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Rationalized Rules: A Critical Metaphor Analysis of Selected Autobiographical Political Discourse

ABSTRACT

This paper aims at giving a critical analysis of the metaphors employed by Benazir Bhutto and General Musharraf in their political autobiographies, viz., Daughter of the East and In the Line of Fire, respectively. The issues of identity, power and their rationalization and ideology are the main concern and focus in the selected political discourses. The selected authors represent two types of ruling classes in Pakistan, the civilians and the military Generals. Both these classes achieved power and ruled the country right from its establishment since 1947. Both of them blamed each other for the adverse economic and social conditions and claimed their role as constructive one. The main idea behind the study is regarding the usage of language by the politicians for the rationalization of their rule and role. So, many linguistic techniques have been detected in their discourse but the focus is only on one rhetorical device that is the use of metaphor. The methodology is adopted from the paradigm of

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critical discourse analysis generally and its sub-category called critical metaphor analysis particularly. Both these approaches keep social, cultural and historical perspectives in view while analyzing some discourse to dig out the covert ideologies and other issues related with power, domination, discrimination, exploitation and identity. The three-point framework for critical metaphor analysis by Charteris-Black (2004) is applied on the selected discourse to arrive at findings regarding the rationalization of power and domination besides the identity or backgrounds of the authors underlying the metaphoric use of language. Favorable findings have been traced regarding the above mentioned issues in the discourse.

■ Introduction

It is generally accepted that the main objective of politics is to achieve and practice power and dominance. For this purpose, social groups or individuals adopt a strategy called *linguistic strategy* through which they persuade or force people to perform under their wishes and requirements. A linguistic strategy exploits the manipulative feature of a language. Norman Fairclough introduces the term *linguistic manipulation* for the above mentioned motive and defines it as "the conscious use of language in a devious way to control others" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 6). Linguistic manipulation is considered an important aspect of political discourse because readers or listeners are persuaded to accept some specific ideas and actions besides winning their support for voting some particular party or individual (Atkinson, 1984). Because of its intensive involvement in a society, politics has become an inevitable ingredient in the lives of human beings (Orwell, 1946, p. 154). Bertrand Russell (2004) in his famous work "Power"

segregated human beings from animals on the basis of boundless desires of which the attainment of power, its practice and sustenance are of the pivotal significance. Human beings unlike animals are not just striving for the fulfillment of instincts like hunger and reproduction but also for achieving some status in a society that is directly or indirectly related with power. Therefore, power has become an impulsive force with human beings who seem to practice it on various levels (Russell, 2004).

The main dynamics on which power is structured are education and wealth that generate authority. On the wider level, power is connected with politics. It is not just asserted from above on the masses but also achieved through the consent of the masses (Simpson & Mayor, 2010). The latter exercise of power constructs political institutions of which the notion of democracy is a significant upshot while the former practice is accomplished through dictatorship where it is imposed from the above. Interestingly enough, both these practices (democracy and dictatorship) share some points in common that are not less than the rationalization of power through the medium of language. The use of language is extensive and unavoidable in the process of socialization and being a social activity, politics also is bound to the language tools for the achievement of the main motive of power (Simpson & Mayor, 2010).

Lakoff (1990) takes language as inherently political for its persuasive capability (Pastor, 2001, p. 42). Being a critical analyst, she sees power present everywhere in every type of discourse. Critical discourse analysts also concentrate on the same lines. They consider language as an influential social practice which helps in (re)producing ideology, power, domination, identity and the issues of exploitation (Wodak, 2002, p. 8).

All researches on power issues have been divided into two traditions, mainstream and second stream. The former has its roots in Weber's notions of institutionalized power. To run its setup smoothly, a society establishes institutions and organizations. These institutions assert power mainly through the medium of language (Simpson & Mayor, 2010). Gramsci played a central role in developing the tradition of second stream by introducing the notion of hegemony. Through this concept he describes power with its importance of persuasive influence and how the domineering groups persuade the subservient ones for the acceptance and enforcement of their values, cultures, ideas and behaviours etc. (1971).

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis provides the notion of linguistic determinism which suggests that language works as a framework for our thoughts and without this framework we cannot even think (Thomas et al., 2004, p. 39). This dominant feature of language is exploited in politics to form ideologies and construct such realities which are more suitable for certain groups or individuals whose main aim is to attain and sustain their domination over others (p. 39).

George Orwell (1949) embarked on the same idea in his novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In it, he portrayed a totalitarian society where the thoughts of the public are controlled with a language called 'Newspeak' in which words and their interpretations are changed according to the requirements of the policy which moulds and controls the thoughts of the masses. The notions of linguistic determinism can be easily observed in the appendix of the novel, *The Principles of Newspeak*, which reads:

It was intended that when Newspeak had been adopted once and for all and Old speak forgotten, a heretical

thought – that is, a thought diverging from the principles of Ingsoc – should be literally unthinkable, at least so far as thought is dependent on words. Its vocabulary was so constructed as to give exact and often very subtle expression to every meaning that a party member could properly wish to express, while excluding all other meanings and also the possibility of arriving at them by indirect methods. This was done partly by the invention of new words... (Orwell, 1949, p. 241)

To achieve or uphold power and to conceal their erroneous deeds, rhetoric or persuasive language is also employed by the fellows in power to persuade and deceive the public (Simpson & Mayer, 2010, p. 43). The study of the language of politicians or figures in power is not new. Its traces are found in classical times i.e. Greeks and Romans where language was considered as a tool to arrive at some truth, to persuade the masses and for the expression of art. Rhetoric was the biggest instrument which was considered necessary to persuade the public for political intentions (Moreno, 2008, p. 28).

Various linguistic techniques like the use of pronouns, metaphors, euphemism, dysphemism, parallelism, the rule of three, presuppositions, implicature, etc. are employed frequently by the politicians in their political discourses to attain their motives (Thomas et al., 2004).

The objective of the current paper is to search out the metaphors as tool of persuasion exploited by two very prominent names in Pakistani politics, viz., Miss Benazir Bhutto and General Pervez Musharraf in their political autobiographies titled *Daughter of the East* and *In the Line of Fire*, respectively.

■ Review of Related Literature

Under the tradition of rhetorical criticism which began in the twentieth century, political discourses remained important object of study for the exploration of political motives underneath them (Leeuwen, 2008, p. 7). In the research article, "The style of political speeches," Leeuwen (2008) analyzes the speeches of some renowned politicians and points out the style and expression as important constituents of such discourses. The researcher opines that the same words with different style can make a lasting and effective impression on the minds of the audience.

Rozina and Karapetjana (2009) have explored the traces of linguistic manipulation in political discourse. They delimit their study to some of the rhetorical devices i.e. metaphors, allusions, metonymy and connotations and conclude that such devices are of much influence for manipulation in political discourse. They also are of the view that all types of regimes, either democratic or totalitarian, exploit language tool for all types of purposes, from conveying information and commands to influencing, persuading or misguiding the masses (p. 120).

Judith Mckenze made a study of political autobiographies of Canadian female politicians to check the political ambitions of women struggling for power. The researcher has inferred the point that politicians employ the genre of autobiography for the representation and propagandization of their political views, aspirations and uprightness of their roles. The political ambitions prevail in political autobiographies (2000, p. 91).

John Hennen (2011) analyzed the autobiography of Charles A. Haynie entitled *A Memoir of the New Left: The Political Autobiography of Charles A. Haynie* carefully and wrote a review with the upshot that the autobiographer operates under the influence of his circumstances. Thus,

socio-cultural context behind the use of language remains dominant in longer discourses like autobiographies.

In his work entitled *More than a story: An exploration of political autobiography as persuasive discourse*, Stephen Gray (1998) explores the use of persuasive language in political autobiography. He opines that it can be a productive tool in the hands of politicians who get an opportunity of an extended discourse through which they can elaborate their ideologies and agenda without any interruption or restraint. Because other mediums of communication, newspaper or television ads, between politicians and the public are limited in scope and do not contain much space. Gray further concludes that political autobiography also provides readers with a chance to judge their politicians and to decide in a better way.

■ Research Methodology

The main theoretical underpinnings on which this paper is based are the ideas from critical discourse analysis (CDA) in general and critical metaphoric analysis (CMA) in particular. Norman Fairclough, one of the founders of CDA, is of the view that language is inherently political and the issues of power, domination, exploitation, identity, etc. are the essence of every discourse.

□ *Critical discourse analysis*

Being a social practice, discourse is not only shaped by the social processes but it also has the ability to shape them. In other words, discourse is both socially conditioned and socially constitutive (Wodak, 2002, p. 8). For its influential nature, it raises the significant and vital questions of power and struggle over power. Such dimensions are revealed in

some discourse under an approach called critical discourse analysis that concentrates, generally, on the relations of discourse and society (van Dijk, 1995, p. 17).

The roots of critical discourse analysis (CDA) can be traced in various fields from classical rhetoric to socio-linguistics, pragmatics, applied linguistics and text linguistics (p. 17). CDA is a complex and multidisciplinary field that deals with the relationships between language, ideology, power, identity, hierarchy, dominance, social inequality and exploitation, etc. Teun A. van Dijk (1993, p. 249) designates it as "socio - political discourse analysis". In the words of one of the founders of CDA, Norman Fairclough (1995), its focus is:

...to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony. (as cited in Locke, 2004, p. 1)

This definition of Fairclough distinctly indicates the objectives of CDA which are to delve into the subsurface dimension of discourse especially that of related with power dynamics. Fundamentally, it studies the patterns and organizations of elite discourse (van Dijk, 1995, p. 19). Michel Foucault (1971) calls discourse not just the way of communication but something that has its strong connections with power and desire and these connections

have to be disguised to achieve desire and power (Palmer, 1997, p. 89). The main objective of CDA is to decipher and demystify the hidden connections of ideologies and power issues in discourses (Wodak, 2002, p. 10).

At times, CDA is criticized on the basis that it ignores the neutrality of language and proclaims the perpetual presence of hidden ideologies and power aspects under every discourse (Blommaert, 2005, p. 37). For this reason, CDA proponents are denounced as activists rather than analysts. Critics of CDA opine that language does not always have power dynamics underneath it thus the CDA approach is questionable.

Despite its criticisms, CDA has developed itself to be a powerful discipline for studying political discourse. It is an interdisciplinary field that is being used in various areas of social sciences. It takes into consideration multifarious theories and methodologies derived from various theoretical backgrounds. It can be viewed as a varying, heterogeneous field that cannot be taken as a closed paradigm rather an open research programme and academic discipline (Wodak, 2002, p. 6).

As mentioned earlier, CDA is not a closed paradigm, thus, it does not have set rules and patterns which may lead to some set methodologies and theories. Rather, it retains and broadcasts eclecticism and pragmatism. The researchers can choose from a wide variety of theories and methodologies in different disciplines and fields to study the issues at hand. They can also develop, adapt and adjust various theories and methodologies according to their areas and interests (Wodak, 2002, p. 14). Still they share the following three points in any approach to critical discourse analysis:

1. Interdisciplinary approach
2. Methodological eclecticism

3. Problem oriented approach

□ **Metaphor theory**

The first glimpses of metaphor theory can be traced in a book called *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) by Lakoff and Johnson. The area of the book is cognitive linguistics – the relationship of language, mind and brain. In the book, the authors opine that metaphors are external display of internal concepts and these have much to do with one's cognition. The idea presented in a metaphor makes a nexus between physical and non-physical objects. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) further describe the structure of a metaphor that contains two strongly correspondent domains, a source domain and a target domain. The former is related with the physical concept while the latter represents the non-physical concept of a metaphor. A metaphor gets its strength with the rational and balanced combination of both these domains.

A metaphor is divided into two types, conventional and imaginative. Conventional metaphors represent the concept regarding common and ordinary experiences which happen frequently in everyday life and are easy to perceive for the speakers of a language while the latter correspond to new and creative concepts. The latter type of metaphor is considered more powerful and persuasive in achieving the desired targets (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

□ **Critical metaphor analysis (CMA)**

Critical metaphor analysis is one of many approaches in critical discourse analysis. Its main objective is to dig out metaphoric expressions in political discourse which communicate some ideologies under its persuasive competence or other motives especially regarding power and domination.

CMA was first developed by Charteris-Black in his famous work titled *Corpus Approaches to Critical Metaphor Analysis*. This book introduces the idea that metaphors play a very important role in political discourse by affecting minds and persuading readers or listeners towards some desired end. Charteris-Black (2004) defines metaphor as:

Linguistic representation that results from the shift in the use of a word or phrase from the context or domain in which it is expected to occur in another context or domain where it is not expected to occur, thereby causing semantic tension. It potentially has linguistic, pragmatic & cognitive characteristics. (p. 21)

He also provides the framework for the critical analysis of metaphors presented in some political discourse. This framework can be summarized in the following three points.

1. Identification of metaphors (which metaphors are found in a particular discourse)
2. Interpretation of metaphors (the construction of social relation under identified metaphors)
3. Explanation of metaphors (the interaction of metaphors within a context in which they occur)

■ Analysis

□ *Analysis of Miss Bhutto's metaphors*

So keeping in view three points prescribed by Charteris-Black (2004), a critical analysis of the metaphoric expressions – used by Ms. Bhutto in her political autobiography titled *Daughter of the East* – has been attempted. The extracts in which metaphor expressions are used by the author are

identified in order to analyze them separately under social, cultural and historical perspectives.

The skies rained tears of ice that night. (Bhutto, 2008, p. 11)

This sentence occurs during the narration of the death of Ms Bhutto's father. At the first night of his death, it hailed heavily in their home town, Larkana. In the metaphor "tears of ice", the target domain which is "tears" indicates the author's intentions to persuade the minds of the readers to create sympathies for herself as well as for her political cause. Ms Bhutto became the chairperson of her political party (Pakistan People's Party) after the death of her father, Mr Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the founder of the party. She seems busy, in most parts of her discourse, in using the name of her father for the purpose of achieving power. After her father's death, the regime of General Zia afflicted atrocities and the target domain of the metaphor implies those cruelties and miserable conditions of the author's life.

As Mir and I flew home to Pakistan for the Michaelmas break, there wasn't a cloud on my horizon. (p. 77)

This utterance is in the background of her return to Pakistan in 1977 when her father was the prime minister of Pakistan. Through the metaphor of "no cloud on horizon", she aims to show a clear and smooth political situation in her country under her father's rule. The source domain of the metaphor, though subjective in its nature, communicates the overall social stability in the country which would later be violated by a military dictator, General Zia who hanged her father besides afflicting atrocities on her as well as on her party. Again the implication under the metaphor tells the upcoming miseries in the author's life.

If you choose to stay here, know that we are in for heavy weather. (p. 115)

The metaphor “heavy weather” is used to depict the brutality of the martial law of General Zia. It works effectively. It is helpful in gripping the readers artistically towards the narrative besides creating feelings of pity for her family which was suffering heavily from the vindictiveness of the military regime of General Zia. It also shows the conscious resistance of the author against the dictator and a desire for the revival of democracy in her country.

I am not made of the wood which burns easily. (p. 128)

The metaphoric use of language presents a strong resolution and a firm character of Ms Bhutto. It also makes the narration impressive. Again it is in the backdrop of the narration of the atrocities from the military regime. It has also a strong implication which shows the author as a leader with iron will and unshakeable determination for the cause of the revival of democracy in her country.

I have willingly taken the path of thorns and stepped into the valley of death. (p. 325)

Through the metaphoric representation of the difficulties of politics and her high resolution, the author grasps the readers in her persuasive language and conveys her standpoint of ousting the dictator away underneath the statement. This is also a vital statement so far as the political life of the author is concerned. The background of the author as a civilian politician who is facing many troubles in political process is quite clear in this statement.

□ **Analysis of General Musharraf’s metaphors**

Again in this section, the three-point model prescribed by Charteris-Black (2004) is applied on General Musharraf’s political autobiography titled “In the Line of Fire”. The extracts in which metaphor expressions are exploited by the author are identified in order to analyze them separately

keeping in view the social, cultural and historical background.

This book is a window into contemporary Pakistan and my role in shaping it. (2006, p. xi)

On the onset of the autobiography, the metaphor "window into contemporary Pakistan" is making the language flowery on the one hand and influencing the readers in making them visualize the wider scope of the book on the other. The implication underlying metaphor is to present the high stature of the author so far as Pakistan is concerned. General Musharraf took over Pakistan in 1999 after ousting an elected government of Mr Nawaz Sharif. He then intends to rationalize his role on various spectrums in his autobiography.

I was face-to-face with terror. (p. 1)

The General has written these lines in the background of one of the attacks by the terrorists on his convoy. The metaphor "terror" illustrates the explosion, the suicide attack etc. In calling this suicide attack as terror, he creates thrilling impact and excitement among readers.

At the end of the war this sector was to become a graveyard of Indian tanks. (p. 46)

The General describes the incidents of 1965 war against India and his strong role in it. By using the word "graveyard" for Indian tanks, the writer is trying to exploit the emotions of his countrymen regarding their hatred for India and thus making his position justifiable. The author's martial background is quite clear in the metaphoric expression which contains the words like tanks, graveyard etc.

It is time to lay bare what has been shrouded in mystery. (p. 87)

The words "lay bare" and "shrouded" are being metaphorically used by the writer for telling the truth about the Kargil Conflict between India and Pakistan. Such statement is given by the writer to create a lasting impact on the minds of the readers and to persuade them towards his version of the Kargil episode.

The soothing hum of the big bird lulled people into contemplation or sleep. (p. 102)

The metaphor "the big bird" that stands for the airplane is helping in attracting the attention of the readers besides influencing their minds towards his version of "the hijacking episode" which led to his coup. Such expression is creating impressive effects in the long monotonous discourse.

He also knew that the next few hours would be spent on the razor's edge. (p. 121)

The metaphoric expression "the razor's edge" is used to influence the minds of readers in favor of the army action against the elected government. This extract is presented in the backdrop of military coup. The toughness and strength of character of the author are intended to show with the use of the metaphor.

Pakistan was a rudderless ship floundering in high seas, with no destination, led by inept captains whose only talent lay in plunder. (p. 148)

Through the metaphoric use of source domain, the writer hints at the miserable plight of the country's affairs and the corruption and malpractices of politicians. Such metaphoric statement helps in providing a rationalization for the military coup undertaken by the author.

The ship of state had to be put on an even keel, its course and direction had to be charted, and a new, capable crew had to be installed to steer it. I was determined to take Pakistan ahead at full sail. (p. 148)

Again, the metaphoric use of language seems quite helpful for the General's exploits. He presupposes the country as directionless with incompetent handlers namely the politicians. He brags himself as the right choice for removing all the evils prevailing in the country.

The base of the pyramid has to be very strong, or else it will collapse. (p. 172)

The metaphor “*pyramid*” which stands here for democracy is very much appealing in the given sentence. It helps to create the democratic image of the author in the minds of readers. A dictator’s talking and favouring democracy is quite paradoxical in nature.

When I took the helm of the ship of state on October 12, 1999, I was solely in charge of all our strategic programs. (p. 287)

The metaphoric use of language, here, helps to make the discourse attractive to some extent and avoids the boredom of the facile use of language. The element of power and military ideology—the sole protector of country’s strategic assets—are overtly communicated by the author.

■ **Conclusion**

While analyzing the political discourses of Ms Bhutto and General Musharraf, it has been observed that the selected political figures consciously or unconsciously exploit rhetorical devices especially metaphors to persuade and inspire readers for their desired ends—the attainment and practice of power. From the use of metaphors their backgrounds are also obvious. Their identities regarding their status and affiliations can also be judged through their persuasive discourses. The following points are inferred from the analysis of the selected authors.

□ ***Inferences from Miss Bhutto’s metaphors***

One of the linguistic tools for persuasion which Ms Benazir Bhutto applied in her discourse is the use of metaphor. Ms Bhutto uses metaphors which have their source domain in natural objects. Her selection of metaphors such as “tears of ice”, “cloud on my horizon”, “heavy weather”, “woods’ burning”, “path of thorns”, etc. create the following effects in her discourse:

1. These show adverse circumstances and miseries faced by the author during her political struggle.
2. These present the steadfastness and high resolution of the author against heavy odds afflicted by the opposition.
3. These also assist the author to produce her positive and firm character before readers.
4. The comparison of the conditions of the author's life with awful demonstration of nature also helps in obscuring the prevailing situation.
5. These help to dilute the effects of boredom and monotony of the long discourse.
6. These also create fascinating effects in the autobiography.

□ ***Inferences from General Musharraf's Metaphors***

Though Mr. Musharraf uses plain and straight forward language in his autobiography, yet the use of the rhetorical devices like metaphors cannot be ignored in his discourse. To an extent these are useful in serving the author's motives. The metaphors like "big bird", "razor's edge" etc. are specimen of the intentional presentation of the General's manly and brave character. Generally, metaphors are there to serve the following goals of the writer:

1. These make the discourse more attractive and flowery and avoid the monotony to an extent.
2. The feelings and emotions of readers are also aroused.
3. Everlasting impact on readers' minds is also intended.
4. These metaphors also help the writer to create underlying meanings and force readers to assume the situation.
5. Finally, these help to persuade and inspire the audience to an extent.

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