

A Form of Patriarchy: Critical Discourse Analysis of Pakistani Politicians' Comments

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Abstract

Political discourse in Pakistan often conceals deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes, which influence societal norms and power dynamics. This study uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore how famous Pakistani politicians utilize language to expose underlying gender stereotypes and perpetuate traditional gender norms. The research carefully examines four remarks made by political figures, including Moonis Elahi and Khwaja Asif, that overtly promote gender stereotypes and represent patriarchal views. These utterances, chosen for their resonance in Pakistani political discourse, are subjected to rigorous language analysis to identify latent biases and socio-cultural consequences. By contextualizing these statements within the broader socio-political landscape, the research underscores the urgent need to confront and challenge these entrenched biases. The findings highlight the ubiquitous presence of patriarchal vocabulary and its detrimental effects on political communication, contributing to the marginalization of women and perpetuation of gender inequalities. Furthermore, the study makes specific recommendations for promoting more inclusive and egalitarian political discourse, such as sensitization and training efforts, educational reforms, media accountability, and future research opportunities. Ultimately, this study serves as a call to action to dismantle patriarchal language in Pakistani politics and move toward a more equal and respectful political climate.

Introduction

The effect of patriarchy weaves its threads discreetly yet forcefully into the complicated fabric of political discourse, molding the rhetoric, narratives, and ideologies politician advocate. This study digs into Pakistani politics, revealing the complex layers of patriarchal roots that frequently define and sustain political discourse. The study uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) to show how patriarchal ideas are invisibly incorporated into the speeches and remarks of Pakistani politicians, maintaining and intensifying gender prejudices, inequities, and cultural norms.

Patriarchy is a hierarchical social system in which men hold more power than women, particularly in political leadership, moral authority, and economic resources. (Connell, 1987). Patriarchy operates in family life and politics, where power is unequally distributed, often along gender lines. Sriram (2007, p. 104) argues that political patriarchy manifests in the underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions, limited access to resources, and the perpetuation of gendered norms constraining women's political participation. Political discourse

analysis offers a unique perspective on maintaining patriarchal ideals, demonstrating the subtle ways language reflects and develops power dynamics. As Pakistani society grapples with shifting ideals of gender equality, it is critical to examine the rhetorical methods used by politicians to challenge or support established gender norms.

Like many others, Pakistani politics has historical, cultural, and social intricacies. Since the nation's beginning, gender standards and expectations have been closely interwoven political discourse. While women's political participation has increased, patriarchal beliefs remain prominent in the political arena. Pakistan's historical and sociological context lends itself to studying the link between patriarchy and political discourse. With a history riddled with gender inequities and patriarchal structures, the nation's politics has become an environment where these long-held ideals intersect with contemporary debate. By analyzing the linguistic techniques, metaphors, and narratives politicians use, this research seeks insight into the mechanisms that maintain the status quo or initiate profound shifts.

Gendered Power Dynamics and Political Participation

Sylvia Walby's (1990) idea of 'Public Patriarchy' provides a framework for studying gendered power relations in public arenas such as politics. Sanauddin et al. (2016) expand this notion to the arena of politics, demonstrating how patriarchy infiltrates the public sphere, limiting women's access to education, employment, and political participation. The effects of these constraints are shown in women's underrepresentation in political posts. Despite attempts such as reserved seats and affirmative action, women's true agency and decision-making inside political institutions and parties remain limited (Saleem, 2013; Bari, 2005).

Violence Against Women

Women who are active in politics are often subjected to violence, both physical and psychological. This can deter them from continuing to participate in politics. For example, a study by Afzal and Ansari (2020) found that women in Pakistan who are involved in politics are more likely to experience violence from their families, their communities, and even from the state.

Women's Political Participation and Symbolism

Women's roles in Pakistani politics are frequently symbolic, placing them as representatives of cultural identity and honor. Their participation in political venues is lauded and regulated as they seek to embody traditional ideals while negotiating the complicated dynamics of contemporary politics (Jamal, 2006). This dual function embodies the conflict between patriarchal traditions and the desire for political inclusion. Furthermore, using women as symbols of national and religious identity, particularly in discourse about Islamic principles, adds layers of complication to their political participation (Shaheed, 2009).

Gender Equality and the Legal Framework

Despite constitutional assurances of equality, Pakistan's legal environment occasionally violates its values. Under Zia-ul-Haq, the "Islamization" era produced legislation such as the Hudood Ordinances, which reinforced gender disparities and eroded women's autonomy, particularly in situations of rape and adultery (Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1987). Shaheed (1999) argues that the Hudood Ordinances, a set of Islamic laws introduced in Pakistan in 1979, are a form of state-sponsored patriarchy. She uses critical discourse analysis to examine the language of the Hudood Ordinances, and she argues that the language of the ordinances reinforces patriarchal norms and values. For example, the ordinances define women as "the honor of the

family," which reinforces the idea that women are the property of men. While following administrations have moved to remove such legislation, the legal system's gendered implications continue influencing women's political involvement and participation (Critelli, 2010).

Institutional Barriers to Women's Empowerment

Political parties significantly influence women's political participation, yet these same parties frequently exemplify patriarchal norms. Women's presence and influence in decision-making processes are limited by male-dominated party hierarchy (Saleem, 2013). The architecture of the voting system, especially the need for national identity cards, disproportionately impacts women's participation, particularly in rural and tribal regions (Yousaf, 2013).

Women's Movements

Kabeer (2002) argues that women's movements have played a critical role in challenging patriarchy in Pakistani politics. She examines the history of women's movements in Pakistan, and she argues that these movements have been successful in raising awareness about women's rights, in mobilizing women to demand change, and in influencing government policy.

1.3 Key Objectives

1. To conduct a linguistic study of Pakistani politicians' remarks and comments.
2. To focus specifically on identifying instances of patriarchal language, gender prejudices, and sexist rhetoric.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the prominent lexical choices reflecting patriarchal language and rhetoric in the speeches and statements of Pakistani politicians?
2. What are the prevalent misogynistic instances in the remarks and comments made by Pakistani politicians?

Research Methodology

This research delves into the complexities of political speech, aiming to unearth hidden patriarchal norms. It utilizes Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its primary tool, specifically employing Fairclough's 3D model. This comprehensive framework allows for a multi-dimensional analysis of language use, going beyond surface-level examination.

Fairclough's model breaks down the analysis into three crucial dimensions:

1. **Textual Dimension:** This stage focuses on the individual building blocks of language – words, phrases, and grammatical structures. Researchers meticulously dissect these elements, revealing how specific choices contribute to shaping meaning, perspectives, and ultimately, ideologies. Here, vocabulary, syntax, metaphors, and rhetorical devices come under close scrutiny to understand how language subtly conveys certain messages and viewpoints that may uphold patriarchal norms.
2. **Discursive Dimension:** Moving beyond the individual text, this dimension examines how language functions within larger contexts like speeches, conversations, or written documents. It sheds light on how language use constructs and reflects social identities, relationships, and, importantly, power dynamics. Researchers pay close attention to language patterns and interactions within the discourse, uncovering how they contribute

to negotiating meanings, ideologies, and ultimately, solidifying or challenging social roles that might be influenced by patriarchal structures.

3. **Social Practices Dimension:** Broadening the scope even further, this dimension takes into account the broader social, cultural, and historical context surrounding the discourse. Here, language is viewed not just as a tool for communication, but also as a reflection and shaper of social practices and structures. Researchers explore how societal norms, power relations, and ideologies influence language use, and conversely, how language use can, in turn, reinforce or challenge those very structures. This dimension emphasizes the intricate connection between language and broader social phenomena, highlighting how political speech can perpetuate or dismantle patriarchal norms.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Qualitative Analysis of Remarks

Analysis of Remark by Moonis Elahi, 2021

Verbatim Text. "Women are unable to be ministers because they are not capable of making rational decisions."

Text Analysis. Elahi's comment uses the term "not capable of making rational decisions," implying that women are incapable of making logical and sound decisions. The phrase "unable" stresses a perceived inability, showing a profound bias against women's political decision-making abilities.

Discursive Practice. This comment generates meaning by depicting women as naturally illogical and unsuited for ministerial responsibilities. It frames the issue around women's alleged incapacity to make sensible judgments, perpetuating the power system in which men, such as Elahi, determine the requirements for political posts. This rhetoric reflects a patriarchal attitude that diminishes women's intellectual abilities and casts them as inferior decision-makers.

Social Practice. Elahi's comment supports and perpetuates patriarchal standards by perpetuating the idea that women lack logic, which is required for political leadership. The comment maintains the gender stereotype that women are emotionally motivated and lack the intellectual aptitude for political responsibilities by presenting women as fundamentally illogical. This maintains current power dynamics in which males continue to dominate positions of decision-making, marginalizing women in political discourse.

Analysis of Remark by Khawaja Asif, 2023

Verbatim Text. "This is the garbage left behind" by the PTI chief, "which has to be cleaned" (Guramani, 2023)

Text Analysis. Khawaja Asif's comment lowers PTI women by referring to them as "garbage," signifying worthlessness. The cleaning metaphor implies a desire to erase these women, supporting a highly sexist mentality.

Discursive Practice. This remark builds a narrative in which PTI women are depicted as useless and disposable, rendering them into things that must be removed. It dehumanizes people, taking away their agency and lowering them to the level of inanimate rubbish. This rhetoric perpetuates gender inequality by reinforcing a patriarchal power system in which women are denied dignity and respect.

Social Practice. Asif's comment supports and amplifies patriarchal standards by demeaning and objectifying PTI women. He fosters the social perception that women are disposable by using derogatory language, maintaining the power dynamics in which males

possess the capacity to denigrate and reject women in public speech. This remark not only exacerbates gender disparities but also creates a hostile climate, further marginalizing women in politics.

Discussion of Findings

Pakistani politics, it seems, has a language problem. This analysis exposes how prominent politicians use words to belittle and marginalize women.

But this isn't just about rude comments. This research, using Critical Discourse Analysis (think of it as a tool to examine how language shapes power), shows how these phrases reflect and reinforce a deeper problem: widespread gender inequality in Pakistan. These comments don't exist in a vacuum; they discourage women from participating in politics and perpetuate the idea that men are in charge.

The analysis argues for a "radical change." Simply avoiding offensive language isn't enough. We need to tackle the root of the issue – the patriarchal attitudes that keep women out of power. By understanding these biases and how language is used to uphold them, we can work towards a more inclusive and respectful political environment in Pakistan, one that promotes true democracy and equality for all.

Important Findings

1. Patriarchal Vocabulary's Pervasiveness. The statements highlight the pervasive usage of patriarchal vocabulary, indicating its accepted presence in political discourse. This type of rhetoric marginalizes women, limits their involvement, and perpetuates social gender prejudices.

2. Intersection of Culture and Politics. Pakistan has a distinct interplay between cultural norms and political discourse. The statements frequently depend on cultural norms and conventional gender roles, demonstrating how societal attitudes and political discourse are inextricably linked.

3. Impact on Political Participation. The use of disparaging language in politics creates a hostile climate for women. It discourages their active participation, reinforcing the notion that politics is a male-dominated domain, limiting women's representation and influence even further.

Conclusion

In conclusion, our research trip descended into the complicated world of Pakistani political speech, revealing the hidden yet profound effect of patriarchal language. The study highlighted the maintenance of gender prejudices and reinforcing established norms and power dynamics through an in-depth investigation of language intricacies within politicians' discourse. The study, founded on critical discourse analysis, examined the subtle ways language affects and supports political narratives, revealing the deeply embedded gender inequalities it reflects.

The study meticulously pursued Pakistan's historical, cultural, and sociological difficulties. The study shed light on the nuanced techniques that sustain or challenge gender norms by analyzing politicians' linguistic choices, metaphors, and narratives. The critical discourse analysis theoretical framework, notably Fairclough's model, offers an excellent lens to examine these complexities.

The investigation's findings confirmed the ubiquity of patriarchal language and its subtle but widespread effects on political communication. The work has highlighted the importance of fully understanding these processes by uncovering the linkages between language and power. Beyond rhetoric, these consequences permeate society's attitudes and exacerbate existing gender inequities.

Recommendations

As this study nears completion, it lays the way for several nuanced proposals aimed at changing the environment of political discourse:

Sensitization and Training

Initiatives to educate politicians, policymakers, and media professionals about the dangers of patriarchal rhetoric are critical. Training programs can encourage more inclusive communication practices, challenging the status quo.

Educational Changes

Gender studies and communication ethics can be integrated into school curricula for aspiring politicians to raise an understanding of language's function in sustaining or changing gender stereotypes.

Media Responsibility

By criticizing and questioning the use of patriarchal rhetoric, media outlets have the key to ethical reporting. This measure can promote productive conversation while discouraging the spread of sexist sentiments.

Future Research

Subsequent research should look at the effectiveness of various communication tactics to reduce the effects of patriarchal language. Investigating the relationship between language and political activity might provide insights into the function of language in affecting public debate.

Finally, the value of this research rests in exposing the hidden yet significant function of patriarchal language in Pakistani politics. The proposed proposals laid a concrete roadmap toward a more egalitarian and inclusive political dialogue. This research aims to demolish profoundly ingrained patriarchal institutions in political communication by shedding light on the subtle interplay between language, power, and gender.

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