# Communicative Competence in the Select Speech of Shri Narendra Modi: A Linguistic Analysis

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## Abstracts

The close connection between language and ideology has long been a recurring subject of study among linguists. Politicians often rely on language manipulation to convey specific messages, discussing topics that seem familiar but may not be fully understood by the audience. This study uses critical discourse analysis to identify the presuppositions and entailments, and thus the ideology, in a speech delivered by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi. The speech is an appeal from Modi to the people of India. A closer examination reveals that Prime Minister Modi employed various persuasive strategies to achieve political and ideological goals. The analysis of the selected speech of Shri Narendra Modi for Swachh Bharat mission on Independence Day establishes the social practises followed and the text that influences the people to bring changes in our society. The level of text and the level of context is analysed for linguistic analysis in six categories like phonology, syntax, semantics, conceptual, belief and para linguistics.

**Keywords**: Communication, Linguistic, Speech, political, phonology.

## Introduction

Narendra Modi assumed the office of Prime Minister of India on May 26, 2014. Born in 1950 in a small town in Gujarat, he was raised in a poor family, which not only instilled in him the importance of hard work but also made him aware of the unnecessary hardships faced by ordinary people (PM India: 2018). From a young age, this motivated him to serve the people and the nation. Known as the "People's leader," his goal is to address their issues, fostering close personal connections both in person and online. He is also recognized as India's most tech-savvy leader, to maintain active presence on social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook.

In 2001, Narendra Modi was appointed as the Chief Minister of Gujarat by his national party, marking his first political office. Prior to this, he had only held various administrative roles within the BJP, working as a back-room strategist without ever running for public office (Marino

2014: xv). He was re-elected as Chief Minister in the December 2012 assembly election, with even a quarter of the state's Muslims reportedly voting for him despite ongoing concerns.

The term Communicative competence was coined by North Americaqn anthropologist and linguist Dell Hymes in the late 1960s (Hymes., 1962; 1971). At the time, Dell Hymes' introduction of the term 'communicative competence' marked a distinct departure from Noam Chomsky's influential concept of 'linguistic competence'. Chomsky's 'linguistic competence' referred to the innate, subconscious knowledge a native speaker has of the grammatical rules to govern the language. This shift broadened the scope of linguistic inquiry to include the functional and social dimensions of language use, beyond just its formal grammatical aspect (Chomsky, 1957, 1965).

To determine the political rhetorical figures that the government employs and the objectives behind them. Sixteen different forms of political language figures of speech were identified by the data analysis, including metonymy, allusion, anaphora, synecdoche, antithesis, climax, pleonasm, hyperbole, trope, sarcasm, anticlimax, parable, personification, parallelism, repetition and euphemism. These figures of speech are used to vary sentence structure, show respect, express ideas politely, and emphasize meanings. It is suggested that the government use simpler words and phrases to make the language more understandable for the public (Putrayasa., 2021).

Negation operates across morphophonemic, morphological, syntactic, and semantic levels of language. Syntactically, it relates to the structure of sentences, whether they are simple, complex, or compound. Therefore, negation plays a significant role in compound sentences. Some coordinators influence negative sentences, while others do not. In Hindi-Urdu, coordination is possible with all major syntactic categories and can occur at lexical, phrasal, or intermediate levels. The following sentences illustrate how the coordinator "am" is used to coordinate various elements, including sentences, verb phrases, verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs.

Politicians utilize campaign speeches as a means of advancing their ideology prior to, during, and following elections, making them an essential genre in political debate. This study looks at Nana Akufo-Addo's campaign speech during his party's manifesto unveiling, which is led by the opposition in Ghana. In order to convince the voters to embrace his ideals and give him their vote, we examine the language he uses to foster a sense of identity and unity with them. Utilizing Fairclough's three-dimensional critical discourse analysis (CDA) paradigm, the research discovered that Nana Addo employed repetition and pronouns like I, you, our, and we to establish a strong rapport and demonstrate her support for the electorate. These tactics were intended to convince voters that he was the most qualified contender for the presidency. This study adds to CDA research on the relationship between language, politics, and society (Addy & Ofori., 2020).

## Communicative effectiveness

Traditionally, the concept of citizenship has been closely tied to the idea of nationhood, forming an 'imagined community' centered around a common language. This view assumes that the state and nation are inseparable entities—the nation-state. However, in today's globalized world, there are numerous other forms of identification and opportunities for political engagement that

transcend national boundaries. This raises questions about the language used for communication. Nation-states have historically enforced a common language through their education systems. In contrast, members of transnational communities bring their own languages into interactions, necessitating the ability to communicate effectively despite linguistic differences. Citizenship across linguistic boundaries therefore requires not only communication skills but also a critical understanding of the conditions under which political activities occur. Citizenship education traditionally prepares young people for political engagement within the confines of the state. Foreign language education (FLE), on the other hand, equips individuals to interact with speakers of other languages. By integrating the goals of citizenship education with those of foreign language education, learners are prepared for what is termed 'intercultural citizenship (Byram et al., 2020).

In his first Independence Day speech as Prime Minister of India, Mr. Modi astutely referred to himself as the "first servant of the people." Delivered on August 15th without referring to notes, the speech had a heartfelt impact. It serves as a classic example of brand positioning, grounded in an understanding of what resonates with the target audience and convincing them that the proposed solutions are superior to all others. This approach leverages the power of contrasts. In his 68th Independence Day speech, Mr. Modi exemplified this by addressing the need to eradicate poverty. He highlighted the complexity and vast scope of the issue, juxtaposing it with the even greater challenge of liberating India from British rule.

He urged the people to shift their focus from "what the country has done for them to what they can do for the country". By doing so, he used the inherent tension between these two perspectives to create a new synthesis.

This approach echoes U.S. President John F. Kennedy's 1961 inaugural address, where he famously said,

"Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country."

Mr. Modi has introduced several policies, such as building public toilets, Swachh Bharat, bank accounts for the poor under Jan Dhan Yojna, and digital education, which clearly convey his message that building India beginning from the grassroots level and it is considered as responsibility of every citizen.

The Independence Day speech resonates with the aspirations, wants and needs of Indians, half of whom are under 30 years old. It promotes a vision of "Made in India" with three key themes: Digital India, Clean India and Skilled India. Mr. Modi understands that a leader's legacy should be built around enduring goals and value systems. He must recognize that his own progress is achieved through serving the people he leads. By doing so, he can establish the standard of performance for himself and others. Accountability for the success and advancement of others is crucial that defines the significance of leader.

## Linguistic analysis

In this part we are going to analyse the speech of our honourable prime minister Shri Narendra Modi. The speech is delivered during the launch of Swachh Bharat Mission and it is discussed in detail.

"Bharat Mata ki Jai, Long Live Mahatma Gandhi, Long Live Lal Bahadur Shastri".

"My Colleagues from Central Government, Shri Venkaiah Naidu ji and Shri Nitin Gadkari ji, dignitaries and my young friends".

"Today is 2nd October, birth anniversaries of our Pujya Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shashtri ji. Lal Bahadur Shastri gave us the Mantra of Jai Jawan Jai Kisan. Indian Farmers filled the granaries in reply to that exhortation. Pujya Bapu gave us the message of 'Quit India- Clean India'. Our countrymen, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, freed the nation from colonialism. Bapu's dream of cleanliness, however, remains unfulfilled".

"I have decided to start a movement in social media also. It is there on MyGov.in website also. A new website has been created on 'Clean India'. Work has been started on Facebook and Twitter also. #MycleanIndia was started today. I appeal all the countrymen to upload photographs of garbage, then clean that and upload the video and the photographs of the cleaned place. I also appeal to media. There are many youngsters, organizations in every nook and corner of the country. They are doing the work of cleanliness way before I became the Prime Minister. They should be brought to the limelight by Media. All common people who work for cleanliness should be highlighted. All of us should create an inspiring environment. Finger pointing will not help as I told earlier this is beyond politics. This is a work solely inspired by patriotism. We will do it with patriotic feeling. There is no place for politics. That is why I say there are many organizations and social and cultural bodies those who are working in their own way. I have seen many villages where Sarpanch is so alert and villagers keep the village in exemplary cleanliness. Many people are like that. Some of the teachers take lot of interest in keeping the premises clean, the atmosphere is kept very pure".

"Brothers and sisters there is a startling evaluation of WHO – they say that the diseases created by lack of cleanliness results in additional loss of 6500 rupees to every Indian. Due to illness someone is not able to drive taxi or auto rickshaw or not able to distribute newspapers or not able to deliver milk. This is just the average of the total loss. If we take out affluent households then burden on poor people will go up to 12-15 thousand. If we just spread cleanliness, our poor will be saved 6500 rupees. This will save him from diseases and unemployment. This movement is very important for the health of the poor. Serving Mother India is serving the poorest".

"Come let's see on MyGov.in, my Facebook or twitter, the mood that I am witnessing, the enthusiasm that I see, fills me with hope that public is ready to move hundred steps ahead of the Government. If public is moving there is no reason to stop them".

"Brothers and sisters, we should gift something to Mahatma Gandhi. In 2019 when Gandhiji will turn 150, we should gift him a Swachh Bharat created with a collective responsibility. Quit India was successful due to the involvement of everyone in the freedom struggle. Success of clean

India lies in the involvement of 125 crore Indians. Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan was successful as it was given by Lal Bahadur Shastri. He called for agricultural production. Nobody asked Lal Bahadur Shastri that, are you going to the fields to plough them, have you done some farming or produced some foodgrain? Nobody asked anything. But as Lal Bahadur Shastri said Jai Kisan- all the farmers stood up and filled the granaries. The momentous tasks of giving food to every poor in India was done on the words of this great man. Now, this is the time to realise Mahatma Gandhi's words. Just look at the purity of this great man's words, its power, its dedication: Shouldn't this inspire us? Whether it is me or you, success of clean India will give us the same pleasure as the success of Quit India slogan. It will give us similar joy and prosperity. We have started moving ahead with our faith in the words of these great men".

"Even today, there are many schools which don't have separate toilets for girls. We need to change this. It is nobody's fault; we just need to move ahead with a positive outlook of future. There should not be any political comment by any member of this movement as everybody has work. Every one before us also worked. Under Mahatma Gandhi, Congress was at the forefront of it".

3.1 Analysis and Discussion

The analysis of the selected speech of Shri Narendra Modi for Swachh Bharat mission on Independence Day establishes the social practises followed and the text that influences the people to bring changes in our society. The level of text and the level of context is analysed for linguistic analysis in six categories like phonology, syntax, semantics, conceptual, belief and para linguistics.

3.2 Political discourse

In contemporary political speeches, two primary concepts are often at play: one rooted in a political party's ideological agenda and the other addressing the electorate's perceived critical issues and needs. Shri Narendra Modi's political speeches exemplify the latter approach. He delivers his speeches live in front of his audience, and while initially their distribution was limited, videos of these speeches were soon uploaded to BJP websites or various news outlets. This made the content accessible not only to Indians but also to anyone around the world interested in these topics.

Political speech is a type of political discourse that falls within the realm of public discourse. It is typically characterized by formal language and a monologue format, and it is usually meticulously prepared by professional speechwriters, leaving little room for improvisation by the speaker. Ideology can permeate discourse at multiple levels, affecting both form and content, and can also be conveyed through the interpretation of the text. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) considers all these social contexts and examines the links between textual structures within this framework. The objective of this paper is to identify, compare, and contrast the discourse structures within the ideological strategies used in speeches delivered by Prime Minister Modi.

Communicationive competence of Shri Narendra Modi is clearly explained in Figure 1. The selected speech during Swachh Bharat mission is analysed.
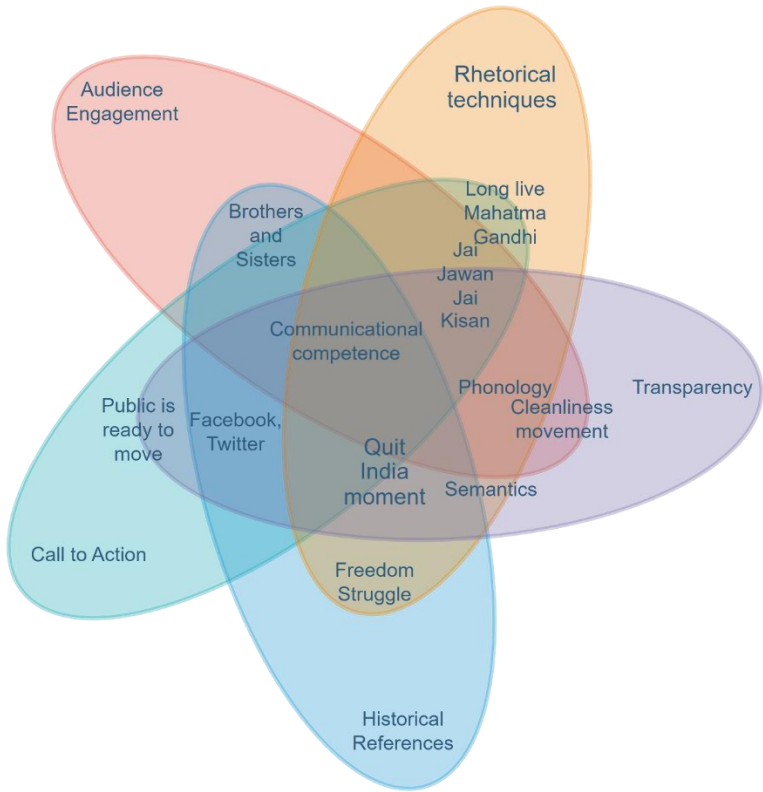
Figure 1. Linguistic analysis of Selected speech of Shri Narendra Modi

Phonology

❖ The patterns of stress and intonation is reflected well with motivational and emotional tone in the speech of Shri Narendra Modi. The speech rise and falls in the same pitch for maintaining engagement and to emphasise important points. This type of emotional wording is also referred to as high-inference language or the language of persuasive techniques. PM Modi often aims to persuade us by appealing to our emotions, using words that carry significant emotional weight. This approach can be persuasive because it encourages people to respond emotionally rather than focusing solely on the facts, subtly influencing their perspective on the topic.

❖ In the selected speech main key features like stress and clear enunciation can be seen in the keywords including Swachh Bharat Jai Jawan Jai Kisan and Mahatma Gandhi for emphasising their significance

Semantics

❖ The choice of lexical words that includes "brothers and sisters", "Mahatma Gandhi" and "Patriotism" evokes the sense of inspiration respect and unity.

❖ The selected speech focus on the public to invoke historical references About Gandhiji and the freedom struggle of India. It also insists national pride as well as importance of cleanliness. Few terms such as health freedom and patriotism are rich in Semantics that aims for creating the sense of urgency and duty.

Syntax

❖ Our honourable Prime Minister uses parallel structures of words like "Quit India-clean India" helps to create memorable and rhythmic speech.

❖ In context like "If we just spread cleanliness, our poor will be saved 6500 rupees", there is frequent use of subordinate clauses for providing additional information.

❖ Communication competence of Shri Narendra Modi can be seen in the sentence structure of the selected speech. To keep the audience engaged, he conveys the message by mixing of simple, complex and compound sentence. It can be clearly known in "Today is 2nd October, birth anniversaries of our Pujya Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shashtri ji".

Belief

❖ The practical and emotional concern is appealed by using pathos like brothers and sisters for addressing the audience to discuss the health and economic benefits of cleanliness

❖ The selected speech employs figures like Lal Baghdad Shastri and Mahatma Gandhi for lending moral authority and credibility to the message conveyed.

Conceptual

❖ The legacy of and Shastri is frame as continuation initiative that helps to contextualise Swachh Bharat mission by narrating national pride and Indian history.

❖ The centre theme of the selector speech includes the keywords like cleanliness, responsibility and patriotism. It focusses on the linkages between historical moments like Quit India moment, freedom struggle with Swachh Bharat mission.

Paralinguistics

❖ The pace underscores key points for maintaining interest among the crowd. The tone of the speech is authoritative and the motivational.

**Discussion and Findings**

Language serves multiple functions in human society, one of which includes its role in expressing content or protesting unfavorable conditions, laws, policies, and systems. This is because language shapes human behavior and serves as a medium for communicating ideologies,

messages, ideas, and responses to the existing social order. This research examines the language used by Honorable Patrick Obahiagbon, a Nigerian parliamentarian, by analyzing selected speeches. Four speeches were chosen, studied, and analyzed using Systemic Functional Linguistics as a theoretical framework. The study concludes that Obahiagbon's elaborate style is characterized by the use of coined words, compound words, outdated language, borrowed terminology, unconventional word combinations, alliteration, intertextuality, grammatical and lexical deviations. These linguistic features are employed in a distinctive manner to express his views on social and political issues such as corruption, violence, laziness, bias, and inequality in the country. Together, these elements form his unique style and define him as an individual speaker. The study reveals that his tendency to use verbose and concatenated language often distracts from his messages, thereby potentially reducing the effectiveness of his speeches rather than enhancing them (Ekpang & Godwin., 2020).

Manipulation is a linguistic tool employed by speakers to influence the thoughts and indirectly the actions of their audience. This research focuses on manipulation observed in two political speeches: one delivered in English by American President Donald J. Trump, and the other in Arabic by Iraqi President Barham Salih, which serve as the study's primary data. Each speech is segmented into numbered excerpts (referred to as Ext.). The study aims to analyze the rhetorical and semantic techniques employed as strategies of manipulation in these speeches using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study's significance lies in exploring how the ideological dimension, which involves enhancing the speaker's image while undermining others', significantly influences political discourse. The research adopts Van Dijk's ideological approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its analytical framework. The findings indicate that both speakers effectively utilize lexicalization, lists of three, repetition, and citations to sway the perceptions of their audiences through their speeches (Jasim & Mustafa., 2020).

## Conclusion

The overall communicative competence of Shri Narendra Modi is analysed carefully with the selector speech which is strategically crafted and multifaceted for effective communication of message to the public. The evidences in the speech shows his communicative competence. He engaged the crowd by using inclusive language and rhetorical techniques like parallelism emotive language and repetition to emphasise the key points and to evoke emotions effectively. He explained his mission with clarity about cleanliness and the economic impact. He emphasises transparency about the cleanliness movement and by explaining patriotic duty. Further, he calls to action by participating the citizens in the cleanliness movement with their personal initiatives and engagement in social media.

The speech can be interpreted differently when viewed purely from a semantic perspective, without delving into the hidden messages and ideologies behind each word. Without a detailed analysis, people might take PM Modi's statements at face value, seeing his speech as simply a call for cleanliness, sanitation, and health security, without any underlying agendas. However, as highlighted in the analysis, the speech is full of presuppositions. During the analysis, various ideologies were identified and examined, with cleanliness, sanitation, and public health being

the main themes detected through presupposition and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). While other ideologies, such as criticism of the opposition, are also present, the analysis focused on the most prominent ones. Therefore, it can be concluded that PM Modi has his own agenda, principles, and ideologies, which Indian leaders are responsible for spreading both explicitly and implicitly.

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