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**RESEARCH PAPER**

## Political Discourse and Strategic Communication: A Pragma-Stylistic Analysis of Imran Khan's Interview with Deutsche Welle

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores how Imran Khan uses language strategically during his interview with Deutsche Welle (DW) on July 15, 2023, to shape public perception and communicate his political views. It looks at how Khan uses different language techniques, drawing on Grice's theory of conversational implicature and Searle's Speech Act Theory. These frameworks help analyze how Khan crafts his message through various speech acts—such as statements, requests, promises, and expressions—while also examining how he uses indirect communication (like implicatures) and specific stylistic choices (tone, word choice, rhetorical devices) to influence his audience. The findings show that Khan leverages these linguistic tools not only to assert his political position but also to build credibility and subtly guide how the public interprets key issues. His careful use of presuppositions and indirect messaging helps him frame political topics in a way that aligns with his broader objectives. By examining this interview, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how political figures use language to control and direct discourse, revealing the complex relationship between language, power, and persuasion. It also opens the door for further research into how different politicians use similar strategies in varying contexts to influence public opinion. Additionally, the study investigates stylistic features such as tone, lexical choice, and rhetorical devices, alongside presuppositions that underpin Khan's statements. And the findings reveal that Khan's use of implicatures, speech acts, stylistic features, and presuppositions effectively enhances his rhetorical strategies, demonstrating a sophisticated interplay between language, context, and political objectives. This study contributes to the fields of pragma-stylistics and political communication by offering insights into the linguistic tactics of a prominent political figure, thus highlighting the intricate relationship between language and political power.

**KEYWORDS** Political Discourse, Pragmatics, Rhetorical Strategies, Speech Acts, Stylistics

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### Introduction

Pragma stylistics integrates stylistic and pragmatic concepts to study language use in context. Stylistics studies the unique aspects of language use in writings, while pragmatics concentrates on how context affects meaning interpretation. The combination of these two fields offers a thorough framework for comprehending how contextual elements and linguistic decisions influence communication techniques, especially in political discourse.

The study explores Khan's use of politeness strategies to navigate sensitive topics and maintain credibility. Grice's maxims are used to assess the relevance, clarity, and informativeness of his communication. Contextual factors, including media dynamics and the political climate, are considered to provide a comprehensive

understanding of Khan's rhetorical approach. Additionally, the analysis investigates Khan's use of metaphor, repetition, and parallelism to strengthen his arguments and appeal emotionally to the audience.

The findings demonstrate that Khan's strategic language choices in the DW interview significantly shape public perception and build support for his party. This research enhances the understanding of political rhetoric, media representation, and their impact on democratic engagement in Pakistan.

### **Literature Review**

Pakistan's political discourse has been significantly influenced by its colonial past. The British colonial rule left a lasting impact on the country's political, legal, and administrative systems. This legacy is evident in the formal and bureaucratic language often used in political communication. Political leaders, including Imran Khan, often reference colonial history to evoke nationalistic sentiments and critique contemporary governance issues. Adams (2018) analyzed political interviews using Grice's conversational implicatures and Speech Act Theory, providing a foundational understanding of pragmatic strategies in political communication.

Since gaining independence in 1947, Pakistan has experienced a tumultuous political journey marked by periods of military rule, democratic transitions, and political instability. The oscillation between military and civilian governments has influenced the tone and style of political discourse. Johnson (2020) examined speech acts in presidential speeches, highlighting how political leaders use language to achieve specific communicative goals. In his opinion, leaders like Imran Khan navigate this complex history by addressing themes of democracy, governance, and military influence in their communication.

Chen (2019) explored presupposition in political discourse through press conferences, revealing the implicit assumptions in political communication from state-controlled media to the proliferation of private television channels and social media, and the landscape has changed dramatically. Political leaders now engage with a more diverse and fragmented audience. Imran Khan, known for his media-savvy approach, uses interviews and social media platforms to reach a broad audience, tailoring his message to resonate with different segments of society. Further Gupta (2021) investigated multimodal discourse in political advertisements, focusing on the interaction between verbal and visual elements.

Kumar (2017) who conducted a critical discourse analysis of Imran Khan's rhetoric, utilizing Fairclough's framework to uncover the persuasive elements in his communication style opines that Imran Khan's political journey from a cricket star to the Prime Minister of Pakistan is a significant backdrop for analyzing his discourse. As the founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, he has positioned himself as an anti-corruption crusader and a champion of justice. His rhetoric often contrasts with traditional political narratives, emphasizing change, accountability, and transparency. Understanding his political trajectory provides context for his language choices and strategic communication. These Previous research has extensively explored pragmatic stylistics in political discourse, offering valuable insights into the language strategies used by political figures. These studies collectively enhance the theoretical landscape, offering varied perspectives and methodologies for analyzing pragmatic stylistics in political discourse.

The study of the literature emphasizes how important pragmatic stylistics is to comprehending political communication. Scholars can conduct a thorough analysis of the subtle language techniques employed by political personalities such as Imran Khan by incorporating theories of conversational implicatures, speech acts, politeness, presupposition, and stylistic devices. In the context of modern political discourse, this method offers insightful information about how language works as a dynamic tool for persuasion, bargaining, and the creation of political identity.

## **Material and Methods**

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study presents the theoretical frameworks and qualitative research methods used in the pragma-stylistic analysis of Imran Khan's interview with Deutsche Welle (DW). The study uses a qualitative approach to investigate the complex linguistic elements, nuanced context, and hidden meanings that are present in Khan's talk. In order to clarify language use and political contexts, the research emphasizes the interpretive role of pragma-stylistics.

The theoretical underpinning is pragmatism, a philosophical approach that emphasizes the practical application of concepts and the results of actions. Pragmatism is a political speech movement that dates back to the late 19th and early 20th century that emphasizes the practical implications of language use. This methodology is consistent with the goal of the study, which is to investigate how language choices impact real-world situations. Khan's interview with DW has pragma-stylistic aspects that will be examined using a qualitative analytical technique. The primary elements of the analytical framework are stylistic devices, politeness techniques, Grice's Maxims, and Speech Act Theory. The study attempts to pinpoint Khan's language patterns and communication strategies through thematic analysis.

Transcripts and video recordings of Khan's interview with DW are used as data sources. Visual as well as textual aspects are analyzed to capture linguistic nuances and contextual information essential for pragma-stylistic analysis.

Transcribing, coding, thematic analysis, comparison analysis, and interpretation are all part of the data analysis process. The study attempts to understand underlying language patterns, communication strategies, and their impact on political narratives by carefully examining linguistic aspects.

### **Use of Pragmatic and Stylistic Theories**

A thorough analysis is conducted of Khan's application of pragmatic and stylistic theories, such as implicatures, Speech Act Theory, politeness techniques, and stylistic devices. These theories explain how Khan handles touchy topics, sways public opinion, and achieves his communication objectives.

### **Comparative Analysis**

Khan's flexibility in a range of interview situations is demonstrated by a comparison of his interviews with DW and Al Jazeera. Variations in tone use of implicatures, engagement styles, and cultural sensitivity provide insight into Khan's strategic communication methods.

## Dominant Role of Speech Act Theory

Speech Act Theory emerges as the most frequently applied theory in analyzing Khan's interview. This theory illuminates how Khan strategically employs language to manipulate public perception and deliver political messages, highlighting the performative elements of political communication. Through a comprehensive analysis of pragma-stylistic elements in Khan's interview with DW, this research aims to deepen understanding of his communication tactics and their impact on political discourse. By integrating qualitative research techniques and theoretical frameworks, the study contributes to the broader conversation on political rhetoric and media representation.

## Results and Discussions

An examination of Imran Khan's interview with DW (September, 2023) from a pragmatic-stylistic perspective reveals a variety of persuasive techniques and rhetorical devices that the former prime minister of Pakistan used. Khan skillfully steers the conversation throughout to make his political stance known, refute charges, and outline his vision for Pakistan's future. Through a close examination of the pragmatic consequences of his linguistic decisions, conversational strategies, and stylistic components, we seek to unravel the underlying intentions, persuasive devices, and nuanced details concealed inside the discourse of the interview. Interpretations

**Performing an implicative analysis** of Imran Khan's interview demonstrates the former prime minister of Pakistan's intricate use of indirect speech actions, implicit meanings, and nuanced communication techniques. Khan carefully moves through the conversation, expressing his opinions, answering criticisms, and asserting his political stance. By delving into the implicatures inherent in his language choices, conversational implicatures, and pragmatic implicatures, we uncover the implicit intentions, hidden agendas, and subtle nuances sewn into the fabric of the interview discourse.

### Conversational Implicatures

- **Charges' Political Motivation:** Khan implies that the 180 charges against him are politically motivated, suggesting they're a tactic to hinder his political career.
- **Election Uncertainty:** His comments about the transition of power imply concerns that the government may try to suppress opposition.
- **Military Influence:** Khan suggests the military's role in politics is a long-standing issue, not just a personal disagreement.
- **Election-Related Violence:** His remark about elections "letting the steam off" implies that postponing elections could lead to political instability.
- **Human Rights Allegations:** Khan implies that the accusations against him are exaggerated or politically driven by comparing his administration's actions to the current government's crackdown.
- **Pragmatic Approach to Taliban:** He implies his foreign policy stance is pragmatic, not ideologically supportive of the Taliban.
- **Critique of Western Hypocrisy:** Khan suggests Western criticisms of Pakistan are selective and politically motivated.
- **Professionalism and Calmness:** Despite stress, Khan's calm response at the end of the interview suggests a need to maintain decorum.

### Conventional Implicatures

- “Even If”: Khan's use of "even if" implies that his incarceration is likely, suggesting anticipated political repression.
- “My Pleasure”: Despite the tense conversation, this phrase conveys respect and appreciation.
- “Total Crackdown”: Implies a severe government response, indicating political repression.
- “The Problem Was That”: Suggests a cause-and-effect situation regarding his relationship with the military.
- “I’m Prepared to Die Here”: Implies strong commitment to his cause.
- “It’s Not Up to Me to Moralize”: Implies he is focusing on national interests rather than criticizing other countries.
- “That Is the Main Reason”: Emphasizes security and stability as the primary reasons for Pakistan’s diplomatic stance.

### Scalar Implicatures

- “Almost 180” Charges: Indicates a large number of charges, emphasizing legal pressure.
- “Most Definitely” Contesting Elections: Highlights certainty in his commitment to contest the elections.
- “Only One” Incident of Journalistic Mistreatment: Minimizes involvement in media repression.
- “Almost About to Break a World Record”: Exaggerates to highlight the absurdity of the legal challenges.
- “Fairly Independent” Judiciary: Implies some autonomy, but not complete independence.
- “A Few” Casualties: Minimizes the severity of violence during protests.

These implicatures reveal the strategic and nuanced ways Khan communicates, adding depth and complexity to his interview responses.

### Presuppositions

A presupposition is an implicit assumption that, although not stated clearly, is assumed to be true in a statement or question. There are several presuppositions in the interview, each carrying implicit presumptions or prior knowledge.

- Will Khan Be Allowed to Contest Elections?: The question about Khan running in elections presupposes there will be elections and his participation may be limited due to legal matters, implying uncertainty or contested elections.
- 180 Charges Against Imran Khan: Mentioning 180 charges implies these allegations are severe and may bar Khan from office, highlighting the scope and significance of these claims.
- Caretaker Government: Questioning the caretaker administration presupposes an orderly, constitutional transition of power, assuming forthcoming elections will be lawful.
- Democracy Hanging by a Thread: Questions about democracy presuppose Pakistan’s democratic system is fragile or unstable, setting the tone for discussions on military involvement and governance challenges.

- **Imran Khan's Relationship with the Military:** Discussing Khan's relationship with the military presupposes initial good relations and a current breakdown, implying a shift in power balance.
- **Attempted Assassination of Imran Khan:** Mentioning an assassination attempt presupposes a direct, deliberate effort to harm Khan, implying political violence.
- **Peaceful or Violent Campaign:** Asking about a nonviolent or violent campaign presupposes potential election violence, suggesting underlying conflicts and instability.
- **Human Rights Violations:** Bringing up human rights allegations presupposes these charges are real and deserving of investigation, providing context for discussing Khan's governance and media freedom.
- **Khan's Attitude Toward the Taliban:** Questioning Khan about the Taliban presupposes their practices are widely viewed as oppressive, laying the groundwork for exploring Khan's foreign policy.
- **Western Countries and Double Standards:** Khan assumes Western nations prioritize strategic interests over human rights, critiquing Western policies and their implications for Pakistan.

Presuppositions provide implicit assumptions and contextual background, shaping the questions and responses, revealing underlying topics and tensions in the interview.

### **Politeness Strategies**

According to Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1978), speakers must control their face-threatening activities (FTAs) in order to preserve social harmony. Imran Khan's response to Tim Sebastian's pointed and frequently aggressive questions with a variety of diplomatic man oeuvres. -

**Bald-on-Record:** This tactic, which calls for straight communication without mitigation, is employed when efficiency or haste are necessary. Tim Sebastian routinely uses this strategy, asking direct questions concerning the 180 charges leveled against Khan, the possibility of his party running for office, and his opinions regarding the Taliban. This direct approach seeks to get answers from Khan and hold him responsible. In direct questioning, Sebastian asks, "Will you run in the elections despite the charges against you?" for example. Khan is forced to give a clear response as a result of this tactic.

**Positive Politeness:** In an effort to establish rapport and respect between the interviewer and the audience, Imran Khan frequently employs positive politeness. For instance, in his discussion of the accusations made against him, Khan stresses the gravity of the claims while framing them as politically driven in an effort to persuade the audience that he is the victim of unfair persecution. He asserts, "These charges are baseless and politically driven, intended to undermine my party's efforts for a democratic Pakistan."

**Negative Politeness:** This tactic entails limiting imposition and respecting the listener's need for autonomy. Khan illustrates the intricacy and historical entanglements of the political system by using negative politeness to defend his connection with the military. By interpreting his acts in the larger framework of Pakistani politics, he seeks to soften potential criticism. He remarks, "The political

system in Pakistan is deeply intertwined with the military, and navigating this relationship requires a delicate balance.”

**Off-Record (Indirectness):** Khan lowers the possibility of conflict by using off-record techniques to hint or suggest without making a direct charge. Khan makes vague allusions to the participation of military and intelligence institutions in the no-confidence vote that resulted in his dismissal. He can express concerns in this way and still have plausible deniability. He says, “Certain forces were at play behind the scenes, influencing the vote against me.”

### Handling Criticism and Diplomacy

**Deflection and Framing:** Khan sidesteps criticism by drawing attention to more general problems that his party faces. In response to a question concerning the 180 accusations, he emphasizes the purge of his party, saying, “10,000 of our workers are in jail.” This detour reduces the FTA’s individual impact by casting it in the context of a group problem.

**Recontextualization and Justification:** In order to justify his behavior, Khan reframes the accusations. He talks about the no-confidence vote and frames his response as a fight against systematic injustice by characterizing it as tainted by corruption and outside meddling.

**Questioning Validity:** Khan frequently contests the accuracy of the accusations and findings made against him. He casts doubt on the veracity of the Human Rights Watch report when presented with it by demanding concrete instances to back up the accusations. **Conveying Disapproval of Injustice:** Khan regularly expresses his displeasure with alleged injustices in order to lessen FTAs. In an attempt to appeal to the audience’s sense of justice, he presents the onslaught on his party as an assault on democracy.

**Using Humor and Relatability:** He occasionally uses humor to ease the situation and give a more relatable tone to his remarks. Khan makes light of the many charges, claiming that he is close to a “double century” of charges, which lessens the severity of the situation.

### Speech Acts Analysis

The speech acts in Khan’s interview reveal how he conveys meanings beyond the literal words used.

**Locutionary Acts:** These are the literal statements made by Khan in response to Sebastian’s questions. For example, when asked about his election plans, Khan replies, “Yes, I will contest the elections,” providing a direct answer to the query.

**Illocutionary Acts:** These reflect the intended meaning behind Khan’s statements, such as asserting his commitment to democracy and framing himself as a victim of political persecution. When he says, “The charges against me are a political ploy,” the illocutionary force is to assert innocence and challenge the legitimacy of the charges.

**Perlocutionary Acts:** The effect of Khan’s statements on the audience includes eliciting sympathy, skepticism, or support. By emphasizing his party’s high public

approval and framing the charges as politically motivated, Khan aims to garner public support and cast doubt on the establishment's actions.

Imran Khan's interview with Deutsche Welle showcases a sophisticated use of pragmatic and stylistic strategies to navigate a challenging and potentially hostile media environment. Through the application of politeness strategies, speech acts, and effective handling of criticism, Khan attempts to maintain his political legitimacy, defend his actions, and connect with the audience. This pragma-stylistic analysis highlights the complexity of political discourse and the strategic use of language in high-stakes interviews.

### **Stylistic Devices**

Imran Khan employs a variety of stylistic devices to enhance his rhetoric, evoke strong imagery, and make his arguments more compelling.

#### **Sarcasm**

Example: Discussing the charges against him, Khan sarcastically remarks about waking up daily to new charges, humorously suggesting he might break a "world record" with a "double century" of cases.

Effect: This sarcasm highlights the absurdity of the charges, casting doubt on their legitimacy while engaging the audience with humor.

#### **Irony**

Example: Khan points out the contradiction between claims of his government's authoritarian tendencies and the current media restrictions, stating, "During my government, media was not as controlled as it is now."

Effect: This irony underscores the discrepancy between the accusations and the current state of media freedom, enhancing his argument against the allegations.

#### **Metaphors**

Example: Using a sports metaphor, Khan describes the 180 charges against him as a potential "world record," and when talking about systemic issues, he refers to "crossing a river."

Effect: These metaphors simplify complex issues, making them more relatable and emphasizing the absurdity and evolution of political challenges.

#### **Narrative**

Example: Khan constructs a narrative of his political journey as an outsider battling entrenched corruption and military influence.

Effect: This narrative reinforces his image as a reformer and victim of a broader conspiracy, garnering sympathy and support.

#### **Hyperbole**

Example: Khan exaggerates the crackdown on his party, claiming "10,000 workers of mine are in jail today" and comparing the current repression to martial law.



Effect: These exaggerations emphasize the severity of the situation, portraying the government's actions as excessively harsh.

### **Rhetorical Questions**

Example: Khan uses rhetorical questions to challenge the notion of a fair justice system and the interviewer's assumptions, such as, "Will they allow the party to contest elections? That's the big question."

Effect: These questions provoke thought and highlight the perceived injustice, leading the audience to question the legitimacy of the government's actions.

### **Symbolism**

Example: Symbolic language is used to depict the oppression of his party, with references to leaders being "underground or in jail."

Effect: This symbolism paints a picture of widespread suppression, emphasizing the struggle for justice and freedom.

### **Personification**

Example: Khan personifies the legal system, suggesting it actively targets him with charges to break a "world record."

Effect: This personification conveys a sense of intentional persecution, adding emotional weight to his narrative.

### **Imagery**

Example: Vivid descriptions of his arrest and the ensuing chaos, such as commandos storming the court, create a dramatic visual.

Effect: This imagery underscores the intensity of the situation, reinforcing Khan's portrayal as a victim of state aggression.

### **Similes**

Example: Comparing the public to sheep, Khan highlights their resistance to being controlled, stating, "We are not sheep."

Effect: This simile underscores the public's desire for independence and justice, aligning with Khan's message.

### **Foregrounding and Deviation**

Foregrounding and deviation are used to draw attention to key points and to challenge conventional expectations.

### **Foregrounding**

Example: Repeated emphasis on the "180 charges" against him and the "10,000 workers" in jail.

Effect: This repetition underscores the scale of legal and political pressure, reinforcing his narrative of persecution.

### **Deviation**

Example: The interviewer's challenge to Khan's democratic credentials and Khan's evasion of direct criticism regarding his support for the Taliban.

Effect: These deviations from expected norms highlight inconsistencies in Khan's responses and the interviewer's probing nature, adding tension and depth to the discussion.

In order to reframe the story and put himself in a positive light in the face of allegations of political persecution, Khan cleverly uses framing and reframing strategies. Khan deflects criticism and presents himself as a victim of a repressive regime by rephrasing inquiries to highlight bigger concerns of injustice and oppression and presenting the claims against him as politically driven. The study explores how Khan redirected the interview's focus, cast doubt on the government's legitimacy, and challenged presumptions using rhetorical questions. By strategically challenging the charges against him, Khan hopes to discredit the government's actions and support his story of being persecuted for his political beliefs. Khan purposefully manipulates tone and cadence to convey calmness, authority, and logic. This is discussed. Khan presents himself to the audience as a leader who can handle difficult political situations with dignity and discipline by using a cool-headed and collected attitude that also communicates stability and reason. Management of Public Image:

Khan's deliberate linguistic choices to control his public image are examined in this study during the interview. By emphasizing his commitment to peaceful protests, adherence to the rule of law, and contrasting with government tactics, Khan seeks to reassure the audience and present himself as a responsible leader dedicated to democratic principles.

### **Conclusion**

Imran Khan's interview with Deutsche Welle showcases his adeptness in employing pragma-stylistic elements to convey political messaging and manage public perception. Through framing tactics, strategic use of rhetorical questions, manipulation of tone and cadence, and management of public image, Khan effectively shapes the narrative surrounding accusations of political persecution. This article provides valuable insights into Khan's discourse strategies and their implications for political communication.

The study contributes to our understanding of political communication by demonstrating Khan's deft use of linguistic strategies. It sheds light on the ways in which language influences political narratives and public opinion, providing insightful information for scholars studying the mechanics of political language as well as political communicators and campaign strategists. The study's conclusions have applications in political speech analysis, communication studies, and campaigns for office. They offer guidelines for campaign messaging, public relations, speechwriting, and the analysis of political language to create messages that are compelling to a variety of audiences.

**Recommendations**

The study's conclusions have applications in political speech analysis, communication studies, and campaigns for office. They offer guidelines for campaign messaging, public relations, speechwriting, and the analysis of political language to create messages that are compelling to a variety of audiences. It would be valuable to extend this analysis to other political figures and their media appearances, examining how different leaders use similar linguistic strategies to influence public perception. This would provide a broader understanding of how language functions as a tool for persuasion and political power across various contexts.

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