

From Crisis to Collaboration: The Role of Communication Accommodation Theory in Imran Khan's Speech at the UN General Assembly

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Original Article

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Abstract

The research paper explores the critical role of Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) in communication of crisis and collaboration with reference to Imran Khan's historic speech at the United Nations General Assembly. Khan expressed and exhibited the exceptional potential of communication as the first ever Pakistani leader to courageously discuss the concerns of Islamophobia and the Kashmir dispute in this global platform. The study investigates how communication accommodation strategies can be identified within Khan's speech, which helps establish and maintain a positive relationship with the audience, as well as fostered collaborative discourse on these sensitive topics. By examining Khan's speech, the research explores the alignment between communication accommodation strategies, and Khan's approach in communication with a particular focus on speech convergence and divergence. In addition, the research examines the collaborative aspects of Khan's speech; how it fostered dialogue and mutual understanding on pressing global issue of Islamophobia. The findings reveal that Khan's address was not merely a conspicuous speech but an act of diplomacy demonstrated through skillful communication, using the power of words to shift the global narrative. His speech demonstrated the presence of nonverbal accommodation and assertiveness, that engaged the audience and promoted positive constructive discourse at international forum of UN General Assembly. The research thus highlights the significance of CAT in establishing collaborative and reconciliatory discourse and communication dynamics at international forums, advancing our comprehension of political discourse and persuasion.

Keywords: Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), Imran Khan's Speech, Social Dialectology, Sociolinguistics, Variationist Sociolinguistic

Introduction

Sociolinguistics is an interdisciplinary field which focuses on investigating the complex relationship between language and society, examining how social factors such as culture, identity, power, and social interaction influence language usage, variation, and development (Fishman, 1972 & Labov, 1966). It validates language as a dynamic and developing system shaped by its users' needs and norms. Sociolinguistics investigates the construction and expression of social identities through language choices and patterns of speech, which frequently act as markers of group membership and contribute to the formation of social bonds (Eckert, 2000). It contributes to our understanding of how language reflects and shapes social structures, power dynamics, and human experiences by investigating language variation, identity building, and language change (Trudgill, 1972).

Within the vast terrain of sociolinguistics, one prominent subfield that has attracted significant attention is social dialectology. It is the discipline of sociolinguistics that scrutinizes the ways in which language varies across different social groups and communities (Labov, 1966). It is a study of the impact of social factors such as class, ethnicity, gender, and age on language use and pronunciation (Labov, 1966). This study of linguistic variation is critical for understanding the intricate fabric of human communication.

Language variation illuminates the inherent diversity within a language. It encompasses differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and even non-verbal cues like body language. Labov's seminal study (1966) on New York City English, for instance, revealed how specific phonological features varied across social groups. This variation can be influenced by social identity, geographical location, and historical developments, both consciously and unconsciously (Eckert & Rickford, 2001).

Variationist sociolinguistics, as a cornerstone within the area of social dialectology, is concerned with analysing systematic variation in language, detecting patterns of usage, and determining the social and contextual factors that drive these changes (Labov, 1972). Researchers aim to reveal the subtle ways in which society shapes and reshapes language by meticulously researching linguistic variation. Variationist Sociolinguistics sheds light on the link between language, identity, and social structure (Eckert, 2000). Influenced by a complex interplay of situational and social factors, language choice refers to the deliberate selection of a particular language or linguistic variety in a given context. Fishman's theory of language domains (1967) emphasizes that people often choose languages based on the functions they serve, considering power dynamics, prestige, and group identity.

Variationist sociolinguistics and sociolinguistics as a whole have a symbiotic relationship. Variationist sociolinguistics provides a systematic framework to investigate language variation within a sociolinguistic context, allowing researchers to elucidate the complexities of linguistic diversity (Labov, 1972). The study of variationist theories in sociolinguistics is imperative for several reasons. Firstly, it offers major insights into how language reflects and reinforces social hierarchies, prejudices, and identity (Trudgill, 1972). Secondly, it illuminates the mechanisms underpinning linguistic change over time. Thirdly, it equips us with the tools to evaluate the impact of linguistic variation on communication and intergroup dynamics (Labov, 1972).

Among the significant variationist theories that developed in sociolinguistics, the work of several luminaries like Labov, Trudgill, Eckert and Gile stand out. Notably, in the mid-20th century, Labov's seminal work on the study of language variation in New York City provided the groundwork for variationist sociolinguistics. Trudgill's study of social class and dialect variation in England provides a link between language and social identity. Furthermore, Eckert's research on adolescent sociolinguistic variation provided insight on how linguistic choices are inextricably linked to the construction of individual identity. However, in the pursuit of comprehending the dynamics of linguistic accommodation in various social settings, this study adopts Howard Giles's Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) as the focal point for analysis.

Giles and his associates have investigated variation in the speech of individual speakers. Giles was particularly interested in how speakers changed the way they spoke according to the person they were talking to. This process was explained in terms of speech accommodation theory or, more broadly, Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT). Giles argued that speakers accommodated to their interlocutor(s): they would tend to converge (adopt similar styles of speaking) when they wished to reduce the social distance between one another, and diverge (speak differently) when they wished to emphasize their distinctiveness or increase their social distance (Deumert & Mesthrie, 2009 & Giles, 2016). Thus CAT is a robust theoretical framework

that offers valuable insights into how individuals modify their language, speech patterns, and nonverbal behavior to converge or diverge from the communication styles of others (Giles et al., 1991).

Adjusting one's communication is a pervasive and integral aspect of effective social interactions. When individuals engage in communication, they promptly initiate the alignment of both verbal and nonverbal components of their behavior. These adaptations form the foundation of Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), which plays a crucial role in understanding the dynamics of communicative encounters (Giles, 2016). CAT illuminates the subtle connection between language, social identity, and social relationships by investigating the processes of convergence and divergence. It emphasizes the need of individuals strategically adjusting their communication styles in order to develop social identity, foster rapport, and improve mutual understanding (Giles et al., 1991). It provides a framework for exploring how social circumstances influence language choices and behaviours, thereby contributing to the formation and negotiation of social identities. CAT's insights into the interplay of language, social identity, and social relationships contribute to a better sociolinguistic understanding of language variation and change, as well as the ways in which language reflects and changes social structures and power dynamics in a variety of social contexts (Giles et al., 1991).

Overall, sociolinguistics and CAT complement each other because sociolinguistics presents a broader framework for understanding language in its societal context, whereas CAT provides unique/specific insights into individuals' accommodation techniques within this broader sociolinguistic environment. Effective communication is critical in political discourse, especially in high-stakes settings like the United Nations General Assembly. World leaders use a variety of strategies to connect and communicate with their audiences and effectively express their messages. A notable instance is Khan's speech at the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. He delivered a passionate address at the UN forum, with the aim of advocating for global peace and unity in general and Pakistan in specific. His intention was to persuade the international audience about the pressing global issue of Islamophobia which was never highlighted in this impressive style and structure at UN Assembly, thus urging the United Nations to take constructive steps. To accomplish this goal, he made strategic and meaningful lexical choices, demonstrating his adept use of language to achieve his objectives. Thus, his speech received historical applause and appraisal for the first time at an international forum.

Khan's oratory skills and strategic communication were on full display during his speech, where he tackled both national and global concerns. In his 25-minute address, he covered four major issues: climate change, money laundering in underdeveloped countries, the Kashmir dispute, and the central focus on Islamophobia. The speech, delivered in such a high-stakes setting necessitated careful consideration of language choices, rhetorical strategies, and persuasive techniques in order to effectively convey his message to a diverse audience of world leaders and representatives from various countries and cultures.

While the theoretic and academic significance of CAT strategies are well-established, there is a limited body of research exploring the identification and analysis of these strategies in the speeches of world leaders. Specifically, within the context of Pakistan, there is a dearth of investigations into how communication accommodation strategies can be successfully and practically utilised for effective communication for reconciliatory themes and to tackle highly sensitive issues as Islamophobia.

Therefore, this study seeks to underline the practical communication strategies within the framework of Communication Accommodation Theory CAT through comprehensive analysis of Khan's address at 74th session of the UN General Assembly in New York. This research

endeavor holds the promise of providing valuable insights into the dynamics of CAT and its profound implications for political discourse as well. Ultimately, it aspires to foster a deeper understanding of the theory's validity and its potential to enrich both theoretical advancements and practical applications in the realm of global politics.

In order to address the mentioned concern and purpose, the paper aims to inquire the following questions:

1. How do the principles and paradigms of Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) highlight the synchronization of both crisis, collaboration and reconciliation in successful communication?
2. How do Communication Accommodation Strategies in Khan's speech at UN General Assembly establish and maintain a positive relationship with his audience?

Accommodation researchers address the precise causes that may drive people to adopt specific linguistic forms. The concept of accommodation is regarded as a universal phenomenon, relevant in both monolingual and bilingual settings, in which speakers adapt their language to the resources available to them. Some researchers, on the other hand, have focused on how groups of speakers, notably in bilingual societies or those speaking different languages, make decisions regarding their language preferences (Deumert & Mesthrie, 2009).

Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), proposed by Howard Giles, is well-known in the field of variationist sociolinguistics. CAT focuses on how individuals change their language and nonverbal behaviour to either converge or diverge from their interlocutors in order to develop rapport and maintain positive relationships (Giles, Coupland, & Coupland, 1991). The theory posits that individuals strategically adjust their communication styles based on their perceptions of social identity, solidarity, and power dynamics (Giles, 1973).

CAT examines the intricate ways individuals modify their language and nonverbal behavior, encompassing tone, accent, pacing, and nonverbal cues, to either converge with or diverge from their conversational partners (Giles, 2016). The selection of a particular language or linguistic variety, termed language choice, embodies deliberate accommodation decisions influenced by perceptions of social identity, solidarity, and power dynamics. This strategic language choice plays a fundamental role in positioning individuals within a given communication context.

Furthermore, language behavior encompasses observable linguistic actions and interactions, revealing the application of convergence or divergence strategies. Individuals adapt their language behavior to either align with or differentiate from their interlocutors. This adaptation in language behavior serves as a tangible manifestation of accommodation strategies, contributing to the establishment of rapport and the cultivation of positive relationships.

Indexicality explores the intricate connections between language and social meaning. It illuminates how linguistic choices serve as indices of an individual's perception of social identity and their intentions within the interaction (Swann, 2009). For instance, when individuals accommodate their language, these adjustments indexically convey their affiliative desires or their intention to assert distinctiveness. Exploring indexicality enhances our understanding of the motivations behind accommodation strategies.

Style-shift represents the dynamic adaptation of language and communication styles within an interaction. It encompasses shifts in speech patterns, tone, and other linguistic features to align with the perceived social dynamics of a given context. It exemplifies how individuals strategically

adjust their communication to convey respect, affiliation, or distinctiveness, further highlighting the interplay between language and social dynamics that synchronizes with paradigms of CAT.

Numerous studies have investigated communication accommodation strategies in diverse contexts, revealing the underlying mechanisms and outputs. Coupland (1984) investigated accommodation in intergenerational communication and discovered that younger people tend to converge with older people to demonstrate respect and bridge generational barriers. Similarly, Giles, Mulac, Bradac, and Johnson (1987) demonstrated how individuals adapt their speech to build positive perceptions and lessen intergroup tensions in their studies.

Gallois, Ogay, and Giles (2005) conducted intercultural communication research and emphasized the relevance of CAT in understanding the dynamics of language convergence and divergence in multicultural environments. They emphasized that people employ accommodation strategies to bridge cultural gaps, identify common ground, and improve communication.

There have been limited studies using Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) in political communication. Researchers like Coupland and Giles (1991) found that politicians strategically adjust their communication styles in televised debates to connect with specific audiences and enhance credibility. Politicians modify vocabulary, tone, and nonverbal cues to effectively communicate. Additionally, studies, such as Rojas, Puig-i-Abril, and Doerr (2018), have explored how CAT is applied in analyzing political speeches. They highlighted the importance of convergence and divergence in political communication, showing that accommodation strategies help politicians build rapport, project charisma, and enhance their persuasive abilities, shaping political discourse and audience perceptions.

Thereby, the collaboration of Variationist Sociolinguistics and Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) highlights the complex nature of language variation and adaptation within the complicated thread of human communication, especially when it comes to deliberation of complex issues like 'Islamophobia'. Variationist Sociolinguistics investigates the structured variation that reflects social distinctions, whereas CAT investigates the strategic choices people make in transforming their language to align with or differentiate from their interlocutors. Together, they demonstrate the richness of linguistic diversity and the strategic nature of communication.

Theoretical Framework

To achieve the objectives of this study, the research adapts Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) as proposed by Giles, as a theoretical framework for analyzing communication behaviors and language variations in social interactions. CAT allows for an investigation into how speakers adapt their language and communication styles, either converging or diverging, to establish rapport and maintain positive relationships and achieve desired communicative goals. (Soliz & Giles, 2012).

CAT has evolved significantly since its inception in the early 1970s, initially based on Giles' Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT) of 1973. SAT, influenced by Byrne's Similarity Attraction Theory (1971), posited that individuals seek acceptance by modifying their communication styles when interacting with those from different social groups. However, as research revealed additional communication complexities, Giles and colleagues embarked on a comprehensive study in the 1970s, leading to the expansion and refinement of the theory and its renaming as CAT in 1987 (Giles, 2008).

Within CAT, two primary accommodative strategies, convergence and divergence, play pivotal roles. Convergence involves individuals adjusting their communication patterns to mirror those of their conversational partners, whether consciously or subconsciously (Giles, 2016). This adaptation is driven by the desire for social recognition and rewards, aligning with Similarity

Attraction Theory (Byrne, 1971), where perceived similarity enhances likability and respect (Soliz & Giles, 2012). Successful convergence increases interaction predictability and communication efficacy. Therefore, it may result in positive evaluations of efficiency and cooperation (Soliz & Giles 2012, 5). It can happen on a conscious and subconscious level. This means people can accommodate their speech on purpose, or it happens without them realizing it.

Conversely, divergence highlights variations in speech and nonverbal behaviors among communicators. It is used by individuals to emphasize their belonging to a distinct group, signaling to themselves or others that they differ from the conversational partner (Griffin, 2012). The urge to signal individuality and reinforce group identities is the basic drive for divergence (Soliz & Giles, 2012). Divergence, in essence, is a reaction to the human desire to maintain and strengthen group identities (Griffin, 2012). It serves the objective of retaining or earning social rewards through adhering to distinctiveness, whether used deliberately or involuntarily (Griffin, 2012). According to Giles (2016), "Convergence and Divergence can each take multiple forms, depending on the social value, degree, symmetry, modality, and duration of the behavior. These are not mutually exclusive strategies and both may be enacted simultaneously".

Both convergence and divergence strategies encompass various facets of communication, including speech patterns, language use, pronunciation, temporal aspects, vocal intensity, discourse style, and nonverbal expression. Furthermore, accommodation can extend to the content of discourse, such as the sharing of personal information, self-disclosure, or humor preferences (Gallois & Giles, 2005 & Giles & Smith, 2016).

Adjustment of communication features does not always imply adjustment of all available variables and dimensions. Accordingly, CAT identifies unimodal and multimodal adaptations. The former refers to shifts on a single dimension only, whilst the latter relates to shifts on multiple dimensions at the same time (Giles, 2016).

Thus, CAT's comprehensive framework provides valuable insights into the interplay of identity, social interactions, and communication behaviors. This study employs CAT to analyze communication behaviors and language variations, shedding light on how speakers adjust their styles in social interactions, thereby enhancing our understanding of communication dynamics and accommodation strategies in the analyzed texts.

This study employs a Qualitative Content Analysis research method to analyze Imran Khan's speech at the 74th session of the UN General Assembly through the lens of Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT). Qualitative Content Analysis provides in-depth analysis and interpretation of language choices, rhetorical strategies, and communication patterns in the speech.

The primary data source utilized for this study is the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) proposed by Howard Giles, as elucidated in the book "Communication Accommodation Theory: Negotiating Personal Relationships and Social Identities Across Contexts," published in 2016. Additionally, we have utilized a verbatim transcription of Khan's UN General Assembly speech, which was sourced from BR Web Desk and published on September 27, 2019. Purposive sampling is employed for analysis, and relevant background information, including the political context, is gathered from reliable sources. To streamline the analytical process, the researchers have segmented the speech into four sections.

Analysis and Interpretation

Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) suggests that individuals adapt their communication behaviors to accommodate or align with the speech patterns, norms, and expectations of their interlocutors. In **section 1** of the speech (attached appendix), we analyze various accommodation strategies observed as the speaker engages with the audience and emphasizes the urgency of the issues at hand. One key aspect of CAT is speech convergence, which involves aligning one's speech with the patterns of the interlocutors. In **line 1 of section 1** of the speech (appendix), Khan demonstrates convergence by addressing the audience as "*Honorable Secretary-General, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.*" By employing these respectful and inclusive terms, he acknowledges the diverse status of the audience, establishing a positive connection with them right from the start.

In addition to convergence, we can identify the strategy of divergence in Khan's speech, where distinctive points are highlighted, and differences in speech patterns are emphasized. In line 4 of the first section, he deviates from the speech patterns of other world leaders by acknowledging the challenges his country faces, stating that he came to the forum "*despite a difficult time in my country facing challenges.*" This statement highlights the unique circumstances of Pakistan and portrays Khan as a leader who prioritizes global issues despite domestic struggles. It emphasizes his commitment to addressing urgent problems and sets him apart from other world leaders.

Furthermore, we can identify instances of CAT's accommodation through content convergence in Khan's speech. He addresses the globally recognized issue of climate change, aligning himself with other leaders who have discussed it. In line 6 of the section 1, Khan indicates his awareness of the discourse on climate change by mentioning, "*I have seen a lot of leaders talk about this.*" Through this alignment with the shared concern, he establishes common ground and positions himself as a collaborator in tackling the problem. This identification of content convergence strategies aims to foster cooperation and effective collective action within his speech.

In section 2 of the speech (appendix), Khan addresses the issue of corruption in developing countries and its impact on their economic development. To establish a positive rapport with the audience and acknowledge their authority, Khan demonstrates convergence by addressing the President as "*Mr. President.*" This convergence strategy aims to show respect and establish a favorable relationship with the audience, capturing their attention and support for his message.

In addition, Khan highlights the stark contrast between rich and poor countries, underlining the widening wealth gap resulting from corruption. To diverge from diplomatic norms and convey a sense of urgency, in line third of the second section of the speech, he employs straightforward and emotive language, describing the effects of corruption as "*devastating*" and "*impoverishing.*" This strategic choice to diverge from conventional diplomatic discourse aims to draw the audience's attention to the gravity of the issue and elicit an emotional response, ultimately motivating them to take action against corruption.

Furthermore, Khan's speech aligns with the paradigms of Communication Accommodation Theory regarding content convergence. He centers his discussion on the issue of corruption and its impact on developing countries, aligning himself with the shared concern for combating corruption. In line 5 of the section 2, by stating, "*Today poor countries are being plundered by their elites,*" he emphasizes the common struggle faced by developing nations. Through this content convergence strategy, Khan seeks to foster a sense of unity among the audience, encouraging their support in addressing the issue collectively.

In section 3 (appendix) of Khan's speech, he addresses the issue of Islamophobia and its impact on Muslim communities worldwide. Within this context, we identify the utilization of convergence

and divergence as Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) strategies, applied to establish a connection with the audience, challenge stereotypes, and foster understanding.

In analyzing Khan's speech, we identify instances of convergence as he highlights the shared concern of Islamophobia and its alarming growth since 9/11. In his statement in the second line of the third section of the speech, *"Islamophobia has grown since 9/11, and it is alarming. It is creating divisions,"* Khan acknowledges the shared experiences and concerns of Muslims. This identification of convergence strategies serves to demonstrate how Khan attempts to establish a connection with his audience and foster empathy towards the issue. The underlying goal of employing this convergence strategy is to bridge gaps between different groups and promote mutual understanding.

In addition to convergence, we observe instances of divergence in Khan's speech as he addresses stereotypes and misconceptions about Islam. In line 3 of section, 3 of the speech, Khan questions the perception that Muslim women wearing hijab are seen as a problem or a threat and states, *"A woman can take off her clothes in some countries but she cannot put more on? And why has this happened? Because certain Western leaders equated Islam with terrorism."* The style shift in this instance is marked by the use of a rhetorical question and a more conversational tone. This style shift serves the rhetorical purpose of making the point more relatable and emotionally engaging for the audience. It introduces a conversational element that helps establish a connection with a broader audience and enhances the overall impact of Khan's message. Through these identified instances of divergence from the prevailing narrative, Khan aims to evoke a sense of injustice and promote reflection on underlying biases and stereotypes. This identification of divergence strategies in Khan's speech is aimed at challenging preconceived notions and promoting a more nuanced understanding of Islam.

Khan's speech aligns with the paradigms of Communication Accommodation Theory in terms of content convergence. He emphasizes that there is only one Islam based on compassion and justice. By aligning with the shared values of compassion and justice, he aims to counter the notion of radical Islam and emphasize the peaceful nature of the religion. This content convergence strategy, aims to create a common ground and dispel misconceptions about Islam.

Furthermore, Khan diverges from the Western perspective by providing a different understanding of Islam and the Prophet Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ). In line twenty-two of the third section, he states, *"They don't look at religion the way that we do. And so, in their eyes, Islam was an intolerant religion."* This departure from the Western viewpoint aligns with the concept of knowledgeability, which emphasizes the role of cultural and contextual knowledge in communication. By highlighting the cultural and religious differences in perceiving Islam, he aims to challenge the Western perception and promote a more nuanced understanding. This divergence strategy is aimed at dispelling stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding Islam.

Moreover, within Khan's speech, we discern instances of convergence as he discusses his personal experience playing cricket in the West and gaining insights into the Western mindset. In line 19 of the section 3, he states, *"Most importantly, I want to emphasize, in order to elucidate this issue of Islamophobia, I've played cricket in the West, and I've gained insight into the Western mindset."* Through this shared experience, it appears Khan through intergenerational communication aims to establish a connection and bridge cultural gaps. This use of convergence strategy, as we observe, seeks to foster empathy and understanding across diverse cultures.

We also identify content convergence in Khan's speech as he provides examples and teachings from Islamic history that counter the negative stereotypes associated with Islam. He highlights the state of Medina as a welfare state that took responsibility for women, the poor, and minorities. In

line 28 -30 of the section 3, he states, "*The state of Medina was the first that took responsibility for women; the widows, the poor. The state announced all humans were equal; whatever the color of their skin.*" By emphasizing the teachings of Islam regarding equality, protection of places of worship, and justice for all, he aligns with shared values and challenges the misconceptions surrounding the religion.

One specific example from the text that illustrates CAT strategies is when Khan draws a parallel between the sensitivity towards the Holocaust and the respect Muslims ask for regarding their Holy Prophet Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ). In line thirty-eight to forty of the third section, he states, "*In Western society, the Holocaust is treated with sensitivity because it hurts the Jewish community. So that's the same respect we ask for; do not hurt our sentiments by maligning our Holy Prophet (وَأَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ).* That is all we ask." This example explicitly exhibits convergence strategy where Khan appeals to the shared value of sensitivity and respect for religious sentiments. He aims to create understanding and empathy by drawing a parallel between the sensitivities of different communities, aligning knowledgeability by leveraging common ground to enhance communicative effectiveness.

In the final section 4, of the speech, Khan addresses the Kashmir conflict and expresses concerns about India's actions in the region. By highlighting the government's commitment to peace in the line 1-2 of section 4, Khan states, "*When we came into power; our first priority was that Pakistan would be that country that would try its best to bring peace.*" Through this statement, the establishment of common ground with the audience, emphasizing their mutual desire for a resolution and a shared goal is fully evident. The identified convergence strategy appears to aim at fostering unity and cooperation among the listeners, encouraging their support for the cause.

Also, he criticizes the Indian government's actions in Kashmir, questioning the mindset that "*locks up 8 million people,*" emphasizing the plight of women, children, and sick individuals. By highlighting the contrast between the treatment of animals and humans, Khan aims to establish empathy and evoke a sense of injustice through non verbal means of indexicality. By discussing the lockdowns, arrests, and human rights abuses, he seeks to elicit empathy and emotional engagement from the audience. This nonverbal accommodation strategy aims to reinforce his narrative regarding the need for justice and self-determination for the people of Kashmir. This communication strategy aligns with the convergence paradigm of CAT that individuals adapt their communication to create a positive relationship with their audience, while also inducing empathy by drawing attention to the suffering of the people in Kashmir.

Additionally, in Khan's speech, divergence emerges as a communication strategy when he provides historical context to the Kashmir conflict. This includes emphasizing Pakistan's involvement in the Soviet war and cooperation with the Americans. Furthermore, he highlights the transformation of Pakistan's narrative from a "*freedom struggle*" to being labeled as "*terrorism*" following the events of 9/11. Through these historical references and challenges to prevailing notions, Khan uses a rhetorical strategy to present a distinctive perspective on the issue, encouraging the audience to reevaluate their understanding of the conflict.

Moreover, in his speech, we identify another form of divergence strategies, as Khan presents alternative perspectives and challenges prevailing narratives. He accuses PM Modi and the BJP of racial superiority and arrogance, suggesting that their actions in Kashmir will lead to further radicalization and potential incidents like Pulwama. Khan highlights the human rights abuses in Kashmir, including killings, rapes, and the arrest of political leaders. By drawing attention to these issues, we observe a divergence from the dominant narrative as Khan seeks to disrupt the perception that dismisses human rights concerns. This identification of a divergence strategy

aligns with the paradigm of CAT that individuals may deviate from the speech patterns of others to assert their unique viewpoints.

Lastly, we identify assertiveness as a communication accommodation strategy in Khan's speech, wherein he makes bold statements and challenges the actions of the Indian government. He accuses India of imposing curfews, increasing troop presence, and violating human rights in Kashmir. Furthermore, he draws comparisons between the ideology of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and figures like Hitler and Mussolini. Through this assertiveness, Khan's aim is to fortify his argument and emphasize his role as a defender of human rights and justice.

The findings of this research indicate the presence of convergence and divergence strategies and the aligned concepts of CAT as viable and valid precepts, underlined and highlighted in Khan's speech, resulting in a reconciliatory and collaborative attempt in establishing the positive repertoire at international/global plate form. Through the utilization of dignified and inclusive language expression, Khan aptly bridged the communication gap between himself and the diverse array of world leaders and delegates present. He converged his message with common issues and experiences, emphasizing collaboration and shared aims.

The use of divergence strategies is also evident in Khan's speech that highlighted Pakistan's specific circumstances and internal concerns, along with the employment of emotive language to create urgency and evoke emotional responses. Khan dispels stereotypes by offering historical background and alternative viewpoints on issues like Kashmir dispute and Islamophobia.

The nonverbal accommodation strategies of indexicality and style shifting is evident in Khan's speech, that aimed to elicit empathy from the audience. These strategies involve the use of emotive words to describe the suffering of specific groups and instances of human rights violations. Khan uses emotive techniques to assert his position by making assertive statements and offering critiques of opposing groups. Additionally, he draws connections between specific ideologies and negative historical figures, which clearly and lucidly reflects the aspect of knowledgeability on part of speaker to converge the divergent point of views. Divergence is observed to intentionally emphasize Pakistan's unique conditions and important concerns, while convergence is seen as fostering a sense of unity, mutual understanding, and audience participation. Notably, Khan's language approach is modified deftly, fluctuating between convergence and divergence strategies as needed. This adaptability corresponds with CAT's expectations, emphasizing the theory's validity and relevance in the context of analyzing Khan's speech.

The findings have implications for political discourse, audience persuasion, and the importance of communication strategies in shaping public opinion. The findings demonstrate a consistent alignment between the identification of communication accommodation strategies in Khan's speech and the paradigms underlined within CAT.

Thus, by identifying strategies of CAT in Khan's speech, we can recognize how Khan passionately addressed the United Nations forum on critical issues. By offering reconciliation and collaboration to existing crisis in the name of 'Islamophobia', the speech aimed to advocate for global peace and unity while emphasizing and urging the United Nations to take constructive actions; in other words, stopping violence and victimization in name of Islam generally labeled as 'Islamophobia'. To achieve these goals, Khan's strategic lexical choices and skillful language usage played a pivotal role in his effective communication.

Conclusion

The study constitutes a thorough examination of the practical viability of Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) when applied to the analysis of Khan's speech at the World Leaders Forum. A careful investigation of the identification of communication accommodation strategies, specifically speech convergence and divergence within Khan's speech, yielded significant insights into the theory's validity in the arena of global persuasive discourse. This study within the CAT paradigm has unequivocally demonstrated the broad applicability and effectiveness of speech convergence and divergence on crucial issues such as the Kashmir dispute and Islamophobia and producing a sense of unity and collaboration among a diverse international audience.

These findings highlight the striking synergy between identification of communication strategies in Khan's speech and the theoretical underpinnings of Communication Accommodation Theory. This research confirms the theory's exceptional adaptability and usefulness in the field of political discourse. The analysis of Khan's careful use of language and communication style to engage a worldwide broad audience effectively demonstrates CAT's everlasting relevance. Significantly, through the analysis we discerned that Communication Accommodation Theory played a central role in facilitating collaboration as a response to the critical global challenges he addressed.

To conclude, Khan's speech not only serves as a captivating case study but also provides vital insights into the continued significance and applicability of Communication Accommodation Theory within modern political discourse. While navigating the intricate landscape of international communication, our observation of communication accommodation strategies being applied within Khan's speech highlights the theory's effectiveness in bridging diverse perspectives and fostering substantial global dialogues. This study emphasizes the critical role of CAT as an analytical framework for comprehending the intricate interplay between language, identity, and persuasion in the contemporary political arena, reinforcing its enduring significance in the analysis of communication strategies and their impact on diverse global audiences.

Finally, the research holds significant value in the field of Sociolinguistics as it addresses a notable gap in current knowledge and offers a distinct contribution to advancing academic comprehension regarding sociolinguistic variationists. By scrutinizing Khan's speech at the 74th session of the UN General Assembly through the lens of Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), the paper underlined the intricacies of language use and accommodation to highlight the deep, critical crisis associated to the term and concept of Islamophobia and provided a way out for collaboration and reconciliation to the established and exaggerated global political debate and discourse. The paper, thus, enriches our comprehension of how communication accommodation functions in real-world sociolinguistic contexts and the collaborative dimension provides valuable insights into how leaders employ language as a tool for diplomacy and global cooperation.

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