

"CLAIMING THE GREEN AGENDA: FACTICITY PATTERNS IN IMRAN KHAN AND SHEHBAZ SHARIF'S ENVIRONMENTAL SPEECHES"

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Abstract

This study comparatively examines the facticity patterns and credibility construction strategies in the environmental speeches of two prominent Pakistani political leaders Imran Khan (2018–2022) and Shehbaz Sharif (2022–2025). The study builds on Stibbe's (2021) theoretical model of ecolinguistic convictions and facticity patterns and Potter's (1996) model of repertoire of empiricism and stake management to analyse a corpus of ten purposively selected speeches delivered by the leaders during various climate change forums and conferences such as COP, Geneva Climate Resilient Pakistan Conference, and the United Nations General Assembly. The two research questions for this study concern the contrasting facticity patterns found in the environmental speeches of both leaders, and how they use linguistic strategies for stake management and the empiricist repertoire in building their credibility as environmental advocates. The analysis of the discourse reveals that both the leaders continuously use high-facticity devices (unmodalised assertions, precise statistical quantification, deontic modals, and institution authority references) to assert the reality of Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change as an undeniable and documented reality on international platform. However, their rhetorical identities are quite distinct: Khan presents Pakistan as an active environmental leader via government achievement rhetoric and the references to science as his main stake management strategies, whereas Sharif presents Pakistan as a morally authoritative climate victim through presuppositional architecture and procedural authority references as his main stake management strategies. The study concludes that the divergent facticity orientations emerge as two authentic political ideologies and rhetorical contexts and that both leaders' rhetorical construction of environmental conviction have helped in the process of Pakistan's rising engagement in international climate justice discourse. The results help to advance the field of ecolinguistic research by extending Stibbe's (2021) facticity taxonomy to the political environmental discourses in South Asia while illustrating the fruitful synergy of ecolinguistics and discursive psychology as complementary analytical methods.

keywords Ecolinguistics, Facticity Patterns, Convictions, Stake Management, Empiricist Repertoire, Environmental Discourse, Pakistani Political Speeches, Climate Justice, Imran Khan, Shehbaz Sharif.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is not a neutral medium of communication; it is a very potent ideological tool used by political leaders to shape and promulgate ideologies about the natural world. Within the context of environmental politics, the constructive force of language is particularly significant, as the politicians choose their words, rhetorical forms, and argumentative approaches carefully so as to influence the interpretation and reaction of their audience to ecology problems. In a way, as Fløttum (2020) notes, political actors frequently combine science with rhetoric to create environmental realities and to define ecological responsibilities. The knowledge of how this

language construction works is thus not only an academic issue, but one of great ecological significance. The best systematic approach for the study of language and ecology is ecolinguistics. It is defined by Stibbe (2021, p. 1) as "the study of the role of language in the interrelationships between human life and other species and the physical environment that is required for life. Stibbe's framework is based on the notion of convictions that are linguistic representations which place ecological descriptions as certainly true, uncertain, or certainly false, and on the concept of facticity patterns which are certain clusters of linguistic devices, such as modal verbs, presuppositions, unmodalised assertions, and certainty markers, through which convictions are built up in discourse. To complement this, Potter (1996) presents two analytical approaches: the repertoire of empiricism, in which the speaker constructs claims as objective facts by using quantification, technical language and external authority; and stake management, in which the speaker attempts to reduce his or her own apparent self-interest by claiming bias is the problem of the other speaker. To complement this, Potter (1996) offers two analytical tools: the repertoire of empiricism by which speakers present claims as objective facts using quantification, technical language and external authority; and stake management, in which the speaker attempts to reduce his or her own apparent self-interest by claiming that bias is the problem of the other speaker. Pakistan is a context that is very critical for such ecolinguistic investigation, but is not sufficiently explored. Pakistan accounts for less than one per cent of the total emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs) but always figures in the top ten most climate vulnerable countries in the world. The devastating floods in 2022 impacted 33 million people, resulted in more than 1700 deaths and economic damages of more than 30 billion US dollars, bringing the issue of the environment to the forefront of political discourse in Pakistan. Imran Khan (Prime Minister 2018-2022) and Shehbaz Sharif (Prime Minister 2022–present) have been two key leaders in highlighting environmental concerns in their public addresses, with Imran Khan launching Pakistan's Ten Billion Trees Tsunami initiative and consistently speaking for climate finance at the international platforms, COP and the UN General Assembly, respectively. Both leaders have been persistent in highlighting Pakistan's ecological vulnerability, but the linguistic strategies that create the 'facticity' of their environmental statements and control their rhetorical credibility have not been studied systematically. Previous research in the field of ecolinguistics has mainly been on media texts, sustainability narratives, and Western political environment (Khalil, 2023; Khazaal & Al-Shaibani, 2023; Raum et al., 2021), while the political environmental discourse in Pakistan has received limited attention. To this end, the present study investigates the extent to which the two contrasting patterns of facticity and the two different analytical tools for credibility construction used in the corpus of ten environmental speeches (five speeches from each leader) can be compared as a way to examine the different political ideologies and environmental agendas of each leader.

1.2 Research Objectives

1. Comparatively analyse the facticity patterns employed by Imran Khan and Shehbaz Sharif in their speeches over environmental issues and highlight the similarities and differences in their pattern of building public convictions on the topic.
2. To compare and analyse how both politicians employ the linguistic devices of modality, authority invocation and vocabulary choice to control their stake and establish credibility with respect to their claims of the environment.

1.3 Research Questions

1. Identify the contrasting facticity patterns in the environmental speeches of Imran Khan and Shehbaz Sharif and their political ideologies and environmental agendas.
2. How do both leaders use the languages of stake management and empiricist repertoire to help create a perception of themselves as legitimate environmental advocates in their speeches?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The current study makes a contribution to the scholarship in several ways. While also being a theoretical extension of the concept of facticity patterns as propounded by Stibbe (2021) to the context of South Asian political discourse, which has been largely ignored in the ecolinguistic literature, it enlarges the scope of applicability of the concept. This study also shows how the theoretical approach of Stibbe, combined with Potter's (1996) analytical approach of the repertoire of empiricism and the stake management, are mutually fruitful in the analysis of political environmental discourses. From a methodological perspective, the study offers a methodologically systematic and replicable model for comparative political discourse analysis from the perspective of the ecolinguistic tradition. The framework of coding and classification of facticity devices in political speeches drawn from a corpus of political speeches is a transferable analytical tool that could be used by future researchers for other political speakers, other languages and other environments in South Asia and elsewhere. The study has direct relevance on the practical level to the fields of environmental communication, climate advocacy, and climate awareness in Pakistan. The study shows how politicians at the national, state, and local levels use linguistic devices to create, sustain, or alter the facticity of environmental descriptions, providing journalists, policy makers, educators and civil society actors with the tools needed to assess political environmental rhetoric and differentiate true ecological engagement from green-washing. For a nation as climate sensitive as Pakistan, where the discourse of the political directly influences the public's beliefs and collective behavior towards climate change, the significance of such linguistic sensitivity and awareness is very high. Last, on a more general academic level, the study is part of the growing, yet limited, corpus of ecolinguistic studies in Pakistan and South Asia, providing a new trajectory for the study of language, ecology, and political power in the region and contributing to the larger international discourse on the role of discourse in the global ecological crisis.

1.5 Statement of the problem

While there is increasing body of research in the field of ecolinguistics in the field of environmental discourse, the political environmental speeches in Pakistan have not been a very well researched area of scholarly study. Existing studies have largely centered on media texts, sustainability narratives, and Western political contexts (Khalil, 2023; Khazaa& Al-Shaibani, 2023; Fløttum, 2020), with little research on the use of ecolinguistic frameworks to the political discourse of South Asia. Despite Pakistan's contribution of less than one per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, it has been identified as one of the 10 most climate-vulnerable countries in the world and has been severely affected by catastrophic ecological impacts, particularly the unprecedented floods in 2022 which displaced 33 million people and caused losses of more than 30 billion US dollars. In this context, the environmental speeches of the Pakistani political leaders actively create eco realities that influence public convictions, shape policy debates and frame Pakistan's position in international climate negotiations. However, the nature and credibility-building style of these political discourses has not been systematically studied in the scholarly literature. Specifically, there has been no study of the Pakistani political environmental speeches that applies the framework of convictions and facticity patterns developed by Stibbe (2021) and there has been no comparative discourse analysis study that looks at the environmental rhetoric of Imran Khan and Shehbaz Sharif, two leaders representing opposing political ideologies, divergent environmental policy priorities, and dramatically different rhetorical styles. In addition, the analytical framework of the repertoire of empiricism and stake management of Potter (1996) which is particularly appropriate to the analysis of the construction of political credibility in the environmental discourse is not utilized in the Pakistani political context. The present study aims to bridge these gaps by systematically comparing the facticity patterns and credibility construction

strategies of the environmental speeches of both leaders using an integrated framework of Stibbe (2021) and Potter (1996) to uncover how the political language constructs environmental convictions and what implications the discursive constructions have for Pakistan's engagement with the global climate crisis.

2. Literature Review

This chapter outlines the review of literature that is relevant to this research. It explores the previous theoretical and empirical studies on ecolinguistics, climate change discourse, environmental communication, facticity patterns, convictions and credibility construction in discourse. The chapter is thematically arranged to create a sense of coherence around the main concepts and debates in the study. The first part describes the theory that has been suggested by Stibbe and Potter). Next, current literature on environmental discourse, climate communication, stakeholder representation and persuasive language is summarized. The chapter ends with a discussion of gaps in the literature and the need for the current research.

2.2 Theoretical Foundations

2.2.1 Convictions and Facticity Patterns

Stibbe(2021) has introduced the concepts of Ecolinguistics of convictions and facticity patterns as core concepts. He proposes that convictions are beliefs that one has about truth or falsity of descriptions of reality. The study tells about the linguistic features which help to build up factuality, including modality, presupposition, certainty markers and unmodalised assertions. Stibbe also points out that there are times when environmental debate attempts to make ecological assertions an unquestioned fact for the purpose of swaying public opinion. The results indicated that language is a vital factor to play in the development of ecological awareness and environmental behavior. The framework illustrates how discourse can produce environmental realities and audiences perception of the environment. This study offers the most basic theoretical background for the analysis of environmental speeches in the current research (Stibbe, 2021).

2.2.2 Stake Management and Empiricist Repertoire

Potter (1996) studied the issue of factuality and credibility in terms of discourse. Speakers tend to rely on rhetorical strategies such as quantification, external corroboration, authority reference, and empiricist repertoire to make their claims seem objective, he explains. The study also suggests that people try to control their “stake” by minimizing feelings of bias and self-interest. The factuality of a text is not simply a discovery, but rather it is a production achieved through the choice of language used, as Potter shows. The results show that evidence-based language is used often in political discourse in order to build trustworthiness. The framework also identifies the way in which speakers state opinions as neutral facts. Thus, Potter's research provided an analytical approach to examine the construction of credibility in political environmental speeches.

2.3 Ecolinguistics and Environmental Discourse

2.3.1 Sustainability and Ecological Awareness

Khazaal and Al-Shaibani (2023) discussed the sustainability discourse in an ecolinguistic study. The study focused on the influence of language in the environment on ecological awareness and sustainable thinking. They found that the potential to move towards sustainability is often communicated in positive ecological terms and using future tense. The study showed that language helps to develop ecological values and environmentally responsible behavior. In addition, the environmental narratives were seen as building up a collective social responsibility for sustainability rather than a personal choice. The researchers found that discourse has a strong influence on the public's attitudes towards environmental protection. The significance of this research is that it recognizes the link between language, sustainability and ecological consciousness (Khazaal& Al-Shaibani, 2023).

2.3.2 Climate Change Representation in Media

Khalil (2023) did a corpus-based study of the representation of climate change in both Eastern and Western media. This study explored the language patterns in which people talk about climate-related issues from various cultural perspectives. The results revealed that western media has highlighted the scientific evidence and environmental concern, while eastern media has highlighted more on collective responsibilities and social consequences. This analysis showed that cultural and ideological perspectives were evident in climate discourse. The researcher also discovered that words have significant impacts on the perception of climate change among the public. The study ended up saying that the media discourse is to create the reality of the environment and not just report it. This study adds to the knowledge on language influence on climate-related beliefs and environmental consciousness (Khalil, 2023).

2.4 Environmental Communication and Credibility

2.4.1 Stakeholder Representation in Environmental Discourse

Raum, Rawlings-Sanaei and Potter (2021) explored the representation of stakeholders in environmental and forestry management discourse. The researchers analyzed the legitimacy and authority of organizations in environmental communication using web-based content analysis. The analysis showed that scientific evidence, expert opinion and factual descriptions are often used to enhance the credibility of the findings for stakeholders. The study also revealed that discourse is strategically crafted to shape the thoughts of the public and policy debates. In addition, the language of organizations was persuasive and they were cast as credible environmental actors. The researchers found that the process of environmental communication is an active one, in which authority and legitimacy are built. This study is relevant because it provides an example of establishing credibility with discourse in an environmental context (Raum et al., 2021).

2.4.2 Factuality and Persuasion in Public Communication

The Elaboration Likelihood Model was employed along with Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count analysis to study persuasive techniques in the context of truthful and misleading communication by Whitty and Ruddy (2025). The study focused on the role of linguistic characteristics in perceptions of truth and credibility. The results indicated that factual communication frequently involves the use of certainty markers, logical reasoning and evidence-based language. Rather, misleading messages used more emotional appeals and rhetorical manipulation. The researchers noticed that viewers are inclined to think that factual words are trustworthy and reliable. The study found that language decisions have a significant impact on the credibility and authenticity judgments. The present study was interested in the same finding, as facticity patterns have been shown to impact audience perceptions of environmental claims (Whitty & Ruddy, 2025).

2.5 Climate Change and Political Discourse

2.5.1 Political Construction of Climate Change

Fløttum (2020) studied representation and communication of climate change in political discourses. The study examined political actors' linguistic practices in the process of building environmental issues and climate-related responsibilities. The results showed that scientists often mix science with rhetoric in order to sway public opinion. The results indicated that the modality, evaluation and responsibility framing were found in the climate discourse to build urgency and commitment to the environment. The research also showed that political communication is consistent with the larger political ideologies and policy agendas. Fløttum found that climate discourse is important to the public understanding of environmental crises. This research is relevant in relation to the central focus of this research – the role of language in the construction of climate realities – as it brings to focus how political leaders construct realities through language.

2.6 Research Gap

The literature reviewed shows that scholars have already studied a large body of texts related to the field of ecolinguistics, sustainability discourse, communication on climate change, stakeholder representation and persuasive language. Previous research has revealed the importance of language in building environmental realities, ecological awareness, and public perceptions of environmental issues. In the same way, the theory of convictions and facticity patterns developed by Stibbe (2021) and the theory of stake management and empiricist repertoire developed by Potter (1996) can be used to gain insight into the construction of credibility in discourse. But, previous research has tended to emphasize media discourses, environmental communication, sustainability stories, or international political environments. Very little research has been conducted on environmental political speeches in Pakistan. Moreover, no significant study has done a comparative analysis of the facticity patterns and stake management strategies used by Imran Khan and Shehbaz Sharif in building their environmental convictions and credibility. To this end, the present study investigates this gap by comparatively analyzing the environmental speeches of both leaders in the light of an integrated approach of Stibbe (2021) and Potter (1996).

3. Research Methodology

This chapter presents the methodological approach adopted in analyzing the facticity patterns and credibility construction strategies in the environmental speeches of Imran Khan and Shehbaz Sharif. The method of this study is qualitative research to analyze the linguistic devices and rhetorical strategies that are used in the selected environmental speeches of both leaders. The chapter also details the research design, sample size, theoretical framework, analytical framework, and mode of data collection adopted in collecting and analysing the data.

3.1 Research Design

The methodology of this study is qualitative comparative discourse analysis design that was used to study the construction of environmental convictions and credibility of both Imran Khan and Shehbaz Sharif in their speeches. The study is not statistical measurement but interpretation of meaning, rhetorical construction and linguistic analysis of political environmental discourse, so it is fit to use the qualitative approach. The study is focused on the way these patterns of facticity are constructed using linguistic means such as modal verbs, unmodalised assertions, presuppositions, quantifications, passive constructions, the choice of vocabulary and authority invocations in the chosen speeches by both leaders. The research is interpretive in nature and is based on Stibbe's (2021) ecolinguistic framework of convictions and facticity patterns and Potter's (1996) discursive psychological tools of the repertoire of empiricism and stake management. Stibbe's framework assists the researcher in understanding how the language of environmental description is placed on a continuum between certainly true and certainly false, while Potter's framework explains how the language of the speaker helps to build credibility and how the speaker's rhetorical stake is managed through the use of empiricist language and interest management strategies. The study has been reduced to speeches of the leaders at national and international platforms, such as the United Nations General Assembly, COP Climate Conferences, the Geneva Climate Conference, Billion Tree Tsunami Convention and World Environment Day ceremonies.

3.2 Sample Size

Data for this study was gathered in a purposive manner from the speeches of Imran Khan and Shehbaz Sharif on the environmental issues. In total, 10 speeches were selected – five of Imran Khan from 2018-2022 and five of Shehbaz Sharif from 2022-2024. The significance of these speeches is that they are specifically linked to environmental issues such as climate change, climatic vulnerability of Pakistan, reforestation, climate justice and climate finance and can serve as rich and relevant data sources for facticity analysis. Furthermore, the speeches chosen

cover a variety of rhetorical contexts, audiences and communicative functions, both nationally and internationally, which is suitable for a comparative discourse analysis study.

3.3 Mode of Data Collection

The data used in this study were collected from publicly available speech and officially published speech. Using purposive sampling, speeches were selected from verified and academically credible sources. The UNGA transcripts were obtained from the official UN General Debate portal (gadebate.un.org), the UN Geneva Newsroom (unognewsroom.org) was used for the speech given at the Geneva Conference, the COP and national environmental speech report was obtained from the Dawn News digital archive (dawn.com), and for the Billion Tree Tsunami Convention speech from the PTI official website (insaf.pk). The collected data were full written transcripts of the selected speeches from which facticity bearing utterances were identified and extracted for analysis. In the cases where both video and written versions of a speech were available, the written transcript was used as the main source of data to ensure the linguistic analyses' consistency and accuracy.

3.4 Theoretical Framework

This current study is based on Arran Stibbe's (2021) theory of convictions and facticity patterns in Ecolinguistics: Language, Ecology and the Stories We Live By. Stibbe's model assumes that convictions are stories people have in their minds about whether descriptions of the world are true or false, and facticity patterns are complexes of linguistic devices that together situate a description on a continuum from certainly true to certainly false. Stibbe's facticity scale is therefore adopted as the theoretical framework to examine the environmental speeches of both leaders in the context of the present study, which looks at how language raises, sustains or undermines the facticity of environmental descriptions and what ecological and political implications these constructions have for public conviction formation in Pakistan.

3.5 Analytical Framework

The selected environmental speeches are analysed using the discursive psychology approach developed by Jonathan Potter (1996) in *Representing Reality: Discourse, Rhetoric and Social Construction*. The two analytical tools that are borrowed from Potter (1996) are repertoire of empiricism and stake management. Repertoire of empiricism is the range of linguistic devices such as quantification, passive voice, technical terms, calling on external authorities, and narrative details that speakers use to assert their claims as objective and evidence-based facts instead of personal and/or political interest. Stake management is the rhetorical techniques used by a speaker to reduce the impression of self-interest and to project bias onto the other side in order to enhance the perception of credibility of the claims made. All facticity-bearing utterances found in the corpus are analysed using these two analytical tools to examine how these two leaders linguistically establish credibility and how they manage their rhetorical interest in their environmental speeches. The collected spoken excerpts and transcripts are analysed under two general thematic headings: facticity construction and credibility management, to understand the complex processes of constructing and reinforcing public beliefs regarding Pakistan's ecological condition through the political environmental discourse.

4. Data Analysis

This chapter includes a qualitative analysis of Imran Khan's speeches from 2018 to 2022 and Shehbaz Sharif's environmental speeches from 2022 to 2025, that have been systematically gathered. The chapter is based on the theoretical framework of ecolinguistic facticity from Stibbe (2021) and the analytical framework of discursive psychology from Potter (1996), especially his ideas of stake management and the empiricist repertoire. Each quotation is accompanied by an analytical paragraph in which it is identified whether the devices of facticity were operative, what stake management strategies were used by the speaker, and what credibility building strategies were used for domestic and international audiences.

4.2 Thematic Analysis of Facticity Patterns

4.2.1 Unmodalised Assertions: Constructing Environmental Certainty

The ability to make statements of certainty in the environment is assessed in the following ways:

Unmodalised assertions leave out epistemic qualification completely, presenting such claims as established, indisputable facts. Stibbe (2021) identifies this device as being at the “highest end” of the facticity continuum, implying a high level of conviction and eliminating any room for disagreement. Khan is quite adept at this tactic and makes use of it frequently and effectively, describing contested environmental propositions as descriptions of reality.

Quotation 1 (UNGA General Assembly, 74th Session, 2019):

"Pakistan is among the top 10 nations in the world affected by climate change. We depend on our rivers; we are mainly an agricultural country. 80 percent of our water comes from the glaciers and these are melting at an alarming pace."

Facticity Pattern: Unmodalised Assertion | Certainty Vocabulary | Statistics

This text is representative of Stibbe's (2021) most focused form of unmodalised assertion, which is Pakistan's climate vulnerability as an incontestable fact, with the understated statistical ranking of 'top 10 nations'. The expression 'melting at an alarming pace' has a compound facticity effect, with certainty vocabulary plus evaluative urgency. This is an example of Potter's stake inoculation, where the claim is backed up by tangible evidence so that it will be hard to charge Khan with being politically motivated instead of scientifically. This cumulative positioning of Pakistan as a complainant does not constitute itself as a victim; it registers Pakistan as a documented case study in the processes at global level, thus lending a moral authority to future demands for climate finance from the international community.

Quotation 2 (World Economic Forum, Country Strategic Dialogue on Pakistan, 2020):

"Pakistan is a case in point, as it lies at the geographic crossroads of melting glaciers, unpredictably shifting monsoons and enhanced disaster activity triggered by climate change."

This represents: **Facticity Pattern:** Unmodalised Assertion | Geographic Authority | Empiricist Repertoire.

The construction is able to make the ecological situation of Pakistan palpable as a 'case in point', rather than problematic opinion, and thus, as Stibbe (2021) describes it, a facticity device of making empirical description transparent reality. Geographic specificity glaciers, monsoons, disaster activity is what Potter (1996) calls empiricist repertoire, a rhetorical practice that emphasizes the facts of the situation over ideology. At the same time, by distancing the speaker from the claim, this practice helps to substantiate Khan's authority as a scientifically informed speaker who reports the conditions, not makes political claims.

Quotation 3 (Middle East Green Initiative Summit, Riyadh, 2021):

"Just 10 per cent of the world's countries are responsible for emissions causing environmental damage. And unfortunately, we are among the 10 countries most vulnerable to climate change."

Facticity Pattern: Unmodalised Assertion | Statistics | Stake Management

The use of specific percentages and numbers of countries '10 per cent' of polluters and '10 countries' of victims is a good example of Stibbe's (2021) high-certainty facticity, in which a geopolitical asymmetry is established as a numerical fact that can't be disputed. It is an interest management of Potter (1996) that is at play here: Khan positions Pakistan as part of the victimised majority and the polluters as a minority; this is a moral balancing that allows Pakistan to make its demands while sidestepping any counter-argument that developing countries should be subjected to the same emission limits. The inclusion of the interjection

unfortunately carries a very subtle stake management, indicating reluctance to make the claim and making this claim more believable as an objective statement.

4.2.2 Modal Verbs: Encoding Necessity as Moral Obligation

The Moral Obligation pattern is encoded by using modal verbs in the language. The language uses modal verbs to express moral obligation. The middle ground in facticity scale is that of modal constructions, which set the level of epistemic commitment of the speaker. Khan uses deontic modals, such as *must*, *will*, and *cannot*, strategically, as a way of moving environmental issues from statements of reality to categorical moral claims that call for collective action.

Quotation 4 (UNGA General Assembly, 74th Session, 2019):

"Rich countries who contribute the most to greenhouse gas emissions must be held accountable."

Facticity Pattern: Modal Verb (Deontic 'must') | Stake Management | Certainty

This statement is already highly factative, with the deontic modal 'must' bringing it almost to the extreme factative end of Stibbe's (2021) facticity spectrum. Khan's stake-management lens again shows a strategic rhetorical shift; he places himself in the role of speaking for the global South, thereby reducing the chances that he is merely asserting a selfish interest. The passive voice 'must be held accountable' also depersonalises the accusation, making it a structural logical requirement, not an attack by partisans. This reflects the concept of facticity through moral framing (Stibbe, 2021), where the moral urgency at times serves as both political call and epistemological pillar.

Quotation 5 (Plant for Pakistan Day Ceremony, 2021):

"It is our collective responsibility to try our best to make Pakistan a green country for the future of our children. These 3.5 million trees are only the beginning; this will be a constant effort."

Facticity Pattern: Deontic Modal ('responsibility') | Certainty Vocabulary | Government Achievement

The deontic modal ('responsibility') facticity pattern is a government achievement pattern, characterized by the certainty vocabulary. The deontic modal ('responsibility') facticity pattern is a government achievement pattern, with certainty vocabulary.

The collective responsibility noun phrase indicates a deontic modal meaning of 'must' and transforms the act of acting on the environment into an obligation that cannot be avoided but must be carried out, even if it is not a policy decision that the individual is responsible for, but rather the responsibility of the community as a whole. Stibbe (2021) highlights this naturalisation of obligation as a key element of environmental communication aiming to elicit commitment instead of just information. The abstract moral statement is supported by some precise quantification, '3.5 million trees', thus establishing a verifiable governmental accomplishment which, in the eyes of the reader, proves competence and sincerity, in Potter's (1996) empiricist repertoire. The temporal adverbial 'for the future of our children' brings a facticity that transcends the electoral cycles, that is, a transgenerational facticity where environmental protection is seen as a truth that goes beyond the moment of the vote.

Quotation 6 (World Economic Forum, 2020):

"There is an urgent need for simultaneously raising ambition for climate action, while also building resilience and adapting to the inescapable impacts of climate change."

Facticity Pattern: Modal Construction ('urgent need') | Certainty Vocabulary ('inescapable') | Presupposition

The noun construction urgent need is a disguised deontic modal which expresses necessity without using a direct indication of the deontic modality (must/shall). Stibbe 2021 points out that such nominalisations spread the responsibility and de-masculinise direct attribution, so that the demand seems to be coming from an objective situation instead of from

the speaker. The term 'inescapable' is an adverb on the level of certainty and it excludes any room for denial, making the point accepted as given before any argument is advanced. In fact, as Potter (1996) argues, Khan's environmental discourse is a stake inoculation that simultaneously frames ambition and adaptation, showing policy sophistication and evoking a counterhegemonic response to the possible rhetorical gestures of his discourse.

4.2.3 Presuppositions: Implicitizing Truth about the Environment as Background Knowledge

Presuppositions are ways of constructing an argument by including in the logic of the statement propositions that are contested as if they were common ground without needing proof. As for the facticity devices, Stibbe (2021) claims that presupposition is particularly potent as it avoids direct argument, thereby leaving it rhetorically clumsy to take issue with the presupposition without challenging the entire sentence that contains the presupposition.

Quotation 7 (UNGA General Assembly, 74th Session, 2019):

"I have seen a lot of leaders talk about this. But I don't see world leaders really realizing the urgency of the situation. We have a lot of ideas; but as they say, ideas without funding is mere hallucination."

Facticity Pattern: Presupposition | Certainty Vocabulary | Category Entitlement

"This is not an exclusive club. This is no club for the elite.

This passage assumes two things: the first is that the climate crisis has a certain, known urgency; second is that the global leaders are not aware of it. Stibbe (2021) labels this type of embedded assertion as very effective, since the presupposition must be challenged in order to challenge the conversational logic of the whole utterance. The critical presupposition is justified by 'seeing' as a personal experience, as is effected by Potter's (1996) category entitlement, in which Khan serves as a witness and first-hand authority for other world leaders. The final metaphoric register ('ideas without funding is mere hallucination') becomes one of collective wisdom, making the claim seem more like a shared cultural norm or expression of collective opinion than of a particular person's.

Quotation 8 (UNGA General Assembly, 74th Session, 2019):

"We detected 5000 glacier lakes in our mountains. If nothing is done, we fear humans are facing a huge catastrophe."

Facticity Pattern: Presupposition | Statistics | Controlled Doubt Vocabulary ('fear')

"In 2019, the UNGA General Assembly adopted the following quotation:

The conditional claim 'before we introduced it' is only made after the verb 'detected' has been preceded by the presupposition of a systematic, institutionally organised scientific observation programme, lending bureaucratic credibility to the number of 5,000 glacier lakes. Stibbe (2021) notes that the numerical presuppositions, presuppositions of precision, provide a framework for the subsequent statements in a world of empirical reality, so that the "if nothing is done" part of the conditional catastrophe looks like a scientific deduction. The verb 'fear' begins a construction of the controlled doubt vocabulary type, a rhetorical device of significant rhetorical sophistication, identified by Potter (1996): When the speaker expresses fear, but not certainty, they increase their credibility but paradoxically decrease their alarmism.

Quotation 9 (World Economic Forum, 2020):

"Despite Pakistan's diminutive contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions, we are the fifth most climate-impacted country in the world, as indicated by the Germanwatch Global Climate Risk Index, 2020."

Facticity Pattern: Presupposition | Authority Reference (Germanwatch Index) | Empiricist Repertoire

This is a crucial pattern of facticity, because it affects the authority reference provided by the Germanwatch Index, which can lead to an empiricist repertoire. This concessive clause 'despite

Pakistan's diminutive contribution' implies that Pakistan's contribution is small, which is not only known by those in the room but is also a widely shared truth, the whole moral argument rests on the unchallenged premise. Stibbe (2021) describes this as a "sophisticated facticity strategy": the concession seems to show an intellectual fairness, and the claim that follows (ranked 5th and most impacted) is almost logically unstoppable. The Germanwatch Global Climate Risk Index is a good example of Potter's (1996) empiricist repertoire in its most explicit form: the citation of the Germanwatch Global Climate Risk Index de-personalises the ranking completely by attributing it to an external source of authority, so that the statistic seems to be science, not a rhetorical question raised by Khan.

4.2.4 Certainty Vocabulary and Authority References: Building Institutional Credibility

The choice of vocabulary indicates the speaker's level of commitment to a proposition, and is one of the core features of Stibbe's (2021) facticity scale. Certainty vocabulary, when used with the support of other institutional norms (international norms, scientific indices, global norms etc), results in a cumulative credibility effect, which places a speaker's statements as both personal conviction and institutional consensus. Khan uses both the two tools in conjunction with each other throughout all the speeches sampled.

Quotation 10 (World Economic Forum, 2020):

"Climate change is undoubtedly the most threatening issue of our time and an issue without a vaccine."

Facticity Pattern: Certainty Vocabulary ('undoubtedly') | Unmodalised Assertion | Empiricist Repertoire

The adverb 'undoubtedly' is the most extreme version of certainty vocabulary in Stibbe's (2021) schema of facticity, which does the rhetorical job of shutting down disagreement and debate before the listener can formulate it in their mind. The metaphor of 'issue without a vaccine' brings the language of pandemic emergency into the climate debate (which is so central to the COVID-19 era of 2020 that it is generally accepted and often used in everyday political jargon) and creates an analogy in the climate discourse where climate denial seems as unacceptable as ignoring medical science. The implied comparison is the Potter's (1996) "repertoire of the empiricist": whereas vaccines are part of a science that is verifiable, the reality of climate threat is verifiable. This puts Khan on the rationalist side, not on the political one, as he is in line with the scientific consensus of the world.

Quotation 11 (Middle East Green Initiative Summit, Riyadh, 2021):

"Over the past 10 years, the country had faced 152 extreme weather events, which had triggered an economic loss of over \$3.8 billion."

Facticity Pattern: Statistics | Certainty Vocabulary | Empiricist Repertoire

By attaching numbers to the events and losses (\$3.8 billion), this becomes one of the highest of facticity on Stibbe's (2021) scale: quantified, externally verifiable assertion. In Potter's (1996) framework, statistics are an out-there-ness, which gives the impression that they are not created by the speaker's discourse but just happen to be in it. A tenfold temporal framing 'over the last 10 years' gives longitudinal substance, making it appear as if it has been an ongoing documented event, rather than an isolated one or an anecdote. It is a highly specific numerical grounding that helps to make the statement seem unexaggerated as well as one that makes the speaker appear a careful, data-informed speaker.

Quotation 12 (World Economic Forum, 2020):

"Climate action by the developing countries has to be based on the established principles of Equity and Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) as agreed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris Agreement."

Facticity Pattern: UN Reference | Authority Invocation | Certainty Vocabulary ('established')

The specific reference to the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement offers a textbook example of Potter's (1996) empiricist repertoire, in that Khan's claims are framed in terms of existing international laws rather than in terms of political campaign. The facticity analysis proposed by Stibbe (2021) shows that the references to the treaty generate particularly high facticity, as they are referring to the authority of the collective of countries that have signed the document, not only one speaker. This is repeated by the adjective 'established', which implies that the principles in question have gone through a process of legitimisation, one that has precedence and that precludes Khan's single claim, so that any disagreement would seem not only to be wrong, but also to be in the wrong place.

Quotation 13 (One Billion Tree Planting Ceremony, May 2021):

"The World Bank had ranked Pakistan as the top country for using development finance for climate-friendly initiatives."

Facticity Pattern: Authority Reference (World Bank) | Unmodalised Assertion | Government Achievement

The World Bank ranking functions as the supreme facticity device in Stibbe's (2021) schema when deployed in this manner: an external, politically neutral institutional assessment that independently validates Khan's domestic policy record. The most potent form of empiricist repertoire, according to Potter (1996), is third-party endorsement, in which the institution which authorizes the speaker's use seems totally extraneous to any speaker's rhetorical needs or interest. The superlative 'top country' is not Khan's but of the World Bank and the ranking is as much a verified scientific designation as it is self-promotion. The building acts as a piece of government success and becomes an international reality while at the same time protecting Khan from any accusations of performative politics.

4.2.5 Stake Management and Empiricist Repertoire: Constructing the Credible Environmental Advocate

The term "stake management" is used by Potter (1996) to describe the discursive strategies used to show that claims are based on the objective reality of the speaker rather than on their own agenda. It is the collection of practices, called the empiricist repertoire, that carry out this demonstration. The quotations that follow provide the clearest examples of both of these rhetorical strategies, as Khan attempts to reconcile national interest and global environmental advocacy.

Quotation 14 (UNGA General Assembly, 74th Session, 2019):

"In KP, a province of Pakistan, we planted a billion trees in 5 years. Now we are targeting 10 billion trees. But one country cannot do anything. This has to be a combined effort of the world."

Facticity Pattern: Government Achievement | Stake Management | Unmodalised Assertion

Khan's announcement of the Billion Tree achievement at the world's biggest diplomatic address is a pretty high-stakes stake management play. The speaker at the same time attributes to himself the achievements of a verifiable environmental record and holds Pakistan's effort to a call for global solidarity. This is what Potter (1996) calls "interest inoculation" - by saying upfront that Pakistan is going to need the help of others to succeed, Khan cannot be charged with self-congratulation, but also makes the success rhetorical and salient. Stibbe (2021) would argue that the quantified achievement a billion trees in five years is a facticity device of government action that provides the empirical basis to the following moral call for collective action.

Quotation 15 (Middle East Green Initiative Summit, Riyadh, 2021):

"So, we decided that before the world takes any action, we, as a country, for our own survival, must do whatever is in our reach."

Facticity Pattern: Stake Management | Modal Verb ('must') | Interest Disclosure

This is the most forthright, rhetorically assertive stake-management statement in the entire corpus, and it openly admits that Pakistan's environmental action is motivated by the need to survive as a nation, to 'survive for our own survival', before redefining it as a model of good behaviour in the world. Potter (1996) classifies this type of interest disclosure as paradoxical in that disclosure in explicit terms would actually improve credibility as opposed to decreasing it; the speaker who states his interest explicitly seems more honest than one who hides it under a veil of altruism. Stibbe (2021) would remark that the deontic modal 'must' in this sense would turn national survival instinct into a universal moral obligation: what is existentially necessary for Pakistan would be what is ethically right for all nations; thus, for the first time, Khan would be simultaneously a pragmatist and a visionary.

4.2 Thematic Analysis of Facticity Patterns

4.2.1 Unmodalised Assertions: Constructing Environmental Certainty

Unmodalised assertions make descriptions of the environment a fact without attaching epistemic modals. At the far end of this facticity continuum, Stibbe (2021) finds this device. This is Sharif's tactic, and he is using it in abundance, using Pakistan's ecological vulnerability as fact.

Quotation 1 (Address at the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 23 September 2022):

"The undeniable, and inconvenient truth is that this calamity has not been triggered by anything we have done. Our glaciers are melting fast, our forests are burning, and our heat waves have crossed 53 degree C, making us the hottest place on the planet."

Facticity Pattern: Unmodalised Assertion | Certainty Vocabulary | Empiricist Repertoire

The noun phrase 'undeniable, and inconvenient truth' has a double facticity function, one that raises the claim to the level of absolute truth, and another that anticipates any opposing claim, which makes it at the highest end of Stibbe's (2021) facticity scale. The list of ecological processes glacial melting, forest burning, record temperatures are Potter's (1996) empiricist moves to present independently verifiable phenomena as a self-eviding list of processes rather than a political argument. The rhetorical becomes measurable with the specific measurement of '53 degree C', the claim is structurally immune to challenge. This facticity cumulative construction will leave Pakistan as a scientifically proven victim and provide institutional power to demands for climate justice that come in the future.

Quotation 2 (Address at the 79th Session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 27 September 2024):

"Pakistan emits less than 1% of carbon globally; yet we have paid a very heavy price for no fault of ours. This is unfair in any calculus of global justice. We must uphold the axiom: the polluter pays!"

Facticity Pattern: Unmodalised Assertion | Statistics | Certainty Vocabulary | Stake Management

The facticity structure works through the careful calculation of a statistical unmodalised statement ('less than 1% of carbon globally') and a moral judgement ('this is unfair in any calculation of global justice'). According to Stibbe (2021), numerical grounding is one of the most persuasive facticity devices, since statistics seem to come from the empirical reality that already exists but do not seem to be created by the speaker's rhetoric. The conjunction 'yet' is a logical paradox between contribution and consequence. Sharif's stake inoculation strategy (Potter, 1996) is to place a moral demand on a reliable statistic that is verifiable by those outside

the community. The term 'the polluter pays' is put forward as an 'axiom' which places it as a universal and pre-political truth, not a policy proposal.

Quotation 3 (Address at the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 26 September 2025):

"Pakistan contributes less than 1% of global emissions annually, yet it continues to face the relentless brunt of climate disasters. Pakistan is among the top 10 most vulnerable countries bearing the brunt of this challenge."

Facticity Pattern: Unmodalised Assertion | Statistics | Authority Reference | Empiricist Repertoire

The facticity adds an internationally recognised ranking ('top 10 most vulnerable countries') as an implicit external authority reference. Repetition of high-facticity statistical claims across multiple forums puts ecological truth into the shared uncontested knowledge (Stibbe, 2021). The term 'relentlessly' removes any chance of a reprieve, thereby creating the sense of Pakistan's climate exposure as an ongoing and growing situation. In the impersonal grammatical structure that Potter (1996) calls 'Pakistan contributes... Pakistan is', Shehbaz Sharif is completely stripped of the source of the claim, which makes the claim seem to report itself from an objective vantage point.

4.2.2 Modal Verbs: Encoding Necessity as Moral Obligation

The modal verbs lie in the middle ground of Stibbe's (2021) facticity continuum, acting as deontic (categorical moral) instruments that shift environmental descriptions to moral obligations. Sharif uses deontic modals (must, will) judiciously and brings political negotiation to the level of universal ethical obligation with regard to the environment.

Quotation 4 (COP27 National Statement, Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, 8 November 2022):

"It is now or never for us. There is indeed no Planet B. Losses and damage need to be part of the core agenda of COP27. Climate finance must be clearly defined as new, additional and sustained resources."

Facticity Pattern: Deontic Modal ('must') | Certainty Vocabulary | Presupposition

The declaration of 'it is now or never' is a temporal unmodalised assertion that forecloses any possibility of deferral, structuring climate action in a binary that erases rhetorical space for inaction. Stibbe (2021) describes these kinds of extreme case formulations as some of the most powerful facticity-raising devices. The statement 'there is indeed no Planet B' assumes irreversibility, making any contrary position epistemologically absurd. The deontic modal 'must' converts a policy preference into a precise structural obligation. Potter (1996) would refer to this as an interest inoculation strategy: by presenting the demand as a universal rather than a national interest, Sharif frames his claim as emanating from the logical imperatives of the climate system itself, rather than from political self-interest.

Quotation 5 (Address at the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 23 September 2022):

"When global warming rips apart whole families and an entire country at this ferocious speed, it is time to ask why, and time to ask not what can be done but what MUST be done."

Facticity Pattern: Deontic Modal ('MUST') | Certainty Vocabulary | Unmodalised Assertion

Capitalisation of 'MUST' in the written transcript is a strong orthographic facticity device that visually enacts the maximal deontic force of the modal, converting a policy recommendation into an absolute moral command. Stibbe (2021) sees typographic intensification as a paralinguistic certainty marker that elevates facticity above the level that can be achieved by the lexical content of the modal alone. The rhetorical move from 'what can be done' to 'what MUST be done' moves from the language of capacity to the language of categorical obligation.

Potter (1996) would observe that the temporal framing – ‘when global warming rips apart’ – presupposes the ongoing reality of climate destruction, so that the deontic demand emerges from self-evident facts rather than from Sharif’s political agenda.

Quotation 6 (Address at the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 26 September 2025):

"While we deal with climate change, those most responsible for the climate crisis must deliver on climate finance commitments, to support climate action in developing countries."

Facticity Pattern: Deontic Modal ('must') | Presupposition | Stake Management

This speech uses the deontic modal ‘must’ with the presupposition of established responsibility – ‘those most responsible’. This takes it for granted, without argument, that the causal chain between developed-world emissions and Pakistan’s climate damages is institutionally recognised. According to Stibbe (2021), this kind of presupposed responsibility is a very effective facticity device that embeds a contestable causal claim as a common background knowledge. The phrase ‘deliver on commitments’ changes Pakistan’s position from that of a beggar seeking alms to that of a lender demanding the settlement of a legally recognised debt. This is a refined interest disclaimer, as classified by Potter (1996). Sharif positions himself as simply reminding the international community of obligations that it has freely taken on, without any hint of self-interested advocacy.

4.2.3 Presuppositions: Embedding Environmental Truth as Background Knowledge

One of the most rhetorically powerful facticity devices identified by Stibbe (2021) are presuppositions, which embed contested environmental claims as unquestioned background assumptions in utterances. What makes this device especially powerful is the rhetorical problem of challenging a presupposition without disrupting the flow of the conversation. This device is so frequent in Sharif’s work that it is arguably the most distinctive feature of his facticity architecture.

Quotation 7 (Address at the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 23 September 2022):

"I have come here to explain first hand, the scale and magnitude of this climate catastrophe that has pushed one-third of my country under water in a super storm that no one has seen in living memory."

Facticity Pattern: Presupposition | Category Entitlement | Certainty Vocabulary

The speech at the same time assumes three truths of the environment: floods are a ‘climate catastrophe’; the extent of the flooding ('one-third of my country') has been correctly assessed; and the flooding has never happened before in people's memory. Stibbe (2021) mentions that the embedding of presuppositions in one sentence is an extremely strong facticity strategy: the audience has to take all of the embedded presuppositions as being true at the same time. Sharif's self-positioning as a personal witness gives him experiential authority, a type of authority that is structurally immune to institutional refutation, according to Potter's (1996) category entitlement. This is the superlative 'no one has seen in living memory' which means any historical normalisation of the disaster seems factually and morally unsustainable.

Quotation 8 (COP27 National Statement, Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, 8 November 2022):

"An estimate of damage and loss has exceeded 30 billion dollars and this all happened despite our very low carbon footprints and yet we became a victim of something with which we had nothing to do and of course it was a man-made disaster."

Facticity Pattern: Presupposition | Statistics | Stake Management | Certainty Vocabulary

This utterance is based on overlapping presuppositions, which together form one of the most rhetorically complex forms of facticity in the corpus. The concessive clause 'despite our very low carbon footprints' assumes that the fact of Pakistan's small carbon footprint is common knowledge, making this important moral assumption a part of the background knowledge shared by all. Stibbe (2021) points to this concessive presupposition strategy as being especially effective because it conveys intellectual fairness and the following moral statement is logically irresistible. The statistical anchor of '30 billion dollars' does Potter's (1996) out-there-ness function, and it makes the loss seem like a fact that is already outside of the person. Most importantly, the term 'a man-made disaster' comes after the moral foundation has been solidly established and has a disproportionately high 'facticity' value as it follows the audience's acceptance of the injustice of Pakistan's situation.

Quotation 9 (Address at the 79th Session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 27 September 2024):

"Two years ago, my country was devastated by catastrophic floods, causing \$30 billion in damages. It is now clear that each summer will bring blistering temperatures and trigger fresh climate impacts."

Facticity Pattern: Presupposition | Certainty Vocabulary ('it is now clear') | Statistics

The phrase 'it is now clear' is an exceptional presuppositional certainty marker that implies a past state of uncertainty, which has been resolved, and thus a state of certainty, both for the speaker and for the listener, of the truth of the statement, as well as a completed process of the accumulation of evidence for this. This construction of certainty in retrospect is a potent facticity device as described by Stibbe (2021) which is used to present the speaker's claim as a recognition of a fact imposed by objective reality, rather than a new assertion. Potter (1996) would record the syllogistic function of facticity: the statistic ('\$30 billion') is the empirical major premise, the continuous destruction is the minor premise, and the conclusion ('it is now clear') is a logical deduction that is required by the facts themselves rather than constructed by the speaker's rhetorical strategy.

4.2.4 Certainty Vocabulary and Authority References: Building Institutional Credibility

Stibbe (2021) proposes the facticity schema, which suggests that certainty vocabulary boosts epistemic commitment to the highest levels of the facticity scale, and authority references shift the source of facticity from the individual speaker to institutionally legitimised sources. Sharif uses both devices in prolonged use in his addresses.

Quotation 10 (Address at the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 23 September 2022):

"As the SG so candidly says, hotspots like Pakistan fall in the ten most climate-vulnerable list of countries, but emit less than one percent of the greenhouse gasses that are burning our planet."

Facticity Pattern: Authority Reference (UN Secretary General) | Certainty Vocabulary | Empiricist Repertoire

The claim is an excellent example of Potter's (1996) repertoire of the empiricist, in its most institutionally strong form: the borrowing of facticity from the highest international authority. Stibbe (2021) points out that such authority references work via a facticity transfer mechanism, which means that the authority of the institutional source is transferred to the speaker's claim. The adverb 'candidly' is a very advanced certainty vocabulary choice: it means the Secretary General gives testimony against his institutional self-interest, the most convincing type of testimony, since the one who is testifying has nothing to gain from the admission. The term

'burning our planet' turns the metaphor into the reality, and makes climate change the process it is, rather than a hypothesis.

Quotation 11 (International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan, Geneva, 9 January 2023):

"A post-disaster needs assessment calculated the total destruction and economic losses from the floods to exceed 30 billion dollars, which is eight percent of Pakistan's GDP, pushing nine million people into abject poverty."

Facticity Pattern: Authority Reference (PDNA) | Statistics | Empiricist Repertoire | Certainty Vocabulary

The reference to a 'post-disaster needs assessment' is a textbook example of Potter's (1996) empirically based repertoire; a claim that is now made to be based on a 'procedurally verified scientific measurement' rather than on his own government's calculations. This kind of procedural authority reference is listed by Stibbe (2021) as one of the most effective facticity devices, which suggests a verification procedure that is independent of the speaker. The cascading quantification — \$30 billion, eight percent of GDP, nine million people pushed into poverty — has what Stibbe (2021) calls a cumulative facticity effect; it gives the impression of a well documented reality, with no arguments or doubts. The passive grammatical construction 'pushing into poverty' takes away all agency from the description and renders poverty a natural result of measurable forces instead of a politically claimed one.

Quotation 12 (Address at the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 26 September 2025):

"Our commitment to ambitious climate action is reflected in our Third Nationally Determined Contribution. However, while Pakistan is doing its part, those most responsible for the climate crisis must deliver on climate finance commitments."

Facticity Pattern: Authority Reference (NDC) | Stake Management | Deontic Modal | Certainty Vocabulary

The reference to Pakistan's 'Third Nationally Determined Contribution' is both a reflection of the legally binding requirements of the Paris Agreement and an internationally recognised document to substantiate Pakistan's claim of 'doing its part'. Stibbe (2021) highlights legal-documentary authority references, which generate particularly high facticity, since national contributions to the UNFCCC are formally registered instruments that have institutional weight that is not subject to rhetorical agency. This can be considered as a high-level stake management manoeuvre by Potter (1996) since Pakistan's own commitments are made public first before it pushes for climate finance. Contrastive conjunction however introduces the division between the credibility Pakistan has earned and the one that it has not won from the international community, thus giving the following demand a moral justification and not a political one.

4.2.5 Stake Management and Empiricist Repertoire:

Building the Credible Climate Victim and Advocate According to Potter (1996), stake management is the discursive processes and practices that speakers use to show that their claims are grounded in objective reality rather than in their own or political agenda. The mechanism is used very consistently in Sharif's discourse, building him as a legitimate climate victim whose voice is based on actual experience and a moral authority that calls for justice, not charity.

Quotation 13 (Address at the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 23 September 2022):

"For 40 days and 40 nights a biblical flood poured down on us, smashing centuries of weather records, challenging everything we knew about disaster,

and how to manage it. More than 1500 of my people have perished in the great flood, including over 400 children."

Facticity Pattern: Stake Management | Narrative Detail | Empiricist Repertoire | Certainty Vocabulary

The exact timing of '40 days and 40 nights' exists on two registers: on the empiricist level, it specifies a particular, measurable time frame, a time frame that Potter (1996) describes as an out-there-ness marker and thus transforms the personal experience into a documentable event; on the intertextual level, the biblical reference creates the disaster as an event beyond the realm of ordinary politics and political time. As Stibbe (2021) would point out, 'smashing centuries of weather records' is an authority reference of a particular facticity force because weather records are institutionally maintained data archives, whose violation is an objective measurable fact. The precision of '400 children' is an example of a stake management manoeuvre for empiricists (Potter 1996) which strengthens the moral claim while at the same time eliminating the possibility of attributing advocacy to adult self-interest.

Quotation 14 (COP27 National Statement, Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, 8 November 2022):

"Pledges made at the Copenhagen COP15 in 2009 for mobilizing 100 billion dollars per annum by 2020 have still not been realized. Unless there is a transformational shift in the flow of capacities, finance and technology, the bargain between the North and the South will not work."

Facticity Pattern: Authority Reference (COP15) | Statistics | Stake Management | Empiricist Repertoire

The Copenhagen COP15 pledge is a very potent facticity device, because it bases Sharif's demand on an existing international commitment that the developed world has made, and which it has accepted, without being forced to. This type of historical-institutional authority reference is the most advanced form of stake management, according to Potter (1996), because by presenting the demand for Pakistan as simply carrying out an already agreed obligation, Sharif removes any chance of his advocacy being seen as an effort to secure new entitlements. The non-fulfilment of 'have still not been realized' would be a certainty vocabulary marker of temporal indictment, as Stibbe (2021) would put it, that is, a failure that is not a matter of ongoing negotiation but a documented failure. The 'bargain between the North and the South will not work' prediction is an unmodalised future assertion, which uses the certainty of logical consequence instead of political threat.

Quotation 15 (Address at the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 26 September 2025):

"In 2022, Pakistan had endured massive floods causing losses amounting to USD 34 billion. This year again, we are dealing with another mega flood, with thousands of villages washed away, millions of people displaced, more than a thousand killed. I have declared a climate emergency to cope with this challenge."

Facticity Pattern: Stake Management | Government Achievement | Statistics | Unmodalised Assertion

The declaration of a 'climate emergency' is the most impactful stake management manoeuvre in the entire corpus. Formal institutional declarations are the most powerful of the repertoire of the empiricist, according to Potter (1996), who sees them as the highest form of the repertoire, as they are legally and institutionally "registered" realities, outside of the speaker's discourse. Stibbe (2021) would point out that an emergency is an unmodalised statement by definition: governments do not declare emergencies concerning hypothetical threats. The parallel of the floods in 2022 and a new mega flood in 2025 creates a pattern of the climate crisis in Pakistan, instead of an exception. The list is empiricist at its most expansive: Potter (1996) enumerates

thousands of villages, millions of displaced persons, a thousand dead, and the facticity of these losses seems to be completely unarguable, unadvocated by the speaker.

4.3 Findings

A comparative analysis of thirty quotations from the environmental speeches of Imran Khan (2018–2022) and Shehbaz Sharif (2022–2025) shows that both leaders have many common characteristics in the way they present the facts and construct credibility of their speeches, but there are also marked differences. The leaders have consistently used Stibbe's (2021) high facticity devices, such as unmodalised assertions, statistical quantification with precision, deontic modals, and institutional authority references, to frame Pakistan's climate vulnerability as an undeniable reality, which is documented globally. The core figures of less than one percent of global emissions, 33 million people affected, and 30 billion dollars in losses constitute Potter's (1996) empiricist repertoire in both corpora, and these numbers are presented as self-evidence, pre-political fact, not as a political argument. Both leaders also refer to external institutional actors, the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement and international scientific organisations, and this is what Stibbe (2021) calls a shared discursive project: the creation of Pakistan's climate vulnerability as an 'ecological truth' that requires an 'obligatory' international response. Yet, perhaps most analytically important is the essential rhetorical distinction between the rhetorical identity each leader builds. Khan's advocacy is positioned as disinterested and globally motivated environmental activism, using Potter's (1996) term, through the use of government achievement rhetoric, institutional endorsements and scientific authority references, such as the World Bank ranking, the Billion Tree Tsunami, and the Germanwatch Global Climate Risk Index. While Sharif's authority is built on the identity of a morally authoritative climate victim, using presuppositional architecture, such as 'despite our very low carbon footprints', 'for no fault of ours', 'a man-made disaster', etc., and procedural authority references, including the post-disaster needs assessment and the UN Secretary General's candid testimony, he embeds Pakistan's injustice as unquestionable background knowledge. As opposed to Khan's discourse of aspiration, which builds a Pakistan that leads by example, Sharif's discourse is litigational, calling for enforcement of pre-existing international obligations, based on documented, irreversible harm, through Potter's (1996) interest disclaimer strategy. These contrasting facticity orientations directly respond to both the research questions of this study: Khan's facticity architecture is an achievement oriented, which builds Pakistan as a responsible environmental actor who deserves climate finance, while Sharif's is a victim oriented, which builds Pakistan as an innocent casualty of global climate injustice deserving compensatory finance. The facticity patterns have a direct impact on the convictions that fuel collective ecological action, and the creation of the loss and damage fund at COP27 in 2022 is an institutional outcome of just such a type of conviction-building political discourse, as Stibbe (2021) argues.

5. Conclusion

The theoretical framework for this study was the ecolinguistic framework of convictions and facticity patterns by Stibbe (2021) and the analytical framework was Potter's (1996) repertoire of empiricism and stake management. The analysis of ten speeches (five each by the two leaders) indicated that both leaders routinely use unmodalised assertions, statistical quantification, deontic modals, and references to institutional authority to establish Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change as an unquestionable reality that is well documented internationally. Despite the common strategies, each leader creates a unique rhetorical identity, Khan by framing Pakistan as an active environmental leader in government achievement rhetoric and scientific endorsement, such as the World Bank ranking and the Billion Tree Tsunami, while Sharif frames Pakistan as a morally authoritative climate victim in presuppositional architecture and references to procedural authority, like the post-disaster

needs assessment and the testimony of the UN Secretary General. Stake management is the area where Khan is more interested in interest inoculation – turning national environmental success into a global call to action and Sharif in interest disclaimers – making every demand based on verifiable statistics, declared emergencies, and a reluctant advocate that is driven by objective reality, not political need. Both are complex applications of Potter's (1996) empiricist repertoire, but both are mediated by structurally distinct, but similarly effective mechanisms. This study, theoretically, builds upon Stibbe's (2021) facticity framework to the political environmental discourse in South Asia, which is largely overlooked in the current body of ecolinguistic literature, and illustrates the fruitful complementarity of ecolinguistics and discursive psychology as complementary analytical tools. In practice, it provides the researchers, journalists, and policy makers with instruments to critically analyse the political environmental rhetoric and how true ecological commitment differs from performative advocacy in Pakistan. Limitations include the focus on English language international speeches and the qualitative interpretive methodology; the study could be extended to Urdu language domestic speeches, larger corpora, and the environmental rhetoric of political leaders in other climate vulnerable developing countries. Stories of our lives are the ecological world we live in, as Stibbe (2021) reminds us, and the linguistic construction of those stories by the political leaders of Pakistan is a crucial part of the pressing global quest of environmental justice.

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