



Ideological Representation of Islamophobia: A Comparative Critical Discourse Analysis of Imran Khan and Donald Trump's Speeches

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ABSTRACT

The negative portrayals of Islam and Muslims is presented by American leaders to make public discourses suitable for their political interests. Since September 11, the term Islamophobia has been consistently used by American media and political leaders to ridicule and harass Muslims. The study examined different manifestations of Islamophobia across a wide spectrum of sociopolitical perspectives taking into account the speech of Donald Trump in election campaign of 2016 and speech of Imran Khan in United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on September 27, 2019. By using comparative critical discourse analysis approach, it is tried to examine the concept of Islamophobia of two political leaders belonging from two different countries. This is qualitative study based on Fairclough's 3D model of critical discourse analysis to inspect the impact of language on audience and society.

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1. Introduction

Islamophobia is a strong and usually overworked fear, dislike, or hostility towards Islam and Muslims. It is fueled by negative stereotypes that lead to prejudice and discrimination and social, political, and communal marginalization of Muslims (Baboolal, 2020). It can also be defined as a rising tide of negative response and antagonism against the Muslims in Europe and the United States. The term of backlash incorporates numerous negative reactions towards Muslims, as well as any activity that can be detrimental to them. These actions may be physical, psychological or a combination of both. This also includes such events as the controversial cartoons that Danish artists created in 2006 and which put Prophet Muhammad in mocking light and were highly critical of Islam. To Muslims, it was a very offensive act and an indication of disrespect. It can also be interpreted as a socially constructed phenomenon because it strengthens a racial hierarchy that exists globally and maintains and expands inequalities in the distribution of resources (Board on American-Islamic Relations, 2016). It is also defined as a groundless kind of hostility against Muslims which leads to generalized fear or aversion to all or majority of the members of the Muslim community.

Islamophobic sentiments in the United States escalated following the September 11 attacks in New York, which represented a significant international shift in the portrayal of Muslims in the media. This event altered people's perceptions of Islam and contributed to a widespread feeling of unease and mistrust towards the entire Muslim community. The assaults made individuals keep thinking about all Muslims were terrorists and if they were, when would they attack again?? The attacks led many to question whether all Muslims were extremists and when another attack might occur. With the significant loss of life on that day, concerns about terrorist threats, particularly from groups like Al-Qaeda, were justified. Nonetheless, a significant issue

arose from the development of broad stereotypes, which persist despite the fact that terrorist organizations constitute only a small minority within the global Muslim population of 1.6 billion. This condemnation of a whole religion because of the acts of a few extremists is based on a failure to comprehend the Muslim religion and ignorance about Muslims which results in the spread of stereotypes which are widely and unjustly generalized on a whole population. The rhetoric utilized by certain candidates, notably President Donald Trump, significantly fueled a surge in anti-Muslim sentiments and Islamophobic ideology on an unprecedented scale. Various media platforms began disseminating heightened negativity, distorted portrayals and hateful rhetoric targeting the Muslim community. The widespread reach and rapid transmission capabilities of media outlets, especially through online platforms, magnified their influence on various audiences.

As a result, there was a surge in acts of hostility and prejudice against Muslims across the United States. Imran Khan, former Prime Minister of Pakistan focused his address at the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly on a phenomenon causing significant pain and suffering. His speech aimed to challenge the perception of Islam as a radical religion and instead held the West responsible for creating a divide between itself and Muslims. This research aims to analyze Khan's language usage to illuminate the global plight of Muslims and demonstrate how Islamophobia originates from the Western world. It will examine the discursive tactics employed by Khan in his speech to criticize Western narratives of Islamophobia. Analyzing Khan's speech at the 74th UNGA session is vital as he addresses Islamophobia and denounces those fostering hatred towards Islam. Khan's 2019 speech gained global attention for its historical context, which emphasized the existence of radicals in all societies. Therefore, this research will center on Khan's speech as a pivotal contribution to the contemporary discourse on Islamophobia in the Western world. Numerous studies have explored narratives of Islamophobic through CDA. However, there is a notable gap in examining comparative analyses of Islamophobic narratives between Eastern and Western politicians within the realm of political narratology. The study aimed to address this gap by examining the Islamophobic narratives articulated by different politicians, as conveyed through media reports, speeches and newspaper articles. The focus will not only be on understanding the political agenda of Islamophobia but also on analyzing counter-narratives presented by figures like Imran Khan to challenge and counteract narratives espoused by individuals such as Donald Trump.

The questions of the research study are given below

1. How do the speeches of Donald Trump and Imran Khan reflect their religio-political ideologies in cultural context?
2. How the rhetorical strategies such as hyperbole, metaphors and appeal to sentiments used by Donald Trump and Imran Khan to legitimize or challenge Islamophobic narrative?
3. In what ways does Imran Khan's rhetoric challenge prevailing discourse on Islamophobia?

As such, this research contributes valuable knowledge to the field of political narratology regarding the discourse of Islamophobia articulated by these two figures.

2. Literature Review

Islamophobia is generally described as fear, hatred and bias against Islam and Muslims, which is often supported by stereotypical and discriminative practices (Tyrer, 2013). Even though this term is quite new, the problem has deep roots in history associated with Orientalist and colonialist discourses. Said (1977, 2015) production can show how Islam representation in the west has historically led to the depiction of the Muslims as irrational, violent and inferior justifying imperial domination. The report of Runnymede Trust (1997) systemized the notion by determining key characteristics of Islamophobic discourse and it also included the portrayal of Islam as monolithic, aggressive and incompatible with Western values. Islamophobia as a phenomenon can be studied through its evolution since the medieval era in Europe to contemporary Western societies that transformed into a religious bias to a culture and racial discrimination (Grosfoguel, 2012; Meer & Modood, 2012). Current studies highlight the role of media and political discourse in strengthening Islamophobic narratives, especially in the post-9/11 context. Studies show that Islamophobia has been politicized more into action, particularly in the United States, where political discourse and media coverage are often used to equate Islam with terrorism and extremism (Lajevardi & Oskooii, 2018; Saylor, 2014).

What has gained attention by scholars in the recent past is the significance of counter-Islamophobic speech especially speeches made by Muslim elected officials. The purpose of such counter-narratives is to dispel mainstream Islamophobic beliefs by underlining diversity, coexistence and social justice (Abbas & Siddique, 2012; Iqbal, 2010). Nevertheless, scholars alert that counter-discourses may unknowingly recreate twofold "Us versus Them" frameworks. This issue points to the importance of essential analysis of speeches given by such leaders as Imran Khan to determine whether they do have a disruptive effect on the Islamophobic discourse or not, or reinforce the existing discursive patterns. Several works based on CDA have been used in the analysis of political speeches in order to identify latent ideologies and tactics of power. The study of leaders such as Obama, Trump, Rouhani, Erdogan and Bhutto shows how linguistic choices influence societal image and political identity (Sharififar & Rahimi, 2015; Wang, 2010; Yujie, 2018). Research studies on the rhetoric of Trump emphasize how Islamophobic rhetoric was normalized in the 2016 American presidential elections (Kazi, 2019). On the other hand, comparative studies show that Muslim leaders usually use discourses to challenge the Western versions, even though some have been more successful than others. Although researchers have carried out extensive studies to identify Islamophobia and the political discourse, but a major gap in comparative Critical Discourse Analysis of western and Muslim political leadership on Islamophobia exists. Specifically, not much has been available regarding the ways in which Donald Trump and Imran Khan create, support or undermine the Islamophobic discourse in their speeches. This study attempts to fill this gap by using the CDA framework as developed by Fairclough to carry out a comparative analysis of their speech.

3. Research Methodology

This study embraced a qualitative descriptive research design to evaluate the discursive forming of Islamophobia in the speeches of Donald Trump and Imran Khan. A qualitative approach was quite appropriate because it executed thoroughly exploration of meanings, ideologies and power relations rooted within political discourse. The study analysis was based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and it employed Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model for its primary analytical framework. The research design provided a fully systematic framework for evaluating the study's objectives by combining the linguistic analysis with socio-political interpretation. By following Fairclough (2001) view of discourse as a social practice, the study assumed that political establishment deliberately use language to shape public perceptions and normalize dominant ideologies. Despite critiques regarding the lack of quantitative objectivity in CDA, the qualitative nature of this study allowed for a nuanced understanding of ideological meanings that cannot be captured through numerical analysis. Fairclough's 3D Model of CDA was applied to evaluate the discourse at three interlinked levels:

First level is related to Textual components and it focuses on lexical choices, repeated vocabulary and interrelationship. Second level is "Discursive practice" and it aimed to examine rhetorical strategies, speaker individuality and audience. The last and third one is Socio-cultural practice to address power relations, ideologies based on social and historical contexts. This multi-layered approach enabled a comprehensive evaluation of how Islamophobia was constructed, reinforced or contested within political discourse. Two political speeches of renowned political leaders were selected to directly address Islamophobia. The first speech was Donald Trump's and he delivered his speech during an election rally in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, on December 7, 2015. In this speech, he announced the proposed plan on the Muslim Ban. The statement lasted four minutes and it was obtained from the American Presidency Project, and linked to the post-San Bernardino attack environment. While Imran Khan delivered the speech at the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on September 27, 2019 during his tenure as Prime Minister of Pakistan. This speech was selected due to its well-defined discursive position against Islamophobia and it was transcribed from the official YouTube channel of United Nations. The both speeches were comparative analysis of Western and Muslim political leadership on the issue of Islamophobia. The data were collected through systematic video transcription and verification procedures. The Maestra software (version 1.3.1) which is a transcription platform based on AI, was used to transcribe the speeches at initial level. The transcriptions were cross-checked on multiple occasions with the original videos to make sure the accuracy. Non-verbal elements such as pauses, intonation, filler words, self-corrections and tone were added in the form of manual notations to identify the distinctive features of spoken discourse. The analysis involved a comparative qualitative examination of both speeches using Fairclough's CDA framework. This paper explored the historical origins of Islamophobia, Islamophobic rhetoric of

Trump, and counter-Islamophobic rhetoric of Imran Khan, the effects of such discursive forms of Islamophobia on Muslim communities and the political popularity of such discursive mechanisms. The discussion of the ideological positioning, the use of persuasive arguments demonstrates that language serves as a potent instrument of controlling the change of the mass consciousness and the justification of the political strategies.

4. Data Analysis

The primary source was a speech documentary video of Donald Trump in his 2015 campaign and the speech of Imran Khan in UNGA in 2019. The Islamophobic discourse by Donald Trump became evident in the extremely polarized 2015-2016 presidential race in the United States, which was characterized by angry rhetoric and increased anti-Muslim sentiments. The proposal of a complete and total ban on Muslims entering the United States, which Trump has made at a campaign rally in South Carolina, on December 7, 2015, became a landmark of his political identity. The speech was given following the attacks of San Bernardino, a time when people were still nervous about 9/11, and Muslims were portrayed as a threat to national security, which further reinforced Islamophobic rhetoric in American political discourse. Using the three-dimensional model of CDA outlined by Fairclough, it is found that lexical decisions made by Trump were emotive and fear-inducing and were planned. Words like hatred, violence, jihad in the world and total shutdown served to demonize the Muslim and created an us versus them dichotomous situation. The repetition of such phrases as 'we have no choice' contributed to the feeling of inevitability and urgency and it justified proposals of discriminatory policies. The intertextual use of American nationalistic slogans such as 'Make America Great Again' and 'America First', was used to mobilize the historical and ideological repertoires that defined Islam as being inconsistent with the so-called axiomatic principles of the United States.

Trump used such rhetorical techniques in the sphere of discursive practice as hyperbole, appeals to Fear, rhetorical questions, and discriminatory citing of opinion polls and research institutions to give his arguments more credibility. Trump appealed to the audience directly, putting himself in the position of a decisive leader, which enhanced the level of emotional involvement and made his position the will of the nation. The socio-cultural context analysis shows that the speech delivered by Donald Trump led to the formation of the power imbalance because it favorably conditioned the promotion of Islamophobia as a regular expression in political speech. The socio-cultural analysis shows that the speech of Trump strengthened the status of power imbalances by making Islamophobia a normalized political discourse. The speech was ideologically based on nationalism, securitization of Islam, religious discrimination and dictatorial leadership. Trump has put a seal on the legitimization of exclusionary policies, social polarization and increased hostility against Muslim communities by framing Islam as a violent tradition and Muslims as their possible enemy. His rhetoric not only altered the opinion of the population but also dominated the policy discourse, media discourses of coverage and international relations, strengthening a wider clash-of-civilization discourse.

The speech by Imran Khan at the 74th United Nations General Assembly (2019) appears as a counter-Islamophobic discourse challenging the hegemonic discourse of Islam as an extremist religion. Based on the use of the three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis by Fairclough, the speech demonstrates that the use of language is strategic to rebuild the image of Islam as a religion that is based on justice, equality, and compassion. At the textual level, the lexical choices made by Imran Khan are foreshadowing the positive Islamic values which include justice, equal treatment and compassion and honorific mentions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) strengthen religious piety and togetherness among the Muslims. Reiteration and intertextual allusion to the Quran, Islamic history and the post 9/11 events in the world are used to bolster the ideological claim of Islam as a non-violent religion and rejection of the dichotomy of moderate and radical Islam. Rhetoric questions, use of analogies (e.g. a comparison with Holocaust sensitivity) and emotive language make the discourse more persuasive. On the discursive practice level, Khan establishes himself as a believable Muslim leader who is speaking to the global community and he uses such rhetoric strategies that are based on empathy, moral responsibility and human common values. His argument foresees a reaction of the audience by putting Islamophobia not merely as a Muslim problem, but a human problem in all its manifestations. The speech is also educative intervention, but it tries to address the wrong perception regarding Islam and Muslims by dialog instead of confrontation, in the socio-cultural dimension. Khan calls the Western ideological hegemony in question by providing the systemic origin of Islamophobia and especially how it is linked with terrorism and geopolitics. His speech

encourages Islamic unity, religious expression and international collaboration but at the same time, it criticizes the media images and political discourses that devalue the identities of the Muslims. In general, the rhetoric of Imran Khan is a counter-hegemonic speech, which challenges the Islamophobic stereotypes, promotes interfaith tolerance and demands focus on the systemic reasons of anti-Muslim bigotry. The speech re-establishes Islamophobia as a global ethical concern, an element where discrimination against Muslims poses a danger to social cohesiveness, justice and humanity in general.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter provides a synthesis of the study results and answers the research questions and if the research objectives are met or not. The paper compared speeches delivered by Donald Trump and Imran Khan about Islamophobia using the Critical Discourse Analysis tool by Fairclough in order to understand how Islamophobia is constructed and opposed in the political discourse of Muslims and non-Muslims. The analysis indicates that the two leaders have significantly different ways of discursively constructing the notion of Islamophobia. The rhetoric expressed by Donald Trump is used to portray Islamophobic and exclusionary discourse that views Muslims as a security threat to the nation and identity of Americans. Using fear-induced discourses, hyperbole, repetition and dehumanizing language, Trump uses Islamophobia as a political instrument to mobilize the population, support the ideology of nationalism and establish authority in a strategic way. His speech always links Islam to terrorism, he views Muslim immigrants and refugees as criminals and justifies discriminatory policies, including his request to ban immigrants of the United States of America altogether. This rhetoric makes xenophobia more solid but it also makes prejudice acceptable as it is embedded on a larger ideological canvas like Make America Great Again.

Conversely, the discourse of Imran Khan is a counter-Islamophobic story that strives to disprove the dominant stereotypes of Islam and Muslims presented in the West. His speech is based on the values of justice, equality, compassion, and religious freedom, relying on the Islamic teachings, historical examples and moral comparisons to break the false beliefs about the association of Islam with extremism. Khan denies the difference between 'moderate' and 'radical' Islam. He declares the oneness of Islam and dissociates the religion with terrorism activities. He redefines Islamophobia as a human rights problem in the world, not a religious or political confrontation, with the help of emotive language, appeals to common values and requests to talk and educate. The paper also indicates that the two leaders utilize rhetorical means to affect the perception of the audience but the direction taken by the ideologies fundamentally differs. Trumps rhetoric encourages fear, exclusion and polarization whereas the rhetoric of Khan encourages inclusiveness, interfaith and mutual respect. These oppositional rhetoric practices place emphasis on the influence of political power, ideology and circumstance on popular accounts about Islamophobia. Summing up, the results validate the claim of the significance of political speech in perpetuation or in challenging Islamophobia. The rhetoric of Trump supports the ideology of Islamophobia and social division, and the discourse of Imran Khan provides a counter-hegemonic paradigm that encourages insight, solidarity and justice in the world. The study offers the conclusion that Islamophobia is not a social phenomenon only but a discourse constructed by political factors and ideological interests. Future research may expand the scope of this study by:

- Comparing a wider scope of political speech in other geopolitical and cultural settings.
- Research on how the contextual factors including media representations, historic events and politics conditions affect Islamic discourse with regards to Islamophobia.
- Carrying out cross-cultural CDA research on the issue of Islamophobia in politics around the world.
- Introducing the approaches of audience-response, e.g. survey, focus-group to study the influence of political discourse on the perceptions of a population.

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