



Use of Religion as a Tool in Politics: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Selected Electoral Speeches

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ABSTRACT: *Employing cross-generational perspective to speech acts, this study attempts to analyze all democratic countries, at the time of elections, candidates present their political agenda, which should be unbiased in principle. However, we argue that political leaders influence public opinion by presenting their religious inclination to the religion of the majority. Thus, in election campaigns, religion becomes a weapon used in order to win elections and achieve political goals. Keeping this in view, our study critically evaluates language used by politicians in the electoral speeches to analyze leaders' religious stance by applying Gee's (2012) "Five theoretical tools" of discourse analysis. To investigate the socio-political ideologies of leaders, the researcher analysed three pre-election speeches by each of three elected politicians: Prime Minister Imran Khan of Pakistan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India, and the former President Donald Trump of the United States of America (USA). Although, the study discusses the use of language in the political context of three different countries of the world, the findings of the study show that religion is used as a tool by all three politicians to manipulate and turn public opinion in their favor. Thus, this study concludes that all three leaders have used religion in an attempt to win votes. Further, the analysis shows that the religion of the majority is used as a tool in the speeches. Religion is an institution, and it is argued here that bias attached to minority religion leaves a negative impact on society and develops a hatred among the majority for the religion of others. Therefore, this study suggests that political leaders should take responsibility for their words to avoid chaos and unrest from spreading among the people.*

Keywords: Religion as a tool, Critical Discourse Analysis, electoral speeches, political discourse

Introduction

The speakers of any language use a unique set of regular expressions when performing a variety of speech acts, such as greetings, apologies, compliments etc. Moreover, since language and culture are inextricably interlinked to each other, language is believed to be a verbal expression of a particular culture.

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This study aims to explore the relationship between politics and religion in order to understand the political agenda of the national leaders and how they influence the public by allegedly associating themselves with the religion of the majority. Here, religion is taken as a subject in political research (Angerbrandt, 2018), political life, and political organizations (Jevtic, 2009). The research shows religion remains a weapon of politicians during election campaigns; therefore, the political leaders' manipulation of religion in all these crucial moments has always influenced their audiences (Beyers, 2015). History shows that wars in the name of religion together with revolutionary movements in the 18th and 19th centuries gave way to the secular understanding of politics. After the Second World War, democracy was encouraged with the secular agenda almost all over the world. It is considered as the only constitutional form of government, which is unbiased, but actually, it is just a claim of democracy and, to date, religion is the main weapon to achieve power in politics (Raiser, 2013). This religion-based division agenda brings violence and chaos not only within a particular country but also becomes a threat to international religious-cultural diversity (Reus-Smit, 2017).

This study mainly focuses on three national political leaders who aim to influence public opinion by using religion as a tool in their electoral campaigns. As discussed above, religion relates to political discourse and in politics use of language plays an important role in achieving goals. Thus, discourse is an institutionalized way of forming, shaping and regulating actions and thus exercises power (Leipold, et.al., 2019). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) offers a tool to examine ideologies packed in language use; the way these are used either in oral or written discourse, in the diverse social sciences arena, but mostly in scientific disciplines, sociology, communication studies, linguistics and social sciences (Van Dijk, 2007). CDA also examines the role of language and how it is used in society with reference to political discourse (Joseph, 2006). Language, as indicated by Fairclough (2002), has a vital role in both social procedures and its associations, particularly with speaking; it cuts through the thick-opaque side of public activity such as social structures, social practices, and social activities.

There is, therefore, a need to understand the political play of politicians, especially their use of religion as a tool for electoral campaigns. Politicians play with the psyche of the public and cash vote by emotionally manipulating the public in the name of religion (Beyers, 2015). This study proposes an exploration of how religion

is foregrounded in electoral campaigns of politicians' speeches. To address this issue, we have two research objectives. The first is to critically evaluate language used by three national politicians in their speeches presenting religion as a tool. The second is to explore the language of electoral speeches to identify these leaders' religious stance. This study analyzes the electoral speeches of Imran Khan before the general elections in Pakistan in July 2018; and the speeches of Narendra Modi before the Indian general elections in April 2019; and the speeches by Donald Trump before the general elections of America in November 2016.

Literature Review

Critical Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is the study of language in use above the sentence level to illustrate how sentences combine to create meaning (Gee & Handford, 2013). According to Fairclough (2016) critical discourse analysis (CDA) "brings the critical tradition of social analysis into language studies and contributes to critical social analysis a particular focus on discourse and on relations between discourse and other social elements" (p.9). The discourse that establishes power relations, ideologies, institutions, social identities, and so forth. Language users make use of language from their own ideological positions through discourse and because of that they see the world from that view. Thus, CDA creates a link between language and ideas and builds its relation with society. With respect to text, CDA deals with two types of texts and they are known as written and spoken texts (Fowler, 1997). As this study addresses political speeches, according to Fowler (1997) political discourse shapes the power structure. Firmly bound to this is the idea inside CDA that language turns out to be more powerful when influential individuals or people who are in power make use of it to create a desired meaning (Wodak, 2006). In the context of democratic systems, a political leader is the most powerful and most important person of society (Prasetyo, 2019). The leader is considered as the absolute power in society.

Religion and Discourse of Politics

Religion and politics are closely knit not only in today's modern world but also in history. The popes used Christianity for their favors in the past, in Hinduism too, even leaders and kings declared themselves as God; Machiavelli challenged religion and their authorities in the past. The same is the case with the Protestants;

they also challenged the Church. Hence, in the past religion has been used as a strong weapon and was misused by the leaders; even today, it is used as a strong weapon to gain power and exercise control over the public (Beyers, 2015).

The religious political leaders or the religious leader manipulate the public opinion like the Hindu nationalist Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) of India, Jewish orthodox parties in Israel, and Islamic parties in Muslim countries. We argue, it is not only the political leaders of these parties who bring religion in their election campaigns, but also the leaders who claim to be secular and democratic base their political agenda on protecting the rights of the religion of the majority to gain votes. Such an approach sabotages secularism, liberalism, and democratic system (Reed, 2015).

Helps (2015) argued that if we look at the constitution of the United States of America, we find that religion cannot be a part of politics and also in electoral campaigns because democracy does not allow this, secondly. But if we look at history, Weber (1968) opines that religion has always played an important role in politics. An interview was conducted by USA's journalist Rachel Martin of Cokie Roberts in 2014, on religion and politics in which she says that Church and Politics have a close connection in the USA dating back centuries. Further, she cites some facts about religion in the US, saying that in the last century, John Kennedy was under such suspicion as the only Catholic to be elected president. Additionally, just before his presidency, a Catholic organization, the Knights of Columbus, lobbied to get under God in the Pledge of Allegiance. Of course, the president who articulated the wall of separation between church and state was Jefferson. Most presidents after him talked about freedom of religion. Starting in the late 19th century, people started to hear more about freedom from religion. In our study, we postulate that religion and politics have some strong connection and this connection influences the US citizens who cast votes.

In India religion has been the main focus of the country, as India has the largest population in the world. There are many religions being practiced in India, with the majority religion being Hinduism whereas other minority religions are also practiced such as Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism, etc. Similarly, to the US, which claims to be a secular state, the same is done by India, which claims to be a largest democratic and secular state. Siddique (2009), says that India declares herself as a secular state, whereas after the tragic events in Mumbai 2008, the scenario has changed because

after these attacks the political leadership blamed only one religion and declared its followers (Muslims) terrorists. On the other hand, Hindu extremists were always ready to target others such as RSS, Bajrang Dal, Shiv Sena, etc. Siddique (2009), argues that these organizations are in politics now and they emphasize those Hindus who converted to Christianity and Islam should now reconvert themselves to Hinduism, and this is all done when they are in government. Now when we see the politics of India, religion has always been the center of discussion for many years. Siddique (2009), says that the Shiv Sena, another anti-Muslim and anti-Christian based on the Maharashtra state of India ruled the state under the support of the government from 1970.

After independence, the first Hindu-Muslim riots took place in Jabalpur in 1962 when Nehru was prime minister and his own Congressmen were involved in attacking the Muslims along with RSS (Hindu extremists), this proves that religion has been the main focus in the Indian politics (Siddique, 2009). Pakistan came into being in the name of Islam, it is known as 'Islami Jamhooria Pakistan', and Pakistan claims that it allows minorities to practice their religion freely by giving equal rights. Every religion is allowed to practice their rituals in Pakistan. According to Bajoria (2011), Pakistan is a homeland for Muslims. In politics, Civilian and Military rulers have used Islam to gain power in state policy. Since 1980, Pakistan's involvement in forming Mujahideen to fight against the Soviet Union is before the world. The evidence for this is 'Islamization' under the rule of Zia from 1977-1988. Zia cooperated with the Islamic party's i.e Jamiat-e-Islami and made new laws. Bajoria (2011), argues that religion has been misused by Pakistani politicians and they used it to gain power, and that the favor was taken by both civilian and military rulers. Even before that after the demise of Quaid –e- Azam, the leadership started dividing people into two groups, one group wanted to have Pakistan as a liberal state, and the other wanted to see it as an Islamic state (Bajoria, 2011).

The aspect of religion in political speeches is not explored with the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis in any previous research. Therefore, this study assumes the analysis of language in use by politicians in their pre-election speeches helps to reveal representation of religion as a political tool as described above by analyzing the electoral speeches of Imran Khan, Narendra Modi, and Donald Trump. In order to investigate these assumptions, the following section will identify the ontological and epistemological underpinning of this study.

Research Methodology

For the purpose of this study, we have chosen Gee's (2012) model of "Five theoretical tools" focusing on five main approaches to CDA. These five approaches help to critically analyze the discourse and allow a comprehensive and holistic analysis of discourse as compared to the other previous discourse analysis models of CDA (for example, Fairclough, 2012). As discussed above, CDA does not only explain language use but also specifies why such language is used and how desired actions/goals are achieved through this language use. As this study is based on the analysis of pre-election speeches of three political leaders of three democratic countries and it especially focuses on the role of religion in language, so, it is necessary to search the element of religion as a tool for influencing public opinion. Therefore, we have employed the five theoretical tools model (Gee, 2012) as shown in table 1.

Table 1
Five Theoretical Tools

TOOLS	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
The situated meaning tool	Related to the psyche of the mind.	"The world's big cats are all endangered."
The social languages tool	Different styles and varieties of using language.	" <u>Heliconius</u> butterflies lay their eggs on <u>Passiflora</u> vines."
Intertextuality	To make references like movies or any quotations.	"It always seems impossible until it's done. (Mandela, 1993)."
The figured worlds tool	Personal identity, memory, consciousness, emotion etc.	"The <u>Bachelor</u> Pope."

The big “D” discourse tool	The variety of areas such as cultural anthropology, cultural psychology, psycholinguistics and philosophy “I have a dream” Martin Luther Jr. Blended different discourse such as narration and argument.”
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The situated meaning tool is related to the mind. It has two levels: one is general meaning, and the second is a specific meaning. General meanings refers to the meaning of a word as found in the dictionary. Specific meaning is that which is taken in a specific context (Gee, 2012). Interpretation of language use involves our expectations about the language use considering that “any word or structure in language has a certain ‘meaning potential’, this is, a range of possible meanings that the word or structure can take on it in different contexts of use” (Gee, 2012, p. 151).

Social languages tool deals with the different styles of using the language such as different social dialects. To understand language, one must know the relationship between listener and speaker (Gee, 2012). All languages in the world are composed of social languages that are what one speaks and learns. Social languages include medicine, literature, religion, gangs, sociology, etc. To know what identity one has can be recognized through one’s social language.

The use of quotation or a reference from other works in a discourse is referred to as *intertextuality*. According to Gee (2012), it involves three types: “When one text quotes, refers to, or alludes to another text, we call this intertextuality” (p. 165). That is a direct quotation, the indirect quotation, or referring to another text.

The figured world’s tool is related to language use and its perception by an individual, in other words it relates to the personal identity, memory, consciousness, emotions, and so forth. According to Gee (2012) “we use words based on stories, theories, or models in our minds about what is normal or typical” (p.168).

Gee (2012) has used two types of letters ‘d’ to describe discourse, one is with *big ‘D’* and the other with a small ‘d’. The big D is related to varieties of areas including culture and small d is related to the language in use. Gee (2012) emphasizes, “we do not invent our language; we inherit it from others. We understand each other because we share conventions about how to use and interpret language” (p. 176). Hence, to understand the discourse one must understand the language and culture to which that discourse belongs.

The speeches by Donald Trump for election 2016, Imran Khan for election 2018 and Narendra Modi for election 2019 were analyzed, these speeches were taken from YouTube in audio form and were transcribed by the researchers. The following table shows the data details of the pre-election speeches with the place where delivered and the dates also the number of words. Trump and Imran Khan's speeches were taken from YouTube while Modi's speeches were taken from BJP's (Bharatiya Janata Party) official Website. The speeches were transcribed and translated by the researchers and translation of non-English speeches was validated and verified by two field experts to avoid bias and ambiguity of translation (if any).

Name	Speech	Place	Words	Date	Online Link of the Speech
Donald Trump (USA)	speech 1	Florida	2,074	Oct 25, 2016	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lku0wFIBCCA
	speech 2	Ohio	2,513	Oct 27, 2016	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TbqGNBzCvvQ
	speech 3	New York	1,021	June 22, 2016	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owuq_An4cnk
Imran Khan (Pakistan)	speech 1	Mardan	1,917	July 14, 2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0TPbMjixIA
	speech 2	Karachi	1,683	May 12, 2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpXUds9lfsk
	speech 3	Lahore	1,846	July 23, 2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73cEePcgwGg

Nernedra Modi (India)	speech 1	Mirzapur	1,500	May 16, 2019	https://www.bjp.org/en/speechdetail/2828003/Salient-points-of-speech-Hon-ble-Prime-Minister-Shri-Narendra-Modi-addressing-public-meetings-in-Mau-Chandauli-and-Mirzapur-Uttar-Pradesh-
	speech 2	Fatehabad	1,617	May 8, 2019	https://www.bjp.org/en/speechdetail/2812411/Salient-points-of-speech-of-Hon-ble-PM-Shri-Narendra-Modi-while-addressing-huge-public-meetings-in-Fatehabad-Sirsa-and-Kurukshetra-Haryana
	speech 3	Kashmir	1,580	April 14, 2019	https://www.bjp.org/en/speechdetail/2749567/Salient-points-of-speech-of-Hon-ble-Prime-Minister-Shri-Narendra-Modi-addressing-a-public-meeting-in-Kathua-J-K-

Data Analysis

As discussed above, critical discourse analysis helps explain language use and also provides tools to rationalize why this use of language results in desired actions and may help achieve target socio-political goals. As this study is based on the analysis of pre-election speeches of three political leaders of three democratic countries with the focus on the role of religion in political discourse in general and in pre-election rhetoric in particular. With this objective, we have employed the five theoretical tools model by Gee (2012) to analyze the use of religion as a tool in pre-election electoral speeches for influencing public opinion by imploring affiliation and bonding.

The situated meaning tool in Trump, Khan and Modi's Speeches

Regarding Situated meaning, the speaker used both general and specific meanings in order to convince the audiences. The researchers have found this element in political speeches, below are some excerpts identified for elaborating the situated meaning tool in Trump, Khan and Modi's Speeches. Here is a small excerpt from Donald Trump's speech (Florida, 2016):

“Wouldn't you rather see them, like in that White House figuring out how to knock the hell out of ISIS? In 2009 before Hillary Clinton it was a different world. **Libya** was cooperating **Iraq** was a reduction violent believe it or not, **Syria** was under control. **Iran** was choked by sanctions; **Egypt** was governed by a friendly regime. **Israel** was not treated fairly by U.S. **ISIS** was not on the map.”

Trump uses “ISIS” to malign Islamic ideologies before his countrymen because firstly, Islamic community is a minority and secondly to gain favors of the majority who belong to Christianity. “ISIS” is an organization established in the name of Islam and their logo is also Islamic and their networks are in Iraq and Syria (Rand, 2016). Trump uses ISIS and the names of some Islamic countries like Syria frequently in his speeches to reject the religion of others. Trump also hits his opponent by using religion-embedded discourse of othering by giving examples of ISIS because he knows ISIS is not favored by the majority of Americans. In the second part of his speech Trump hits those countries where the USA had played her role. On the contrary, the speaker also favors Israel while maintaining that Israel was not treated fairly by the USA government. Thus, the speaker uses his world view or

values using the specific context of other countries. Trump targets Islam and establishes its links with terrorist groups and calls it “radical Islam”. The use of the adjective 'radical' indicates the discourse of othering, where the addressee adds the adjective to portray non-Muslims view of Islamic extremism. While, Being Muslim Khan portrays Islamic practices as glorious, for example:

“First of all thanks to Almighty Allah, because the Supreme Court has declared your brother as Sadiq and Ameen.” (Khan, Mardan)

Imran Khan explains to the crowd that he is declared as honest and faithful by the Supreme Court of Pakistan and he takes advantage of that as in Islam these both terms are used to describe a good leader. He takes advantage of these words in this pre-election scenario because these words were used as titles for Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him). These terms may not have importance to the people belonging to other religions but the majority who are Muslims in Pakistan pay much respect to “Sadiq” and “Amin” leaders. Like Khan, Modi brings in his religion in the speech. Like many politically influential orators who “typically appeal to a source (or sources) of power external to them in order to legitimate their exhortations” (Graham, Keenan & Dowd 2004 p.208). Following is a small excerpt from Modi’s speech

“I am in the land of Gurus and Gurudwaras and Pandits. Brothers and sisters.” (Modi, Haryana).

This shows that Modi starts his speech by bringing religion and he knows that in Haryana (one of the Indian cities), there are many temples and it is considered as the city of worship in India for Hindus. Thus, he starts his speech with a religious welcome by considering himself between worshipers and between temples. Modi in this way, talks on two levels of discourse ‘typical’ and ‘normal’, bringing religion in every step of the speech typically for the vote bank. He uses the religion of Muslims also, in his speech at Fatehabad, he talks about ‘triple talaq’, when he is in Haryana he talks about temples. This shows the discourse that normally praises people’s and their beliefs and ways to worship. But typically, the discourse of religion is used to get votes and achieve his goal.

The social languages tool in Trump, Khan and Modi's Speeches

In order to understand spoken language, one must know the relationship between listener and speaker. In the following excerpt of Donald Trump's speech (New York, 2016), we have identified the social languages tool:

“The father of the Orlando shooter was a **Taliban** supporter from Afghanistan the most repressive and active **anti-gay** and **anti-women** regimes on earth.”

Targeting Islam and Muslim states, Trump calls Afghanistan an anti-gay and anti-women country. Through such discourse he also tries to establish an association of the Orlando shooter with Afghanistan. Hence, Trump creates a link with his addressees by using discourse of othering for Muslims and giving negative attributes to Muslim community. These words show Trump's anti-Islam political agenda in his election campaign which strengthens the argument of our study that the political leaders use religion as a tool. Similarly Imran Khan in the following small excerpt from his speech (Lahore, 2018) brings elements of religion by declaring his religio-political agenda clearly:

“My purpose was this *iybaka na'budu wa iyyaka nastaeen* and I did politics on this for 22 years. And I want to make my country that country for which Pakistan was made.”

Khan claims that the purpose of his politics is based on this verse of the Holy Quran. He reminds people of Pakistan that Pakistan came into existence in the name of Islam. Imran Khan refers to the Quranic verse that for those who have never tried to change their conditions, Allah does not help them. In this way he connects himself with the listeners. The speaker wants to win elections and that is the reason he gives verses of the Holy Quran so that people can cast their votes for him. In this way the orator develops some affiliation and bonding with the people (his addressees). Zappavigna (2014) views that this use of language makes “ambient affiliative network” and here this network is of religion of the majority that makes the addresser distinct from the followers of minority religions for example Christianity. Similarly, in the following excerpt Narendra Modi talks about the rights of Sikh community):

“In 1984, thousands of our Sikh sisters, brothers, and young children were murdered in different parts of the country including Delhi, Haryana, Punjab at the behest of the Congress family, and its courtiers.”(Modi, Haryana)

Modi talks about justice for the Sikh people and he refers to 1984 as they were murdered while the opponent party Congress was in power. As Sikhs in India are also in great numbers and their vote for him is also important. So, he refers to the violence which took place in 1984, and thousands of Sikhs were killed. He assures them that they will get justice in his upcoming government. On the other hand, this dialect of religion is proved contrary to the facts as Modi was already in government (2014-2018) for five years but he makes promises for yet another future tenure.

Intertextuality in Khan’s Speeches

The use of quotation or a reference from other works in a discourse is referred to as intertextuality.

“Bismi llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm.” (Khan, Lahore, 2018)

“Iyyaka **Na`budu** wa Iyyaka Nasta`een.” (Khan, Lahore, 2018)

The above small excerpts show that Imran Khan starts his speech with Quranic verses and he also gives examples from the history of Islam. As discussed earlier, this research studies manipulation of religion in political speeches, and Khan’s speeches are replete with intertextuality references like use of Arabic words and phrases from the Quran: “Bismi llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm.”, “Iyyaka **Na`budu** wa Iyyaka Nasta`een.” and many more. This use of bilingual intertextuality depicts that Khan uses religion in order to achieve his political goals.

The figured world’s tool in Trump, Khan and Modi’s Speeches

The figured world tool helps to identify how speakers use ethics, beliefs and value systems on the basis of which communities and societies differ. All three leaders manipulate the element of religion to critically present differences from others' religion; and on the basis of which the majority identifies themselves with those beliefs and values which they favor.

“I only want to admit people who share our values and love our people that Hillary took 25 million dollars from **Saudi Arabia** and much more from others, where being **gay** is also **punishable by death.**” (Trump, New York)

“Hillary Clinton took millions from **Kuwait, Qatar, Oman**, and many other countries they **horribly abused woman** and the **LGBT citizens** to carry up her corrupt dealings.” (Trump, New York)

According to Gee (2012) the use of words is influenced by some accepted social theories, or models which in the minds of the addresser and addressee find certain things normal or typical. The analysis of the above excerpts of speeches reveals that Trump’s speech favours majority Christian American by targeting Saudi Arabia and shows his realization that the Saudis do not accept gays and even women’s rights, hence Saudis horribly abuse women. While, American society welcomes LGBT rights. This rhetoric of contrast presents American supporters of LGBT good and Saudi women abusers as evil. As in the USA’s society, these words such as gays, lesbians are accepted while these words as taboos in any Islamic society. Trump brings the element of religion and gives examples of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman where being gay or lesbian is punishable. Secondly, Trump emphasizes women’s rights and targets Islamic countries to prove that Islamic countries impose many restrictions on women. On the other hand, Trump’s speech shows that women are horribly abused in these Islamic countries. They do not get equal rights. In the same way, the following excerpt from Khan’s speech shows how he gets the attention of the majority by manipulating Islamic beliefs:

“Is there not a surah in Quran Sharif? A surah named Al-Furqan means God has always given a sense of good to humans so that humans should know the difference between good and bad. And people who went to the airport to receive Nawaz are donkeys, they are not humans. Because they don’t sense the difference between good and bad.” (Khan, Mardan)

Khan gives an example of a Quranic verse at first, and then brings in the differentiation between good and bad by righteous and pious Muslims. Further, he says to the people of Pakistan that they are foolish; he even calls them donkeys, and does not consider them humans. He says these words to those Pakistani’s who gathered for his opponent, Nawaz Sharif at the airport. This shows that Khan proves himself as right, using words such as donkeys and foolish for the people of Pakistan. Here the discourse of religion is used for self-othering by targeting the opposition party leader. Khan is drawing on the contrast between the good: his supporters being followers of Islam and the bad: the supporters of the opposition being blind to the teachings of Islam. This discourse of contrast intends to appeal to the emotions and

consciousness of the addressees to bring the supporters of the opponent party to his side.

“Our government also took the initiative to liberate the Muslim sisters from the hell of triple Talaq, only one phone call saying talaq, talaq, talaq, and her life is ended! Is this fair?” (Modi, Mirzapur)

Like Khan and Trump, Modi uses religion in his speeches. As discussed above, he disrespects the emotions of Muslims on the issue of Talaq (Divorce). Here, he presents his anti-Islam agenda.

The big discourse “D” tool in Trump, Khan and Modi’s Speeches

According to Gee (2014), to understand the discourse, one must understand the language and culture to which that discourse belongs. Our study is delimited to view cultural manifestation of religion. The excerpts quoted in the previous sections give examples of the use of religious terms, words, phrases, connotations etc. which together point to the cultural manifestation of that particular republic. In the following small excerpt, Trump (Ohio, 2016) creates discourse to blame the opponent Hillary who remained foreign secretary and the whole speech depicts discourse that maligns the opponent and he criticizes her as she favors Islam and Muslims.

“There are now 1000 open **ISIS** investigations in the United States, **ISIS** is on a campaign of **genocide against Christians in the Middle East**, or what they call **the nation of the cross**, that's what they call the nation of the cross, think of that. Think of that's the term they have for **Christians.**” (Trump, Ohio)

In the above speech, the speaker first creates the discourse of religion and then demands the vote for the right person, Trump himself, who would make the country great. The speech reveals that Trump’s discourse declares himself the right choice in values, deeds, feelings, words, etc. While, Imran Khan, being a leader in a Muslim majority country favors Islam.

“See how Muslims are treated in the world, See in Somalia, Libya's condition of Muslims, today I salute to our armed forces for fighting with terrorism.” (Khan, Lahore)

Khan reminds the crowd about their Muslim brothers who are not treated well by other countries, he reminds that there is no voice for them. Hence, he is the person who will fight for their rights. He gives examples of how Muslims are treated badly in Somalia and Libya. This all shows that Khan creates a discourse of religion to gain votes.

“The **Ramayana** and **Mahabharata** and those with a mindset of being sent to jail for taking the name of God.” (Modi, Haryana)

“The Aashirwad of Maata will strengthen me.” (Modi, Kashmir)

In the above small excerpts, Modi praises himself in the crowd that he gets strength with prayers of Maata. His speeches depict that Modi talks by seeing the crowd and its situation, in the majority of Muslim areas he talks about Muslim rights with a religious perspective. In the same way in the Sikh community, he talks about their rights whereas in Hindus he talks about their gods and their rights which shows a clear depiction of the use of religion for gaining votes.

Findings/Discussion

The findings of the data analysis reveal that leaders use religion to achieve their goals which are to rule the people. Like the previous research, we found that the leaders use religion as a weapon (Beyers, 2015) to win elections. The chosen Gee’s (2012) model of “Five theoretical tools” help to critically analyze the discourse and allow a comprehensive and holistic analysis of pre-election discourse. In Donald trump’s speeches, we found that he has used the element of religion frequently, he has given examples to relate his stance to religion. It may be against or in favor but he uses religion to support his views. He targets ISIS and talks about its relations with Islam. Trump blames Muslim countries like Syria and Iraq for supporting ISIS that aims at converting Christians. This shows that he brings existing controversy between two religions, Islam and Christianity, and manipulates them by showing them enemies to each other. He talks against Hilary (former foreign Secretary), that she supported Muslims especially Syria, Iraq, and ISIS. She was responsible for killing Americans. So, this shows that religion is the main agent for Donald Trump to support his ideas. The findings of this study are substantiating the research conducted by Helps (2015), this study shows that religion is used by the U.S politicians in their speeches. The findings of this study show that religion has been used by Trump for his agenda that is to gain votes, so this study agrees with the

views of Helps (2015), who talks about the use of majority religion and proves that the USA has no state religion whereas politicians go against the constitution of the USA.

All three speeches of the leader Imran Khan start with religious references in the speeches. Firstly, he starts his every speech with the verse of the Quran and he promises the people of Pakistan to make the country a welfare state of Medina when he will be Prime Minister. Muslims have a lot of respect for Medina because of Prophet Muhammad which depicts that religion is being used to gain votes. Secondly, he emphasizes on his own identity as a staunch Muslim as in one of his speeches he says that he has been grown with this Quranic verse i.e., “iyaka nabudu wa iyak a nasteen”, which means “you we worship and you we take refuge in”. Our study favors Bajoria (2011), who opines that Civilian and Military rulers have always used Islam to gain power. Moreover, Pakistan is an Islamic state, Pakistan came into being in the name of Islam and its constitution clearly depicts strong beliefs of Islam, therefore unlike Modi and Trump, Khan’s stance for religion is embedded in the national ideology. However, Pakistan follows a democratic system and as in democracy everyone has the right to perform their duties according to their beliefs.

This study reveals that Modi has shown his favor for Hinduism, not only for the reason that he believes in it but also to influence the audience, who share these beliefs. The data analysis shows that Modi starts his speech by saying “Namaste” and talks about Ishwar Chandra, Kaali Maata, etc. which are gods of Hindus. These findings support the previous research (e.g. Siddique, 2009) that leaders in India try to hurt the religious minorities. In his speech, Modi also talks about “Ishwar Chandra” who is considered the most pious person in Hinduism. Hindus worship this lord, for example in one of Modi’s speeches shows his strong hatred for the opponent who broke the idol. Hence, it was observed in data analysis that in Modi’s all three speeches he has used religion for gaining the vote. For instance, when there is a majority of Hindus he talks about Ishwar Chandra, Raam, and other idols of Hindus. However, in the crowd who is Muslim majority, he talks about their religion and attacks the sensitive issues like “triple talaq”.

Conclusion

This study involves the critical discourse analysis framework by Gee (2012): the five theoretical tools. We have carried out the analysis through the lens of these five theoretical tools to reveal how language is used by politicians. Thus, this study

concludes that all three leaders use religion for gaining votes, and religion worked for them as a tool in their speeches. The leaders' use of religion in the speeches aimed to manipulate religious affiliation of majority and thus developing a bond with them for winning elections. Secondly, the religion of the majority was used as a tool in the speeches. For example, Donald Trump used Christianity and favored Jews; the same was done by Imran Khan he used Islam; while Narendra Modi used Hinduism in electoral speeches. So, this shows that religion was manipulated and was taken as a tool by political leaders to achieve their goals. The religious discourse supports these findings and their stance as they have used religion to achieve their goal. Through discourse, the language is maintained by the political leaders as well. These speeches were effective tools to the end, and their analysis opens a new perspective into viewing the religion on a different level.

In this research we took three leaders from three different countries of the world and their pre-election speeches, hence being a Muslim we may have had a biased approach towards any anti-Islam comment by these leaders or we may have favored the Muslim leader (Imran Khan) and his speech. Secondly, being a Pakistani, we may have favored Pakistan and its constitution.

This study is important in a way that it adds to the critical knowledge in the field of language and it has given an insight into the selection of words by politicians to achieve their goal. This study persuaded religion as a tool in political speeches. Furthermore, this study has concluded that politicians use religion as an element for their goals in electoral speeches. Thus, religion is an institution and bias attached to the religion leaves a negative impact on society and also on common peoples. Future research may also focus on the Gee (2012) framework to analyze not only the electoral discourse of the leaders but also the political discourse in general. Further study with respect to electoral speeches can also be carried on the political agendas of politicians in society. The research can also be carried out on politicians' political agendas with respect to money and also with respect to moral and ethical values.

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