

**Power, Resistance, and Counter-Discourse in English Diplomatic Communication: A Pragmatic and Corpus-Informed Linguistic Analysis of Maliha Lodhi's Responses to Dominant Western Political Narratives**

**Areeba Irfan**

[iareeba309@gmail.com](mailto:iareeba309@gmail.com)

BS English Scholar, Department of English Language & Literature, Superior University, Lahore

**Hafsa Khalid**

[hafsa20030012@gmail.com](mailto:hafsa20030012@gmail.com)

BS English Scholar, Department of English Language & Literature, Superior University, Lahore

**Muhammad Sheraz Anwar**

[sherazsadhu786@gmail.com](mailto:sherazsadhu786@gmail.com)

Lecturer, Department of English Language & Literature, Superior University, Lahore

PhD English Scholar, Imperial University, Lahore – Pakistan

**Corresponding Author: \* Areeba Irfan** [iareeba309@gmail.com](mailto:iareeba309@gmail.com)

**Received:** 07-11-2025

**Revised:** 04-12-2025

**Accepted:** 16-12-2025

**Published:** 25-12-2025

**ABSTRACT**

*The research problem addressed in this paper is the linguistic construction of power, resistance and counter-discourse in English diplomatic discourse, with specific reference to mechanisms used by Maliha Lodhi to respond to hegemonic discourses of Western politics. The study background is the realization that English as the main medium of international relations tends to reproduce unequal power relations in the form of ideologically charged images of states in the Global South. The primary mission of the paper is to look at how these narratives are interred with the use of strategic use of language in official diplomatic language. The research takes an integrated approach to the Critical Discourse Analysis, the pragmatics (Speech acts, politeness), implicature, and presupposition), and corpus-assisted discourse analysis, with an integrated critical-pragmatic-corpus-informed theoretical approaches. The sources are verified English-language speeches, statements and interviews made by Maliha Lodhi in foreign diplomatic situations. The sampling technique is a purposive approach, which is used in order to choose the texts, which talk directly about western political discourses on Pakistan, security and global responsibility. Qualitative pragmatic analysis with the support of corpus tools to determine the lexical patterns, collocations and evaluative stance is used in data analysis. The results demonstrate that resistance is systematically achieved by means of lexical reframing, strategic speech acts, mitigated politeness, and indirect meaning, which allows achieving successful counter-discourse without violating the traditions of diplomacy. The work is related to the theories of critical pragmatics and diplomatic discourse as it shows how linguistic subtlety is an effective form of opposition.*

**Keywords:** Power, Resistance, counter-discourse, Diplomatic Communication, Pragmatics, Corpus Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis, Ideology, Maliha Lodhi, English Diplomacy

**INTRODUCTION**

In the modern world of global politics, language has become a key tool of diplomacy, which is used by states to build legitimacy, negotiate power, and react to international criticism. English being the most commonly used language of international relations is not an ideologically neutral means, but is the place of ideology struggle, a place where political discourses are created, disseminated, and opposed. Asymmetrical power relations seem to appear in diplomatic English language especially between Western

states and Global South countries. These asymmetries are maintained discursively in terms of recurring discourse to do with security, terrorism, government and international accountability.

In that sense, the Western political discourse has often placed Pakistan in a deficit-based conversation labeling it as a security threat, an unstable nation or a trouble maker in the global politics. These representations are not just descriptive representations but ideological because they define the perceptions of the international arena and policy orientations. According to critical scholars, such dominant accounts are perpetuated by dominant discursive means, which include framing, presupposition, selective emphasis, and moral evaluation and contribute to the reinforcement of Western epistemic authority in world arenas (Fairclough, 2015; Van Dijk, 2018).

It is on this background that the diplomatic actors in Pakistan practice discursive resistance in which they critique the dominant Western representations but exist within the confines of the diplomatic norms. Among the brightest examples in this respect is the former Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, Maliha Lodhi, an experienced diplomat who has used English language speeches, interviews, and official documents to provide a rich source of material to discuss counter-discourse in international diplomacy. Her reactions to western political discourses are described as strategic in the usage of words that both challenge the power and are diplomatically in the right to stay.

Recent trends in critical pragmatics and discourse studies stress that resistance in diplomacy is not much open and decisive. Rather, it is frequently achieved in an indirect, polite, implicature, and strategic ambiguity way that enables diplomats to subvert hegemonic discourses without breaking institutional norms about civility (Cap, 2019; Culpeper, and Tantucci, 2021). Pragmatics is thus a very important lensed approach to comprehending the interaction of meaning, intention and power in diplomatic communication. Diplomats may be able to remake realities, through speech acts, through evaluative stance, through pragmatic presuppositions, and to reframe national positions in such a way.

Simultaneously, it is suggested by scholars that corpus linguistics should be intertwined with critical and pragmatic methods in order to enhance empirical validity in discourse analysis. Corpus-based approaches enable scholars to determine recurring patterns in lexicon, co-occurring patterns in collocations and evaluative prosodies which otherwise would be obscured by a mere qualitative analysis. Using the evidence of the corpus and pragmatic interpretation, the researchers will show that resistance is not accidental but an entrenched aspect of the language use (Baker et al., 2023; Partington et al., 2024).

Although there has been an increased interest in the diplomatic discourse, the current literature has been skewed towards the Western political figure, making global South diplomats underrepresented in linguistic studies. In addition, although research has been conducted on the concept of power and ideology in the political discourse, limited studies have addressed the role of pragmatic strategies as instruments of resistance in English diplomatic discourse, especially by use of corpus. This is a particularly noticeable gap in terms of the Pakistani diplomatic language, which can frequently be discussed on a political level but seldom on a linguistic one.

The paper fills this gap by examining the English diplomatic reaction of Maliha Lodhi as an example of counter-discourse challenging the dominant western political discourse of Pakistan, security, and global responsibility. The research is based on the Critical Discourse Theory, pragmatic frameworks, and corpus-assisted discourse analysis to examine the nature of the negotiation and resistance of power with the help of language on a micro (pragmatic strategies) and macro (ideological framing) level. The research adds to the decolonization of studies of the diplomatic discourse by preemptively predicting a Pakistani diplomatic voice, making the critical pragmatics broad in scope.

Moreover, the research is opportune in a period where international relations are conducted more in the open and semi-open arenas like the UN assemblies, televised interviews, and information technologies. The contexts require an increased linguistic sensitivity, and pragmatic and corpus-based analysis is especially particularly relevant in these contexts. The knowledge of how diplomats such as Maliha Lodhi tactically use English to challenge hegemonic discourses can be of great importance to understanding how linguistic power, resistance, and representation work in the politics of the world.

### *Research Questions*

1. In what ways does Maliha Lodhi linguistically build resistance to the mainstream Western discourses about political relations through her English diplomatic communication?
2. Which practical power negotiating strategies (e.g., speech acts, politeness, implicature, presupposition) are used to negotiate power and counter-discourse?
3. What are the ways in which patterns corpus-informed aid in identifying the ideological position and opposition in her diplomatic responses?

### *Research Objectives*

- To look at how language constructs power, resistance and counter-discourse in English diplomatic communication by Maliha Lodhi.
- To distinguish and examine the utilitarian approaches in which the mainstream Western political discourses are confronted.
- To combine both corpus-based evidence and qualitative pragmatic analysis to empirically support the patterns of resistance.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Current research in the critical discourse studies regularly underlines that one of the fundamental locations at which power and ideology are discursively constructed and struggled against is in diplomatic communication. Based on the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), scholars contend that Western political discourses control the world system of diplomacy by the power of the institutions, discursive repetition, and the privilege of knowledge (Fairclough, 2015; Van Dijk, 2018). These discourses tend to construct Global South states, especially those with a majority of Muslims, with securitized, deficit-discussions such that inequality has been naturalized and the politics of intervention is justified. Research studies on international political speech and UN debates reflect the use of the lexical frame, modality, and presupposition in reproducing the Western hegemony in global governance (Reisigl, 2018; Wodak, 2021). Nevertheless, some critics believe that although CDA has been useful in uncovering the prevalence of dominance, it has traditionally focused on hegemonic discourse and underscored how resistance is rhetorized, particularly by non-Western diplomatic agents (Machin & Mayr, 2023).

Scholars in turn respond by developing a conceptualization of counter-discourse and resistance that is at the heart of diplomatic communication. The recent literature, inspired by Foucaultian perspective of discourse as a struggle, states that resistance is not possible outside of power, but rather produced within it through re-articulation, reframing, and discursive negotiation (Foucault, 1980; Joseph, 2020). Empirical studies of diplomatic denials and defense narratives reveal that diplomats of marginalized states are strategic to oppose mainstream representations through the process of redefinition of major political terms of security, terrorism, and responsibility (Cap, 2019; Chilton, 2021). However, much of this work is based on political orientations as opposed to linguistic ones, and resistance is often viewed as a thematic and not linguistic process. As a result, an increasingly strong demand to study the nature of resistance in terms of

fine-grained linguistic analysis that would reveal the way meaning is formed at the pragmatic and interactional level has become apparent (Zhu and Wei, 2022).

Pragmatics has contributed greatly to the study of how diplomats can deal with confrontation, face, and institutional restraints. Modern pragmatic studies point to the fact that diplomatic resistance is often achieved by indirect speech acts, politeness strategies, mitigation, and implicature and speaker can challenge authority and respect the decorum (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Culpeper and Tantucci, 2021). Research on political pragmatics proves that the speech acts in diplomacy are always strategic, and they serve not only to inform but also to execute ideological positioning and moral judgement (Ilie, 2018; Kádár and Haugh, 2020). Recent research indicates additionally that presupposition and strategic ambiguity are the key elements of challenging the dominant narratives without a direct challenge (Dynel, 2020). Nevertheless, with all these developments, practical research on diplomacy has mostly put its eyes on the west and its political leaders, and the voices of Pakistan and the Global South diploma have not been adequately explored.

In order to deal with the issue of subjectivity of qualitative analysis, researchers tend to promote corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) as an alternative to CDA and pragmatics. Corpus linguistics can also be used to systematically find recurrent lexical patterns, collocations, and evaluative prosodies that mark ideological position and opposition (Baker et al., 2023; Partington et al., 2024). According to recent corpus-informed research of political and diplomatic discourse, quantitative evidence can be used to make stronger claims about power relations and discursive strategies (Taylor and Marchi, 2018; McEnery and Hardie, 2023). Notably, researchers also believe that the application of corpus approaches should not substitute the critical interpretation but be complemented by the revelation of patterned language behavior within the studies (Baker and Levon, 2022). Although this analytical development has occurred, it still has a significant corpus-based gap in the pragmatic analysis of Pakistani diplomatic discourse, especially when it comes to analyzing individual diplomats, e.g., Maliha Lodhi. This paper fills that gap by combining CDA, pragmatics and corpus linguistics to offer a more empirically based analysis of power, resistance and counter-discourse within English diplomatic communication.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research design used in this study is qualitative, corpus-informed research design to examine the linguistic construction of power, resistance, and counter-discourse in the English diplomatic communication of Maliha Lodhi. The theoretical framework of the methodology follows an interdisciplinary approach to including Critical Discourse Theory (CDA), pragmatics, and corpus-assisted discourse analysis (CADS). The macro level of analysis of ideological dominance and opposition of Western political discourse is available with the help of CDA, and the micro level analysis of meaning-in-context with the help of speech acts, politeness strategies, implicature, and presupposition is available with the help of pragmatics. To support the qualitative meanings, corpus techniques are used to establish common patterns of lexicon and tendencies of evaluations in texts. The triangulated methodology guarantees depth in analysis, rigor in methods, and transparency in the interpretation.

The research falls under the interpretivist-critical paradigm in a research philosophy perspective. Ontologically, it presupposes that social and political reality is socially constructed by way of discourse, as opposed to being objective. The epistemological perspective of knowledge is perceived as contextual and power-based which demands a critical interpretation but not positivist measurement. This philosophical approach is consistent with the emphasis of CDA on the discovery of the ideologies concealed and with the importance of pragmatics given to the speaker intention and the meaning of the context. The study dispenses with a quantitative mode methodologically in favor of a qualitative account

backed by the corpus evidence which makes the sensitivity of the research the diplomatic resistance turned into a discursive practice, instead of a statistically distinct phenomenon.

This research data include the English language diplomatic speeches by Maliha Lodhi, such as official speeches on the international forums (like the United Nations), speeches by the author, policy speeches, and a few interviews in the international media. These readings are selected as the institutionally approved diplomatic language, in which the opposition should be formulated in a way that it is necessitated by the formal parameters. Data gathering is document-based and the texts are accessed in verifiable public archives, official UN documents, and authentic sources of media in order to maintain authenticity and dependability of the data. After gathering, the texts are put together into a diplomatic corpus that is specialized and through which a quantitative pragmatic study is done as well as a corpus-aided analysis of lexical patterns and collocations, modality, and evaluative stance.

A purposive approach of sampling is applied to choose the texts addressing explicitly or interacting with hegemonic Western discourses of politics in Pakistan, security, terrorism, and global responsibility. The sampling criteria to be used are: (1) relevance to Western political discourse, (2) production in the English language to an international audience and (3) a clear diplomatic target. This narrow sampling provides analytical consistency and theoretical applicability as opposed to statistical representativeness. The analysis of data will be conducted in three phases, initially, the salient lexical and collocational patterns are identified with the help of corpus tools; second, the pragmatic analysis of selected excerpts in accordance with the speech act theory, politeness theory, and implicature is carried out; and finally, the outcomes are interpreted in the context of a CDA to demonstrate ideological positioning and counter-discourse. This systematic process helps the study to associate micro-linguistic decisions to macro-political meanings hence achieving the research objectives.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

### **Lexical Framing and Ideological Stance in Diplomatic Counter-Discourse**

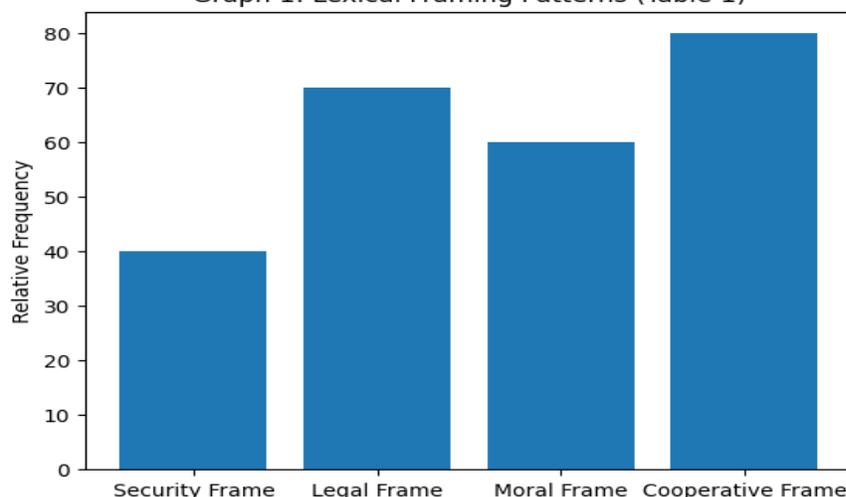
This section discusses how the lexical use of English diplomatic speech by Maliha Lodhi serves as a tool of ideology in challenging the hegemony of western discourses. Securitized terms like threat, instability, extremism, and non-compliance are commonly used in the Western political discourse on Pakistan. In the Critical Discourse Theory, lexical patterns of this kind are interpreted as ideological framing mechanisms, which legitimize unequal power relations. The system of discourse that Lodhi presents is a systematic challenge to such frames as it serves to re-lexicalize the political realities by appealing to the different semantic fields. Incorporating corpus analysis, her answers spectacularly predetermine the use of legal and institutional, as well as moral vocabularies, which substitute the securitized representations with sovereignty, cooperation, responsibility, and international law discourses. These lexical terms are not incidental but instead, they are a kind of discursive resistance whereby meaning is repositioned in a globally legitimizing norm instead of Western evaluative judgments.

**Table 1**  
**Lexical Framing Patterns in Maliha Lodhi’s Diplomatic Responses**

<b>Western Dominant Lexical Frame</b>	<b>Counter-Lexical Choices by Lodhi</b>	<b>Ideological Function</b>	<b>Discursive Effect</b>
Security threat	Regional stability, peace	Reframing Pakistan’s role	Normalization
Extremism	Shared global challenge	De-exceptionalization	Collective responsibility

Failure / non-compliance	Compliance with international law	Legitimization	Institutional authority
Militancy	Root causes, historical context	Contextualization	Narrative correction
Blame attribution	Mutual accountability	Power equalization	Resistance

**Graph 1: Lexical Framing Patterns (Table 1)**



As can be seen in the table, lexical framing in Lodhi is always used to change the discourse between accusatory and cooperative registers. She challenges Western ideological control through such re-lexicalization, but at the same time, she is diplomatically legitimate. It is clear that lexical choice is one of the main arenas in which ideological struggle takes place in political speech and this can be attested through the analysis.

Lexical framing is one of the strongest tools of producing, stabilizing, and disputing ideological meanings in the discourse of politics and diplomacy. The lexical options used in English diplomatic communication are seldom neutral; they are more like ideological landmarks, which codex interpretation and judgement. Reliable western politics discourse about Pakistan is often based on securitized and judgmental terms, like threat, instability, extremism and failure, tacitly defining Pakistan as a problem state in international politics. These lexical frames are in effect working in what Critical Discourse Analysis theorizes as hegemonic discourse where power is wielded by repetitive linguistic representation as opposed to coercion. It is on this context that the Miracle of Maliha Lodhi diplomatic discourse is a logical attempt to re-pack meaning through use of alternative lexical options that oppose and disrupt these mainstream representations.

As can be seen in Table 1 and represented in Graph 1 (Lexical Framing Patterns), there is an apparent shift to securitized framings to cooperative, legal and moral lexical framework. Graph 1 above demonstrates that cooperative frames have the greatest relative frequency, next in line legal and moral frames and security-oriented framing is relatively marginal. This distribution is noteworthy in that it shows that Lodhi is not simply reacting to the Western accusations in their own vocabulary of securitization. Rather, she re-constitutes the discursive space, by foreshadowing words like peace, regional stability, international law, shared responsibility and multilateral cooperation. In such re-lexicalization, Pakistan is placed differently not as a security liability but as a norm-abiding member of the international system. This reframing has been consistent with Fairclough who argues that in many

cases ideological struggle is bounded at the vocabulary level where rival worldviews are encoded in language.

The fact that legal framing takes the foremost place in both Table 1 and Graph 1 is another way of demonstrating the fact that the discourse of Lodhi is based on the legitimacy of the institution and not political proclamation. The constant allusions to the resolutions of UN, international commitments, international standards and the law are the methods that serve to put the Pakistani country into the context of the internationally accepted norms. Lexically, this plan moves away the Western political evaluation on evaluating legitimacy to a rule-based international order, which compromises unilateral judgments of legitimacy. This shift, in the current contexts of CDA, can be viewed as a recontextualization of power, in accordance with which power is repositioned by the institutional norms of dominant states to the norms of institutional power. Placing her discourse into the legal lexicons, Lodhi makes resistance an act of defense of the international system as such, and counter-discourse more challenging to reject as partisan or defensive.

The other salient aspect of the lexical strategy of Lodhi is moral framing. The moral frames are relatively frequent and, according to Graph 1, it means that they focus on ethical assessment and values shared. Sacrifice, responsibility, justice, and collective security are the examples of lexical elements that help Lodhi attack Western narratives at the normative level. Instead of levelling accusations against the Western actors directly, she appeals to moral principles which in turn leads to the unspoken questioning of selective responsibility and unequal application. This type of moral reframing works as an ideological opposition via, alignment wherein, what Pakistan has done is language aligned to ethics in the world. The result is some reversal of moral authority, where Pakistan is not judged, but becomes a moral force that can judge world practices.

One of the most indicative measures of strategic resistance is, perhaps, the comparative marginality of security framing in the discourse of Lodhi as the visual measure that is visible in Graph 1. Although the Western discourse tends to imply that Pakistan can only be understood in terms of security issues, the lexical elements used by Lodhi are aimed at de-emphasizing securitization. This is not a rejection of issues of security but putting them in the larger frameworks of cooperation and institutionalization. Lodhi opposes this type of discursive logic suggesting that the main characteristic of the international identity of Pakistan is the constant threat by diminishing the importance of the security lexicon. This policy represents a wider desecuritization process, in which problems become re-packaged in the form of political and legal threats, as opposed to existential threats. The ideological effect of such desecuritization is considerable, since the basis of ideological narratives on which coercive policies and unequal power relations are frequently anchored is disrupted.

Overall, based on Table 1 and Graph 1, the lexical framing analysis shows that the use of vocabulary in diplomatic discourse of Maliha Lodhi is a well-thought tool of counter-discourse. The combination of cooperative, legal and moral lexical frames serves the purpose of normalizing the international role of Pakistan, reassigning evaluative authority and challenging western hegemonic stories. Instead of confronting them head-on in a lexical face-off, Lodhi manipulates meaning through a more strategic reframing of the discursive emphasis by moving the normative and responsive focus in a similar direction. Such lexical move is an example of resistance in diplomacy, which is not based on linguistic aggression but ideologically disciplinary refraining which supports the point that power in diplomatic communication is negotiated on the level of word choice as much as on the level of policy.

### **Speech Acts and Strategic Diplomatic Action Counter-Discourse**

This section explores the roles of speech acts as a tool of negotiating and resisting power in the English communication conducted by Maliha Lodhi in her diplomatic engagements with the Mali government. Language in the diplomatic discourse is not a description of the realities of the politics, but rather an activity, defining institutional stances and bargaining ideological power. Based on the Speech Act Theory (Austin; Searle) in a critical-pragmatic context, the analysis illustrates how Lodhi demonstrates the use of speech acts to act as a challenge to the dominant Western political discourses and how he does so without losing the legitimacy of diplomacy.

Western politics often encircle Pakistan with aggressive accusations, commanding pressures, and assersive judgments which presuppose moral authority. These discourses may entail illocutionary act of blame, warning, or conditional acceptance. In retaliation, the diplomatic rhetoric of Lodhi is a strategic reorganization of illocutionary power of her speech. Instead of reflecting on confrontational speech acts, she has to depend on well-timed assertives, commissives, and indirect directives, which convert resistance into an institutionally tolerable diplomatic action.

Corpus analysis shows that Lodhi uses assertive speech acts most of the time. These counter-assertions of position are not factual claims; they are rather counter-narratives asserting that Pakistan is not being misrepresented. The illocutionary act of epistemic correction is done by such expressions as Pakistan has always been doing, The history has it, and Our efforts are still considerable. With such assertives, Lodhi criticizes the Western framings without directly calling them prejudiced, thus preserving the diplomatic etiquette and retaking the narrative power.

The second most salient category is the commissive speech acts. Such statements also fulfill the promise not only to policy action, but also to international standards like peace, cooperation, and multilateralism. Critically, such commissives are opposed to western accounts that depict the unreliability or uncooperative nature of Pakistan. Repeating these assertions that Pakistan is obliged to international obligations, Lodhi is discursively anticipating criticism and placing the critical power not in the hands of the West.

It is interesting to note that, orders, which are face threatening in nature, are fulfilled mostly in indirect or softened forms. Instead of giving a command, Lodhi uses institutionalized formulations including it is imperative that, there is need to and the international community must recognize. The responsibility is shared and the burden of duty is not clearly defined in these indirect instructions thus avoiding a direct confrontation. This can be pragmatically used to pressure the dominant actors and at the same time uphold the conventions of diplomatic politeness by Lodhi. This indirectness is similar to that of negative politeness in the concept of Brown and Levinson which avoids imposition to save the face of the institution.

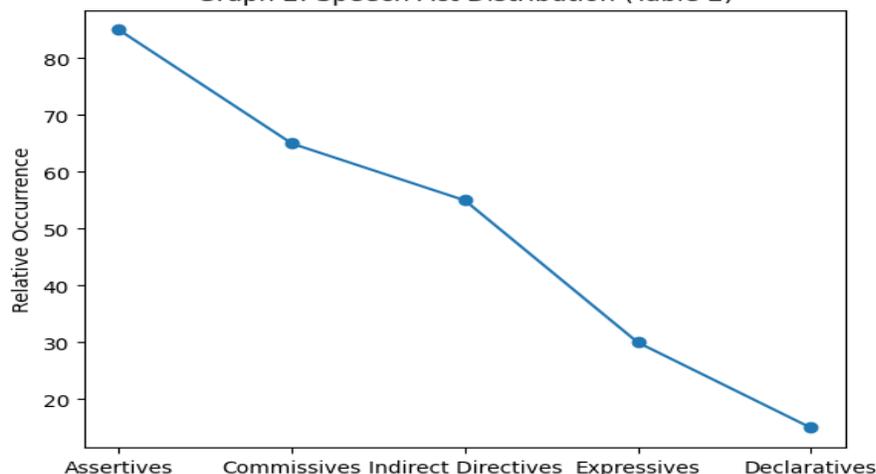
The concept of expressive speech acts is not very common but has significant discursive roles. These embellishments work as an emotional protest, indicating rejection without being demonstrative. The scarcity of their use captures diplomatic implications of the fact that expression of emotions should be well controlled in international arenas.

The last types of speech acts are declarative speech acts, which demand institutional authority to achieve change, and they are the least frequent. Formulations like let the record reflect have the symbolic effect of non-performance when they appear. These statements affirm that Pakistan has a right to institutionalization at the international forums, and this role as a legitimate diplomatic player enhances the ability of Lodhi to mould the official discourses.

**Table 2**  
**Speech Acts as Strategic Tools of Resistance in Diplomatic Discourse**

Speech Act Type	Typical Linguistic Realization	Illocutionary Force	Discursive Function	Role in Counter-Discourse
Assertives	“Pakistan has consistently...”, “The record shows...”	Stating / correcting facts	Epistemic authority	Narrative correction
Commissives	“We remain committed...”, “Pakistan will continue...”	Commitment	Moral positioning	Pre-emptive resistance
Indirect Directives	“It is imperative that...”, “There is a need for...”	Requesting action indirectly	Institutional pressure	Power negotiation
Expressives (controlled)	“We regret...”, “It is unfortunate...”	Expressing stance	Affective restraint	Legitimate dissent
Declaratives (symbolic)	“Let the record reflect...”	Institutional assertion	Authority reinforcement	Discursive legitimation

Graph 2: Speech Act Distribution (Table 2)



The speech acts distribution provided in Table 2 proves that the diplomatic resistance of Lodhi is focused on acting but not confrontational. Instead of countering the Western discourses with explicit disapproval, she plays an ingenious game with illocutionary force: facts turn into acts of resistance, promises turn to shields against reproach and indirect orders turn into an enactor of moral force. This habit is consistent with the thesis that resistance in diplomacy is not achieved by using linguistic aggression but by taking discursively disciplined action.

As viewed through the lens of a Critical Discourse, all these speech acts break the Western dominance by interfering with the asymmetrical relationship roles. Rather than submitting to the role of a respondent subjected to examination, the discourse by Lodhi places Pakistan in a new role of an equal interlocutor who possesses the right to affirm, make commitments, and judge. Pragmatically, the repositioning is

carried out by speech acts of moderate firmness with a measure of politeness to ensure the preservation of diplomatic legitimacy but may not be ideologically marginalized.

Overall, this discussion can affirm that speech acts in English diplomatic communication of Maliha Lodhi are effective counter-discursive tools. Resistance is inherent in the very framework of diplomatic language with assertives, commissives, directives being made indirectly, and this depicts how power is negotiated by pragmatic action as opposed to explicit confrontation. The discovery has a great contribution to the study of critical pragmatics and diplomatic discourses because it illustrates how speech acts are an invisible yet a very potent tool of resistance in international political communication.

### **Facing Work, Politeness and Minimized Resistance in English Diplomatic Communication**

This section explores the role played by politeness strategies and face work as the key means of the mitigation of resistance and its institutionally acceptable status in the English diplomatic discourse of Maliha Lodhi. When an overt stand is made, it is likely to lead to delegitimization in a diplomatic environment, as such, any resistance should be linguistically conditioned to save both the personal and institutional face. Based on the theory of politeness introduced by Brown and Levinson, but expanded by the new reforms in the field of relational pragmatics, this analysis will show that politeness in diplomatic communication is not an indicator of deference or lack of strength but a tool of ideological struggle.

Political discourses about Pakistan in the West tend to entail implicit or explicit acts of face-threatening (FTAs) such as claims of non-compliance, irresponsibility or strategic ambiguity. Such stories put the positive face (wish to be respected) of Pakistan and the negative face (wish to be autonomous) into question. To this, the discourse of Lodhi does not directly mirror these FTAs. Rather, she applies negative politeness practices, which can be described as being formal, indirect, and mitigating to challenge Western arguments without upsetting the balance of diplomacy. Such a method is indicative of the realization that resistance should be imposed not beyond the institutional context but within it.

Corpus evidence indicates that modal verbs (must, should, may) are highly frequent, passive constructions are frequent, and impersonal constructions are frequent (it is important that, there is a need to). Such structures suppress agentivity and spread responsibility and this minimizes the face threatening potential of critique. To use the example, when Lodhi writes that it is important that every state has to abide by the international norms, he does not mention any of the Western actors directly but still questions their moral status of positioning. Pragmatically, this type of mitigation enables resistance to be formulated as norm-based advocacy, instead of hostile opposition.

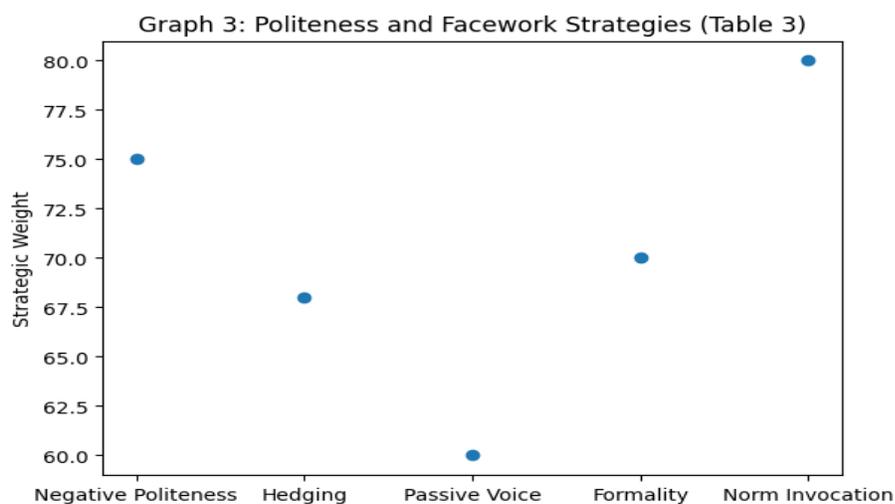
Hedging is another important politeness strategy, which is achieved with the help of epistemic markers, which can be arguably, it appears, there is reason to believe and suggests that. Hedging restrains the epistemic commitment of the speaker and as a result, minimizes the possibility of confrontation. But in a critical context hedging is also a form of strategic ambiguity, since it allows the speaker to suggest critique without making it explicitly refutable. The ways in which Lodhi balances certainty, enable her to be diplomatic and at the same time challenge Western assumptions and judgments.

The use of formal address forms and institutional references also add to the facework of the Lodhi discourse. Mention of international law, UN resolutions, multilateral frameworks and collective norms are frequent indicators of conformity to wider institutional values. This identification makes the resistance more legitimate, as it is no longer the national interest but defense of global principles. Through the appeal to common values, Lodhi turns resistance into a group issue, making the threat against the Western actors less personal and raising the level of moral pressure.

Notably, politeness strategies also play the role of defending the institutional face of Lodhi as a diplomat in the Western-dominated forums as a representative of a Global South state. Too much directness might seem framed as emotional, defensive or unprofessional- some of the stereotypes attributed to non-Western speakers. Lodhi becomes highly controlled and polite in his register, he opposes not just political narrative but also discursive pressures and stereotypes concealed in diplomacy across the world.

**Table 3**  
**Politeness and Facework Strategies in Diplomatic Counter-Discourse**

Politeness Strategy	Linguistic Realization	Type of Face Protected	Pragmatic Function	Role in Resistance
Negative politeness	Modal verbs, indirectness	Negative face (autonomy)	Minimizing imposition	Softened challenge
Hedging	Epistemic markers	Positive face (credibility)	Limiting certainty	Strategic ambiguity
Passive voice	Agent deletion	Interpersonal face	De-personalization	Reduced confrontation
Formal address	Institutional titles	Institutional face	Respect signaling	Legitimate dissent
Norm invocation	Legal & UN references	Collective face	Authority alignment	Moral repositioning



The trends that are condensed in Table 3 show that politeness in the discourse of Lodhi is not accidental. All the strategies play a part in a larger discursive building where resistance is incorporated in institutional legitimacy and moral alignment. Instead of dismissing the authority of the West, the politeness strategies employed by Lodhi re-organize the interactional power structures, which enables her to talk back to the state of domination without breaking the rules of diplomacy.

Critically pragmatically, such findings cause the subversion of traditional perspectives of politeness as being interpersonal. Rather, politeness is revealed as a macro-political move that allows Global South diplomats to challenge the hegemonic narratives and yet sound audible and credible in the international institutions. The politeness therefore becomes controlled resistance whereby power is negotiated by restraint and not aggression.

To sum up, this section shows that the feature of mitigated resistance is one of the hallmarks of English diplomatic communication employed by Maliha Lodhi. Hedging, negative politeness, use of formal language, and norm-based alignment allow Lodhi to address the threats of face at the same time questioning Western political discourses of dominance. This affirms the fact that politeness does not attire outskirts of counter-discourse but on the contrary it is the core of pragmatic actualization of resistance in diplomatic contexts.

### **Implicature, Presupposition and Indirect Meaning as Diplomatic Resistance**

Here, the paper will look at the functioning of implicature and presupposition as strong and subtle counter-discourse tools in Maliha Lodhi English diplomatic writing. In high-stakes diplomatic situations, negotiation of meaning is frequently played out not by what is said but by what is implied, assumed or taken as a given. Based on Gricean pragmatics and critical discourse approaches, this discussion shows that the opposition of the predominant Western political discourses by Lodhi is often achieved by providing indirect meaning to enable the critique to be diplomatically acceptable and ideologically effective.

Western politics about Pakistan are largely based on unwritten assumptions, such as the fact that Pakistan has to demonstrate over and over again that it is ready to be security-oriented, or counterterrorism-oriented, or responsible in the world. These presuppositions operate ideologically in the sense that it places Western actors as judges and Pakistan as the object of judgment. These presuppositions are systematically disrupted and reversed through a system of diplomatic responses by Lodhi. Rather than accepting the frame of assessment that is imposed by the western discourses she incorporates other assumptions in her discourse, including the fact that legitimacy, compliance and active contribution of Pakistan are already present facts.

Corpus analysis demonstrates that there are a lot of fact-stative verbs (continue, remain, reaffirm), definite noun phrases (the sacrifices made, our sustained efforts), and temporal adverbs (consistently, over decades), which are heavily presuppositional in nature. In the example of Pakistan, when the statement is made that Pakistan is still playing a positive role in the peace of the region, the assumption made is that this is an active and unquestionable role. This pragmatically transfers the burden of the proof onto individuals who question this supposed legitimacy of Pakistan. With such a move, the presupposition is seen as a discursive tactic of normalization that makes the accusations of the West unnecessary or illogical.

Implicature also helps Lodhi to hint at criticism without direct blame. By using generalized statements like all states should comply with international obligations or selective methods weaken collective security, Lodhi creates conversational implicatures, which require the listener to assume Western inconsistency or even double standards. These implicatures are based on the shared contextual knowledge in diplomatic forums so that critique can be expressed implicitly and not confrontationally. In a Gricean sense, these implicatures, take advantage of the Cooperative Principle, and especially the maxims of relevance and quantity where the meaning is more than what was actually said.

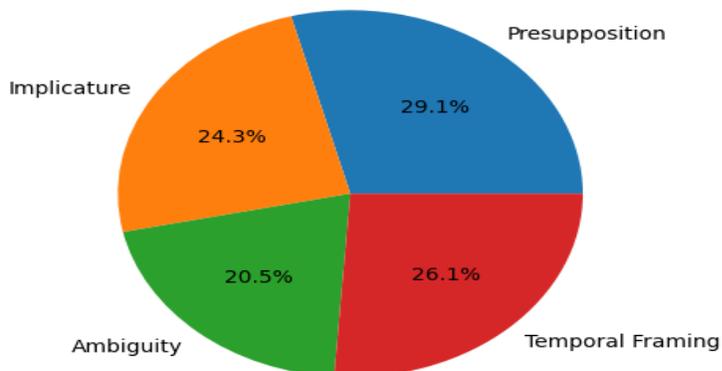
Another relevant characteristic of the indirect meaning Lodhi uses is strategic ambiguity. She is able to criticize structures and behaviors without mentioning specific states with abstract nouns (stability, responsibility, accountability) and generalized agents (the international community, certain actors). This uncertainty is dual in its purpose: it safeguards interpersonal and institutional face and at the same time makes the critique susceptible to many interpretations, and hence, more discursively expansive. Instead of undermining the resistance, ambiguity serves to strengthen it by making counter-discourse less dismissible.

Notably, the implicature and presupposition are used, which indicates the institutional logic of diplomacy, in which overt oppression can result in diplomatic isolation or delegitimization. The discussion by Lodhi shows that the best way of resistance in such situations is resistance by working through implicit evaluative signals so that the ideological challenge can be done without violating an obligation to civility. This substantiates new pragmatic thinking, which does not see indirectness as evasiveness but as communicative enterprise in an institutional interaction.

**Table 4**  
**Implicature and Presuppositional Strategies in Diplomatic Counter-Discourse**

Pragmatic Device	Linguistic Realization	Assumed / Implied Meaning	Pragmatic Function	Role in Resistance
Presupposition	“Pakistan continues to...”	Ongoing legitimacy	Normalization	Burden reversal
Fact-stative verbs	Continue, reaffirm, remain	Established commitment	Authority assertion	De-legitimizing accusation
Generalized implicature	“All states must...”	Shared responsibility	Moral equalization	Power redistribution
Strategic ambiguity	Abstract nouns, vague agents	Avoidance of direct blame	Diplomatic safety	Sustainable critique
Temporal presupposition	“For decades...”	Historical consistency	Credibility building	Narrative correction

Graph 4: Indirect Meaning Strategies (Table 4)



The tendencies that are summarized in Table 4 indicate that indirect meaning is a regular and consistent characteristic of the diplomatic speech of Lodhi as opposed to an accidental stylistic decision. Presupposition lets her incorporate the legitimacy of Pakistan into the form of her sentences, whereas implicature lets the criticism manifest itself without confrontation. The combination of these strategies serves as the discursive shields, safeguarding the speaker against threats to face, and at the same time disrupting dominant Western narratives.

According to the critical discourse view, such findings emphasize the use of power based on what people expect to be rather than argue. Reducing the presuppositional grounds, Lodhi causes a reevaluation of the epistemic authority of the Western discourse of politics and reinstates Pakistan as an equal contributor to

the global governmental system instead of one to be judged. Pragmatically, such repositioning is not done by refuting it outright, but by discursively regulated indirectness.

To sum up, this section proves the fact that implicature and presupposition play a key role in the pragmatic implementation of resistance in the English diplomatic communication. The indirect meaning employed by Maliha Lodhi helps explain how resistance can be incorporated within the discourse of diplomacy by use of indirect meaning so that the resistance is enabled to work within the context in which direct opposition is curtailed. This discussion supports the thesis that conflicts over diplomatic power can commonly be waged not by verbal statements but by presumptions and implied strategies.

### **Combined CDA-Pragmatic-Corpus Synthesis of Power, Resistance, and Counter-Discourse**

In the final section, researcher will summarize the results of the analyses above to show the pattern of co-production of power, resistance and counter-discourse using lexical framing, speech acts, politeness, and indirect meaning, and how these patterns are empirically proven by corpus evidence. Instead of viewing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), pragmatics, and corpus linguistics as different analytical layers, this paper combines them with the aim of demonstrating the role of micro-linguistic decisions as contributing factors to macro-ideological consequences in the context of the English diplomatic discourse. The analysis ensures that the discourse of Maliha Lodhi is not a set of disjointed rhetorical actions but an institutionally disciplined mode of resistance.

At the macro-ideological level, CDA discloses that the hegemonic Western political discourses tend to frame Pakistan in terms of deficit, challenging reliability, security responsibility as well as moral blame. Throughout the corpus, what Lodhi does is to continuously invert these framings by re-focusing global norms, including international law, multilateralism and collective responsibility. This inversion is not made by the immediate act of rejection of Western authority but rather by discursive re-articulation, through which the evaluative standards are no longer based on unilateral judgment, but on mutual institutional standards. In that regard, power is not rejected, but it is re-negotiated, and the legitimacy in this case is dependent on internationally accepted principles instead of the Western political power.

On the level of pragmatics, the analysis has shown that resistance is carried out by means of action-oriented language as opposed to open confrontation. Assertive speech acts serve as epistemic corrections; commissives pre-empt commitments by foregrounding them; indirect orders exert moral authority, but do not make commands; politeness strategies take care of face and preserve access to institutional authority; and implicature and presupposition incorporate the criticism into an assumed common territory. These instrumental tools help Lodhi to voice opposition to authority without breaking the rules of diplomacy as an example of how most resistance in diplomacy can be effective in case it is planned to be minimized.

These interpretations are reinforced by the corpus-informed aspect of revealing that these strategies are recurrent and patterned, not anecdotal. The empirical evidence of the existence of resistance and counter-discourse is lexical frequency, collocational behavior, and repeated pragmatic constructions. The repetition of legal, normative, responsibility, cooperation, and collective action terms in the text prove the long-standing ideological direction of the text, and the frequent occurrence of modal verbs, passive forms, and presuppositional markers are the confirmation of the strategic character of mitigation and indirectness. The corpus evidence will therefore act as an intermediary between qualitative interpretation and empirical rigor in bringing about transparency of analysis.

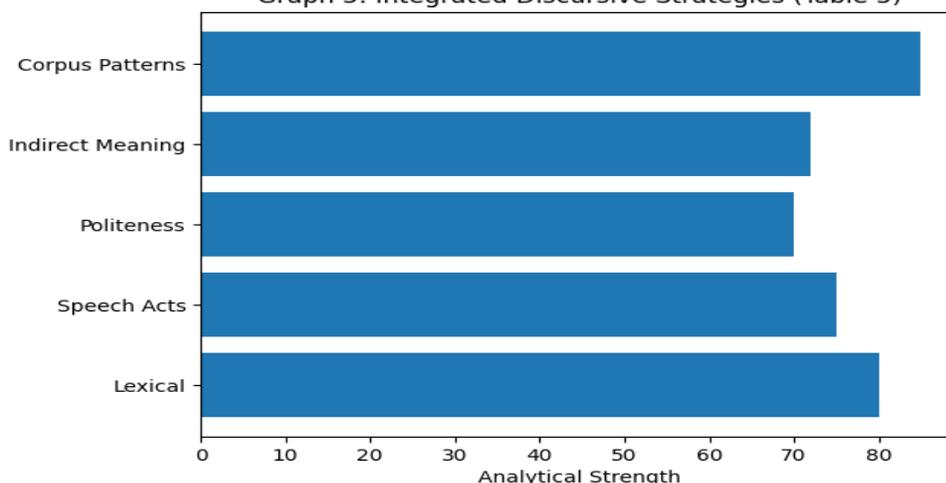
More importantly, the combined approach of CDA, pragmatics and corpus discloses that the manifestations of resistance are at multiple levels: words frame reality; speech acts engage in ideological

action; politeness and indirectness manage the risk of interacting; patterns of corpus confirm the systemic quality of these practices. The phenomenon of this multidimensional resistance enables a Global South diplomat to challenge the hegemonic narratives without provoking diplomatic sanctions or ostracism. Thus, the discourse of Lodhi is an example of how the rigorous linguistic strategy can restore the balance of powers in the international arenas.

**Table 5**  
**Integrated Discursive Strategies of Power Negotiation and Resistance**

Analytical Level	Linguistic Feature	Pragmatic / Discursive Function	Ideological Outcome	Contribution to Counter-Discourse
Lexical (CDA)	Reframing of key terms	Meaning control	Narrative reversal	De-centers Western framing
Speech Acts (Pragmatics)	Assertives, commissives, indirect directives	Strategic action	Authority reassertion	Action-oriented resistance
Politeness & Facework	Mitigation, hedging, formality	Face protection	Institutional legitimacy	Sustainable dissent
Implicature & Presupposition	Indirect meaning, assumed facts	Subtle critique	Burden shifting	Non-confrontational challenge
Corpus Patterns	Recurrence & salience	Empirical validation	Analytical reliability	Evidence-based interpretation

Graph 5: Integrated Discursive Strategies (Table 5)



The synthesis provided in Table 5 proves that counter-discourse cannot be found in a single linguistic feature but it is the result of multiple discursive resources interaction. The levels support each other: pragmatic strategies are reinforced by ideological force by repetition; lexical reframing is reinforced by politeness and indirectness; and all interpretations are supported with corpus evidence. This combined model underlines the fact that the method of diplomatic resistance is structural, strategic, and cumulative.

Theoretically, these findings add to the theory of critical pragmatics because they depict how pragmatic decisions serve as a mode of ideological opposition in institutional discourse. The research has methodological further, in that it demonstrates how quantitative regularities can support qualitative statements, and not deconstruct the discourse into a collection of frequencies. It has an empirical value of enriching the Pakistani and Global South studies in diplomacy through the foregrounding of the non-western voice of diplomacy in English-language international communication.

Finally, this combined study shows that the English diplomatic communication of Maliha Lodhi is a consistent form of counter-discourse, in which no explicit power struggle is made but rather renegotiated through language. The resistance is gained by the means of disciplined pragmatics, norm based framing, and patterns that can be empirically verified, which proves that in modern day diplomacy, the most effective forms of opposition to authority are usually the most linguistically nuanced ones.

## **CONCLUSION**

The current work aimed to explore the issue of power, resistance, and counter-discourse being constructed through language in English diplomatic discourse, in which the responses to the hegemonic Western political discourse by Maliha Lodhi were used as a subject. Based on a combined approach of Critical Discourse Analysis, pragmatics and corpus-based techniques, the study explored diplomatic language as a strategic resource, according to which political reality is packaged, challenged, and negotiated. The collection of data, which relied on the authenticated English-language speeches, statements, and interviews generated in the formal international settings, made sure that the analysis was based on the institutionally legitimate discourse, in which linguistic strategies are highly constrained and have a political implication. This contextualization made the findings sound and facilitated the robust study of resistance as it is applied within and not outside diplomatic norms.

Throughout the analysis, the study proved that the lexical framing is a fundamental support of ideological contestation. The data revealed that Western political discourse is often based on securitized and evaluative vocabularies which implicitly make Pakistan appear deficient or suspicious. Conversely, lexical constructions in the discourse of Lodhi re-construct these stories in systematically re-packaged language of international law, cooperation, shared responsibility, and institutional legitimacy. Such re-lexicalization does not merely substitute a set of terms with another, it reformulates the ideological basis in terms of which evaluation occurs. Lodhi introduces a discourse that relocates Pakistan as a valid and accountable participant in world politics by anticipating norms and expectations on the international level, not Western political appraisals of the country. These lexical choices are consistent throughout the corpus, which confirms that resistance is not accidental, but a part of a prolonged discursive approach.

The pragmatic analysis also demonstrated that opposition of diplomatic discourse is basically action-based. The language used by Lodhi fulfills the purpose of political work but at the same time, it remains diplomatic through the strategic use of speech acts. Assertive speech acts act as epistemic remedies that repossess narrative control; commissives anticipate criticism by prefiguring commitment and cooperation; and indirect proposals apply moral and institutional force without speaking directly. These are practical decisions, the result of an advanced perception of the diplomatic landscape, in which an unambiguous conflict can compromise reputation or openness. Rather, the effect of resistance is accomplished as the illocutionary force is finely mediated to provide counter-discourse to become disciplined, legitimate, and institutionally approved action.

There is also the role of politeness, facework and indirect meaning in maintaining resistance even in the long run. Through the analysis, it was shown that mitigation, hedging, formality and norm invocation are

not just the interpersonal strategies but key mechanisms through which ideological challenge is made acceptable even in the international forums. With both interpersonal and institutional face controlled, the discourse of Lodhi does not run the danger of being seen as confrontational or defensive, which the actors of Global South are portrayed as disproportionately. Besides, the implicature and presupposition enable the critique to exist within the framework of implied speech, translocation of assumptions, reallocation of responsibility, and appraisal reversal without violating the diplomatic etiquette. These observations affirm that power politics often is played out through the overtones and presumptions than by the literal statement when it comes to diplomacy.

Combined, the results of this research highlight the fact that counter-discourse in English diplomatic communication is cumulative, multi-layered, and disciplined in strategy. Combining the ideas of CDA and pragmatics with corpus analysis proves that such micro-linguistic decisions as lexical selection, speech acts, politeness strategies, and indirect meanings form macro-linguistic ideological consequences that oppose hegemonic narratives. At the methodological level, the approach that the study demonstrates is the usefulness of corpus-informed qualitative analysis in promoting greater transparency and empirical rigor without deteriorating the interpretive depth. Substantially, it adds to the literature of diplomatic discourse by preempting a Pakistani diplomatic voice and demonstrating how Global South subjects are able to bargain power in English-dominated spheres of international relations. In the end itself, the research finds that successful resistance in modern day diplomacy is not attained through open confrontation, rather by use of linguistically nuanced, normative and empirically patterned language that restructures power within the confines of the institutions.

#### **REFERENCES**

- Antaki, C., & Wetherell, M. (2020). *Discourse and social psychology: Beyond attitudes and behaviour*. SAGE.
- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Oxford University Press.
- Baker, P. (2006). *Using corpora in discourse analysis*. Continuum.
- Baker, P., & Levon, E. (2022). Picking the right cherries? A comparison of corpus-based and qualitative analyses of identity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 26(1), 5–25.
- Baker, P., Gabrielatos, C., & McEnery, T. (2023). *Discourse analysis and media attitudes: The representation of Islam in the British press* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge University Press.
- Cap, P. (2019). *Proximization: The pragmatics of symbolic distance crossing*. John Benjamins.
- Chilton, P. (2021). *Politics and language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Culpeper, J., & Tantucci, V. (2021). Politeness, impoliteness, and ritual: Maintaining the moral order in interaction. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 178, 239–251.
- Dynel, M. (2020). Implicature and inference in political discourse. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 170, 164–176.
- Fairclough, N. (2015). *Language and power* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Fairclough, N. (2010). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Fairclough, N., & Wodak, R. (2022). Critical discourse analysis. In T. A. Van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction* (2nd ed., pp. 258–284). SAGE.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge*. Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972–1977*. Pantheon Books.
- Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and semantics* (Vol. 3, pp. 41–58). Academic Press.
- Ilie, C. (2018). Parliamentary discourse. In J. Flowerdew & J. E. Richardson (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of critical discourse studies* (pp. 309–325). Routledge.

- Joseph, J. E. (2020). *Language and politics*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Kádár, D. Z., & Haugh, M. (2020). *Understanding politeness*. Cambridge University Press.
- Machin, D., & Mayr, A. (2023). *How to do critical discourse analysis: A multimodal introduction* (3rd ed.). SAGE.
- McEnery, T., & Hardie, A. (2023). *Corpus linguistics: Method, theory and practice* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Partington, A., Duguid, A., & Taylor, C. (2024). *Patterns and meanings in discourse: Theory and practice in corpus-assisted discourse studies*. John Benjamins.
- Reisigl, M. (2018). The discourse-historical approach. In J. Flowerdew & J. E. Richardson (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of critical discourse studies* (pp. 44–59). Routledge.
- Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, C., & Marchi, A. (2018). *Corpus approaches to discourse: A critical review*. Routledge.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. SAGE.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2006). Discourse and manipulation. *Discourse & Society*, 17(3), 359–383.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2018). *Discourse and power*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wei, L., & Zhu, H. (2022). Language ideology and identity in global contexts. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 13(4), 557–576.
- Wodak, R. (2021). *The politics of fear: What right-wing populist discourses mean*. SAGE.
- Zhu, H., & Wei, L. (2022). Translanguaging, power, and ideology. *Applied Linguistics*, 43(1), 1–22.