

## Political Persuasion in Bilawal Bhutto's Speech in the Debate on Sustainable Peace and Security: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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### Abstract

This study analyzes Bilawal Bhutto's speech as a reflection of the Pakistani community's perception and the country's stance on pressing global issues. The speech addresses key concerns such as climate catastrophe, terrorism, regional conflicts, COVID-19, and Islamophobia, positioning Bhutto as a global leader during crises. The study has used Fairclough's three-dimensional model for the analysis of the data through a mixed-method research approach, where frequencies of key terms have been retrieved quantitatively, while the interpretation of the speech has been carried out through the lens of the second layer of the 3D model. Discursive strategies like intensification, referential nomination, and prediction are employed to engage the audience and reinforce his persuasive appeal. His speech highlights the urgency of global cooperation in confronting shared challenges.

**Keywords:** Bilawal Bhutto, Climate Change, Pakistan, CDA, Political Persuasion.

### Introduction

Persuasion is a term that is used to persuade people in any social setting. Persuading someone to do something good is a good deal in politics (Gass & Seiter, 2018). Political leaders have been consciously or unconsciously involved in political persuasion for ages. They have been using persuasive and other strategies for centuries (Saeed et al., 2020; Iqbal et al., 2020; Hassan, 2020). The speakers with important or authoritative positions in hand use these strategies to achieve their personal or social objectives. According to Kang (2018) and Aazam (2019), language plays a vital role in recognizing and identifying an ideology or an issue. So, political leaders always tend to utilize language to influence or convince others. That is why language is used by national and international leaders, by use different strategies to convey their messages more effectively.

Bilawal Bhutto, being the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, represents the Pakistani people in his debate on peace and security. His speech seems to be influential for the Pakistani community in particular and for the world in general. He uses certain strategies to let the world know of the catastrophic condition of Pakistan in recent floods and a new layer of terrorism. The present study seeks to analyze the use of persuasive strategies and approaches that are used by Bilawal Bhutto to persuade the audience to protect the world from any kind of conflict in his speech in New York.

According to Cahyono (2021), the notions of discourse, power, and ideologies are connected with each other. Similarly, politics is considered an art of struggling for domination to get absolute power. Power relations are always digressive. This relationship can be practiced and exercised through discourse. It is so because every political activity can be dealt with and furnished by the use of language in speech. A politician may use different technicalities to persuade and induce power, and act in a specific way to convince others (Hassan, 2022).

The study aims to highlight the persuasive strategies Bilawal Bhutto has used in his speech at the United Nations Security Council for sustainable peace and security. The study also seems to analyze the strategies in terms of the convincing power of Bilawal Bhutto to let the audience know of his political ideology and views. Since Pakistan has been severely hit by climate change and the war on terror, this speech holds great importance for world leaders to learn from it and formulate new mechanisms and strategies to address it. His speech holds great importance for his encouraging views on multilateralism. The researcher has used Fairclough's three-dimensional model for data analysis. CDA is one of the techniques that is used to analyze social and cultural concerns. According to Haryatmoko (2016), CDA practitioners like Fairclough, Van Dijk, Wodak and Kress, and Van Leeuwen have all agreed on the point that CDA is a research methodology used to highlight and analyze hidden agendas or ideologies in the text. It attempts to critically evaluate and analyze any social or communicative event to reveal the ideology in discourse (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). According to Fairclough, "discourse is a process of social practice with internal and dialectical relations" (Fairclough, 2001). The analysis process does not show the analysis of text only, but also takes into account the production, interpretation, and social processes and contexts. Fairclough (2013) is of the view that analysis of ideology in any communicative or social event can be done by taking into account a three-dimensional model: textual analysis, discursive practice analysis, and social practice analysis. The model is further divided into three stages: description, explanation, and interpretation.

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

The modern world is facing numerous threats and challenges to maintain sustainable peace and security. Living in a peaceful environment is one of the basic rights of every individual. No research has been done on any of his speeches regarding peace and the security of the globe. Therefore, the current study aims to highlight the discursive strategies employed by Bilawal Bhutto to globalize his thoughts for the maintenance of peace and security in the world. The study also investigates the use of lexical choices by Bilawal Bhutto, which shows his inclusive approach to combating global issues.

### **1.2 Research Objectives**

1. To highlight the use of lexical choices by Bilawal Bhutto to show his strong commitment and inclusive approach in resolving global issues like climate change, multilateralism, Covid-19, islamophobia, and the Kashmir conflict,
2. To explore discursive strategies used by Bilawal Bhutto to formulate his viewpoint on world issues
3. To find out the political ideology of Bilawal Bhutto by highlighting the collective responsibility of the entire world community to protect mankind from potential natural and man-made hazards and conflicts.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

1. How does the use of lexical choices by Bilawal Bhutto show his strong commitment and inclusive approach in resolving global issues?
2. What are the discursive strategies used by Bilawal Bhutto to formulate his viewpoint on global issues?
3. How does Bilawal Bhutto show his political ideology by highlighting the collective responsibility of the entire world community to protect mankind from potential natural and man-made hazards and conflicts?

### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

The primary concern of the speech is to analyze the speech of Bilawal Bhutto in terms of his role in international politics, utilizing the political discourse analysis taken from CDA. The study examines the political persuasion of Bilawal Bhutto to the world leaders to pay attention to the global crises and

catastrophes. The study is significant in the sense that it utilizes all the modern techniques to enhance the understanding of the general public regarding global issues. The study is useful for future researchers to carry out research in the political sphere by taking help from the current study.

### **1.5. Delimitations**

The study is delimited to the analysis of persuasive strategies and inclusive approaches to examine Bilawal Bhutto's ideology about global concerns like climate change, islamophobia, the Kashmir issue, and the COVID pandemic.

## **2. Literature Review**

Tayyab (2021) has investigated former PM Imran Khan's speech ecolinguistically. The researcher has applied Aristotle's rhetoric as a theoretical framework. The study found that political leaders devise discursive strategies at international conferences. They usually overlook the possible criticism.

Saeed and Aslam (2020) have investigated the persuasive, discursive, and rhetorical strategies by Imran Khan in his victory speech in the National Assembly of Pakistan. Aristotle's theory of Rhetoric was used as a theoretical framework. They found out that political discourse is created to impose their ideologies on the general public. The strategies by Imran Khan include self-presentation and prediction (Hassan, 2020).

Shboul (2020) in his study has investigated the conceptualization of climate change in the US politics from the perspective of ecolinguistics and CDA. His study includes the analysis of statements and letters by governors and mayors of the U.S. The results manifested that climate change is the top preference of governors and mayors.

Tariq (2020) has critically evaluated Khan's speech at UNGA in 2019. The researcher has utilized a three-dimensional model of Fairclough to analyze the 'US' vs 'THEM' narrative in his speech. The research highlighted a clear difference between the US vs THEM in Khan's speech. The researcher found out that Khan urges international leaders to seek harmony among world nations to gain prosperity and peace in the world.

Rabbani (2019) has attempted to explore the relationship between language and social and political perspectives in Imran Khan's speech at the UNGA in 2019. The researcher has applied a three-dimensional model of Fairclough as a theoretical framework. The research shows that Imran Khan tried to overcome violence and injustice in the world by highlighting the brutalities inflicted by India on Kashmir.

Hussain (2015) has applied Fairclough's three-dimensional model to study the political discourse of the Egyptian president. The study seeks to highlight the hidden ideology and agenda, and critical linguistics perspectives in his speeches. The study reveals the use of specific language by the president to gain certain intended goals.

Most research works in the political arena show the exclusive use of pronouns to concentrate on the aspects of positive US and negative THEM. However, the current study is based on the analysis of how Bilawal Bhutto has globalized his political perceptions by using some discursive strategies and techniques, especially the use of inclusive pronouns in his address. He makes connections and shares his views with the rest of the world to let them know the hazardous and catastrophic conditions as a result of global conflicts (Hassan, 2023). The speech is 2990 in length; however, the current study aims to highlight discursive strategies and an inclusive approach used by Bilawal Bhutto in his speech at the UN Security Council for sustainable peace and security.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Method**

The researcher has used a mixed-method approach for the analysis of data. The text/speech is analyzed qualitatively. Quantitative method is used to determine the frequencies of different lexical items and different pronouns.

#### **3.2 Theoretical Framework**

The researcher has used Fairclough's three-dimensional model as a theoretical framework to analyze data. The model consists of description, interpretation, and explanation of the text. The analysis is divided into three stages as given by Fairclough.

##### **a. Textual Analysis.**

Textual analysis includes linguistic items used in the text. A major part of the speech is dedicated to multilateralism, global conflicts, and catastrophes in the form of growing terrorism and climate change.

##### **b. Discursive Strategies Analysis**

This is the second stage of analysis. At this stage, the researcher analyzes and interprets the text in connection with production, consumption, and distribution strategies.

##### **c. Explanation of the text from the perspective of social practices**

At this stage, the researcher attempts to analyze the speech from the perspective of social practices that give rise to terrorism and hate culture in society.

### **4. Results and Discussions**

The analysis is carried out by dividing it into three-dimensional stages given by Norman Fairclough. In this section, Fairclough's 3-dimensional model is used to analyze the political ideology in Bilawal's Speech.

#### **4.1 Textual Analysis**

It is the stage where the focus is on linguistic aspects of the data. There are several social and political areas taken into account in the speech; however, the major part is dedicated to multilateralism. This shows his strong commitment and dedication to world politics for the extermination of global issues. There are different areas covered in the speech, such as multilateralism, global peace, the COVID pandemic, climate change, and the Kashmir issue.

The speech as a whole is declarative, argumentative, and persuasive, which not only exhibits his strong will to act personally but also urges world leaders to act timely manner for the sake of global peace and security.

"It is therefore vital to empower and efficiently utilize all the main organs of the United Nations for sustainable peace and security (Bilawal Bhutto, 2022).

According to Fairclough (1989:19), in the first stage of description, linguistic features are of great importance for discourse analysis. Linguistic features further establish social and political identities. They can also be used for the establishment of relationships among different people. Wodak and Meyer are of the view that the use of lexical items is the projection of the speaker's choice.

##### **4.1.1 Multilateralism**

Multilateralism is defined as coordination and cooperation among several nations to pursue a common goal. In this process of coordination and collaboration, several other agencies and civil society, and other private sector organizations can be involved. Bilawal's speech revolves around multilateralism from start to end. The word 'multilateralism' has been used twelve times in his speech. This shows his ample belief in multilateralism to settle gigantic global concerns. According to him, all the challenges and conflicts can be resolved through multilateral acts. As an example;

"There are indeed many benefits of multilateralism, and they are very evident (Bhutto 2022).

#### 4.1.2 Climate Change

Another major issue being highlighted in the speech is climate change. From the context of Pakistan, climate change holds great importance, as Pakistan is one of the most affected countries in the world. Bilawal Bhutto urges the world leaders to act for the preservation of environmental and ecological life. He presented his argument in a logical way to ask for climate justice from the developed world.

“... and face collectively and multilaterally first and foremost the existential threats, be it in the shape of climate catastrophe and climate change (Bhutto 2022)”.

#### 4.1.3 Islamophobia

Since the speech is mainly concerned with multilateralism and multilateral thinking to approach world problems, islamophobia holds great importance in the speech. According to him, islamophobia has been divided into binaries. It is considered one of the biggest menaces in the modern world. It leads to the racial genocide of a specific community. This is not an issue limited to a specific area, but a concern of the whole world. According to Bilawal, the main reason behind terrorism is the radicalization of Muslims by the West. He persuades world leaders to take concrete measures against this phenomenon to have sustainable peace and security in the world.

“We must confront the ideologies of hate, of xenophobia, of islamophobia... which impose discrimination and violence and even threats of genocide against religious minorities in certain countries (Bhutto 2022)”.

#### 4.1.4 Kashmir Issue

This is one of the most important issues in Pakistani politics. Pakistani political leaders have always raised the Kashmir issue on all international forums. Similarly, Bilawal has also raised the Kashmir issue in an outstanding manner, which shows his political ideology about the Kashmir issue. Along with other regional conflicts Kashmir conflict has led to the rise of global terrorism. According to Bilawal, achieving sustainable peace and security without under the agenda of multilateralism is impossible without resolving Kashmir conflict.

“When it comes to the question of Kashmir, prove that multilateralism can succeed, prove that the United Nations Security Council under your worthy presidency can succeed, and deliver peace in the region” (Bhutto 2022).

#### 4.1.5 COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has created hurdles in international trade and unity. The peace and security of the world are at stake due to the pandemic (Hassan et al., 2024). Bilawal Bhutto discussed the pandemic and its implications for the whole world. The pandemic has really proved vital for the disintegration of the world in 2019. Bilawal persuaded the world's leaders to come forward and help the developing countries to overcome global issues like COVID-19.

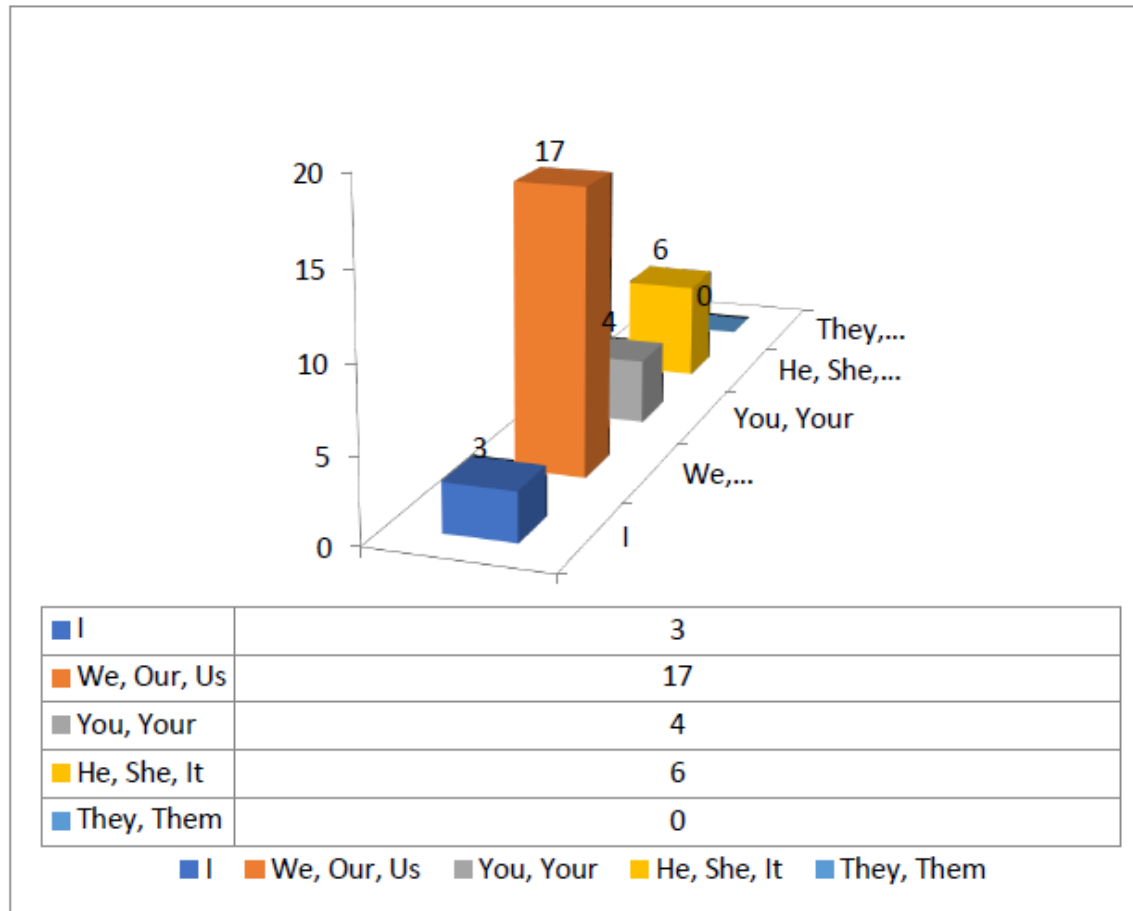
“...and face collectively and multilaterally, first and foremost, the existential threats that we face as the human race, be it in the shape of the COVID pandemic.....(Bhutto 2022)

#### 4.1.6 The use of Pronouns

The pronoun ‘I’ has been used by Bilawal Bhutto as many as three times, which shows his strong conviction and confidence in what he is personally doing for the protection of social and environmental, political setup, and conservation of ecology. The use of ‘I’ also shows his strong will to warn and suggest the ‘them’ about the hazards in store for them in the future. The inclusive pronoun ‘we’ has been used 14 times in speech. The most frequent use of inclusive pronouns such as ‘we’ and ‘our’ represents Pakistan in particular and the developing countries in general, where he talks about the miserable condition of Pakistani people in the wake of severe and biblical floods. However, for most of the speech, ‘we’ has been used to represent the whole world. This shows his inclusive approach in resolving global conflicts. This also proves him a global leader who is well abreast of the conflicts

in the world. It also suggests the indifference of wealthy nations towards the most hazardous effects of climate change. The pronoun `you` is used four times in the speech. It has only been used to address the president of the conference. It has not been used to blame someone or to differentiate between the addressor and the addressee.

**Figure 1** Use of Pronouns in Bilawal Speech



#### 4.1.7 The use of Modal Verbs

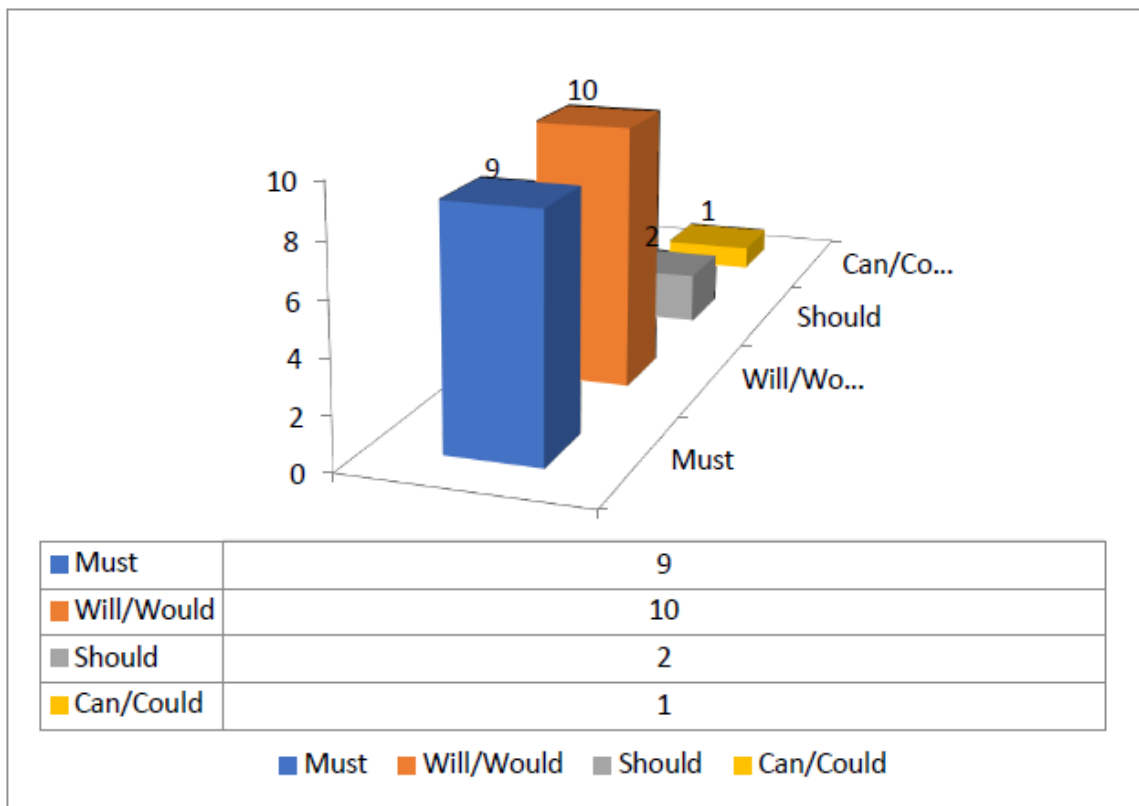
Moreover, Bilawal Bhutto has used modal verbs in his speech to show certainty, empathy, and strong conviction in resolving global issues like climate change, global terrorism, islamophobia, Kashmir conflict, and other social and political issues. The modal verb `must` has been used as many as twelve times, which shows his strong conviction and commitment to global conflicts. The frequent use of `must` reflects his utmost concern for a safe and healthy world. Besides `must`, there are certain other modal verbs used in the speech. These modal verbs include `can`, `should`, and `would`. `Can` and `should` have been used five times in the speech. This shows his strong belief in dealing with global issues. The use of such modal verbs shows his positionality as a world leader, who can convince others and take steps in personal capacity for the eradication of global conflicts. It is noteworthy to state that in his speech, he has used the modal verb `would` eight times in the speech. The use of `would` instead of `will` shows the importance and formal status of the conference. Similarly, the use of `would`

reflects his maturity in the choice of words. It also shows his ability to speak at a highly important conference.

## 4.2 Discursive Strategy Analysis

This is the second stage of analysis, where the researcher tries to interpret the text with production, consumption, and distribution strategies. Bilawal seems to be greatly concerned about multilateralism and its implications for the protection of global issues. He has been talking and raising awareness among the masses about the preservation of forests, water resources, and the rise of a new layer of terrorism. The speech is of great importance at the international forum concerning recent floods and the rise of terrorism in Pakistan.

Figure 2: Modal Verbs in Bilawal Speech



This can be a test case for the world leaders to open their eyes and pay attention to climate change, keeping in view the devastating situation in Pakistan. His persuasion of the world leaders may have an impact on his country, which is one of the largest countries and the most vulnerable in terms of environment and terrorism. He is the one who behaves as a world leader to protect the planet from any kind of crisis. Therefore, from a production perspective, the research finds that Bilawal Bhutto, being representative of this country, is a very important producer of the text. Different strategies used by Bilawal Bhutto to persuade the world leaders regarding global conflicts

#### **4.2.1 Intensification Strategy**

In order to stress the global issues such as climate change, global terrorism, islamophobia, and multilateralism, Bilawal Bhutto uses discursive strategies like intensification. He keeps on using several terms repeatedly to raise awareness of how important global issues are. On the one hand, he shows his concerns about global peace and security by highlighting the miseries and destitution of his people around the globe, and on the other hand, he urges the world leaders to fight together against any kind of curse that gives rise to global inequality. He persuades and warns the world community to feel the pain of developing countries; otherwise, the safest countries will become victims of terrorism.

#### **4.2.2 Referential Nomination Strategy**

One of the most important and convincing strategies that Bilawal Bhutto uses is the strategy of referential nomination strategy. The excessive use of inclusive ‘we’ suggests how Bilawal Bhutto establishes his relationship with the audience in the meeting, in particular, and the rest of the world in general. His “in-group” includes the people of Pakistan, the Muslims of the world, and, to some extent, the developing world, but the use of inclusive “we” also includes the whole world. Most often, ‘we’ in his speech represents the whole world. He has also used the personal pronoun I in the speech, but that does not show any arrogance or positive ‘US’. He is likely to show himself as an example to other international leaders to get some inspiration for the protection of the environment and other global issues.

#### **4.2.3 Strategy of Inequality**

The third and most important strategy the Bilawal Bhutto employs to raise the issue of social ecology is the tool of ‘inequality’. He tries to convince the world of social inequality when he talks about the plight and miseries of Pakistani people in particular and the development in general. As an example:

“The world’s attention must also turn away from pursuing narrow national ambition and face collectively, multilaterally, first and foremost the existential threats (Bhutto,2022).

#### **4.2.4 Prediction Strategy**

Bilawal Bhutto uses a prediction strategy to warn world leaders of the hazardous effects of global issues in store for them. He started his speech by taking into account the disastrous effects of floods in Pakistan and the subsequent measures decided in COP27 under the presidency of Egypt. Apart from that, he sheds light on certain other global issues and warns the world leaders of the severe impacts on global peace and security. He predicts that without proper management and proper planning at the world level, the existential threats will engulf us all.

“Adding new permanent members would multiply the possibility of paralysis of the Security Council” (Bhutto, 2022).

### **4.3 Explanation of Speech with the Perspective of Social Practices.**

It is one of the most important abilities of a great leader to be always aware of the circumstances happening around them. He is always knowledgeable of global and national concerns, talks to his colleagues and counterparts, and makes healthy decisions for the extermination of such issues. He is capable of exchanging ideas with other world leaders at any international forum. So, by representing Pakistan and highlighting the issue of climate change and terrorism concerning Pakistan’s worst conditions proves himself an effective leader.

In his speech, Shehbaz Sharif urges the world leaders to come forward and play their due role in avoiding the possible outcomes of global issues. His speech has a great impact on the global community because he not only highlights the miseries of the developing world but also warns other countries of the catastrophic effects in store for them. His choice of lexical items has enlarged the social effects of speech. The way he uses inclusive pronouns to represent the whole human society has an impact on world leaders at large.



In a nutshell, Sharif's ideology about global issues such as climate change, regional conflicts, law, and other situations of the world is that he believes in collective effort and predicts such calamities in the future if appropriate measures are not taken. He believes in incorporating the effect of such changes on social ecology. According to him, not only humans but also other species are affected by climate change. He believes in taking concrete steps to deal with such matters. He thinks that if justice is not done to the people in developing countries like Pakistan, the developed countries will also have to face the wrath of such issues. According to him, inclusiveness rather than selfishness is the moderate way to address global issues.

## 5. Conclusion

Bilawal's speech is a clear representation of the perception of the Pakistani community. His speech holds a mirror to the situation in Pakistan in terms of climate catastrophe and terrorism. His speech is vertically structured. He presented his viewpoint on the prescribed agenda so tactfully. Bilawal Bhutto has used some inclusive pronouns to manifest his ideology about global concerns. He acted like a world leader by using the inclusive pronoun. He has used some discursive strategies like intensification, referential nomination, and prediction to grab the attention of the audience. His excessive use of inclusive pronouns shows his persuasion to induce world leaders on how to cope with global issues such as climate change, COVID-19, regional conflicts, and islamophobia. He presented himself as the global leader during the time of crisis. He urges the whole world community to act in a timely manner for the preservation of the environment and protection of the world's peace. His speech has multiple impacts on the global community. The world needs more organizations under the umbrella of the United Nations to tackle issues more quickly. In his speech, Bilawal Bhutto stresses the collective responsibility of the global community to save the world from such calamities for sustainable development and a peaceful life.

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