

# A Critical Discourse Analysis of Political Speeches: A CDA examination of Imran's and Arden's Speeches at the UN and General Assembly

## ABSTRACT:

*This paper investigates the uses of hedges by Pakistani writers in The Express Tribune and The Dawn Newspaper. Hedges are words that speakers or writers use to express uncertainty and tentativeness in their language. A corpus of 28 articles was compiled for the study. The raw data were then cleaned and converted into text files. To identify hedges, each text file was uploaded to Metapak, which generated a list of hedges used in each article. This list was further refined by removing undesired words. The study reveals that the writers of both newspapers used a total of forty-eight hedges. It uncovers that the male contributors use more hedges than the female contributors and that The Dawn Newspaper employs more hedges than The Express Tribune. Both writer-oriented and reader-oriented hedges were observed across the two newspapers. The study concludes that Pakistani English newspapers employ hedging practices in their writing. The study is limited by its small sample size and focus on only two newspapers, suggesting the need for broader research across larger datasets and diverse media outlets.*

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## Introduction

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a vast area of linguistics that explores the context in which language is used. According to Tostcher (2000), Discourse analysis is expanding far and wide due to different definitions which give a “bundle of meanings” to the field. Discourse is the process of using language in “context,” i.e., language of social and political, which forms the base of the society (Schaffner, 2010). Language is the main instrument of politicians to achieve their political aims and goals. It plays an

important role in governing the society and building the perception of the people about issues running in the country (Machin & Mayrs, 2012). SFL is seen as a tool for meaning creation and as a network of interconnected meaningful language choices (Halliday, 2014). The notion of transitivity is seen as the basis for the speaker's individual inscription of his experience in the semantic initiation of experience (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). However, it is Halliday's most comprehensive theory that outlined language as a speaker's experience (Titscher et al., 2000).

Nowadays, SFL and transitivity theories are used in many fields of studies like stylistics and critical discourse analysis. The phenomenon of language structure producing numerous meanings and ideologies that are typically not explicit for readers has been investigated using transitivity analysis (Mehmood, 2014). SFL is seen as a tool for meaning creation and as a network of interconnected meaningful language choices. The notion of transitivity is seen as the basis for the speaker's individual inscription of his experience in the semantic initiation of experience (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

However, it is Halliday's most comprehensive theory that outlines language as a speaker's experience. It is not new that stylistics and discourse analysis studies have been using SFL and transitivity theories for language analysis. The phenomenon of language structure producing numerous meanings and ideologies that are typically not explicit for readers has been investigated using transitivity analysis (Mehmood, 2014). It was Halliday (1974) who first introduced transitivity analysis. He examined the transitivity syntactic structure's frequency in the development of the novel's theme in Golding's research of "The Inheritors." Transitivity analysis was important, according to Opara (2012), in identifying motifs in the narrative discourse. It demonstrates how the discourse producers' linguistic decisions are used to create characters. The study's findings showed that the positive character dominates the themes. Nguyen (2012) used the transitivity theory to analyze Hoa Pham's short tale "Heroic Mother" to determine and describe how the language is used to convey the characteristics of the main character.

According to the research, transitivity linguistic choices were crucial in character development and helped the reader comprehend the main character coherently. In order to uncover the ambiguity between speech and action through the U.S. State Department's discourse, Hamdache (2016) undertook a corpus-based discourse analysis of the department utilizing transitivity theory. The outcome showed that the United States is only willing to fight ISIS as a coalition member and is not obligated to do so. To analyze language decisions in Woolf's literary work "Old Mrs. Grey," Cunanan (2011) employed the transitivity system. The study also emphasizes how readers can access a persona's stream of mind thanks to transitivity.

This study aimed to observe different data compared to earlier research. It delimits the research by focusing only on the one meta function of SFG theory, that is ideational meta function. Using transitivity analysis, this study's focus is on the experienced meanings that politicians convey in their speech. This essay contrasts the two non-native English politicians' speeches and examines the language used by each to convey their ideologies and levels of authority. The AntConc corpus tool is used in the research to do corpus-based analysis.

## **Literature Review**

M.A.K. Halliday created systematic functional grammar (SFG), which is founded on grammatical description. It claims that for generating meaning, language is considered a necessary structural tool or

interlocking system. Halliday and Hassan (1989) defined a text as "language that is functional"; that language focus, to deliver societal meaning in a particular and realistic manner, whether it is in written or spoken form. Instead of combining words and sentences, Halliday decided to use text directly in order to analyze the meaning and usage of words and phrases. The core concept of Halliday is that language is established metafunctionally. As a result, Halliday's functions of language consist mainly of three types of meaning, these are: interpersonal, ideational, and textual functions. These are collectively referred to as Meta functions.

The primary function of the Ideational function described by Halliday (1994) is that it is the base for describing human experience. In another way, this function serves as a bridge for the new and unfamiliar words to the audience. In another way, this function serves as a bridge for the new and unfamiliar words to the audience. Halliday further divided the Ideational function into two smaller processes, logical and experiential. When the combination of two or more grammatical words makes a complex one, known as "logical". Whereas, in contrast, the previous is when people understand according to their surroundings, known as the "experiential" function. Transitivity and voice collectively make the ideational function work.

According to Huzhunlin (1988), "these functions specify the character of their structural awareness as well as establish the accessible possibilities in meaning."

Ideational function in grammar is represented by the transitivity system. The transitivity system consists of the following six processes:

- **Material processes:** Actual physical activity.
- **Relational Process:** Expression of possession, equivalence, and qualities.
- **Mental functions:** Cognition, emotion, and perception functions.
- **Verbal processing:** Communication processes.
- **Behavioral processes:** Fusion of material and mental process.
- **Existential:** Existential processes that an entity in the subject position goes through.

According to O' Halloran (2006), the interpersonal meta function, "relates to a text's elements of tone or interactivity." In the field, three elements shape tenor, these are: the personality of the speaker/writer, social distancing, and relative social positioning. When it comes to spoken communications, only social distancing and relative social statuses are applicable, but social position and writer personality are also applicable to a written manuscript as well. According to Coffin (2006, pp. 22–23), "Social distance" refers to how much speakers know each other(closeness), like how the routine of nicknames reveals how close they are to one another. According to relative social statuses, a mother's relationship with her child would be regarded as unequal in terms of authority and familiarity on the matter.

## Research Methodology

In this case, the main concern is the speech acts (for instance, some quickly ask questions and others choose to stay quiet or respond) that determine who chooses the topic, the turn administration, and how well both speakers can assess the subject. The speaker establishes a connection with the listener through words. He employs words to enlighten, inquire, greet, persuade, and do other things. (Sharififar & Rahimi 2015) The speaker establishes a connection with the listener through words (Wang, 2009). He employs words to enlighten, inquire, greet, persuade, and do other things. Modality and mood are two words that are used to describe interpersonal functions.

According to O'Halloran (2006), "The textual meta function pertains to mode; the internal organization and communicative aspect of a text." This includes spontaneity, textual interaction, and conversational distance (Coffin, 2006, p. 245). The elements like nominal grouping, grammatical complexity, coordination, and lexical density can influence the spontaneity. The spontaneity can be influenced by elements including lexical density, grammatical complexity, coordination, and the use of nominal groupings (Saragih, 2010). The communicative remoteness looks into the cohesiveness of the text in terms of in what way it fits together and makes use of the intellectual language (Van Dijk, 2003). Using lexical chains, tone, and other linguistic terms, such as tonality, speech register, and tonicity, Coffin(2006) stated that coherence can be examined through the concepts that contain characteristics like grammatical, lexical, and intonational. The lexical component emphasizes sense linkage and lexical repetition. Aspects of grammar take into account the function of linking adverbials and the repetition of meaning that is indicated by words like references, ellipsis, and substitution.

## Data Analysis

Table 1 lists the 5872 words and 581 sentences that make up Arden's speech. The speech of Imran is made up of 221 sentences and 2774 words. Two speeches show that Arden utilized words more simply than Imran did. To close the gap between himself and the audience, Arden has employed everyday words. In order to make her discourse longer, she often makes references to many topics and characters. As can be seen, Imran has used fewer but more complex terms. His language is official and is indicative of his early presidential days.

**Table1**

*Statistics of Sample Speeches*

Statistical Terms	Statistics	
	Imran's Speeches	Arden's Speeches
Words	2774	5872
Sentences	220	560

Transitivity focuses on the explanation of the whole phrase, rather than just describing the function and

structure of the verb and object. (Thompson, 1996, p. 78). A clause, in Halliday's view, is made up of three elements: the process, the participant, and the circumstances. Material process, mental process, relational process, behavioral process, verbal process, and existential process are the six categories into which Halliday divides these processes.

**Table 2**

*Transitivity in Sample Speeches*

<b>Process types</b>	<b>Imran's speech</b>		<b>Arden's speech</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Relational	300	57.2%	216	44.9%
Material	110	20.9%	160	33.2%
Mental	75	14.3%	59	12.2%
Existential	17	3.2%	23	4.7%
Verbal	16	3.0%	15	3.1%
Behavioral	6	1.1	8	1.6%

Table 2 shows that among all processes, the relationship process ranks top with 57.2% and 44.9% frequency. Mental process comes in second with 14.3% and 12.2% frequency, followed by material process with 20.9% and 33.2% frequency.

### **Material Process**

The events and activities that take place in a person's external environment are considered a material process (Saragih, 2010). Material process refer as the "doing" or "happening" process. In this process, there are two parties involved: A performer of the activity is an actor. The person affected by the activity is the goal. Action words that are abstract or concrete are applied using this technique.

**Table 3**

*Arden's Speeches, Transitivity Analysis (Material process)*

<b>Jacinda (Actor)</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

The billions, you, I, they, Go, come, take, does, changes, The fuel industry, the young, safe  
they, the world, Ukraine, lost, need, changed child, global community,  
ethnicities, our interdependency, peace and security,  
racism, safety.

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**Table 4**

*Imran's Speeches Transitivity Analysis (Material process)*

Imran (Actor)	Process	Goal
They, we, Hindu, the world, this	Going, foreign, population, act.	Siege people, Minister of Saudi Arabia, Kashmir, Pakistan, an Indian citizen

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Tables 3 and 4 show how the material process points to government activity, that how current and future prime ministers will accomplish things for their people. Table 3 shows that the most frequently referenced entities in Arden's speech are I, they, Ukraine, and the rest of the world, suggesting that Arden and her administration present themselves as proactive leaders committed to combating poverty and violence while promoting international peace. However, there are far fewer instances of this process in Imran's speech, and the majority of the actors are Hindus. Nevertheless, since it was the early days of Imran's leadership as prime minister and he also makes reference to the wise choice of Ukrainian speech, this does not imply that Imran is not an action leader.

A relational process is defined as a way that helps to describe the relationship between the entities. This is done by following the steps "identification", "attribution", and "possession" (Saragih, 2010). Identification and attribution play an important role in categorizing the relational process in the sentences or clauses. So, in the speech or in the text, if one person recognizes and refers to the other person, then this process is known as relational process, and ultimately word is known as relational word. In this process, mostly verbs are used. For example, "am," "is," "are," "was," "were," "become," etc. An entity has some properties that are ascribed to it through the attribution process (Halliday, 1994). In this procedure, verbs like (look, cost, play, sound, get, seem...) are used.

**Table 5**

*Relational processes: Transitivity analysis of Imran's and Arden's Speeches*

Relational process (Attributive)	Relational process (Identifying)

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We were amongst the founding members of the United Nations as a government.	It was in our region that these weapons of war were tested.
New Zealand is determined to do good and to be good for the world.	There are challenges we face as a world that I know, no matter what.
He felt that all Muslims were terrorists.	Pakistan was born out of the biggest refugee problem in history.
There is only one Islam.	We are trying our best now in the peace process in Afghanistan.

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Table 5 shows that just 3.2% and 4.7% of all sentences are accounted for by existential processes. This figure indicates that there aren't many existential processes in either of the participants' talks. One reason is that using this method too frequently can make the audience feel monotonous and make it difficult to maintain their attention. The addresses include the following instances of existential processes.

#### Table 6

##### *Existential processes: Transitivity analysis of Imran's and Arden's Speeches*

Jacinda Arden	Imran Khan
1) There is no question that murder disarmament is an enormous challenge.	1) Where there's massive unemployment, we know what we go through.
2) When you are a child, fear is not discrete, and it can't be removed through legislative acts.	2) Every Muslim became branded when 911 happened.

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In the mentioned examples, Prime Minister Imran shows the present occurring and existing by using the word there be. Prime Minister Imran proudly expresses the strength of patriotism and national unity in the aforementioned examples. Imran suggests that action should be taken against those who deserve it more than it should be against everyone else, by illustrating the existence of the disorderly conditions like poverty and discrimination in the nation.

#### Mental Process

Table 7 shows that there are 75 and 59 mental processes in total, accounting for 14.3% and 12.2% of the entire system, respectively, in President Trump's address. Prime Minister Ardern's speech contains mental processes since she urges her listeners to observe and feel what happened in New Zealand on the day of the mosque incident. In order to combat terrorism globally, Arden calls on all the world leaders

present at her speech to band together. Here are a few instances of both speakers:

**Table 7**

*Transitivity Analysis Of Imran's And Arden's Speeches (Mental Process)*

Jacinda Arden	Imran Khan
We may feel afraid, but as leaders, we have the keys to create a sense of security.	I see the European countries struggling with the refugee problems.
We have felt a sense of responsibility to do something.	He felt that all Muslims were terrorists.

### Verbal Process

Verbal clause occurrence is relatively significant, with 3.0% and 3.1%, according to Table 8. Verbalization is a speaking technique that encodes mental processes through the physical activities of "talking," making it a medium between mental and physical processes (Thompson 2008: 100). Typically, direct and indirect quotations are used to realize verbal operations. When a speaker directly quotes someone in his text, it signifies that he uses their words in his own writing. Its purpose is to use the reputation of well-known persons to further the text's credibility.

### Modality Analysis

Modality is a vital component in achieving the interpersonal metafiction significantly, because modality is the function of language that shows the extent to which a proposition is admissible, like the pitch and tone, which show the politeness and positive attitude.

**Table 8**

*Modal Verbs (Zhang Guoling, 2006)*

	Low Politeness	Median Politeness	High Politeness
Positive	Can, may, could, might, dare	Will, should, shall	would, Must, ought to, need, has/had to
Negative	Needn't, doesn't/didn't, need to, have to	Won't, shouldn't, isn't/wasn't to	Mustn't, oughtn't, can't, couldn't, mayn't, mightn't, hasn't/hadn't to

**Table 9**

*Levels of Politeness in Selected Speeches*

Sample Speeches	Total number	Low Politeness	Median Politeness	High Politeness			
		No	%	No	%	No	%
Arden	5872	38	64%	44	74%	4	6.8%
Imran	2774	23	82%	27	97%	5	18%

1) New Zealand, alongside a group of like-minded countries, will also announce the launch of a new initiative.

2) I can tell you that their expectations of all of us are high.

3) I am not suggesting, though, that we rely on the goodwill of others to make progress.

According to Table 9, the median politeness ranks top in both speeches with 74% and 97 percent respectively. In both speeches, "will" is the modal verb that is used the most. The next two are "can" and "must." These two prime ministers have used the word "will" more often than other verbs to indicate what they intend to do in the future. It illustrates the prime minister's capacity to lead his or her government through future Challenges.

## Conclusion

Halliday's systematic functional grammar (SFG) is used to analyze the speeches of both participants, Imran and Arden. Some of the important features in the investigation are as follows. First, simple and colloquial language, like easy words and simpler and shorter sentences, which is easily comprehensible contrast to Imran, who used more formal, complex language, which can be the result of his first period as Prime Minister. Secondly, from the transitivity analysis, which consists of six further processes, it can be seen from the statistical table that both participants used relational process (process of "being" and "possessing") more frequently than any other process, which shows both the politicians' focus to prioritize and shows the efforts of their country and people to the world. Whereas if we see individually, Imran Khan's speech found prevalent use of relational process, which once again shows the relationship building between the government and the people, by describing the future programs and strategy to implement those programs. Third is from the interpersonal Meta function of this study, which focuses on the modality.

The percentage of modal verbs usage is again greater in Imran's speeches, which ultimately shows the firm belief in completing the tasks and promises, and also helps in shortening the distance between him and his people, as much as possible, so that they understand the concept. Modal verbs play an important role in building confidence and faith, especially modal verbs like "will" and "can". Imran used these two modal verbs in order to build faith in the audience, in the country, and the country's government that they can face

difficulties bravely.

The researcher comes to the conclusion that Hallidayan transitivity is the finest theoretical instrument for data analysis with the aid of the aforementioned findings. Human experiences are represented by transitivity in a situational setting. Virtually every facet of human experience is covered by transitivity. For a better knowledge of transitivity analysis, comparative research is best. Both speakers delivered excellent speeches in the same language and on various subjects. Imran Khan uses complex sentences and tough terminology, in contrast to Jacinda Ardern's straightforward style and brief sentences. Both speakers have essentially similar political views and opinions (on hosting refugees, the economic crisis, Islamism, and Terrorism). It is possible to examine the connections between language, ideology, and power using critical discourse analysis. It offers a fresh perspective and approach to the study of public addresses. Therefore, it would be wise for us to pay greater attention. Overall, it can be concluded from the transitivity analysis of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's and Imran Khan's speeches that both of the participants' true goals are to stabilize the perception of their nations and people, build a positive political reputation, and gain more support and confidence around the world.

## **Recommendations**

This paper only focuses on the two aspects of Systematic Functional Grammar (S.F.G) theory of Halliday (1985). Researchers are advised to analyze the other discourse on the basis of other Meta functions, like contextual function. Researchers can also analyze the speeches on a literary ground by applying the theory of stylistics, or they can be analyzed based on gender differences, like the use of vocabulary tone and speaking style. Finally, this study is an effort to investigate the linguistic features of language used by the politician in Pakistan, as well as to widen this area for other researchers, for further academic research findings and results. Researchers believe that more in depth researches on a large scale will reveal more general linguistic features of political language. Critical discourse analysis now attempts to analyze the political discourse, and it clarifies that Halliday's three Meta function is good and can be used in CDA. But other methods of analysis are suggested to work on further, Van Dijk socio cognitive approach, discourse historical method of Wodak, framework proposed by Fairclough, and others. Future study can be done on social and cultural linguistic features, which ultimately helped researcher and learners understand the context of discourse.

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