

Parallelism and Pronouns in Political Discourse as Rationalization Devices

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Abstract

The current study is a critical evaluation of the political autobiography named “Daughter of the East (2008)” by a renowned Pakistani political leader Ms. Benazir Bhutto. The evaluation has been focused on the notion that the use of pronouns and parallel structures of sentences serve the purpose of rationalization or justification of one’s role. The critical analysis was done on the basis of the ideas which were presented by Norman Fairclough (2015) and named as three- dimensional framework. It has been observed that the said author has used pronominal choices and parallel structures to enhance her political position. The said choices seem to create collectiveness and sense of inclusion with the common people of Pakistan. At the same time, these are used to share and claim responsibility on some crucial events and issues. The parallel structures help to influence the minds of the readers and persuade them towards the stance of the author. Besides, the critical study of an autobiography can also help to have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of things and events surrounding an author.

Keywords: *Parallelism, pronouns, rationalization, political discourse, critical discourse analysis, autobiography.*

1. Introduction and Background

On Pakistani political arena, a struggle for power between civilian politicians and other forces has been observed since 1947. Both these power holders always blamed each other for the adverse conditions of the country on political, economic, geographic and social fronts (Khan & Abid, 2015). Some forces usurped power in the pretext that the civilians have failed in delivering and working for the progress and prosperity of the country (Khan, 2012). On the other side, the civilian politicians launched movements for the restoration of democracy in the country. One such political leader was Ms. Benazir Bhutto who – after the death of her father, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, at the hands of the then oppressor, – started a political movement for the restoration of civilian rule and democracy. During that movement, she has to face a lot of troubles and difficulties which has been noted in her political autobiography, “Daughter of the East (2008)”. On the whole this autobiography is an account of the rationalization and justification of her political role. These elements can be detected by studying the use of language made by the author.



Language is not merely a mode of communication rather it is powerful tool in the hands of powerful people which help them to grab power besides practicing it (Wodak, 2001). Ideologies are propagated through language (van Dijk, 1997). Language has various features inside it (Simpson & Mayer, 2010). The use of pronouns and parallelism are such elements of language which are very common in the construction of some ideas (Bayram, 2010). The current study is about the very same features of language. The researchers have selected and critically evaluated the political autobiography of Ms. Benazir Bhutto, a very prominent political leader of Pakistan. She had undergone a long political struggle against the dictator. In her discourse, she has tried to rationalize her role and position in adverse political scenario of Pakistan.

2. Theoretical Framework

The critical evaluation of political discourse is not new rather its roots can be traced back to ancient Greeks and Romans (Moreno, 2008). In every civilization, the critics have talked about the importance of language and its features. Politically, language has been exploited by the people in power to grab and practice power since the time immemorial. Thus the role of language has always been acknowledged in the area of politics that revolves around power (Gee, 2011). In modern times we have an intellectual and interdisciplinary approach named critical discourse analysis (CDA) that has the major objective of evaluating language use or discourse to arrive at the underlying meanings (Fairclough, 2015).

CDA has the agenda to decipher ideologies which tend to help some powerful to practice power (van Dijk, 1997). For its social approach and having the agenda of working for the deprived and depressed, CDA is considered as social work (Fairclough, 2015). In some society, the most important discourse can be of some person in power or struggling for power. His/her discourse can address the following purposes (van Dijk, 1997):

- It helps to respond one's political rivals
- It helps to highlight the negative elements of one's political rivals and one's positive features
- It provides the opportunity to make fun of political adversaries, their points of view and agendas
- It also favors to rationalize one's own stance position, stance and acts
- It helps to present oneself as the only positive person among some political adversaries and their policies

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Three-Dimensional Framework

As the focus of the current study was on exploration and discovery of the role of the use of parallel structures and the use of pronouns, so it is qualitative in nature. The focal ideas were the struggle for power, domination and discrimination, so the paradigm of critical discourse analysis has been

undergone and the ideas of Norman Fairclough (2015) have been exploited which are sometimes named as three-dimension framework– description, interpretation and explanation – and which is stated as under:

3.1.1 Description

Description is the first stage of the critical analysis of some discourse. At this stage the researcher has to identify and find out particular linguistic and non-linguistic devices and techniques used in some discourse. The researcher has to make his/her concern with some particular devices that may help to sustain the status-quo, exploitation and discrimination (Fairclough, 2015).

3.1.2 Interpretation

At this second stage of some critical analysis, the researcher observes that how the selected devices and techniques are communicating some particular meanings in some specific setting or context. The purpose and meaning of the usage of the linguistic or non-linguistic devices are also tried to find out (Dunne, 2003). Here, the analysts try to elaborate meanings and purposes behind the use of the particular devices identified at the first stage of analysis called description.

3.1.3 Explanation

At this third and final stage of critical analysis, the analysts have to work at larger social context because discourse is socially situated and socially conditioned. Here, the analysts have to observe all the social, economic, psychological and geographical questions and elements. The ideological and identity markers are also kept in concern because the major purpose of that critical analysis is to unearth the hidden meanings so without making concerns with the above mentioned elements, no one can know the meanings and intensions underlying some discourse (Baker & Ellece, 2011).

3.2 Objectives of the Study

The present study intends to achieve the following objectives:

1. to focus on linguistic devices like the use of pronouns and parallelism in the selected political discourse
2. to try to know the role of pronominal choices and parallel structures in the process of rationalization of the author's role
3. to view the role of pronominal choices and parallelism in political discourse

3.3 Research Questions

The study has focused on finding responses for the following research questions:

1. What types of pronominal choices and parallel structures have been exploited by Ms. Benazir Bhutto in her political autobiography?

2. How far has the author succeeded in rationalizing her role with the help of pronominal choices and parallelism?

To have the answers for the above mentioned questions, the researchers have applied the three-dimensional framework presented by Fairclough (2015) on “Daughter of the East (2008)” in the following sections.

4. Parallelism in “Daughter of the East”

Here, in this section, the researchers have identified, found out and analyzed the parallel linguistic structures in the autobiography of a renowned political personality of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto. The researchers have taken the 3rd edition of the said autobiography entitled “Daughter of the East”. The critical analysis was done keeping in view the ideas/framework mentioned in the methodology section.

*“Stand up to challenge. Fight against overwhelming odds.
Overcome the enemy.” (P. 18)*

Here there are three sentences which are called the imperative sentences. There is similarity in the structure of all these sentences. The writer’s intentions are quite obvious i.e., persuasion of the minds of the readers or listeners. On the implicit level, Miss Bhutto also tries to portray herself as steadfast and courageous character in the political struggle against the oppressor, the biggest rival of the political and democratic government in Pakistan. Thus she intends to imply the role of a great leader who irrespective of her unfavorable odds continues the struggle against oppressing forces.

*“You can imprison a man, but not an idea. You can exile a man,
but not an idea. You can kill a man, but not an idea.” (P. 123)*

You + can + verb + a man, but not an idea
imprison, exile, kill

The given statement comprises three sentences; the writer frames different rather alike words and phrases in the framework of parallel structures. She kept the subordinate clause that consists “but not the ideas” as same and in the principal clause “You can ----- a man”, she has only made changes with the verb. The subordinate clause (but not an idea) remains the same in all the three sentences. Again, the purpose seems the same i.e. the persuasion or inspiring the minds of the readers or listeners. But Miss Bhutto at each step is also intends to portray herself as a great political leaders who could fight with any odds that confront her. Her struggle was quite difficult at the times of 1980s when there was a oppression of General Zia in power in Pakistan. General Zia in fact got power after a political crisis in Pakistan. He hanged Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the most prominent civilian politician and father of the author, on murder charges. Thus Miss Bhutto’s struggle was too two-fold, bringing good name to the politicians and tackling the tyranny of the oppressor. Thus, such discourse mentioned in the above example helps the author to portray her own positive and resolved political persona.

“Lashes were administered to anyone saying ‘Long Live Bhutto’. Lashes were administered to anyone displaying PPP flag.” (P. 129)

Benazir Bhutto in the above mentioned statement narrates the story of the atrocities of the oppression. She narrates the incident in the form of parallelism. She very successfully broadcasts the negative image of the oppression and the witch hunt of the workers of Pakistan People’s Party. The use of language seems quite helpful for the author here who very successfully conveyed her message through the series of parallel structures. The author also rationalizes her stance of being a staunch political and democratic leader who can bring her country and countrymen towards progress and enlightenment.

“My thoughts will constantly be with you, with the struggling masses, with the hungry and the oppressed, with the exploited and the discriminated [against], with all those who....(P. 229)

Here in this statement, the author has used a parallelism. The first object of the sentence, “you”, in the principal clause, has been replaced by the author with struggling, oppressed and hungry masses. There can be possibly two purposes and effects of the usage of this parallelism in the above given statement. Firstly to inspire the hearts of the readers and secondly to give her message in implied way i.e. oppression times was bringing people to the edge of miseries and problems. And the best possible solutions for such issues could be the restoration of the political and civilian rule. With such a stance, she rationalizes her position as being a staunch democratic leader who has great concerns for the masses of her country who are deprived from their rights by the tyrant oppression.

“The poor were demoralized. The women were demoralized.” (Page 313)

The	+	Noun	+	were demoralized.
<u>poor, women</u>				

In the series of parallel structures, the author has used the poor and the woman as depressed and affected ones. Keeping the fact in mind, it could be the purpose of a politician to attract the majority of her country. In Pakistan, the women and the poor happened to be in majority. The author is using both of them simultaneously to bring them to her stance of gathering the majority of people on the plate form of democracy and against the oppressor. There is also a strong implication behind this statement which shows poor and women as equals who were deprived of their rights. The author basically wants to say that the oppressor was the sole responsible for all the setbacks faced by the country and the solution for these problems was only a democratic atmosphere where the powerless and deprived could progress and prosper. This seems not just the indigenous message rather the author seems to attract the international audience too.

“Benazir has come. Revolution has come. (P. 323)

Noun + has + come

Benazir, Revolution

Here, the author has applied very brief parallel structures. She has replaced only the subjects i.e. the noun “Benazir” has been replaced by the noun “Revolution”. Again the two-fold message has been intended by the author. The one can be the persuasion. The readers or listeners may keep the message in their minds for a long time. There is an implicative too which suggests that the noun “Benazir” is equivalent to the noun “Revolution”. Thus in a way, the author is trying to have political mileage too. After the death of her father, Z.A. Bhutto, she took command of his political party (Pakistan People’s Party) and launched a political campaign against the oppression. During that struggle, she has to face many difficulties but she remained steadfast and courageous. She became the symbol of democracy in Pakistan because she was the only notable resistant against the dictator. That’s why she called herself as synonymous to revolution. The above parallel structures also present her as the brand of revolution i.e. the political one.

5. Analysis of Pronominal Choices in “Daughter of the East”

In this section, the researchers have identified the pronouns and analyzed them in the light of the ideas/framework elaborated in the methodology section. The pronominal choices were picked according to their importance and occurrences (page numbers are mentioned below every statement that is copied from her discourse) in the political autobiography named “Daughter of the East” by Ms. Benazir Bhutto.

“Clearly it’s not easy for women in modern society, no matter where we live. We still have to go the extra mile to prove that we are equal to men. We have to work longer hours and make more sacrifices.” (P. xii)

The author, Ms. Bhutto has used the pronominal choice quite often in the above given extract. This pronominal choice is the first person pronoun “we” which is plural in its essence while the author is singular. Her purpose is quite obvious which is to create the sense of inclusion and camaraderie with other women of the society. By establishing such camaraderie, Ms. Benazir Bhutto is trying to show herself as a feminist too. The fact behind doing so can be to highlight her sufferings to create the sense of compassion among the readers and listeners especially the feminine ones. Besides, women are in majority in Pakistan. They are deprived of the right to vote in many areas of the country. So bringing them into the process of electoral politics, she may have extra mileage of being a woman. But the problems described by Ms. Bhutto do not seem logical as she was raised and brought up by her aristocratic father in an atmosphere of total liberty. At times, she was preferred by her father over her other brothers. Being the woman of an elite class, she was away from the quite common troubles faced by the other women of the

lower ranks. Thus here the solidarity of the author with other women of her society may be to attract them towards her cause i.e. the attainment of power. In other sense, such choices work for the rationalization of her power too. She, being woman, implied herself as best suitable ruler because the ratio of number of women in Pakistan is higher than the number of men.

"They killed my father in the early morning hours of April 4, 1979." (P. 3)

After the introduction of her autobiography, the author starts her narration from the above mentioned statement. Here, she has used the third person pronoun "they". This 3rd person pronoun is used commonly for the people who are not present on some occasion. Thus this pronoun brings ambiguity regarding somebody's identity in language. Here it is serving the same purpose of ambiguity. Ms. Bhutto was a politician who had been fighting with the establishment for quite a long time after her father was hanged during the rule of General Zia. In the above given statement, she is not clearly indicating the "killers". There seems to be multi-purpose behind it. It is quite obvious that the pronoun "they" is making the situation ambiguous that seems a deliberate effort. In spite of pointing directly towards establishment, she is using a pronoun that is not clearly telling the real entity. The matter of the fact is that the establishment is much stronger in Pakistan. No politician or political party can dare blame them directly. Thus Ms. Bhutto's implied stance is self-revealing where she is trying to communicate her message between the lines. She intends to enforce her position as anti-establishment politician and staunch democrat besides justifying her political struggle to national and international democratic audience.

"We are all culprits. We are all guilty and burdened with sin." (P. 14)

The author has used the pronominal choice "we" here in a series of parallel structures. This pronoun again serves the purpose of solidarity of the author with the common people of Pakistan. She is of the view that responsibility of the execution of her father lies on the head of the whole population of the country. Here, she seems much enforcing. The message that is presented in implied way is that all the Pakistanis should feel the responsibility of her father's death as common cause and join hands with her in political struggle for the revival of civilian government. And of course she is the best possible option to run the affairs of the country as a civilian office holder.

"I cannot permit you to come in here and violate its sanctity, I told him. You killed my father. You sent him here." (P. 17)

The background of the given statement is that the author was brought to the grave of her father by the oppressors. Her father was executed allegedly by the oppressive forces. The author blames the whole army and the soldiers for her father's death. She has used the 3rd person pronoun "you" for the people who killed her father. One purpose is the usage of the pronoun "you" is to hide the identity of someone. Thus she is basically trying to hide an open secret. There is a hidden message that she cannot join hands with

the establishment and she would try her best to revive civilian rule in her country. She is implying herself as torch bearer of democracy in Pakistan and such stance is favorable for her being the head of the civilian government. Here the conflict between the oppressors and political entities is quite obvious. After the judicial murder of her father, Ms. Bhutto seems to play from very high moral grounds in rationalizing her stance and position.

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

Again the pronominal choice that has been used by the author is personal pronoun "we". This choice of pronoun is quite in abundance in her discourse. The basic purposes that are to create collectiveness and solidarity are being served here quite successfully. Ms Bhutto is creating this collectiveness with the whole population of her country who tried to join hands with her. Her struggle was for the revival of democracy, so she is of the view that if somebody works for the said cause, he/she would be in deep danger. She justifies her position as a civilian politician against the atrocities of oppression. She shows as if the whole nation was suffering during the dictatorship. Her stance is right but on the other side, most of the people of Pakistan have no concerns for the civilian rule rather they like it. If we talk to the common people of Pakistan – who are struggling hard to meet their both ends – about democracy, they don't have much interest in such notions. So a politician's stance for democracy and civilian rule seems quite difficult to be imposed generally among masses.

"Our wills may have remained strong, but our bodies were paying the price." (P. 204)

The author has used the possessive case "our" twice in the above given sentence. By the use of this pronominal choice, she is trying to include the whole population of her country in the struggle of reviving democracy. She says that all the people were with her against the oppressor and were suffering pains along with her. She was not alone in the struggle of reviving civilian rule. In reality, her struggle along with her political party was the sole effort during 1980s when there was a dictatorship. There were numerous other political parties too but they were not playing active role against the oppressor rather most of them were puppets in his hands. The author's stance of collectiveness is actually a rationalization in favor of her democratic stance to the national as well as international democratic audience.

"We didn't want to come to power through bloodshed." (P. 325)

In this sentence too, the pronominal choice, "we", has been intended by the writer to highlight the sense of collusion. She also highlights herself as a democratic person who only believes in the right to vote. She is of the view that she was having other people too on her side during her struggle against dictatorship. During 1980s, she along with her political party – Pakistan People's Party – was struggling against oppression. She calls

her struggle as peaceful one. But irony of the situation is that how someone could get power back from oppressor without shedding blood.

"But Zia, we all knew, was not one to hold himself accountable to the laws of Pakistan." (P. 369)

The pronominal choice, "we" is acting as a solidarity factor between the author and the common people of Pakistan. There is a deep presupposition too which shows that the whole population of the country was against the establishment. But the facts show the contrary situation. She intends to communicate the message to oppressors of her country as well as the international audience that in her struggle, every common person of her country was a part. It was the common cause for which she and her family were fighting. There was no personal agenda behind their struggle. Thus such implications are helpful for her political stance of bringing democracy in her country.

6. Conclusion

After viewing critically the pronominal choices and parallelism in the selected political discourse, it could be concluded that the author has used these linguistic techniques very successfully. The author, Ms. Benazir Bhutto communicates her stance of a political and democratic leader that can be summed up in the following points:

- Pronominal choices are exploited in the selected discourse to hold responsibility for some issue when its purpose was to take credit.
- These were used to share commission or responsibility of the issues which were dire or difficult to hold.
- The use of pronouns also helps the writer to obscure responsibility on the conflicting and controversial issues.
- These choices also support to create intimacy, familiarity, the sense of inclusion or collectivity with common people of Pakistan.

The parallel structures serve the following purposes for the author:

- They tend to influence the minds of the readers.
- Their major objective is the persuasion in which they are very successfully used because on reading them one gets influenced by the stance of the author.
- The parallel structures have also implied meanings which are imbedded in social and political context of Pakistan.

7. Recommendations

It is recommended for the future researchers that they should discern the autobiographical discourse of the politicians because it is really helpful to see their true agendas and intensions. Such type of autobiographies can be evaluated from various other perspectives as well.

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