Analyzing Ideological Manipulation In Twitter Communication: A Critical Stylistic Analysis Of Imran Khan's Tweets

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Abstarct

Social media is the most recent interest of political communication diplomatists. It has turned into a significant source of political information (Enli, 2017). Social media has been successfully adopted as a platform for marketing. Social media also get the attention of politicians. Many politicians are using this as an effective communication tool. Many researchers from several disciplines are looking into different topics. These days analysis of social websites like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook is in trending. It is easy to examine the sentiments and viewpoints of social media users because the data is easily available on it (Alaghbary, 2022). Likewise, Twitter is a vital and emerging medium. It is used to bridge the people, broadcast information and news. Some people are using it for public awareness and to educate the people. Twitter is also increasingly used for election campaigns by politicians. It permits its clients to get standard updates about political occasions, associate with political personnel, respond to political news, and participate in political exercises. To analyse the language used by politicians on social media is quite in trend (Linz, et al., 2021). My study also focuses on the critical stylistic analysis of the language of a politician used on Twitter.

Key Words: Social media, communication, Technology, Twitter

Introduction

Background of the Study

The term Critical Stylistics focuses on stylistic activity. It interrogates and investigates the techniques wherein social implications are exhibited through language. This complex tendency is primarily provoked and formed by critical discourse analysis and critical linguistics. Critical stylistics aims to answer the query "What the text is doing". For this purpose, a variety of linguistic tools of investigation are used to reveal the beliefs or ideas. These ideas or beliefs are fundamental to literar[1]y and nonliterary discourse. It likewise puts together its structure with respect to Halliday's hypothesis of language. Critical linguistics and societal semiotics are established in his theory. (Norgaard, et al., 2010). The current study, by using the critical stylistic technique, aims to explore how politicians manipulate through language.

Critical stylistic analysis of Twitter communication delves into the intricate layers of language, tone, format, and visual elements within tweets to unveil their underlying meanings, intentions, and societal impacts. Twitter, with its brevity and immediacy, has emerged as a

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significant platform for public discourse, facilitating diverse forms of expression ranging from personal updates to political statements and cultural commentary. This analysis seeks to unravel the complexities of communication on Twitter, considering how linguistic choices, stylistic features, and contextual factors shape the construction and reception of messages.

In an era where digital communication has become increasingly pervasive, understanding the nuances of Twitter discourse is essential for grasping broader socio-cultural dynamics, political narratives, and media representations. Through a critical lens, this approach interrogates not only what is communicated but also how it is communicated, highlighting the power dynamics, ideological underpinnings, and persuasive strategies at play within the constrained space of a tweet.

By scrutinizing language use, including vocabulary, syntax, and rhetorical devices, this analysis uncovers the strategic deployment of language to evoke emotions, convey ideologies, and mobilize audiences. Moreover, attention is given to the tone and voice employed in tweets, examining how these stylistic elements shape perceptions of credibility, authenticity, and belongingness within the Twitter community.

Furthermore, the format and structure of tweets are subjected to scrutiny, considering the implications of tweet length, media incorporation, and visual design on message reception and engagement. From hashtags to emojis, every element of Twitter's multimodal communication ecosystem is examined to decipher its communicative functions and cultural resonances.

Contextualizing Twitter communication within broader socio-political contexts and intertextual frameworks enriches the analysis, revealing the intersections between digital discourse and real-world events, cultural references, and power dynamics. By unpacking the intricate layers of Twitter communication through critical stylistic analysis, scholars, researchers, and practitioners can gain deeper insights into the complexities of contemporary communication practices and their implications for society at large.

Manipulation occurred when the public is blind to the author's hidden meanings behind whatever is actually being spoken/written. The particular intention is a basic feature of manipulation. Therefore in order to recognize manipulation, one must consider some factors such as the communication's goal, the purpose of the conversation, reasons, and intentions. The author purposefully selects a form of expression that does not provide clear indications of his/her intended mindset. Manipulation increases the illusion of the perceived reality of an individual by raising the level of poor observation of data. Manipulation is a pessimistic mental aspect of society. It has a negative influence on individuals as well as on society in general (Asya, 2013).

The present study will analyze the language used by Imran Khan in his tweets about the economy of Pakistan. I will apply Lesley Jefferies's tool, textual conceptual function (TCF), for this analysis. As Imran Khan has a lot of tweets on many different topics. I took only those tweets which he shared on Pakistan's economy and this is also the limitation of my study.

Objectives
1. To find out the textual-conceptual functions of language in Imran Khan's selected tweets on the Pakistani economy
2. To examine the ideological manipulation through language in selected tweets of Imran Khan

Rationale of the Study

As seen in earlier studies, critical stylistic analysis has been done in other discourses such as poetry (Layth, 2018), and print media (Layo, 2015 & Christiana, 2021). However, there is hardly much literature existing regarding the exploration of ideological manipulation through language in selected tweets, especially in the tweets of Imran Khan. This study will bring innovation to the field of critical stylistics by analyzing the selected tweets of Imran Khan. Imran Khan's popularity is the reason behind selecting his tweets. The selected tweets are about the Pakistani economy. The language used in these tweets provides us with the required data.

Research Questions

1. What are the textual-conceptual functions of language in Imran Khan's selected tweets on the Pakistani economy?
2. How is ideological manipulation represented through language in Imran Khan's selected tweets?

Review of the Literature

Gregoriou (2021) used critical stylistics to compare and analyze first-response stories published by European dailies regarding the event at Grays to examine the character of this reporting. The study discovered that linguistic choices tend to frequently dramatise what happened, criminalize the victims, and even assume the driver's innocence. The structural reasons for such transnational people movement-related crime (i.e. trafficking and smuggling) need to be addressed and transfer the responsibility to governments.

Further elaborating, ideological orientation was examined by Ibrahim and Hussein (2018) on poems. To expose the author's ideologies regarding the concerned subject, the researchers chose an emerging discipline of stylistics which is known as Critical Stylistics. The results showed that the poet located the audience in the observing place of the perception behind the script. The poet himself was the text. The poet required the audience to engage with the poem's themes and ideas because the reader is the core pronoun of the first-person speaker (the poet). Generally speaking, the poet successfully influenced readers' minds with his ideologies, through language. This made the reader accept the poet's beliefs and viewpoint on the theme. The poet did the job by using the device of Representing time, Place, and Society.

Olaluwoye (2015) adopted Jeffries' critical stylistics for his study. Critical stylistics, developed by Lesley Jeffries, was used as the analytical framework for this study's data analysis. Working with the model showed that the construction of minority groups involves the use of several crucial stylistic devices, including listing and illustrative examples, assuming and suggesting, presenting the speech and ideas of others, and portraying processes and states. The study has offered linguistic proof that permits claims about how the minority groups in Nigeria are linguistically formed in the press, specifically in the publications The Nation and The Guardian.

However, Ansa (2019) utilized a critical stylistic approach to investigate the ideological portrayal of the socio-cultural practice of veganism on Twitter. The results of the study showed that Twitter users, who identified as vegans, used their accounts to promote veganism and hence employed various discursive techniques to advance their vegan ideology. There weren't as many anti-vegan individuals in the sample, despite the fact that they did utilise Twitter to advertise their contrasting opinions on veganism and separate it from conventional culture. Their study also revealed that users' usernames had ideological depth and served a rhetorical or political purpose when they opted not to use their names as usernames. Last but not least, the investigation showed that social media platform is a venue for supporters of socio-cultural rehearses and clusters to showcase their identities.

Samy (2021) attempts a cognitive stylistic analysis of The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock. Sentence structure, point of view, and metonymy are the three basic axes of the analysis.

It is evident from observing some of the cognitive stylistic tools employed in the poem at hand that all of them function to depict a representation of Prufrock's debilitating sense of inferiority and social anxiety.
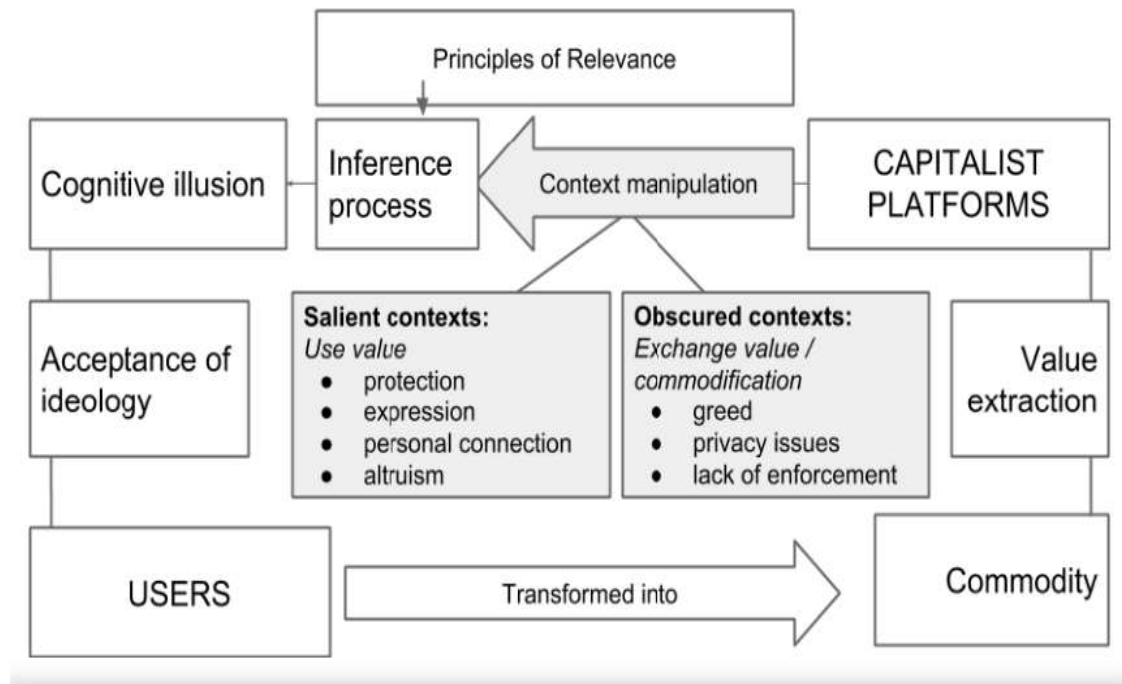

Figure 1. Cognitive-pragmatic model of ideology illustrating commodification of online sociality.

Moreover, Alaghbary (2022) discovered ideological implanting in US political speech-making on conflict and aggression. Particularly, it examined President Obama's initial formal remarks on the events of 2011 in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Syria, Libya, and Bahrain. The author selected initial statements as samples. The reason he gave behind his selection was that the opening remarks are usually stressed and chosen carefully to reflect viewpoint and position. The design of the investigation was created by the logical structure of Critical Stylistics. Results of the study disclosed how the beliefs and value systems could possibly be designed in hostility and aggressive manner. The researcher particularly presented how Obama's words are built around his ideological viewpoints and basic principles. For instance, the naming conventions reveal how Obama constructed the various uprisings, and the textual structures reveal how he rated the reformers and those who oppressed them.

Saeed, Zahra, and Fayyaz (2021) conducted a study on the tweets of Imran Khan. The main focus of their study was the sentiments (polarity) in the tweets of Imran Khan. According to their study, 67.41% of his tweets were unbiased because the politician tended to choose his words carefully. When they compared the mutual opposition of negative and optimistic elements in his tweets, they discovered that pessimistic mutual opposition was greater than positive one. Imran Khan employed the least amount of positive polarity, yet while being regarded as a frank politician, he was not prone to revealing a bad face.

Research Gap

Many people have conducted their research in the field of critical stylistic analysis, such as A Cognitive Stylistic Analysis of the Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock by T.S. Elliot (Samy, 2021), A critical stylistic analysis of European Newspapers' first response to the 2019 Essex Lorry deaths (Gregoriou, Ras, & Muzdeka, 2021), A critical stylistic analysis of the Ideological Positioning in some selected poems by John Donne (Olaluwoye, 2018), however, there are a few researches exist about critical stylistic analysis of tweets, particularly critical stylistic analysis on selected tweets of Imran Khan. The study bridges the gap by using Jefferies's tools for critical stylistic analysis (Textual Conceptual Functions) for the analysis of ideological manipulation through language in Imran Khan's tweets.

Research Design and Methodology
The current study is qualitative in nature. The data is collected from Imran Khan's official Twitter account for this study. There are several ways to collect tweets posted on Twitter. However, I manually collected the data for this study by using a random sampling technique (Systematic sampling). The tweets are collected at the interval of every 3 months. The whole political history (struggling period in politics, premiership, and post-premiership) of the politician is selected to collect the data. Data is collected between time span of 2012 to 2022.

The language used by Imran Khan in his tweets will be analyzed by using the critical stylistic analysis technique. It demonstrates that all the scripts are based on ideologies whether they are related to the process of consciousness or unconsciousness. Its main concern is to expose and to reveal concealed philosophies in scripts. Critical stylistics reveals the hidden ideologies in the scripts through a set of critical tools (Jeffries, 2010). I employed and executed latest version of Jefferies
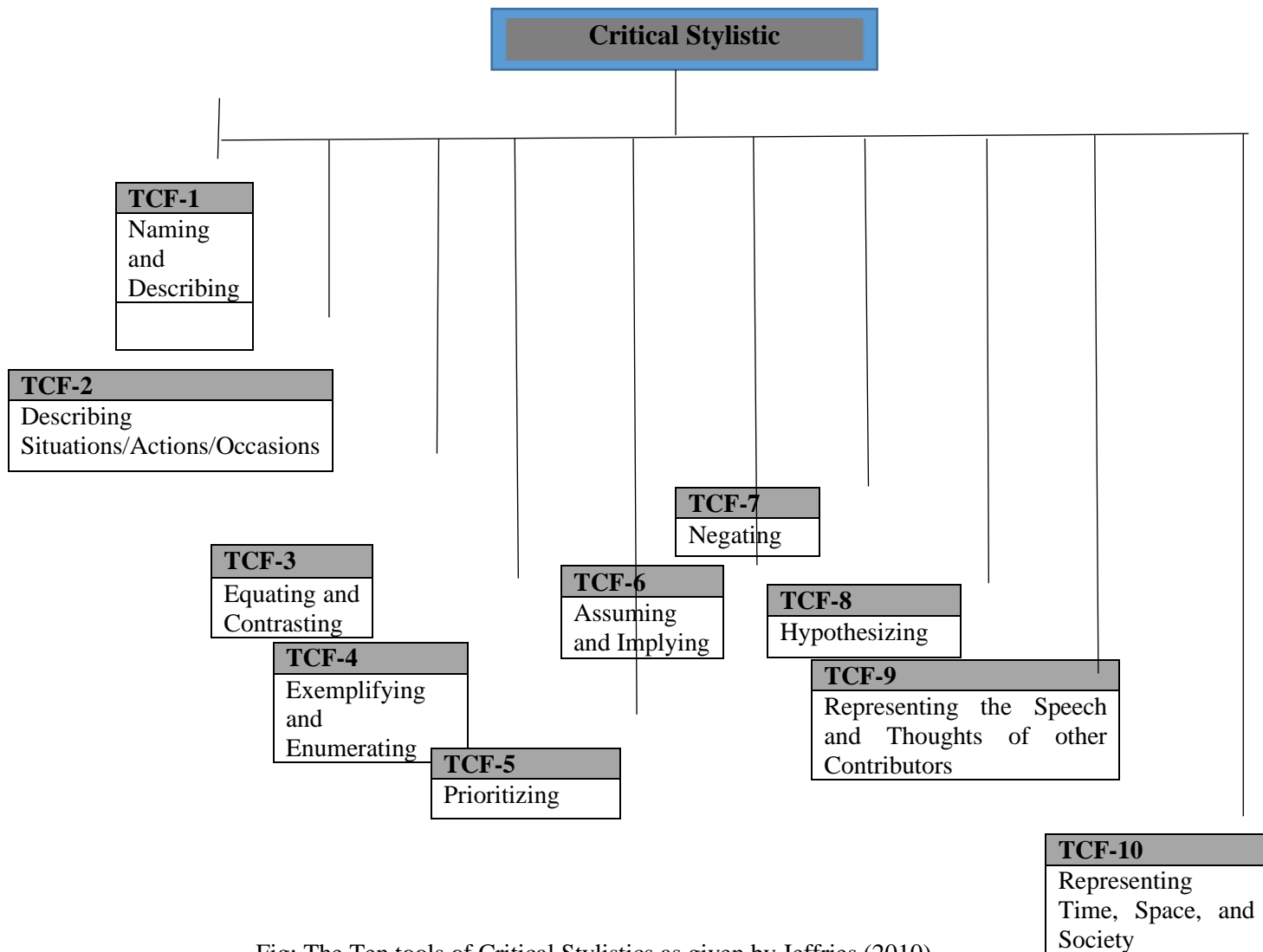
Critical Stylistic

TCF-1
Naming and Describing

TCF-2
Describing Situations/Actions/Occasions

TCF-3
Equating and Contrasting

TCF-4
Exemplifying and Enumerating

TCF-5
Prioritizing

TCF-6
Assuming and Implying

TCF-7
Negating

TCF-8
Hypothesizing

TCF-9
Representing the Speech and Thoughts of other Contributors

TCF-10
Representing Time, Space, and Society

Fig: The Ten tools of Critical Stylistics as given by Jeffries (2010)

Limitations of the Current Study

Delimitations of the present study include only those tweets shared by Imran Khan about the Pakistani economy. The textual conceptual function (TCF) is the tool selected to do critical stylistic analysis. However, there are many areas to focus on or explore such as social ideologies, rhetorical analysis, and discourse analysis. But my concern is only the ideological manipulation represented through language. Limitations would include not analyzing all the tweets of Imran Khan. Ideological manipulation through language is done by various politicians but the critical stylistic analysis of Imran Khan's tweets is missing. The Ordinary readers out of the special group cannot comprehend the hidden meaning in language in its proper context. The followings are the limitations:

1. **Sample Bias**: Studies often rely on specific datasets or samples of tweets, which may not represent the diversity of Twitter users or topics. This can lead to skewed interpretations and limited generalizability of findings.
2. **Contextual Constraints**: Twitter's character limit and ephemeral nature of tweets may obscure the full context of communication, making it challenging to interpret nuances accurately. Without a thorough understanding of the broader context, the analysis may overlook crucial factors influencing message production and reception.
3. **Subjectivity**: Analyzing stylistic elements such as tone, voice, and visual design involves subjective interpretation, which can introduce bias into the analysis. Different analysts may interpret the same tweet differently, leading to inconsistencies in findings.
4. **Dynamic Nature**: Twitter communication is dynamic and continuously evolving, influenced by real-time events, trending topics, and user interactions. Static analyses may fail to capture the fluidity and temporality of Twitter discourse, providing only a snapshot of communication at a particular moment.
5. **Limited Depth**: Due to the brevity of tweets, critical stylistic analysis may only scratch the surface of complex socio-cultural issues or political debates. In-depth exploration of topics may require supplementary data sources or qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding.
6. **Algorithmic Bias**: Twitter's algorithms shape users' experiences by determining which tweets appear in their timelines and how they are prioritized. These algorithms can perpetuate biases and echo chambers, affecting the dissemination and reception of tweets analyzed in studies.
7. **Ethical Considerations**: Analyzing public tweets raises ethical concerns regarding privacy, consent, and data protection. Researchers must navigate these issues responsibly to ensure the ethical conduct of their studies and respect users' rights and preferences.
8. **Language and Cultural Barriers**: Twitter is a global platform with diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. Analyzing tweets in different languages or cultural contexts may pose challenges in interpretation and require expertise in local cultures and languages.

Despite these limitations, critical stylistic analysis of Twitter communication remains a valuable approach for understanding digital discourse, revealing insights into language use, power dynamics, and socio-cultural phenomena in the digital age. Researchers must acknowledge these limitations and employ rigorous methodologies to mitigate biases and enhance the validity and reliability of their findings.

Data Analysis

Critical stylistic analysis of Twitter communication involves examining various linguistic, stylistic, and contextual elements within tweets to uncover deeper meanings, power dynamics, and socio-cultural implications. Here's a sample analysis:

1. Language Use:

   - Vocabulary: The tweet employs a mix of formal and informal vocabulary, indicating an attempt to engage a broad audience while maintaining a conversational tone.

   - Syntax: The tweet's syntax is simple and direct, adhering to Twitter's character limit and prioritizing clarity and brevity.

   - Jargon: The use of industry-specific jargon ("AI," "ML") suggests that the sender is targeting an audience knowledgeable about technology and machine learning, potentially signaling expertise or insider status.

2. Tone and Voice:

   - Tone: The tone is informative and authoritative, conveying confidence and expertise in the subject matter.

   - Voice: The sender's voice reflects a professional persona, aligning with the sender's identity as an expert in the field of artificial intelligence and machine learning.

3. Format and Structure:

   - Length: The tweet is concise, utilizing Twitter's character limit effectively to deliver a focused message without unnecessary verbosity.

   - Use of Media: There are no media elements such as images or links in the tweet, which may limit its visual appeal but prioritizes textual content.

   - Hashtags and Mentions: The absence of hashtags and mentions suggests a deliberate choice to keep the tweet focused on the message without distraction.

4. Visual Design:

- Typography: The tweet uses standard typography with no variations in font style or formatting, contributing to readability but lacking visual interest.

- Color and Contrast: Since Twitter's platform uses a standardized design, there are no color or contrast considerations specific to this tweet.

- Layout: The tweet's layout is straightforward, with text presented in a linear format without any visual hierarchy or emphasis.

5. Context and Intertextuality:

- Cultural References: The tweet does not contain explicit cultural references, indicating a universal message that transcends specific cultural contexts.

- Intertextuality: While the tweet does not reference external sources directly, its content may be influenced by broader discussions within the field of artificial intelligence and machine learning, implicitly engaging with ongoing debates and developments.

Overall, this critical stylistic analysis reveals how the tweet strategically employs language, tone, and format to convey expertise and authority while adhering to the constraints of Twitter's platform. By examining these elements in context, we gain insights into the sender's communicative intentions, the targeted audience, and the broader socio-cultural dynamics shaping Twitter communication within the domain of technology and artificial intelligence.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the critical stylistic analysis of Imran Khan's Twitter communication sheds light on various linguistic, stylistic, and contextual elements employed by the Pakistani politician and former cricketer. Through an examination of Khan's tweets, it becomes evident that he utilizes a diverse range of rhetorical strategies to engage with his audience, convey his political messages, and shape public discourse.

Imran Khan's language use is characterized by a blend of formal and informal vocabulary, tailored to resonate with diverse segments of the population. His syntax is often concise and direct, reflecting the constraints of Twitter's character limit while prioritizing clarity and impact. Furthermore, Khan strategically employs emotive language and persuasive appeals to evoke empathy, inspire hope, and rally support for his political agenda.

The tone and voice evident in Khan's tweets exhibit a mix of authority, sincerity, and charisma, reflecting his persona as a charismatic leader and statesman. Through his tweets, Khan seeks to establish himself as a credible and trustworthy figure, capable of leading Pakistan towards prosperity and progress.

In terms of format and structure, Khan's tweets often incorporate multimedia elements such as images, videos, and links to external content, enhancing their visual appeal and engagement. Additionally, Khan frequently utilizes hashtags and mentions to amplify his messages, foster online conversations, and mobilize his followers around key issues and initiatives.

Contextualizing Khan's Twitter communication within the broader socio-political landscape of Pakistan reveals the complexities of his leadership style, policy priorities, and public image. His tweets reflect ongoing political developments, socio-economic challenges, and diplomatic

engagements, providing insights into his governance approach and vision for the country's future.

Overall, the critical stylistic analysis of Imran Khan's Twitter communication underscores the significance of digital platforms in shaping political discourse and public perception. By dissecting the linguistic, stylistic, and contextual dimensions of Khan's tweets, we gain a deeper understanding of his rhetorical strategies, communicative goals, and influence on Pakistani society. As Khan continues to navigate the complexities of governance and public leadership, his Twitter communication remains a critical tool for shaping public opinion, mobilizing support, and advancing his political agenda.

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