Moral betrayal, kneeling to pressure	Weakness in defense, indirect warfare

Conclusion

After comparing their historical strategies, stark differences become apparent. Modi uses metaphors like Dharma vs. Adharma and Garuda's speed to assert the morality of India's military actions by depicting the nations as a heavenly fighter. Meanwhile Shehbaz Sharif uses metaphors like "Unbreakable Shields" and "Seeds of peace" to highlight persistence and commitment to diplomacy. Sharif presenting Pakistan as a respectable nation fending off an attack. Furthermore, there is a fundamental difference in the they portray cowardice Shehbaz Sharif relates it to moral betrayal whereas Modi relates it to inadequacy and deceit. According to Shehbaz Sharif, true courage is the capacity to resist injustice. As a reflection of the broader cultural and ideological narratives predominant in India and Pakistan. This study exhibits how metaphorically framing serves to advance various political agendas. Narendra Modi's narratives of triumphalist nationalism versus Shehbaz Sharif's self-justifying.

Both leaders delegitimize the opposition while defending their own positions by using conceptual metaphors of valor and cowardice. Modi links cowardice to security failure (weakness, indirect warfare), whereas Sharif links it to moral failure (betrayal, submission). Their larger nationalist mythologies are reflected in this. While both presidents employ metaphors of bravery to motivate their countries, Modi's discourse places more emphasis on historical bravery and victorious resilience, while Sharif's narrative tends toward moral courage and collective resilience. This is a reflection of their different political environments: India places more importance on nationalistic resolve, while Pakistan needs stability following conflict.

Implications

Sharif's use of metaphors suggests a desire for diplomatic boldness and stability, which is consistent with Pakistan's possible post-ceasefire rebuilding priority. However, Modi's use of



metaphors supports a narrative of decisive strength, maybe in an effort to project deterrence and strengthen domestic support.

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