Discursive and Phonetic Analysis of Muniba Mazari Bloch's Speech: We All Are Perfectly Imperfect

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Abstract

Presently, the Critical Discourse Analysis has developed differently and entered into a new phase. We find not only articles on Critical Discourse Analysis in academic journals but many speeches on online sources too. We see discursive videos and speeches on YouTube, TV and other digital platforms. One of the speeches that we come across is a motivational speech. This study presents the functional linguistic analysis of the famous motivational speech of Muniba Mazari Bloch, "We All Are Perfectly Imperfect" using the qualitative approach to explore the discursive use of sound patterns by Muniba Mazari Bloch. This analysis aims to shed light on the speech management by Mazari to inspire her listeners by the insightful selection and deployment of particular speech sounds, speech pragmatics, and rhythmic patterns. Research has been conducted using the M.A.K Halliday's theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics which is based on the functions performed by the linguistic expressions in certain societal contexts/settings. The findings show that Muniba Mazari Bloch employs particular phonological style and supra segmental features of language to have an impact on the people who get influenced and inspired by her motivational speech. This study is useful for understanding the implicit interests of the speaker with the use of elegant speech phrases and the phonetic schemes to control the minds of her listeners.

Keywords: motivational speech, sound patterns, supra segmental features, systemic functional linguistics, discourse

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1. Introduction

Today, speech does not merely convey information but is also a weapon for the propagation and defense of a person's ideas. It is well-known fact that language is never 'neutral' since it connects the speaker's private and public worlds; hence it is possible to infer the speaker's intention from a specific interaction (Henry & Tator, 2009). Motivational speeches are a form of persuasion in which the communicators inspire their listeners to gain control over them. Speakers can inspire their listeners to take certain action and reach their shared goals by appealing to their shared sense of purpose and providing them with the motivation to do so. Given this, no one can claim neutrality when discussing the function of language in the realm of motivation. It's important to note that this takes into account the connection between words and the larger social and cultural milieus they're embedded in. This entails the impact of language on social identities and interactions (Asif & Zhiyong, 2020). It verifies that "Language is embodiment of traditions, standards and beliefs of a particular society" (Mahmood et al., 2020,p.871). Moreover such a purposeful language shapes the listeners thoughts, ideas, and beliefs as discourse refers to both spoken and written language which is used for a specific purpose. Discourse analysis analyzes the conversations in order to gain insight into the nature of language use

Every motivational speaker has a particular style and specific language package in order to inspire and influence the listeners. Such motivational speeches attract many people who get inspiration for their lives. These speeches are not only valuable for political scientists and historians but also for the linguists and discourse analysts. Language, according to Halliday (1978), is considered to be a social act because it is used in a social context, namely, the act of communicating with other people. There is a close and interdependent relationship between language and culture. We become who we are through the language in both forms: written and spoken. Motivational speeches are the recently established social media weapons where not only words but spoken style and phonological pattern are highly significant. "Phonological recognition is defined by Yopp and Yopp (2009) as the "... sensitivity to the sound structure of a language." It requires one to be able to tune out the meaning of spoken words in a social context or setting. Motivational speeches are relatable and have a capacity to ignite online debates as "the distinctiveness of online literature is the active participation of the readers or viewers" (Ahmad & Gang, 2020, p. 126).

Throughout her life journey, the famous Pakistani female motivational speaker Muniba Mazari Bloch has been an inspiration to others. In 2017, Muniba Mazari Bloch gave a speech at Malaysia titled as: "We All Are Perfectly Imperfect". This study is the critical functional linguistic analysis of this speech and the phonetic features in this speech. This analysis suggests a method of understanding phonetic patterns in the light of their role in establishing a certain discursive goal. This analysis is different from others because it explores the particular rhythmic styles in language employed by the speaker to have an impact on the audience. Such an analysis also takes into consideration the gestures, tones and intonations of the speaker which are used by the speaker to be an influential motivational speaker. Muniba Mazari Bloch makes her speech sounds function in a particular way to establish rhetoric power over the audience and that the discursive practices could be best interpreted not only through the discourse markers only (that have been analyzed in the previous researches), but also through a particular impact of sound patterns. This type of analysis makes use of functional language since it is predicated on the premise that linguistic forms are inextricably specified by the purposes for which they are employed (Hu, 2017). It reminds me of an article "Blend of Ethics, Politics and Stylistics in Trauma Narrative" (Ahmad et al., 2021) where the political views are analyzed via stylistics.

2. Literature Review

Wang Junling conducted a comprehensive study on speech by a world reknown politician in 2010 . This research used theory of systemic functional grammar to examine Barak Osama's "Change has come" slogan from the perspective of its transitivity and modality in an effort to restore his public's faith in him as a leader. He spoke in a way that was accessible to the audience. He readily gained popular support and bolstered public faith in him with this political address.

Memon et al. (2014) examined Benazir Bhutto's public speech with discourse point of view. This work provided a critical analysis of the ideology behind the election agenda presented in her speech. This research work looks at the dissemination of an ideology through language by analyzing the discourse content in the speech while using Socio- cognitive approach to CDA.

Ernawati and Shandy (2022)'s study of Muniba Mazari Bloch's Speech is also based on Critical Discourse Analysis and Functional Linguistics. It explores the relationships among language, ideology and power. However it focuses on word choice and speech acts. Speech act is an important aspect of Critical Discourse Analysis. This study details all different types of speech acts as tactfully used by the speaker in her speech.

Tayyab et al. (2022)'s work on Muniba Mazari Bloch's Speech uses Leech and Short (2007)'s model of stylistic analysis that studies lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech, context, and cohesion. It mainly considers figures of speech and the resultant rhetorical impact.

Thus the works of analysis have already been there in past on Muniba Mazari Bloch's speeches. The above mentioned previous researches have analyzed linguistic devices, stylistic use of figures of speech and discourse markers in Muniba Mazari Bloch's speech but phonetic and supra segmental features of language used by Muniba Mazari Bloch have not been specifically analyzed . The lack of such analysis represents a gap in already done research on this speech. In this study we are critically analyzing the discourse in this speech from phonological point of view.

3. Methodology and Theoretical framework
This qualitative research entails a functional linguistic analysis of selected lines of Muniba Mazari Bloch's speech "We All Are Perfectly Imperfect" by utilizing M.A.K Halliday's theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Stylistics and Critical Discourse Analysis.

M.A.K Halliday is a great name in the field critical linguistics. His works have linked language and discourse at multiple levels. One of his ideas is the notion of meta-function. His idea of meta-function has three divisions: the ideational function, the interpersonal function and the textual function. The present work is based on textual function of the language as used by a writer or a speaker for creating a particular impact. This analysis on the textual dimension of the speech focuses on intonation, repetition of words, body language and expressions of the speaker. The study centers on the connection that exists between speech and the manner in which it is delivered; the connection between the text of the speech and the style of utterance of the words. SFL is centered on language functions. A functional

approach based on phonology is taken, involving analysis of the utterance in terms of roles such as Actor, Agent/Medium, Message, Mood, etc. (Halliday, 1994).

According to Leech (2007), "style is the way in which something is spoken, written or performed." Thus, one aspect of stylistics refers to the study of sound patterns and style of speech. The style is an idiosyncratic quality of a writer or a speaker that makes one different from others. It is the style that has made what Shakespeare was as the great dramatist of all times. However the style was mostly analyzed on the basis of written texts whereas the present work has brought into analysis the speech of a famous and influential speaker. In fact, this study links discourse and stylistics for the analysis of the speech under discussion: speech by Muniba Mazari Bloch. According to Fairclough (2001), the study of signs, gestures, and symbols in addition to the written, spoken, and printed text makes up critical discourse analysis. Specifically, it focuses on the underlying concerns of the speech delivered by the speaker. In fact Motivational speakers use their talks as a means of exerting influence over their audiences.

Data relevant to Muniba Mazari Bloch's speech is identified and analyzed for the discursive study. As speech practice is rhetorical so this analysis is based on the analysis of speech within a social context to analyze the impact of Muniba Mazari Bloch's speech on the society. This study concentrates on the discourse and explores the link that exists between speech production and transmission of ideas. The data utilized in this study is in the form of utterances and this information has been compiled from the video recording of this speech. A video recording of this speech is the primary source of data for investigation. After downloading the video from You Tube its vocal patterns in combination with its transcription are examined in accordance with the M.A.K. Holliday's systemic functional linguistic theory, stylistic analysis of speech patterns and critical discourse analysis.

3.1 Methodology and Theoretical framework
1. How does Muniba Mazari Bloch make use of supra segmental features of language in her   speech"?
2. How does she make the sounds function in particular ways to deliver a powerful discursive speech?

4. Speech Analysis and Discussion

Utterance No.1: "Words can make you, break you they can heal your soul, they can damage you forever" (Mazari, 2017.)

In the field of systemic functional linguistics, the context of a given situation is comprised of a set of factors which correlate with the way language is realized in speech generated. She utters the word "words" by raising the back of the tongue and rounding the lips in a way that she is making the voiced sound by vibrating the vocal chords to make the sound more powerful.

(see the video athttps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBnAMUkNM2k).

It indicates that she is making the use of her strong rhetoric power over the audience. Through using the glide consonant she is also characterizing the way through which people are going to perceive it and be influenced by her rhetoric. One rhetoric device which has been used by her in uttering this line is consonance and uses of the words "make and break" in a sequence as a symbol of having language power to influences the audience. When she utters the word "make", she makes an effective use of the vowel sound instead of simply uttering a vowel sound. Through these phonological tactics, she makes her speech strong and enhances its impact on her listeners.

Utterance No.2: "I always try to use positive words in my life. Wherever I go, they call it adversity; I call it opportunity".

Systemic functional linguistics insists that form and meaning are linked and it is practically done by the Muniba Mazari Bloch. The meaning making resource here is the use of passive words along with slow rhythm and downplaying the power of others by saying "they call it adversity" then she pauses and she says "I call it opportunity". She voiced the "I" by making her pitch high to highlight the point of emphasis. Her use of emphasis here likely plays a role in the creation of an impact on her audience. Thus she manages to control the receiver's tendency to build negative stereotypes about a speaker. M.A.K Halliday, the founder of systemic functional linguistics, calls such sort of functions performed by language as ideational, interpersonal and textual functions. Ideational function of language propagates certain impressions. Therefore, the audience value Muniba Mazari Bloch as credible speaker and embrace her ideas, knowledge, and

views. This demonstrates the significance of the way a word or letter is pronounced in shaping the attitudes of the masses.

Utterance No.3: "That's why, in Pakistan, people called me the 'iron lady' of Pakistan".
In discursive analysis, language is a tool, it is apt to think that its patterns are better examined and understood in relation to the roles they play, as proposed by Halliday's functional approach to language. The way she sounds herself the iron lady of Pakistan clearly a discursive indication of her strong impression over the audience because she is using a metaphor to strengthen her identity as a powerful woman in a traditional culture. Moreover, from the phonetic point of view that she drops the voice twice by raising and lowering of pitch, we can infer that she is making herself an embodiment of tolerance as thousands of people get paralyzed everyday but they don't sound that they are iron people. Reality, according to Sapir, is not simply supplied to us through language but is mediated by several linguistic representations (Sapir, 1921). The discursive model of language values the process how meanings are coded in both spoken and written language to control the minds of the audience. So, the way she sounds has a strong effect on the available means of persuasion in the situational context in which audience perceive her.

Utterance No.4: "And do you know how we all begin?"
In addition to the consistent sounding in her lines one more discursive practice has been analyzed here; the communication equipped with questioning results in a powerful impression. First she takes a pause than she has utters the word how with the movement of vocal chords but it is not voiced and the best way to attract audience is to control your volume of speech as she does here. She is slowing down and is taking a pause. (see the video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBnAMUkNM2k) She is not allowing inflection at the end of her sentence and it makes her sound effective and then she is keeping her tone steady. When she slows down her speed of utterance by asking the question from the audience this speech tactic affects the way audience perceive her. Today's youth are too easily motivated by all these things as the priorities of language choices of Pakistani youth (Javed et al, 2022) are well known by such speakers.

Utterance No.5: "We all have fears. Fear of the unknown, fear of known, fear of losing people. Fear of losing health, money."
Discourse is a piece of language that is bigger than a sentence and has a strong connection to a particular context. One of the tactics to establish her rhetoric power over the audience takes into account Edward Sapir s' research on voice attractiveness that how often you smile during the speech also affects your audience (Sapir, 1921). Muniba Mazari Bloch smiles a little when she tells how to come up with your fears. While saying this point Muniba Mazari Bloch has consistently used dental consonant sound /f/ in a rhythmic manner what we called alliteration, a strong rhetoric device, by directly linking the keywords together enabling the audience to make comparisons and connections between them and this rhythm conveys a certain attitude of simply drawing the attention to her words. She utilizes consonance so that the words which are in close proximity to each other, when sounds the same one after the other it will definitely be a tactic to elicit a positive response from the audience.

Utterance No.6: "Thank you so much for all the love, for all the warmth. Thank you all for accepting me. Thank you very much."
One of the discursive practices employed by Muniba Mazari Bloch in this particular utterance involves a specific word with specific sound. The word 'thank you' she repeats thrice. This is a marker use under politeness principle. In the presentation of gratitude through such words, the presenter has a specific goal in mind. While saying the word Thank you, she utilizes the voiceless, dental and fricative consonant 'th'. She is breathing out while moving the tongue sharply downward and throughout the speech she technically uses dental fricatives to make her speech rhythmic and fluent. (See video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBnAMUkNM2k). When 'Th' consonant sounds consistently occurs in a sentence more than once and this pairing reflects the same mouth positions in order to be seem coherent. This discourse marker creates an influence that marks a decorum in her style and it greatly affects the target audience.

Utterance No.7: "You are smiling, are you OK?"
Discourse operation needs context: (1) socio-cultural context (2) situational context. Here, the utterance of "Are you OK" functions as a response activator and she uses it in a persuasive way by stretching the final vowel sound of "ok". The speaker puts a greater emphasis on OK throughout the

delivery of the statement. It can be deduced from this that the term "ok" serves as an indicator of both detailed talk and involvement. The linguistic use of OK here portrays the presenter's feelings at this point in the conversation. The speaker uses the discourse marker OK to prompt the listener to give their reaction to the question being asked. Also she posits the stretched vowel at the end word of word ok instead of simply saying ok and elongating the utterance here is for the purpose of taking audience consideration into account.

Line No.8: "My dear friends, in my situation, there was a tunnel that I had to roll on but there was no light. And that is where I realized that words have the power to heal the soul".

Systemic Functional Linguistics sees scriptures as fragments of communication made for the social reasons. When people listen to a speech or produce their own text, they decide what to highlight, downplay, or leave out. Three factors are important. The first involves the field, or whatever the social group believes to be crucial to talk and write about; the second is the interpersonal, or the words we choose that place us as credible, kind, or fearful, and that position the listeners as colleagues, novices, or enemies; and the third is the language decision that make a text formal or written like, or informal and spoken-like (called the mode), mirroring that all such discursive choices are socially conditioned. Also the interaction between the several interlocutors is what dictates the nature of the speech event and talk, as described and utilized in Goffman's (1981) analysis of radio talk. Based on Goffman's participant categories, Bell (1991) argues that the audience can influence the results of a speech either directly or indirectly. The audience is seen as a component of the discourse process against the sender-receiver dynamics (Craig, 2005). As contextual information is quite essential for a better understanding of not only traditional works but of digital literature too (Javed et al., 2022), it is to be asserted here that, the perspective of language structures serves an artistic purpose. It's a way of showing that the speaker cares about the subject at hand emotionally. Sounding in a particular way like "My dear friends" demonstrate the signaling of emotion, allowing the speaker to emphasize the most salient points as a partners' appeals to the audience and while sounding "My dear friends" she emphasizes on "My" which indicates love and affection towards audience to attack on their specific knowledge (mind control) and make them involved in a conversation.

5. Conclusion

The findings have revealed that Muniba Mazari Bloch has an ability for being an impressive speaker through her speech as the more rhetoric power a speaker has in his/her speech the more he/she will be able to attract the people through the authority of rhetoric power. It appears that sound utterance with the particular pattern as compared to the normal routine way has a profound effect on how people perceive a speaker. Focusing on the phonetic analysis of her speech, it is very clear that her talk contains a significant number of particular phonetic patterns. These phonetic patterns include highness and lowness of pitch, the movement of vocal chords, specific rhythms, and the use of stretched vowels. All of these are the discourse strategies that Muniba Mazari Bloch has used in order to make her conversation effective and powerful. Moreover, she has maintained concentration of her audience throughout the entire speech, and thus she has established cohesion among her statements. The article is beneficial in in understanding a presenter's approach to generate an impact through the talk and persuade the listeners.

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Online Resources
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5tNYkN2p7c (Accessed 5
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