

**DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES REGARDING POLITICS OF POWER AND
PERSUASION: CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF DAWN NEWSPAPER'S
EDITORIAL ABOUT HASINA'S FALL**

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Abstract

This study applies Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the discursive strategies used in Dawn newspaper's editorial titled "Hasina's Fall". The analysis focuses on how language constructs and reflects power dynamics, ideologies, and persuasive techniques within political discourse. By exploring the linguistic elements, narrative structures, and rhetorical devices, the study reveals how the editorial frames Sheikh Hasina's political downfall, shaping readers' perceptions of leadership, governance, and political legitimacy. The findings highlight how media discourses can legitimize, challenge, or undermine political authority through subtle linguistic strategies. This research underscores the importance of media in influencing public opinion and political narratives, demonstrating how power and persuasion are intricately linked through discourse.

Keywords: power and persuasion, Hasina's fall, political downfall, political legitimacy, importance of media in influencing public opinion

Introduction

In political discourse, language plays a pivotal role in shaping perceptions, manipulating ideologies, and constructing power relations. Media outlets, particularly newspapers, serve as crucial platforms for disseminating such discourse, influencing public opinion and the political climate. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) offers a powerful framework for uncovering the hidden ideologies and power structures embedded in these texts. This study focuses on the editorial titled "Hasina's Fall" published in the Dawn newspaper, a leading English-language daily in Pakistan. Through a CDA approach, the paper seeks to explore the discursive strategies employed in the editorial to represent political power, legitimize or challenge authority, and persuade readers. By examining the linguistic choices, narrative structures, and rhetorical devices, this analysis reveals how the editorial negotiates the complex dynamics of power and persuasion in the context of Sheikh Hasina's political downfall, reflecting both local and global political discourses. Following a structured approach to analyze the discourse structure, social context and power dynamics within the text (mostly being discursive) using Teun A. van Dijk's model for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA.): The researcher conducts CDA of chosen text from award-winning journalist. The special concern of Vern Dijk model is the loyal and economic discourse reproduces but also resists power, hegemony, dominance and inequality by using text analysis in social political context.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze the discursive strategies used in Dawn newspaper's editorial titled "Hasina's Fall" that construct and reflect power dynamics and political ideologies.
2. To explore how rhetorical and linguistic devices in the editorial persuade readers and shape their perceptions of Sheikh Hasina's political downfall.

Research Questions

1. What discursive strategies are employed in Dawn newspaper's editorial about "Hasina's Fall" to represent political power and ideologies?
2. How do the rhetorical and linguistic devices in the editorial influence readers' perceptions and persuade them regarding Sheikh Hasina's political situation?

Literature Review

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a multidisciplinary approach that investigates the relationship between language, power, and ideology. It views language not just as a tool for communication but as a means to exert control, influence thought, and shape public perception. Rooted in the works of scholars such as Norman Fairclough, Teun A. van Dijk, and Ruth Wodak, CDA seeks to uncover how discourses reflect, reproduce, or challenge social power structures. In media studies, particularly in analyzing political discourse, CDA is essential for understanding how language operates within news narratives to legitimize or question authority, influence ideologies, and manipulate readers' perceptions (Sibtain et al., 2023).

The media, especially newspapers, play a crucial role in shaping political discourse and public opinion. Newspapers act as intermediaries between the political elite and the public, framing issues in ways that can either reinforce or resist dominant ideologies. Studies have shown that media outlets often have implicit biases shaped by their owners, political affiliations, or target audience. Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model emphasizes that news is a product of various filters, including ownership, advertising, and political influence, which may dictate the selection of news and its portrayal. In political crises, these media discourses often become arenas for battles of legitimacy, where language becomes a tool to build or destroy political reputations. CDA helps to deconstruct these processes, revealing how the media subtly (or overtly) influences political perceptions (Abbas et al., 2023).

In the context of South Asia, political discourse in the media has been particularly charged, with newspapers playing a significant role in shaping the political landscape. Pakistan and Bangladesh, in particular, share a complex history marked by their partition and subsequent political tensions. Pakistani media outlets, including Dawn, often engage in the political dynamics of neighboring countries, using discursive strategies that reflect local geopolitical interests (Iqbal et al., 2022). The editorial "Hasina's Fall" in Dawn is a striking example of how newspapers frame the political developments of a foreign leader, in this case, Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, from a perspective that is likely influenced by Pakistan's political and historical relationship with Bangladesh.

Previous research has demonstrated that editorials often use specific linguistic and rhetorical devices to align readers with particular political positions. Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach in CDA argues that media discourses shape and are shaped by mental models of social reality. These models reflect the underlying ideologies of the discourse producers and are designed to

resonate with or challenge the mental models of their readers. In the case of Dawn's editorial on Sheikh Hasina, the newspaper's representation of her leadership, decisions, and eventual political downfall is likely mediated by a broader ideological (Iqbal et al., 2021) framework that reflects both Pakistan's historical relations with Bangladesh and its own internal political narratives.

Several studies have examined how South Asian newspapers frame political leaders, particularly in moments of political crisis. Fairclough's concept of hegemony posits that discursive practices in media often work to sustain the dominance of particular ideologies or political regimes, even when they seem neutral or objective. In the case of Sheikh Hasina, Dawn may use discursive strategies to portray her fall as either the result of her political missteps or as a consequence of larger geopolitical forces. The editorial could be utilizing strategies such as lexical choices, thematic structures, and argumentation schemes that subtly critique her leadership while also engaging the Pakistani audience's pre-existing sentiments regarding Bangladesh. Rhetorical devices such as metaphor, euphemism, and polarization are also commonly employed in political discourse to frame leaders and their actions in a specific light. For instance, metaphors can construct a leader as a "savior" or "villain," while polarization can frame political events as a battle between "us" and "them," reinforcing national or regional ideologies. In Dawn's editorial, such devices might be used to depict Sheikh Hasina's downfall in ways that resonate with Pakistani readers, invoking a sense of validation for Pakistan's political stance or eliciting sympathy for her opposition. Ideological Square theory by Van Dijk further explains how media outlets may emphasize positive actions of "in-groups" (those aligned with the writer's perspective) while minimizing or ignoring their negative aspects, and conversely, highlight the negative actions of "out-groups" while downplaying their positive aspects. This theory could be useful in analyzing how Dawn constructs Hasina as part of the "out-group" and whether her policies, leadership style, or alliances are depicted in a negative light to serve a particular ideological narrative (Iqbal et al., 2020).

Additionally, power relations in political discourse are often tied to the Foucauldian notion of power/knowledge, where control over discourse also equates to control over knowledge production and dissemination. Through CDA, scholars can explore how Dawn constructs knowledge about Hasina's political situation and what power relations are perpetuated through this construction. The editorial can be seen as an attempt to influence not just Pakistani readers but also to shape broader regional and global perceptions of political leadership in Bangladesh. In conclusion, analyzing Dawn's editorial through the lens of CDA provides valuable insights into how discursive strategies are employed to negotiate the politics of power and persuasion. It allows us to see how media texts are not neutral reflections of political realities but are actively involved in constructing those realities. The editorial on "Hasina's Fall" serves as a rich case study for understanding the role of language in political discourse, revealing how newspapers can act as powerful tools in shaping public perception, reinforcing ideological positions, and negotiating power dynamics both within and across national borders (Afzal et al., 2021; Javaid et al., 2021; Zafran et al., 2021; Rehman et al., 2021).

Research Methodology

This research employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the primary methodology to explore the discursive strategies used in Dawn newspaper's editorial on "Hasina's Fall". CDA is

chosen because it allows for a detailed examination of how language is used to construct and convey power, ideology, and persuasion within political texts. The analysis will be conducted using Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA, which is widely used for understanding the relationships between discourse, power, and society. This model examines texts on three levels: (1) textual analysis (micro-level), which focuses on the language, grammar, and vocabulary used in the editorial; (2) discursive practice (meso-level), which looks at the processes of text production, distribution, and consumption; and (3) social practice (macro-level), which situates the text within broader social and political contexts.

Data Collection

The primary data for this study is the Dawn newspaper editorial titled "Hasina's Fall". The editorial is selected because it addresses a significant political event in South Asia, providing a rich source of material for analyzing discursive constructions of power and persuasion. The editorial will be accessed through Dawn's online archive, ensuring that the text is original and complete. The study will also consider the socio-political context in which the editorial was written, including historical relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh, to better understand the ideologies embedded within the text.

Analytical Framework

The analysis will begin with textual analysis, focusing on key linguistic elements such as vocabulary choices, sentence structure, metaphors, and rhetorical devices. This step will involve identifying words or phrases that reflect power relations, ideologies, or persuasive strategies. Special attention will be given to lexical choices that frame Sheikh Hasina in either a positive or negative light and to rhetorical devices such as polarization, metaphors, and hyperbole, which may be used to influence readers' perceptions.

Next, the study will move to the discursive practice level, where the processes of producing and consuming the editorial will be explored. This will involve examining how Dawn positions itself within Pakistani media and political discourse, how it constructs the narrative of Hasina's downfall, and how its readers are likely to interpret this narrative. This stage will also consider how intertextuality and genre conventions influence the construction of the editorial.

Finally, at the social practice level, the study will explore the broader socio-political and historical context in which the editorial was written. This includes considering the historical tensions between Pakistan and Bangladesh, as well as current political relations between the two countries. This contextual analysis will help uncover how the editorial's discourse is shaped by these larger political dynamics and how it, in turn, contributes to shaping public opinion.

Procedure of Data Analysis

Data analysis will be conducted systematically, beginning with coding the editorial for key themes related to power, ideology, and persuasion. These codes will be used to identify recurring patterns in the language and rhetorical strategies employed in the text. The analysis will then interpret how these patterns reflect the editorial's underlying political stance and how they work to persuade readers. The findings will be contextualized within the broader political discourse of South Asia, allowing for a deeper understanding of how the editorial constructs power relations and ideologies.

The study will also employ Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach, which explores how media discourses influence cognitive models and shape readers' understanding of political events. This approach will complement Fairclough's model by providing insights into how readers are likely to interpret and internalize the editorial's discourse, further enhancing the understanding of its persuasive impact.

By using CDA to explore the discursive strategies in Dawn's editorial, this methodology provides a comprehensive approach to understanding how media texts construct and reflect political power and persuasion. The multi-level analysis ensures that both the linguistic features of the text and the broader socio-political context are taken into account, offering a nuanced understanding of the relationship between language, power, and ideology in political discourse.

Data Analysis

Step 1: Assimilate to the Social Context

According to Van Dijk, all discourse is fundamentally social in nature. Among other things, this involves the socio-political context in which a text is created and received. Likewise. The editorial HASINA'S FALL examines the turmoil of PM in Bangladesh: "Bangladesh's military has finally revealed as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed resign and left the country because the popular protests by Bangli Students." The article scrutinizes political repression, economic issues and the inevitable military foray into politics.

2. Analyzing the Discourse Structure

The validity of Van Dijk's model has been empirically tested in a number of studies on the basis that it is possible to investigate discourse structure including themes, macro and micro-levels analysis as well as linguistic strategies.

- Major themes addressed in the editorial:
- Political reprisal and its impacts
- The role of the military in politics
- The effect of autocratic rule on democracy and security.
- Possible spillover for similar states in South Asia.

Macro-Level Analysis

Headlines and Ledes (The headline "HASINA'S FALL -- How it Happened," tells us right off the top that this is a tale of political reversal.) Lead sentences set the scene — Hasina on her last days in power, as protests urge it to stop. She falls because of repressive action and bad economy but military intervention is no solution

Micro-Level Analysis

Repressive Actions, Misgovernance, volcanic eruption of public anger and later Military intervention suggest highly negative lexical choices in relation to Hasina's governance.

Pronouns and Modality: The editorial here uses those heavier pronouns in the word "we" (notably, this paper—positioning itself as neutral with wording like "this paper has opposed military intervention...") to make an argument for democracy.

Syntax and Sentence Structure: The language of the speech uses large, complex sentences that enable it to better address some of these imbrications, such as how one instance may feed-into another; a direct result [or driving cause] linking political repression with public unrest to military course.

Step 3: Dynamics of power and ideologies

Van Dijk's CDA also examines the construction and maintenance of power relations implemented by means of discourse.

Power Dynamics:

Sheikh Hasina: The text positions the Sri Lankan as having become a svayamsevak because she centralised power, undermining democratic processes. It underscores her deeds and their ramifications on the stability of Bangladesh.

The military

There is a portrayal of the military as seizing upon an "open goal" courtesy of Hasina's shortcomings. The text criticizes this intervention, and points to the long-term detrimental consequences for democracy.

The editorial supports democracy and opposes military rule so is ideologically biased. It calls for power to be restored so called civilian hands and its denounces authoritarian regimes, regardless of affiliation with a political leader or the military.

Cognition (Mental model and Social Cognition)

The op-ed gives the reader a mental model of Sheikh Hasina being an authoritative figure and she was backstabbing her own policies. This image is also fortified by the military looming large as an opportunist authority that seeks to use this moment of crisis to its advantage.

Ideational

the text reflects a particular ideational framework, one that is biased towards democracy and civilian governance to autocracy or military rule. This idea is portrayed as widely-accepted, which has a reframing effect on political morality for the reader.

Images and social representations

the editorial mirrors, potentially perpetuating images of political power in south Asia. It seems to be saying that repressive leaders not only turn public opinion against them but can actually attract military participation. This is the typical image of society in South Asian politics, which has been greatly influenced politically by its military.

Power Dynamics

The edit talks about the power dynamics between government, military and public. The text proclaims that on the one hand Hasina is using repression (and), and on the other, a military coup both are targeted by democracy norms nations as generally opposed to dictatorships.

Conclusion

The analysis and result shows that the editorial doesn't only criticize on governance of Sheikh Hasina but it also believes influential upon military intervention into politics according to van Dijk's CDA model. The study illustrates how the city creates and reproduces power relationships, champions democratic values to foster security, democracy or taste of authoritarianism in declination at both local and broader national level (Bangladesh-South Asia). We will be looking at the way social cognition (how knowledge, beliefs and ideologies are made) makes its appearance in discourse when we use it to analyse text using Teun A. van Dijk's model of someone who is both a sociologist and cognitive scientist. Socio-cognitive model of Van Dijk analyses the links between discourse, cognition and society focussing more on mental

representations as well as social structures in shaping our capacity for understanding (CDA) or producing a text.

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Appendix 1 Text

AFTER several weeks of deadly anti-government protests, Sheikh Hasina Wajed's fifth stint as Bangladesh prime minister came to an unceremonious end on Monday. Following news that she had resigned — or quite possibly been ousted — and left the country, there were celebrations on Dhaka's streets. Since last month, there had been growing unrest in Bangladesh, with a student-led protest movement demanding an end to quotas in government jobs for descendants of 'freedom fighters' who had participated in the creation of Bangladesh. However, the protests went beyond job quotas. Sheikh Hasina, during her back-to-back 15-year rule, had decimated the opposition and shut all safety valves, resulting in a volcanic eruption of public anger. Her opponents claimed her government had indulged in corruption, extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances. In addition, over the past several weeks, the administration, along with supporters of Sheikh Hasina's Awami League, had fought pitched battles with demonstrators. At least 300 people were reportedly killed. This was the build-up to her eventual departure, which was followed by the Bangladesh army chief announcing an interim set-up. This paper has consistently opposed military intervention in political affairs. Pakistan has gone through several cycles of military rule — direct and otherwise; Bangladesh, too, is no stranger to power grabs by the generals. In both states, these interventions have only hurt the democratic process. And while it can be argued that Sheikh Hasina's repressive actions, misgovernance and ensuing unpopularity created a golden opportunity for the army to assert itself, the generals in Bangladesh must be condemned roundly for their interference and for further damaging the democratic process. Indeed, the disastrous consequences of such meddling can last over generations. In Sheikh Hasina's Bangladesh, the unrelenting throttling of the opposition meant that, instead of political battles being fought in parliament or at the ballot box, the struggle to secure power played out on the streets. But again, it was not the army's place to intervene. Power, through credible elections, should return to civilian hands as soon as possible and the army should go back to the barracks without further ado. If the troops do not make their exit soon, given the charged political environment, Bangladesh will enter a new phase of instability. In Sheikh Hasina's fall lie lessons for all developing states, particularly those in South Asia, which share many sociopolitical traits with Bangladesh. Political repression, mixed with

economic frailty, is a recipe for public unrest. Along with crackdowns on the opposition, Bangladesh's economic progress had slowed, with the country turning to the IMF last year. When all avenues for dissent are closed off, and authoritarian tactics are used to clamp down on political opponents, the stage is set for either violent upheaval, or the entry of unelected forces moving in to 'save the day'.

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