EVALUATIVE LANGUAGE IN POLITICAL INTERVIEWS WITH PAKISTANI POLITICIANS: AN SFL-BASED APPRAISAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract
This study investigates the evaluative language employed by key Pakistani politicians in their political interviews. Six interviews were selected for analysis—two interviews each with Imran Khan, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and Shahbaz Sharif. Following Martin and White's Appraisal Framework (2005), the relative frequency of various appraisal resources was calculated using the UAM Corpus Tool. The findings revealed that *all types of major appraisal resources—attitude, engagement, and graduation, along with their subcategories such as affect, judgment, appreciation, monoglossia, heteroglossia, force, and focus—were used in their interviews. Imran Khan employed more negative attitudinal resources, particularly the subtype judgement, than others. He evaluated his opponents negatively and held them responsible for Pakistan's decline. Bilawal Bhutto was found to use more appreciation resources and appraised the coalition government for lifting Pakistan out of the crisis. Shahbaz Sharif predominantly used the affect subtype of attitude to convey emotional appeals and support his economic recovery agenda. Notably, Imran Khan and Bilawal Bhutto used monoglossia and closed space for multiple voices in one of their interviews, whereas Shahbaz Sharif employed heteroglossia and opened space for multiple voices in both of his interviews. He also consistently used the force subtype of graduation to emphasize the urgency of international aid for flood victims in Pakistan and the importance of Pak-China friendship. The study concludes that politicians use evaluative language as a powerful tool in their political interviews and speeches to position themselves positively while criticizing and discrediting opponents in political discourse. By employing evaluative language, they influence public opinion and promote their political agendas.*

Keywords: evaluative language, political interviews, Pakistani politicians, SFL, appraisal analysis

1.   Introduction

Language is a medium through which people express opinions, thoughts, and emotions in front of others. It is used for conveying information, but its functions are not limited. It also plays a key role in maintaining power relations and building identities in society. In the political realm, language is not only restricted to delivering messages and conveying information, but politicians also use it as a powerful tool to perform different functions like constructing authority, discrediting their opponents, and influencing public opinion. One of the key strategies in political discourse is the use of evaluative language. Evaluative language refers to the use of words and expressions through which people express their attitudes, appreciations, criticisms, approvals, disapprovals, ideologies, emotions, and judgments toward events, situations, or people. Pounds (2015) also defines evaluative language as:

Evaluative language includes the range of linguistic resources that may be used to express language users' attitude or stance to different entities in the real world or to propositions. It expresses speakers' or writers' views of the world and at the same time, typically engages with shapes, and influences others' views and feelings (p. 1).

Politicians can use evaluative language to position themselves positively and criticise their opponents in political discourse. By employing evaluative language, they influence public opinion and promote their political agendas. As Qadeer and Shehzad (2018) argued, politicians, whether they are in government or opposition, always try to employ rhetoric to craft their speeches and interviews strategically, whether delivering speeches to the nation or public gatherings, aiming to persuade and influence through effective language manipulation. Different studies were conducted on the interviews and speeches of different politicians in political discourse in the past. Aljuraywi and Alyousef (2022) conducted their study on Donald Trump and Joe Biden's interviews and analyzed attitudes in their interviews by applying Martin and White's appraisal framework (2005). Asad et al. (2021) interpreted attitudinal realizations in Pakistani Online newspapers: *DAWN* and *THE NEWS*, through appraisal theory. Anjum et al. (2023) analyzed Imran Khan and Bilawal Bhutto's interviews on *CNN* through multimodal discourse analysis. Irfan et al. (2024) employed Fairclough's (1995) 3D model to examine persuasive language in the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan's interviews.

Despite numerous studies analyzing political interviews and speeches globally, the appraisal analysis of evaluating language in political interviews with Pakistani politicians remains unexplored. Researchers have paied less attention to the appraisal analysis of such interviews in Pakistani political discourse. Therefore, there lies a gap in past studies conducted on political interviews and speeches, and the present research study aims to fill that gap. Pakistani politicians also use evaluative language to influence public opinions and pass judgments and appreciation towards people and events within Pakistani political discourse. The present research study aims to address this gap by examining the evaluative strategies used by Imran Khan, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and Shahbaz Sharif using Martin and White's Appraisal Framework (2005).

1.1 Research Objectives

The present research study aims to achieve the following objectives:
1. To identify various appraisal resources, i.e., attitudes, engagement, and graduation, in Pakistani politicians' political interviews.
2. To find the purposeful reasons for using appraisal resources in Pakistani politicians' political interviews.
3. To compare the use of evaluative language in Pakistani politicians' political interviews.

1.2 Research Questions

The study seeks to address the following research questions:
1. What different appraisal resources are used in Pakistani politicians' political interviews?
2. Why do Pakistani politicians use different appraisal resources in their political interviews?
3. What are the differences in the use of evaluative language in Pakistani politicians' political interviews?

1.3 Significance of the Study

The study is significant for the students of linguistics who are interested in understanding the applications of appraisal systems in Pakistani political discourse. It is also very helpful in conducting the appraisal analysis of different texts, interviews, and speeches in general. This research study has great significance in both the academic and the social sectors by raising awareness of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). This study fills the gap in the previous studies conducted on Pakistani political discourse and contributes to the existing body of literature. It is significant for future researchers as well, as they can base their studies on this research.

1.4   Delimitations of the Study

This study is delimited to the political interviews of three key Pakistani politicians namely Imran Khan, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and Shahbaz Sharif. These politicians were chosen because they represent and lead the top political parties (PTI, PPP, and PMLN) of Pakistan. For this study, their six interviews in English, which they gave to the international media after 2021, were selected. Another reason for analyzing these political interviews is to explore the linguistic choices of politicians and their impact, as they have held power multiple times in Pakistan's history.

2.   Literature Review

This section of the literature review discusses the key concepts related to the topic of the present study. It explains the major concepts such as evaluative language, political interviews, and appraisal theory. It also explains the theoretical framework followed in the present study and provides an overview of previous studies conducted on various political speeches and interviews. In the end, it also presents an identified research gap.

2.1   Evaluative Language

Evaluative language refers to the use of words and expressions through which people express their attitudes, appreciations, criticism, approvals, disapprovals, ideologies, emotions, and judgments toward events, situations, or people. It consists of those linguistic choices that are used to express speakers' or writers' stances and attitudes towards worldly entities. Pounds (2015) states that evaluative language carries context-based meanings, and therefore its meaning is implicit rather than explicit. Evaluative language is register-specific as well as genre-specific. The corpus analysis of evaluative language is quite helpful for identifying its register-specific forms. This analysis is also very useful in identifying common grammatical structures associated with evaluating language. Evaluative language is a type of language that conveys judgement and expresses the point of views of writers or speakers. It ranges from low to high (weak to strong) in intensity and can include different types of phrases like; Noun, verb, adverbial, and adjectival phrases.

2.2   Political Interviews

An interview is a kind of formal communication between the participants. It is an interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. Interviews are conducted to gain information on different topics, events, issues, etc. It provides a platform for the interviewers to convey their opinions to the audience. Since the emergence of TV, interviews have been conducted on TV to grab the attention and viewership of people on a large scale. Most of the time, a journalist on TV becomes an interviewer and conducts interviews with politicians as their interviews are the main focus of electronic, social, and print media. Conducting interviews with politicians has two main purposes: first, they try to gain viewership for the channel on a large

scale, and second, they provide a platform for the publication of politicians' ideologies and opinions on different matters. Hussain et al. (2020) stated that the critical and creative approach of journalists to interview help extract facts from the interviewees. Such an approach of journalists brings the true face of interviewees to the public. It also helps in understanding the political complexities and biases. Politicians also adopt evaluating language in interviews which reflects their attitudes, engagement, and graduation by employing different linguistic choices.

2.3   Theoretical Framework

After reviewing the previous studies conducted on different interviews and speeches, it was observed that most of them followed Martin and White's Appraisal Theory (2005) as a theoretical framework as it best suited the nature of such research studies. This framework effectively analyzed the collected data, which is why the present study also adopted it to analyze the use of evaluative language in the political interviews of Pakistani politicians.

2.3.1   Appraisal Theory

Appraisal theory is the framework proposed by Martin and White within Halliday's (1978) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). It is an extension of M.A.K. Halliday's interpersonal meta-function of language. J.R. Martin and P.R.R. They were of the view that the function of language is not limited to interacting with others, as the interpersonal meta-function of language suggests, but people also use it to express what they feel, what they value, and what they think. Martin and White (2005) claimed that while conducting SFL-based studies on interpersonal meaning before 1990, researchers' main focus was "more strongly oriented to interaction than feeling" (p. 7). Therefore, there was a need to expand this theoretical orientation to consider the speakers' and writers' emotions, attitudes, and judgments as well. For this reason, an appraisal framework was developed (Martin & White, 2005, p. 1).

Martin and White, along with their colleagues, developed this appraisal framework in the 1990s and 2000s. This framework focuses mainly on evaluating language. It consists of three major systems: Attitude, engagement, and graduation—which are further divided into subtypes.

2.3.1.1 A**ttitude.** Attitude refers to the system by which a language user can pass judgments, express feelings, and evaluate different entities through it. It can be eithrt positive or negative. It has three subtypes: affect, judgment, and appreciation. Affect deals with emotions and feelings, while judgment refers to one's opinion towards people's behaviors. Qasim et al. (2020) stated that judgment is the assessment, either positive or negative, of the socially assigned value of a person, objects, or state of affairs. In simple terms, judgment refers to the evaluation of people's behaviors in terms of social norms and morality (e.g., criminal, friendly, honest, loyal, and corrupt). On the other hand, appreciation refers to the assessment, either positive or negative, of various entities in terms of their worth and value (e.g., impressive, boring, effective, and beautiful).

2.3.1.2 Engagement. Engagement deals with how speakers interact of others' views. It refers to how language users open and close space for other people's views. This system also explains how people position themselves in relation to others' voices, either by endorsing or disclaiming their beliefs. In simple terms, engagement is the speaker's alignment or misalignment with others' views. It has two subtypes: monoglossic and heteroglossic engagement. Monoglossic engagement does not consider alternative views while heteroglossic engagement acknowledges them. Heteroglossic engagement can be further divided into dialogic

contraction and dialogic expansion. Dialogic contraction closes space for others' views, whereas dialogic expansion opens space for others' voices and perspectives.

2.3.1.3 Graduation. The graduation system within appraisal framework refers to the intensity and degree of evaluation. It has two subtypes:force and focus. Force refers to the strength and intensity of the expression. It includes intensifiers such as slightly, utterly, very, and extremely. On the other hand, focus deals with the softening and sharpening of the expression.

Figure 1

Hierarchy of Martin and White's Appraisal Theory
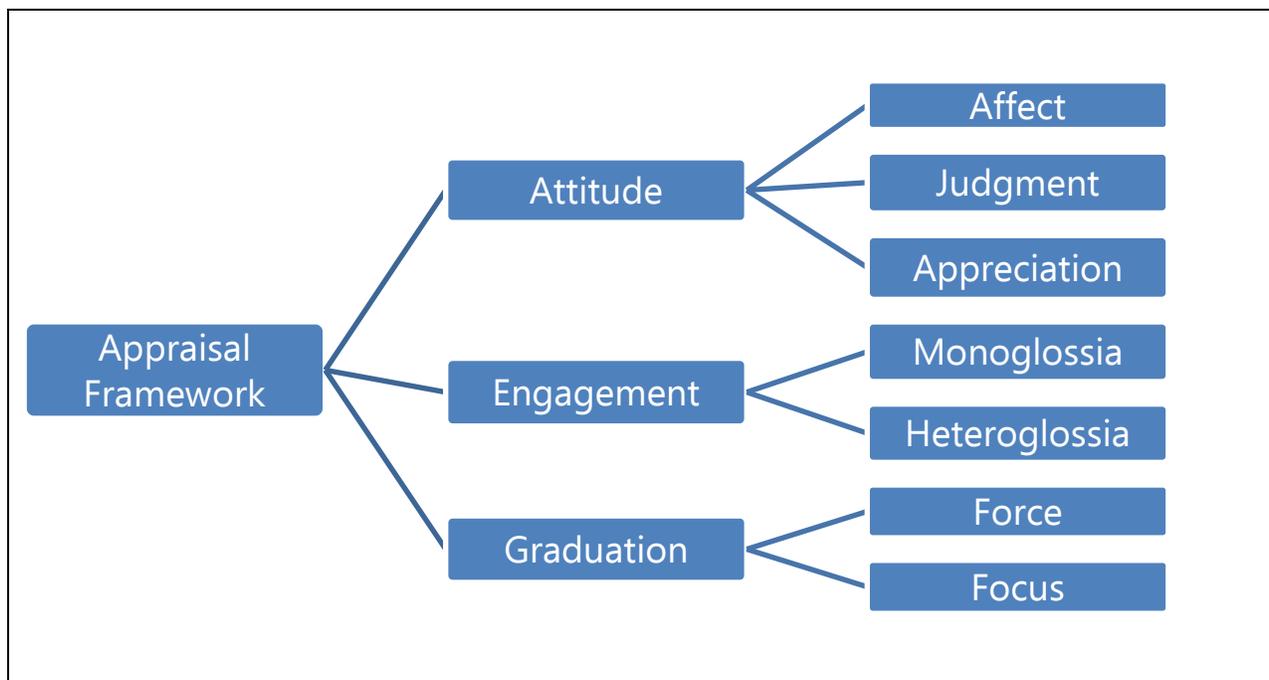
2.4   Past Studies

Many researchers have conducted different studies based on Appraisal Theory in political discourse. Some studies in this field are reviewed and discussed below:

Siddiq et al. (2025) analyzed the role of evaluative language features in the editorials of Pakistani newspapers during the general elections of 2024. In this study, 20 editorials were taken from four Pakistani newspapers, namely *The NEWS*, *The Nation*, *The Daily Times*, and *DAWN*. These editorials were analyzed using Martin and White's Appraisal Framework (2005), under the broader umbrella of Fairclough's 3D Model of CDA. The findings of the study revealed that various evaluative tools were employed in the editorials to shape public opinion during the elections. Some newspapers used negative evaluative tools to criticize the electoral system, while others employed positive evaluative tools to support the government and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

Risdianto et al. (2024) conducted a research study on Indonesia's national online newspapers and analyzed the evaluative language they used regarding the shifting of the Indonesian capital city. The study also critically analyzed how these newspapers construct ideologies and shape public opinion concerning the relocation of the Indonesian capital. The study adopted Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as a tool for discourse analysis and used

Martin and White's Appraisal Framework to analyze the evaluative tools present in the selected newspapers. After the analysis, the researchers found more instances of positive attitudes than any other evaluative tool across all newspapers. This revealed that all newspapers aligned with the government and promoted its narrative regarding the capital city's relocation.

Aljuraywi and Alyousef (2022) conducted a study on Donald Trump and Joe Biden's political interviews and analyzed attitudinal realizations using Martin and White's Appraisal Framework (2005). In this study, the researchers analyzed four interviews—two each of Donald Trump and Joe Biden—on the program "60 Minutes" with interviewers Leslie Stahl and Norah O'Donnell, respectively, during the 2020 U.S. elections. The study adopted a mixed-method design, calculating the frequencies of attitudinal realizations (i.e., affect, judgment, and appreciation) and qualitatively analyzing specific instances in the interviews. The quantitative analysis of attitudinal realizations was conducted using the UAM Corpus Tool. The key findings revealed that Trump, along with interviewer Leslie Stahl, used more "affect" strategies, whereas Biden and Norah O'Donnell employed more "appreciation" in their interviews. All participants used different attitudinal realizations to achieve specific rhetorical purposes. In this study, the researchers effectively applied the Appraisal Framework to analyze Trump and Biden's interviews, generating meaningful insights. The study demonstrates how attitudinal items can be strategically used to position oneself and others positively or negatively in interviews and everyday communication.

Asad et al. (2021) interpreted attitudinal realizations in Imran Khan's speech at the 74th UN Session as represented in Pakistani Online newspapers, namely *DAWN* and *THE NEWS*. In this study, the researchers applied Martin and White's Appraisal Framework (2005) to analyze attitudinal realizations (i.e., affect, judgment, and appreciation). According to Norman Fairclough (1995), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was combined with the Appraisal Framework to explore the context and ideologies within the speech. The findings revealed that judgment was more frequent than affect and appreciation. Negative evaluations (judgments) were frequently used, reflecting the themes of climate change, Islamophobia, and the Kashmir's conflict covered in the speech. Both newspapers gave prominent coverage to the speech. This study was delimited to the analysis of attitudinal items within the speech.

Anjum et al. (2023) analyzed Imran Khan's and Bilawal Bhutto's political interviews on *CNN* using multimodal discourse analysis. Their expressive modes of communication were interpreted based on interviews given to *CNN* in 2022 following the vote of no-confidence motion. The findings revealed that Imran Khan appeared more confident and politically mature than Bilawal Bhutto Zardari when expressing his stance on various issues.

Irfan et al. (2024) employed Fairclough's (1995) 3D model of CDA to examine persuasive language in former Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan's interviews with *FRANCE 24 English* and *CNN* in 2022. The study revealed that his interviews were rich in rhetorical and persuasive elements. Context control and mind control were the major features found in his interviews.

Krishnan et al. (2024) analyzed attitudinal subsystems under the broader umbrella of Martin and White's Appraisal Framework (2005) to investigate the performance of Malaysian fresh graduates in their job interviews. The researchers found more instances of the Appreciation subsystem. The successful fresh graduates employed positive attitudinal subsystems (Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation) in their job interviews.

Talib and Khaleel (2021) conducted a comparative study on Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's and Nawaz Sharif's speeches at the UN assembly and analyzed their diplomatic language. In this study, the researchers applied Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to analyze the selected speeches. The findings revealed that Z.A. Bhutto deviated from the norms of diplomatic language due to factors like the war at that time in his country. His tone was harsh and aggressive, and he used blunt language. On the other hand, Nawaz Sharif remained within the domain of diplomatic discourse and used straightforward language because the situation was not as alarming during his time as compared to that of Z.A. Bhutto.

Qasim et al. (2020) conducted a study on Pakistani newspaper editorials after the general elections held in 2018. This study analyzed how these editorials constructed ideologies and shaped public opinion regarding the election results. The study adopted a mixed-method approach and applied Martin and White's Appraisal Framework (2005) and transitivity systems under the broader umbrella of SFL. The findings revealed that newspaper editorials are powerful tools for constructing ideologies. Different editorials presented different ideologies by employing various grammatical and linguistic choices, appraisal resources, and transitivity systems regarding the 2018 general election results. For instance, *DAWN* was found to use suggestive and evaluative language to influence public opinion regarding election results, while the editorials of *Pakistan Today* countered the rhetoric of rigging by using such grammatical and linguistic choices. In contrast, *The Nation* represented the rhetoric of rigging and irregularities in the 2018 elections, while *The Express Tribune* claimed the fairness of the elections.

Noor et al. (2017) examined mock job interviews of future engineers in Malaysia. In this study, their communication abilities in mock job interviews were analyzed by following the framework of Verbal Impression Management, and their appraisal systems in the interviews were examined by following the Appraisal Framework. The study revealed that the candidates who used positive evaluative language and managed impressions effectively while communicating were considered successful.

Parvin (2017) analyzed three news reports on the Paris Attacks in Iran using Martin and White's Appraisal Framework along with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Specifically, attitudinal subsystems of the Appraisal Framework were applied to these news reports. The findings revealed that the first news report showed negative attitudinal realizations, the second report also contained negative attitudinal realizations, expressed them by adopting the invoked strategy; while the third news report adopted a neutral tone, consisting of equal instances of negative and positive evaluative expressions.

Pekařova (2011) conducted a study on journalistic discourse and analyzed features of evaluative language in newspaper articles. In this study, a total of 45 articles were analyzed from three British newspapers: *The Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, and *The Independent*. Martin and Rose's (2007) Appraisal Framework was applied to analyze the selected articles, although the framework of appraisal analysis given by Martin and White (2005) was also considered. The findings revealed that affect (attitude) was used less frequently across all newspapers. Graduation was the most frequently used category in all newspapers. *The Independent* used more features of the evaluative language compared to others.

2.5   Research Gap

All of the above-mentioned research studies have effectively analyzed various news reports, speeches, and interviews using different analytical frameworks. As the present study

deals with the political interviews of Pakistani politicians, previous research studies have examined political interviews of different politicians following different relevant models. However, the appraisal analysis of language in political interviews of Pakistani politicians remains unexplored. Researchers have paid limited attention to the appraisal analysis of such interviews in Pakistani political discourse. Therefore, there lies a gap in previous studies, which the present research study seeks to address. This study aims to examine the evaluative language used by Pakistani politicians in their interviews by following Martin and White's Appraisal Framework (2005).

3. Research Methodology

This section discusses the research design, source of the data, and data collection methods of the present study. It also describes the procedures followed while analysing the collected data and briefly explains the theoretical framework followed in the study.

3.1 Research Design

The present study adopts a mixed-method design. Keeping in view the research questions, this study best suits the pragmatist paradigm, as it aims to interpret the use and purpose of evaluative language qualitatively. This study also deals with the percentage frequencies of appraisal systems (i.e., attitude, engagement, and graduation), which were identified quantitatively through the UAM Corpus Tool. It also includes the comparison of the usage of evaluative language in chosen politicians' interviews. As this study is both qualitative and quantitative, a mixed-method research design is most appropriate.

3.2 Data Collection

The data for the present research study were collected as follow:

3.2.1 Source of the Data

For this study, data were collected from YouTube. Six interviews were selected – two interviews each with Imran Khan, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and Shahbaz Sharif. These politicians were chosen because they represent and lead the top political parties of Pakistan namely Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), and Pakistan Muslim League (N). Their interviews were downloaded, transcribed using an online software: www.youtube-transcript.io, and then analysed for the present study. After the transcription, each interview was carefully listened to in order to ensure its accuracy.

3.2.2 Sampling Technique

The present study employed a purposive sampling technique, as the participants were selected based on their political relevance, vote bank, and leadership status in Pakistan.

3.2.3 Sample

Two political interviews on international media of each Pakistani politician namely Imran Khan, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and Shahbaz Sharif, were downloaded from YouTube and then transcribed for further analysis. A total of six interviews were analysed in this study. Table 1 shows a detailed description of selected interviews.

Table 1

Description of Interviews with Imran Khan, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and Shahbaz Sharif

Politician	Channel	Date	No. of Words
Imran Khan	*Al Jazeera English*	August 05, 2023	3,380
	FRANCE 24 English	May 18, 2023	1,916
Bilawal Bhutto	*CNBC International Live*	February 19, 2023	3,466

	The Daily Show	March 15, 2023	4,867
Shahbaz Sharif	Bloomberg	September 23, 2022	1,549
	CGTN	November 13, 2022	2,978

3.3 Data Analysis Procedures

After transcription, the collected data were analyzed in two ways: qualitatively and quantitatively. The data were qualitatively analyzed using White and Martin's Appraisal Theory (2005) as a theoretical framework to examine the nature of various evaluative tools in the interviews. These interviews were also thematically analyzed to interpret them in different ways and understand the purpose of using appraisal systems. The interview datasets were uploaded to the UAM Corpus Tool to calculate the frequencies of appraisal systems in the interviews and also to identify what types of appraisal systems most commonly used by politicians. As the number of words was not equal in each politician's interviewers, the frequencies of appraisal systems were calculated as percentage. Figure 2 shows the scheme generated in the UAM Corpus Tool for tagging the appraisal resources in the collected interview data.

Figure 2

Final Version of the Employed Appraisal Systems Annotation Scheme
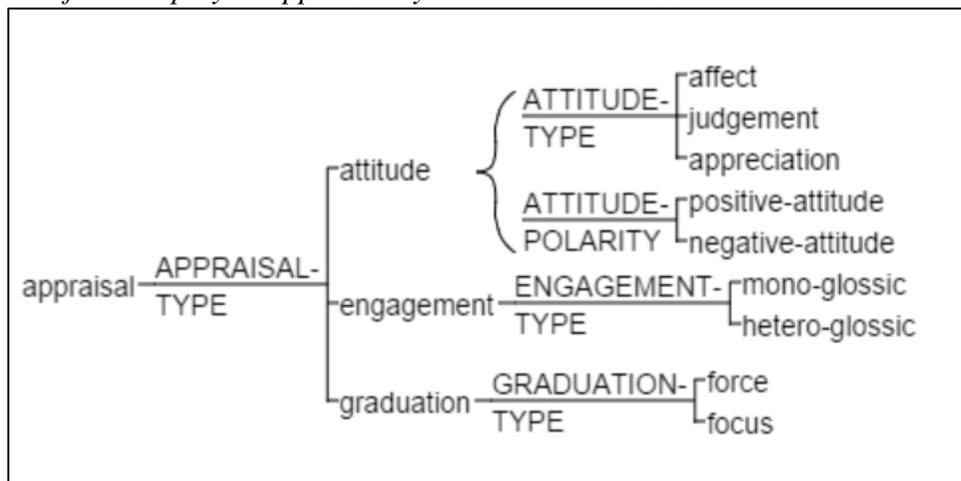
Texts of all six interviews were uploaded to the UAM Corpus tool for calculating the frequencies of appraisal resources as shown in the figure 3.

Figure 3

Visual of Uploaded Texts of All Six Interviews in UAM Corpus Tool

UAMCT 6.2: Appraisal Analysis

UAM CT · Files · Layers · Annotation · Search · Statistics · Lexis · Help

Action on selected files: Activate ▾ Go   Add Files to Corpus

Subcorp	Filename	Layers
Texts	Text-1.txt	Appraisal
Texts	Text-2.txt	Appraisal
Texts	Text-3.txt	Appraisal
Texts	Text-4.txt	Appraisal
Texts	Text-5.txt	Appraisal
Texts	Text-6.txt	Appraisal
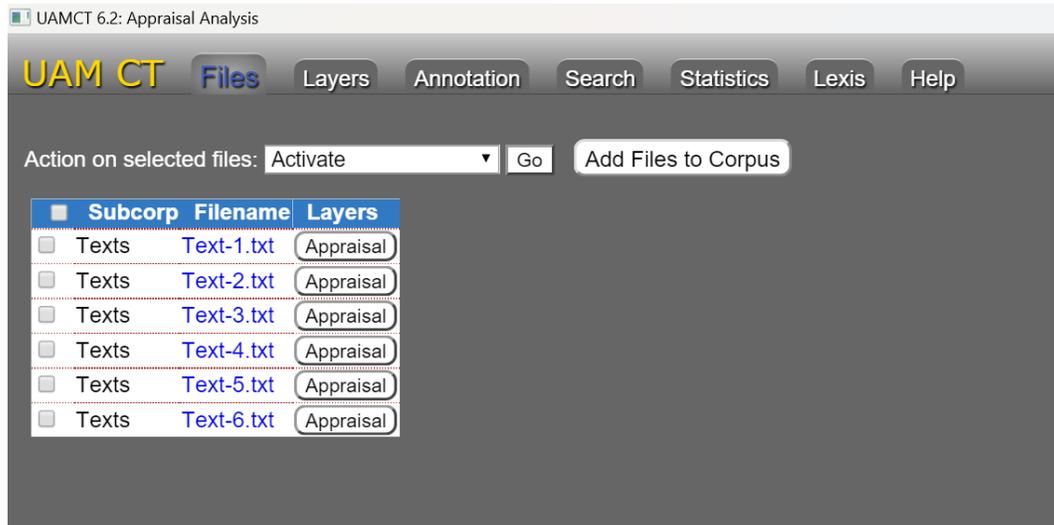
4.   Data Analysis

This section focuses on the analysis of collected data. Data collection methods, sampling technique, and theoretical framework have been discussed in the Section 3 of Research Methodology. The analysis of collected is presented in three separate sections: First section deals with the analysis of Imran Khan's interviews, second and third section deal with the analysis of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Shahbaz Sharif's interviews respectively.

4.1   Imran Khan's Interviews

When the transcript of Imran Khan's interview on *Al Jazeera English* was uploaded to the UAM Corpus tool, the following frequencies of different appraisal resources were identified.

Table 2

Appraisal Resources in the Interview with Imran Khan on Al Jazeera English

Appraisal Resources	Frequency	Percentage
Attitude	76	38.38%
Engagement	64	32.32%
Graduation	58	29.29%
Attitude Polarity		
Positive Attitude	17	22.36%
Negative Attitude	59	77.63%

Table 2 shows that Imran Khan employed more attitudinal resources in his interview than engagement and graduation resources. Among attitudinal resources, Imran Khan used more negative attitudes (77.63%) than positive attitudes (22.36%).

Table 3

Types of Appraisal Resources in the Interview with Imran Khan on Al Jazeera English

Appraisal Resources	Types	Frequency	Percentage
Attitude	Affect	13	17.10%
	Judgment	38	50%
	Appreciation	25	32.89%
Engagement	Monoglossia	30	46.87%
	Heteroglossia	34	53.12%
	Force	51	87.93%

Graduation	Focus	07	12.06%

Table 3 shows that among attitudinal resources, Imran Khan employed more judgmental resources (50%). He opened space for multiple views by employing heteroglossia (53.12%). Different types of appraisal resources in Imran Khan's interview are as follow:

(1) "Sadly 25 people died" [Attitude: Affect]. (Imran Khan)

(2) "They are actually dismantling democracy" [Attitude: Judgment]. (Imran Khan)

(3) "It was one of the best performances in two decades of any government" [Attitude: Appreciation]. (Imran Khan)

(4) "The PDM and the establishment they are petrified of Elections" [Engagement: Monoglossia]. (Imran Khan)

(5) "If you look at the polls ratings, the surveys, PTI is 70% popular now" [Engagement: Heteroglossia]. (Imran Khan)

(6) "Up to 600 people who got injured" [Graduation: Force]. (Imran Khan)

(7) "Something floating out on the social media" [Graduation: Focus]. (Imran Khan)

When the transcript of Imran Khan's interview on *FRANCE 24 English* was uploaded to the UAM Corpus tool, the following frequencies of different appraisal resources were identified.

Table 4

Appraisal Resources in the Interview with Imran Khan on FRANCE 24 English

Appraisal Resources	Frequency	Percentage
Attitude	89	45.87%
Engagement	68	35.05%
Graduation	37	19.07%
Attitude Polarity		
Positive Attitude	42	47.19%
Negative Attitude	47	52.80%

Table 4 shows that Imran Khan employed more attitudinal resources in his interview than engagement and graduation resources. Among attitudinal resources, Imran Khan used more negative attitudes (52.80%) than positive attitudes (47.19%).

Table 5

Types of Appraisal Resources in the Interview with Imran Khan on FRANCE 24 English

Appraisal Resources	Types	Frequency	Percentage
	Affect	25	28.08%
Attitude	Judgment	36	40.44%
	Appreciation	28	31.46%
	Monoglossia	38	55.88%
Engagement	Heteroglossia	30	44.11%
	Force	28	75.67%
Graduation	Focus	9	24.32%

Table 5 shows that among attitudinal resources, Imran Khan again employed more judgmental resources (40.44%). He closed space for multiple views by employing monoglossia (55.88%). Different types of appraisal resources in Imran Khan's interview are as follow:

(8) "We want" [Attitude: Affect]. (Imran Khan)

(9) "What I am saying is right" [Attitude: Judgment]. (Imran Khan)

(10) "Our best investigative journalist" [Attitude: Appreciation]. (Imran Khan)

(11) "I do think that they could try again" [Engagement: Monoglossia]. (Imran Khan)

(12) "People do not want these criminals" [Engagement: Heteroglossia]. (Imran Khan)

(13) "Really can't put wait" [Graduation: Force]. (Imran Khan)

(14) "Actually was assassinated" [Graduation: Focus]. (Imran Khan)

4.2   Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's Interviews

When the transcript of Bilawal Bhutto's interview on *CNBC International Live* was uploaded to the UAM Corpus tool, the following frequencies of different appraisal resources were identified.

Table 6

Appraisal Resources in the Interview with Bilawal Bhutto on CNBC International Live

Appraisal Resources	Frequency	Percentage
Attitude	110	57.59%
Engagement	44	23.03%
Graduation	37	19.37%
Attitude Polarity		
Positive Attitude	52	47.27%
Negative Attitude	58	52.72%

Table 6 shows that Bilawal Bhutto employed more attitudinal resources in his interview than engagement and graduation resources. Among attitudinal resources, Bilawal Bhutto used more negative attitudes (52.72%) than positive attitudes (47.72%).

Table 7

Types of Appraisal Resources in the Interview with Bilawal Bhutto on CNBC International Live

Appraisal Resources	Types	Frequency	Percentage
	Affect	12	10.90%
Attitude	Judgment	35	31.81%
	Appreciation	63	57.27%
	Monoglossia	17	38.63%
Engagement	Heteroglossia	27	61.36%
	Force	31	83.78%
Graduation	Focus	6	16.21%

Table 7 shows that among attitudinal resources, Bilawal Bhutto employed more appreciation resources (57.27%). He opened space for multiple views by employing heteroglossia (61.36%). Different types of appraisal resources in Bilawal Bhutto's interview are as follow:

(15) "I hope" [Attitude: Affect]. (Bilawal Bhutto)

(16) "Police were successful" [Attitude: Judgment]. (Bilawal Bhutto)

(17) "Most realistic practical and perhaps optimistic scenario" [Attitude: Appreciation]. (Bilawal Bhutto)

(18) "We're still working out our plans" [Engagement: Monoglossia]. (Bilawal Bhutto)

(19) "Surely all democrats in Pakistan should welcome that…" [Engagement: Heteroglossia]. (Bilawal Bhutto)

(20) "More than nine billion" [Graduation: Force]. (Bilawal Bhutto)

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265

JOURNAL OF APPLIED
LINGUISTICS AND
TESOL
JALT

JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL (JALT)
Vol.8.No.2 2025

(21) "First time the institution of parliament is constitutionally and democratically removed a prime minister" [Graduation: Focus]. (Bilawal Bhutto)

When the transcript of Bilawal Bhutto's interview on *The Daily Show* was uploaded to the UAM Corpus tool, the following frequencies of different appraisal resources were identified.

Table 8

Appraisal Resources in Interview with Bilawal Bhutto on the The Daily Show

Appraisal Resources	Frequency	Percentage
Attitude	251	37.54%
Engagement	198	29.64%
Graduation	219	32.78%
Attitude Polarity		
Positive Attitude	84	33.46%
Negative Attitude	167	66.53%

Table 8 shows that Bilawal Bhutto employed more attitudinal resources in his interview than engagement and graduation resources. Among attitudinal resources, Bilawal Bhutto used more negative attitudes (66.53%) than positive attitudes (33.46%).

Table 9

Types of Appraisal Resources in the Interview with Bilawal Bhutto on The Daily Show

Appraisal Resources	Types	Frequency	Percentage
	Affect	34	13.54%
Attitude	Judgment	46	18.32%
	Appreciation	171	68.12%
	Monoglossia	106	53.53%
Engagement	Heteroglossia	92	46.46%
	Force	178	81.27%
Graduation	Focus	41	18.72%

Table 9 shows that among attitudinal resources, Bilawal Bhutto employed more appreciation resources (68.12%). He closed space for multiple views by employing monoglossia (52.53%). Different types of appraisal resources in Bilawal Bhutto's interview are as follow:

(22) "It devastates me" [Attitude: Affect]. (Bilawal Bhutto)

(23) "Violated court orders time and time again" [Attitude: Judgment]. (Bilawal Bhutto)

(24) "Peaceful transfer of power" [Attitude: Appreciation]. (Bilawal Bhutto)

(25) "60% of our population is beneath the age of 35." [Engagement: Monoglossia]. (Bilawal Bhutto)

(26) "The courts are saying that..." [Engagement: Heteroglossia]. (Bilawal Bhutto)

(27) "Biggest climate catastrophe" [Graduation: Force]. (Bilawal Bhutto)

(28) "Actually a socialist political party" [Graduation: Focus]. (Bilawal Bhutto)

4.3   Shahbaz Sharif's Interviews

When the transcript of Shahbaz Sharif's interview on *Bloomberg* was uploaded to the UAM Corpus tool, the following frequencies of different appraisal resources were identified.

Table 10

Appraisal Resources in the Interview with Shahbaz Sharif on Bloomberg

Appraisal Resources	Frequency	Percentage
Attitude	68	38.20%

Engagement	58	32.58%
Graduation	52	29.21%
Attitude Polarity		
Positive Attitude	21	30.88%
Negative Attitude	47	69.11 %

Table 10 shows that Shahbaz Sharif employed more attitudinal resources in his interview than engagement and graduation resources. Among attitudinal resources, Shahbaz Sharif used more negative attitudes (69.11%) than positive attitudes (30.88%).

Table 11

Types of Appraisal Resources in the Interview with Shahbaz Sharif on Bloomberg

Appraisal Resources	Types	Frequency	Percentage
	Affect	26	38.23%
Attitude	Judgment	11	16.17%
	Appreciation	31	45.58%
	Monoglossia	28	48.27%
Engagement	Heteroglossia	30	51.72%
	Force	46	88.46%
Graduation	Focus	06	11.53%

Table 11 shows that among attitudinal resources, Shahbaz Sharif employed more appreciation resources (45.58%). He opened space for multiple views by employing heterooglossia (51.72%). Different types of appraisal resources in Shahbaz Sharif's interview are as follow:

(29) "Very happy to meet XI Jiang" [Attitude: Affect]. (Shahbaz Sharif)

(30) "He (Xi Jinping) is a man who has been you know dedicating his life for human interesting cause" [Attitude: Judgment]. (Shahbaz Sharif)

(31) "We are rated as one of the most vulnerable countries" [Attitude: Appreciation]. (Shahbaz Sharif)

(32) "I'm here to tell the world what happened with us..." [Engagement: Monoglossia]. (Shahbaz Sharif)

(33) "Leaders have touched the subject in their speeches" [Engagement: Heteroglossia]. (Shahbaz Sharif)

(34) "Less than one percent" [Graduation: Force]. (Shahbaz Sharif)

(35) "To be very exact" [Graduation: Focus]. (Shahbaz Sharif)

When the transcript of Shahbaz Sharif's Interview on *CGTN* was uploaded to the UAM Corpus tool, the following frequencies of different appraisal resources were identified.

Table 12

Appraisal Resources in the Interview with Shahbaz Sharif on CGTN

Appraisal Resources	Frequency	Percentage
Attitude	162	39.22%
Engagement	136	32.92%
Graduation	115	27.84%
Attitude Polarity		
Positive Attitude	144	88.88%
Negative Attitude	18	11.11%

Table 12 shows that Shahbaz Sharif employed more attitudinal resources in his interview than engagement and graduation resources. Among attitudinal resources, Shahbaz Sharif used more positive attitudes (88.88%) than negative attitudes (11.11%).

Table 13

Types of Appraisal Resources in the Interview with Shahbaz Sharif on CGTN

Appraisal Resources	Types	Frequency	Percentage
	Affect	34	20.98%
Attitude	Judgment	36	22.22%
	Appreciation	92	55.55%
Engagement	Monoglossia	56	41.17%
	Heteroglossia	80	58.82%
Graduation	Force	98	85.81%
	Focus	17	14.78%

Table 13 shows that among attitudinal resources, Shahbaz Sharif employed more appreciation resources (55.82%). He opened space for multiple views by employing heteroglossia (58.82%). Different types of appraisal resources in Shahbaz Sharif's interview are as follow:

(36) "This is like a family… if a part of the body aches the whole body aches…" [Attitude: Affect]. (Shahbaz Sharif)

(37) "President Xi Jinping… is a very Visionary leader… man of great wisdom…" [Attitude: Judgment]. (Shahbaz Sharif)

(38) "This friendship is unbreachable…" [Attitude: Appreciation]. (Shahbaz Sharif)

(39) "China has always been a very prosperous and rich country…" [Engagement: Monoglossia]. (Shahbaz Sharif)

(40) "Some say China is a threat…" [Engagement: Heteroglossia]. (Shahbaz Sharif)

(41) "Back-to-back meetings…" [Graduation: Force]. (Shahbaz Sharif)

(42) "Real source of all-weather fraternity…" [Graduation: Focus]. (Shahbaz Sharif)

5.   Findings and Discussion

The collected data was analyzed using Martin and White's Appraisal Framework in the previous section of data analysis. This section presents the findings obtained from the analysis of present study and compares them with the results of previous studies conducted on various interviews and speeches.

5.1   Findings

Keeping in view the research questions of the present study, the findings are presented in three separate sections.

5.1.1   *Identified Appraisal Resources in Selected Political Interviews*

The data analysis revealed that key Pakistani political figures—Imran Khan, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and Shahbaz Sharif—used evaluative language primarily in their political interviews given to the international media. All major types of appraisal resources such as attitude, engagement, and graduation were used in their interviews along with their subcategories—affect, judgment, appreciation, monoglossia, heteroglossia, force, and focus.

5.1.2   *A Comparative Analysis of Appraisal Resource Usage*

To compare the usage of appraisal resources in the evaluative language in the political interviews with key Pakistani political figures, the analysis of the data revealed that Imran Khan employed more negative attitudinal resources in both of his interviews as compared to Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Shahbaz Sharif. He used 22.36% positive and 77.6% negative attitudinal resources in his interviews on *Al Jazeera English* and 47.19% positive and 52.80% negative attitudinal resources in his interviews on *FRANCE 24 English*. Among the subtypes of attitudinal resources, frequencies of judgment were found more in number than affect and appreciation in both of Imran Khan's interviews which were 50% and 40.44%, respectively. On the other hand, among the subtypes of attitudinal resources, frequencies of appreciation were found more in number than affect and judgment in Bilawal Bhutto and Shahbaz Sharif's interviews. Bilawal Bhutto employed more appreciation resources in his interviews—57.27% and 68.12%—than Shahbaz Sharif, whose were 40% and 55.55% in both of his interviews, respectively. Among the subtypes of attitudinal resources, affect was frequently used in both of Shahbaz Sharif's interviews which was 38.23% in one interview and 20.98% in another.

It was found that Imran Khan employed more engagement resources as compared to Bilawal Bhutto and Shahbaz Sharif, and there was less of a difference between the frequencies of monoglossic and heteroglossic resources in both of his interviews. In one interview (on *Al Jazeera English*), he opened space for other views and voices as heteroglossic resources were 53.12% while monoglossic resources were 46.87%. In his second interview (on *FRANCE 24 English*), he closed space for other views and voices as monoglossic resources were 55.88% while heteroglossic resources were 44.11%. Similarly, Bilawal Bhutto also opened space for other voices in one interview (on *CNBC*) while closing it in his second interview on *The Daily Show*. On the other hand, Shahbaz Sharif was found opening space for other views and voices in both of his interviews.

Moreover, it was also found that the frequencies of graduation resources were higher in both interviews with Shahbaz Sharif than in those with Imran Khan and Bilawal Bhutto. The frequencies of the graduation subtype "force" were also found to be higher in number in his interviews, at 88.46% and 85.81%, respectively.

5.1.3   The Purpose of Using Appraisal Resource in Political Interviews

As the frequencies and usage of appraisal resources of key Pakistani political figures were compared in the previous section, it was observed that Imran Khan employed more negative attitudinal resources as compared to others. Among those negative attitudinal resources, most of them were negative judgmental appraisal resources because Imran Khan was removed from his office in April 2022, which is why he evaluated his opponents negatively and held them responsible for the downfall of Pakistan. On the other hand, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Shahbaz Sharif employed more appreciation resources (a subcategory of attitude) because they were in power at that time. They appreciated themselves for lifting Pakistan out of the crisis and others for helping Pakistan during crucial times. Bilawal Bhutto was found to use more appreciation resources than Shahbaz Sharif because he was the Foreign Minister at that time and he tried to promote the country's image internationally, to build diplomatic goodwill, and to influence international stakeholders. Shahbaz Sharif employed the attitudinal subtype "affect" in greater numbers in both of his interviews as compared to Imran Khan and Bilawal Bhutto. He adopted this subtype of attitudinal resources to promote his ideology of bringing back Pakistan

economically on track. Through these resources, he expressed emotional views towards the impact of the flood and hopes for a strong friendship with China.

Shahbaz Sharif employed heteroglossia and opened space for multiple voices and views in both of his interviews in order to make himself more democratic and in touch with the public. He used it for strategic purposes to manage controversy without directly supporting or endorsing it. On the other hand, Imran Khan and Bilawal Bhutto employed this strategy only in one of their interviews. Imran Khan and Bilawal Bhutto employed monoglossia in their interviews on *FRANCE 24 English* and *The Daily Show,* respectively, where they closed space for other views and voices. They employed this strategy in order to show themselves as assertive and decisive. Imran Khan employed it to mobilize his supporters and to control the narrative strongly. The use of heteroglossia can raise questions about politicians' real stance because public supports those leaders who can reflect their own ideas. On the other hand, monoglossia can strengthen authority and help in building public trust.

It was also observed that Shahbaz Sharif employed the graduation subtype "force" mostly in both of his interviews during his premiership. He used it to emphasize the urgency of international aid for flood victims in Pakistan and the importance of Pak-China friendship. He employed it to make his interviews more compelling and emotionally engaging. Supporters of such politicians feel that the person cares about their public.

5.2   Discussion

This section interprets and compares the findings of the present study with the results of previous studies conducted on different interviews and speeches to check whether the findings of the present study support the results of previous studies or challenge them.

The findings of the present study revealed that all major appraisal resources such as attitude, engagement, and graduation were used in the interviews with Imran Khan, Bilawal Bhutto, and Shahbaz Sharif along with their subcategories—affect, judgment, appreciation, monoglossia, heteroglossia, force, and focus. The crux of the study was that Imran Khan leaned heavily on negative judgment resources, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari focused on appreciation to validate government efforts, and Shahbaz Sharif emphasized affect and force to project empathy and urgency of international aid for flood victims in Pakistan.

The results of the present research study align with the study of Aljuraywi and Alyousef (2022) conducted on Donald Trump and Joe Biden's political interviews where Trump employed negative judgments to criticize the U.S. media and his opponents just as Imran Khan used negative judgment resources for discrediting and criticizing his opponents, military establishment, and judiciary, and held them responsible for the downfall of Pakistan. The present study revealed that Bilawal Bhutto employed more appreciation resources to appreciate the coalition government for lifting Pakistan out of the crisis and others for helping them in crucial times, just like Trump, who employed more positive resources of appreciation to appreciate the outcomes of his political efforts concerning increasing employment rates. Shahbaz Sharif was found to be using more resources of affect, just like Trump and Biden, who used these resources to promote their ideology of "Making America Great Again" and to express emotions toward freedom of speech, equality, and minority rights, respectively. The findings of the present study support all the previous studies conducted on various interviews, speeches, and news editorials, such as Qasim et al. (2020), Talib and Khaleel (2021), Krishnan et al. (2024), Risdianto et al. (2024), and Siddiq et al. (2025). The present study does not challenge any previous studies.

6.   Conclusion

The present study analyzed evaluative language in the political interviews of key Pakistani political figures by following Martin and White's Appraisal Framework (2005). Politicians use evaluative language in their political interviews and speeches as a powerful tool to express their attitudes, appreciations, criticisms, approvals, disapprovals, ideologies, emotions, and judgments toward events, situations, and people in political discourse. The present study aimed to identify different evaluative tools and their purposeful use in political interviews of mran Khan, Bilawal Bhutto, and Shahbaz Sharif—key Pakistani politicians. The findings revealed that all major appraisal resources—attitude, engagement, and graduation—were used in their interviews along with their subcategories such as affect, judgment, appreciation, monoglossia, heteroglossia, force, and focus. The study concluded that Imran Khan employed more negative attitudinal resources compared to the others. He evaluated their opponents negatively and held them responsible Pakistan's downfall. Bilawal Bhutto was found to use more appreciation resources because he was the Foreign Minister, and he praised the coalition government for lifting Pakistan out of the crises and others for helping Pakistan during crucial times. Shahbaz Sharif employed the attitudinal subtype "affect" more frequently to promote his ideology of bringing Pakistan back on an economic track. He also employed heteroglossia and opened spaces for multiple voices and views, whereas Imran Khan and Bilawal Bhutto employed monoglossia in their interviews, closing off space for other views and voices. It was also observed that Shahbaz Sharif predominantly employed the force subtype of graduation in both of his interviews during his premiership.

To conclude, politicians use evaluative language as a powerful tool in their political interviews and speeches to position themselves positively, criticize, and discred opponents in political discourse. By employing evaluative language, they influence public opinion and promote their political agendas.

6.1   Recommendations and Suggestions for Future Research

Many ways are open to conduct future studies on political interviews and speeches. As the present study investigated major appraisal systems along with their subcategories in Imran Khan's, Bilawal Bhutto's, and Shahbaz Sharif's political interviews, researchers can investigate further subtypes of the subcategories, such as subtypes of affect, judgment, appreciation, monoglossic, heteroglossic, force, focus, and so on, in their interviews. Future studies can apply the appraisal framework in the political realm, focusing on the aspects such as power and gender. Researchers can also conduct comparative studies on the interviews and speeches of other Pakistani political figures.

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