
CONSTRUCTING SELF AND OTHER THROUGH MODALITY: A CORPUS-ASSISTED CRITICAL STYLISTIC STUDY OF PAKISTANI ELECTION MANIFESTOS

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Abstract

This study explores the use and function of modality in the 2024 general election manifestos of three major political parties in Pakistan: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). These parties are selected based on their winning the 2024 general elections. The specialised small-scale corpus of 2024 general election manifestos has been analysed using a mixed-methods mode of inquiry, combining corpus linguistic tools AntConc (4.3.1) and qualitative analysis based on the textual-conceptual function of hypothesising in Jeffries' (2014) Critical Stylistic framework. The modal verbs retrieved through corpus tools have been further analysed with KWIC analysis to find out their frequency and distribution across the selected parties. The data is further examined qualitatively within the purview of the textual-conceptual tool of the Critical Stylistic framework (Jaferries, 2014). The findings reveal a significant contribution of modality in the ideological positioning of the political parties and in their identity construction process. Political narratives are shaped through the strategic use of obligation, prediction, and possibility modals. The study contributes to the growing body of research on Pakistani political discourse focused on the usefulness of analysing ideological meanings in political texts.

Keywords: critical stylistics analysis; political discourse; manifestos; identity, hypothesising, modality

1. INTRODUCTION

The extant literature establishes Election manifestos of political parties as more than a sheer statement of their policies, and plans fulfilling an informational purpose. These multi-purpose documents are crafted meticulously as persuasive texts to mobilise voters by influencing their perceptions and hence to achieve the ultimate goal to secure political power (Arlow, 2024; van Dijk, 2006). In the same vein, Fairclough (2003) mentions the election manifestos as a primary site for examining the interplay between linguistic choices, ideology, and the construction of identity.

Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) mention modality as a significant linguistic component of grammar that functions to express their judgment, attitude, or commitment regarding the proposition. This aspect of language use is relevant to the election manifestos, which express promise and future action in their text via modal auxiliary verbs. The sub-categories of modality include Epistemic and Deontic Modality. Epistemic modality expresses the speaker's assessment of the probability or certainty of a proposition (e.g., may, must, probably, certainly). Whereas, Deontic Modality is concerned with necessity, obligation, or permission (e.g., must, should, ought to, allowed to) (Jeffries, 2014).

The use of modality in the election manifestos poses a problem in the realization of political issues in linguistic terms. The perceived gap between rhetoric and reality often leads to public skepticism in developing countries, like Pakistan, due to the prevalent political instability, which often undermines long-term policy commitments. This democratic charged environment in Pakistan makes election manifestos an important document for critical inquiry. The bulk of research studies in developing countries have focused on political aims and policies rather than on their underlying discourse structures (van Dijk, 2022). This interplay between linguistic choices, ideology, and the construction of identity is a crucial site for critical investigation (Fairclough, 2003).

The realisation of hypothesising through modality often leaves a gap, which benefits the political parties to strategically hedge their promises or firmly commit to a vision, a strategic ambiguity often exploited for ideological purposes. This study examines the grammar of commitment (modality) in the general elections 2024 manifestos of the major political parties in Pakistan through the textual-conceptual function of Hypothesising from the Critical Stylistics framework proposed by Jeffries (2010). Critical Stylistics offers a systematic and comprehensive toolkit combining the tools from critical linguistics and stylistics. This framework is used not only to identify the linguistic choices of the writers but also the ideological implications of such choices (Jeffries, 2007,

2010). Hence, it effectively maps the linguistic choices with the ideological implications of such choices. The term textual-conceptual refers to the two types of meaning, i.e., textual and conceptual, which are similar to Halliday's concept of ideational function in systemic functional grammar (Jeffries, 2010). Jeffries explains that (2014, p.409), "the conceptual part denotes the way the linguistic tools try to capture what a text is doing conceptually in presenting the world, while the textual part refers to the way these resources are utilised to construct the conceptual meaning".

Jeffries (2014) opines that the stylistic choices encode the textual meaning of the linguistic features which are embedded in a text. These stylistic choices are ideologically manipulative because they are made from an ideological perspective. The present study utilises jafferies concept along with the quantitative power of corpus tools AntConc to contribute to the qualitative stylistic interpretation (Simpson, 2014; Baker, 2006), further adding to the replicability and objectivity of the study. The study aims to investigate the use of modal force in constructing self and other identities in the general election manifestos 2024. The particular focus of the study is to find answers to the following research questions.

1. What is the normalised frequency and distribution of modal auxiliary verbs across the 2024 General Election manifestos of selected Pakistani political parties?
2. How is the modality deployed to construct positive self-identity and negative other-identity in the 2024 election manifestos?
3. What are the ideological consequences of the use of modality in the selected manifestos for political persuasion?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical and empirical foundations of the present study have been systematically reviewed in this section to establish the need for the current analysis. The concept of political discourse is defined in CDA as a social practice instrumental in the reproduction of power and ideology (Fairclough, 2003; van Dijk, 2006). The connection between language and politics is inseparable. Linguistic interaction is the primary source through which political activities are enacted. Language as a form of social practice not only reflects but also shapes socio-political realities (Fairclough, 1989). Mey (2001) argues that language acts as a means through which political institutions obtain symbolic representation, while Hall (2001) is of the view that discourse does not merely reflect the meanings of events, rather it produces these meanings.

According to Wodak (2001), in the political domain, the discourse is adjusted in line with audience expectations. This aligns with Habermas's (1987) view of language as a function as a medium of communication and as an instrument of hegemony. In a political context, lexical and syntactic choices have ideological intent contributing to the moral positioning of political actors (Fiske, 1994). As Halliday (1994) observes that social meanings are embodied by the linguistic structures. This language use is most notable in the language of election manifestos, where transitivity patterns, modality, and appraisal resources encode ideological stance and authority. In the vibrant political context of Pakistan, the political legitimacy and the party's credibility are established via the use of language. A key site of this ideological work is visible in the texts of the election manifestos that are characterised by over-persuasion (Wodak, 2021).

Critical Stylistics (CS), a powerful synthesis of formal analysis and critical investigation (Jeffries, 2014), moves beyond traditional aesthetic stylistics to systematically link micro-level linguistic choices to macro-level ideological goals (Simpson, 2014), providing the necessary methodological rigour to the analysis of ideological texts. This framework has compatibility with the corpus tools, which further add to the replicability and rigour of the analysis. In Pakistan, political discourse has largely been analysed through Critical Discourse methods, which have been criticised for their limitations of bias and lack of objectivity (Wodak, 2001; van Dijk, 2008). There is limited research on the use of modality in election manifestos in the Pakistani context, particularly from the perspective of self and other identity construction.

Identity has become a core concept in the discipline of linguistics in recent decades, particularly in the sub-disciplines of linguistics, e.g., sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and gender studies (e.g. Holmes and Meyerhoff, 2003; Benwell and Stokoe, 2006; Talbot, 1995; Tajfel, 1982, Bucholtz and Hall, 2005). Over the years, there has been a change in the concept of identity, not as essentialist (Joseph, 2004, p. 83). It is a significant core concept in critical stylistics. Another key term related to the current study is Van Dijk (1998) defines ideology as a three-dimensional concept, i.e, sense, society, and discourse. According to this, ideology refers to a set of beliefs that are cognitively perceived and socially practised by a particular language speaker. Fairclough (2003) mentions ideologies as "interpretations of aspects of the world that help to build and sustain power, dominance, and exploitative relations" (p.9). Simpson (2004) explains the concept of ideology as a set of beliefs which is instrumental in understanding and interacting with the world around us.

Modality has been examined across genres for its semantic functions (Lyons, 1981; Palmer, 2001; Leech, 2014) and its use in various discourse settings acting as an indicator of cognitive context (van Dijk, 1997). The role of modality in persuasion, manipulation, and commitment in different political contexts has been established, such as Canadian conservative discourse (Lillian, 2008) and UK parliamentary discourse (Vukovic, 2014). Similarly, modality as a tool of identity construction has also been highlighted in political discourse (van Dijk, 2006; Wodak,

2021). These studies highlight the strategic role of high force assertive modals, indicating political commitment and efficiency of the social actors in political discourse. Hence, the extant literature confirms modality as an ideological apparatus to communicate commitment, obligation and the perceived truth value of propositions (Yunisda & Firmansyah, 2019). Most of the studies conducted in Pakistan are either qualitative in nature, from Critical Discourse analysis or limited in scope. This scholarly gap is filled by the present study, which conducts a systematic analysis of modality from an identity perspective with the assistance of a corpus tool in the selected manifesto discourse.

3. METHODOLOGY

The discourse of election manifestos has been analysed in the current study by employing a mixed-methods approach. It combines quantitative corpus tools with qualitative critical interpretation through the lens of the textual-conceptual function of Jeffries, Critical Stylistic framework (2014). Critical Stylistics (Jeffries, 2014) serves as the main analytical framework for the qualitative analysis of the data. Critical Stylistics, in a systematic way, links the formal linguistic choices of Modality to the ideological landscape of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

Hence, the framework ensures that critical claims have verifiable and objective textual evidence. The specific tool used for the analysis hypothesising realised through modality. Through this function, political parties' commitment to future actions is examined. Quantitative analysis is conducted by the corpus linguistic tool AntConc (Anthony, 2023) to find out the frequency and distribution pattern of modal auxiliary verbs. According to Baker (2006), quantitative analytical tools assist in the identification of objective, large-scale linguistic patterns necessary for qualitative interpretation (Baker, 2006).

Jeffries' framework is based on Simons' (1993) framework of modality. In her framework, Jeffries proposed three categories of modality in terms of meaning. The first category is Epistemic Modality, which reflects the speaker's doubt or certainty. The text producers can express a range of strong and weak certainty by different forms of epistemic modality, i.e., might vs sure. The second category, Deontic Modality, refers to the degree of obligation or desirability of the text producer, i.e., should. The second category, Boulomaic Modality, refers to the desire of the speaker to do an action, i.e. wish.

3.1 Data Sources and Sample

The study conducts the analysis on the three purposively selected election manifestos of a sample of three major political parties that contested the 2024 general election. The manifestos of those political parties are selected that have contested and won the 2024 general election and got representation in the parliament.

TABLE 2. A Summary of the Data Collected from the 2024 General Election Manifestos

| S. No. | Name of the Political Party | No. of Words |
|--------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) | 24411 |
| 2 | Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) | 21455 |
| 3 | Pakistan Tehreek-E-Insaf (PTI) | 42013 |
| | Total words | 87879 |

3.2 Data Compilation Process

The small-scale, specialised corpus was compiled by retrieving the 2024 general election manifestos of the selected three political parties from their official websites. The identification phase exclusively focused on the linguistic resources that realise the Critical Stylistic function of Hypothesising, primarily the modal auxiliary verbs. These modal verbs directly express the degree of commitment and certainty.

3.3 Data Analysis Procedure

The data is analysed in two sequential and interdependent phases. In the first phase, quantitative analysis is carried out with the help of the corpus tool AntConc (4.3.1) to establish the frequency and distribution of modal auxiliary verbs. To make the under-comparison corpora comparable, Mayer's (2023) criterion regarding the comparison of corpora of unequal sizes was followed. The frequencies of the stylistic strategies identified in each manifesto were normalised per 10000 words. The KWIC analysis was conducted in the second phase to examine the collocates (subjects/verbs) of the modal auxiliary verbs. This collocational examination assisted in identifying whether the commitment/necessity was attributed to the party itself (In-Group) or the opposition/past government (Out-Group).

In the second stage, through the mapping of linguistic realisation to their ideological function, the interpretation within the purview of Jeffries (2014) critical stylistic framework was carried out. The modal auxiliary verb instances were interpreted in the context based on the concordance lines. Each modal auxiliary instance was interpreted in context and categorised according to its function in identity construction.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

This section presents a critical stylistic analysis of the 2024 general election manifestos of the selected political parties: Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan People's Party (PPP), and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Jeffries (2014) observes the ideational function of modality in relation to its textual conceptual sense. Modal auxiliary verbs employed by writers in verb phrases are characterised as the typical instances of modality. However, modal verbs are not used in all of the verb phrases. The list of modal verbs in the English language is as follows: 'can, could, shall, should, will, would, may, might, must, dare, ought, and need' (P. 117).

The following tabular presentation shows the frequencies of this stylistic strategy in the general election manifestos. In the given tables, 'Self(n)' signifies the normalised frequency of the strategy of modality, 'Others(n)' indicates opposing political leaders and parties, and the sum of the normalised frequencies of 'Self' and 'Others' is presented as 'Total(n)'.

(i) Pakistan Muslim League (N): Use/ Distribution of Modals in General Election Manifestos 2024

Table 5.5 Normalized Frequencies of Modal Verbs in PML-N Manifesto 2024 Per 10000 Words.

| Modals | Self(n) | Others(n) |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|
| Will | 21 | 01 |
| Would | 02 | - |
| Shall | 02 | 01 |
| Could | - | 02 |
| Total | 25 | 04 |

The normalised frequencies of the use of modal auxiliary verbs in the Pakistan Muslim League (N) Manifesto indicate their frequent use for self-representation and a less focus on other references. Contrary to a high frequency for self-reference (n=25), the manifesto text depicts use of infrequent references to others (n=4). This usage pattern implies that the main objective of PML-N has been to showcase its own competence and agendas. The modal auxiliary ‘will’ has been found in the highest frequency(n=21), followed by the minimal use of ‘would’ and ‘shall’(n=2 and n=2), respectively.

The KWIC analysis presented below highlights that the modal auxiliary 'will' (n=21) collocates with the positive action words as visible in the screenshot. 'ensure, promote, expand' etc., It indicates PML-N's commitment and certitude to plans and actions by employing 'will' strategically. This represents a confident and forward-looking stance of PML (N) leaders to resolve the problems faced by the nation. Other modal verbs, 'would and shall' have been employed in comparatively less frequency (n=2) times each, portraying a positive face of PML-N, showing their future commitment to public welfare projects.

The use of 'will' indicates a commitment and future orientation, constructing the image of PML-N as a visionary and trustworthy party. It showcases proactive intentions and resolve of the party to recover the chronic issues.

The KWIC analysis of modal auxiliary 'shall' presented below suggests the party's intentions concerning certitude and determination of prompt actions in response to the challenges faced by the country. The party resolves to provide the access to 'good governance, proper sanitation, justice and education' to the citizens.

Opposite to this, the use of modal auxiliary verbs referring to the political opponents is less frequent (will(n=1), shall(n=1), could(n=2) suggesting the limited capacity of their rivals in the political domain. The infrequent use of modal verbs shows a strategic move aiming at demeaning the political discrimination of their opponents and representing a positive self-image.

(ii) Pakistan People's Party(PPP): Use of Modals in General Election Manifestos 2024

Table: 5.6 Normalised Frequencies of Modal Verbs in PPP Manifesto 2024 Per 10000 Words.

| Modal Auxiliaries | Self (n) | Others (n) |
|-------------------|------------|------------|
| Will | 200 | 01 |
| Would | 03 | - |
| Shall | - | 01 |
| Can | 08 | - |
| Could | - | 02 |
| Must | 03 | - |
| Total | 214 | 04 |

The table shows a recurrent employment of the modal auxiliary verb in the PPP 2024 manifesto, which constructs its powerful and resourceful political identity. The modal auxiliary "will" (n=200) has been found most frequent. This modal auxiliary emphasises certitude, portraying the party as committed, confident to carry out its agenda once it comes to power. It portrays the PPP leaders as practical and open-minded. It establishes an authoritative and composed stance of PPPP leadership. This implies a self-assured, strong image of PPPP. The KWIC analysis given below indicates the use of the modal auxiliary, presenting PPP as a reliable political party, as in S.No. 76 with the use of 'will', PML-N manifestos show its resolve as, 'our aim will be to set Pakistan's foot as a dynamic power. Similarly, in S.No. 80, 81 and 83 the text utilises the modal auxiliary 'will' expressing its determination to 'dedicated resource will be allocated...' and "a task force will be created" showing commitment of PPP to pro-people policies and agendas. It refers to epistemic meanings and raises hope for a bright future in the electorates.

| File | Left Context | Right Context |
|----------|---|--|
| 1. Model | | the utilization of the Land and Discharge Fund to address climate-related losses and damages especially after re |
| 2. Model | making prior initiatives, while protection and use the land through which monoculture and illegal | recording the protection of forests of the SADC and post-tropical would attain intensive engagement with all countries that co |
| 3. Model | engaged in the protection of forests of the SADC and post-tropical would attain intensive engagement with all countries that co | recording the protection of forests of the SADC and post-tropical would attain intensive engagement with all countries that co |
| 4. Model | a series of comprehensive strategic measures for the mutual benefit of our two countries. The two | recording the protection of forests of the SADC and post-tropical would attain intensive engagement with all countries that co |
| 5. Model | party and integrity would be filtered. His recognition of the party's strategy and place me into | recording the protection of forests of the SADC and post-tropical would attain intensive engagement with all countries that co |
| 6. Model | it. If the new elected government is more aware to build a legacy of peace and justice, the PNP | recording the protection of forests of the SADC and post-tropical would attain intensive engagement with all countries that co |

The text of the election manifesto of PPP avoids the use of speculative and conditional language evident in the less frequency of the modal auxiliary “would” (n=3).

| File | Left Context | Right Context |
|-----------|---|---|
| 1. Model | Measures will be taken to provide additional support that | be provided by government with the help of the local government and local government including provision of loans, administration of educational |
| 2. Model | for a brighter future for all citizens. Measures will be taken to provide additional support that | be provided by government with the help of the local government and local government including provision of loans, administration of educational |
| 3. Model | protecting biodiversity, before any new economic activities, introducing renewable resources and new cultures | measures to support the implementation of sustainable development, including economic, environmental, These measures might include the use |
| 4. Model | insert in a social process, increasingly utilising increasing support resources and new cultures | of renewable energy sources, including wind power, solar power, hydro power, biomass power, geothermal power, and nuclear power. These measures might include the use |
| 5. Model | in recognising and focusing on regional integration as this is currently a priority for our | of renewable energy sources, including wind power, solar power, hydro power, biomass power, geothermal power, and nuclear power. These measures might include the use |
| 6. Model | is implemented to increase its foreign exchange transactions. With these increased measures, PPP | of renewable energy sources, including wind power, solar power, hydro power, biomass power, geothermal power, and nuclear power. These measures might include the use |
| 7. Model | will support the development of the economy, including the implementation of the new industrial policy, the | of renewable energy sources, including wind power, solar power, hydro power, biomass power, geothermal power, and nuclear power. These measures might include the use |
| 8. Model | the required 40% journey into 2050. PPP's new strategic location and demographic capital | of renewable energy sources, including wind power, solar power, hydro power, biomass power, geothermal power, and nuclear power. These measures might include the use |
| 9. Model | the region's growth journey into 2050. PPP's new strategic location and demographic capital | of renewable energy sources, including wind power, solar power, hydro power, biomass power, geothermal power, and nuclear power. These measures might include the use |
| 10. Model | act of justice. So after the arrival of peaceful measures for resolving conflicts related to | of renewable energy sources, including wind power, solar power, hydro power, biomass power, geothermal power, and nuclear power. These measures might include the use |
| 11. Model | we will build a new architecture of institutional engagement with all countries which | of renewable energy sources, including wind power, solar power, hydro power, biomass power, geothermal power, and nuclear power. These measures might include the use |
| 12. Model | is in the local area, and business conditions on the other side. A entrepreneurial nation strategy for | of renewable energy sources, including wind power, solar power, hydro power, biomass power, geothermal power, and nuclear power. These measures might include the use |
| 13. Model | bring of infinite funds back into the national economy. Through these policy measures, PPP | of renewable energy sources, including wind power, solar power, hydro power, biomass power, geothermal power, and nuclear power. These measures might include the use |
| 14. Model | launched Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Karachi, 1986. "Liberation of a People, as an aim of a people, where we | of renewable energy sources, including wind power, solar power, hydro power, biomass power, geothermal power, and nuclear power. These measures might include the use |
| 15. Model | is member state of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as an example of a platform we | of renewable energy sources, including wind power, solar power, hydro power, biomass power, geothermal power, and nuclear power. These measures might include the use |
| 16. Model | in "The objective of our foreign policy is to always be a responsible citizen in world politics | of renewable energy sources, including wind power, solar power, hydro power, biomass power, geothermal power, and nuclear power. These measures might include the use |
| 17. Model | international relations. In 1994, PPP became a member of the PAKISTAN COOPERATIVE | of renewable energy sources, including wind power, solar power, hydro power, biomass power, geothermal power, and nuclear power. These measures might include the use |
| 18. Model | member while introducing towards a sustainable, sustainable future and a new green that | of renewable energy sources, including wind power, solar power, hydro power, biomass power, geothermal power, and nuclear power. These measures might include the use |

The use of ‘can’ (n=8) is less frequent, but it is significant in reinforcing the party image, suggesting its commitment to public welfare and its promises. Its recurrent use foregrounds the party’s capacity to act as a harbinger of change in the country. It also highlights that the party is capable and has the potential to effect change where required.

| File | Left Context | Right Context |
|----------|---|--|
| 1. Model | with an aim to consider launching a constructive dialogue with New China, at the same time, Pakistan | can implement in light to serve as a better option, and any further construction that affects water flow must be subject to include |
| 2. Model | or party states here or the fact that the rights of the Karmi people, as per the UN Convention | can implement to help for a just peace even as we consider launching a constructive dialogue with New China. At the same time, it |
| 3. Model | cannot be right to water as a human rights and any further construction that affects water flow | can implement to relatively acceptable salvagings under relevant agreements. New China has been there in an urgent need to implement its |
| 4. Model | PPP will ensure that all major infrastructures, transportation and other projects | can implement that enhance resilience against climate-related challenges, while investing in sustainable solutions in the local area |
| 5. Model | to all the local areas. PPP will ensure that all major infrastructures, transportation and other projects | can implement that enhance resilience against climate-related challenges, while investing in sustainable solutions in the local area |
| 6. Model | involving engagement in an increasingly interconnected world. To build this duty, the government | can implement and registered with constantly engaging in various efforts to better serve the people |

The use of “must” (n=3) constructs a tone of moral responsibility inconsonance with the socialist agenda of the PPP. These modal verbs, “would, can, must”, have been used very infrequently, as suggested by their occurrence in the data. These scant references to others shows PPPPs’ cautious stance to refer to their political rivals. The overall analysis of the modal verbs reveals the construction of a proactive and positive image of the PPPP. This this the voters are persuaded to support and vote for PPP during the elections.

It is very interesting to find that a minimal reference has been made for rival parties in the under-analysis manifesto. It implies the preference of the party to present internal agency rather than external commitments.

(iii) Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI): Use of Modals in General Election Manifestos 2024

Table: 5.7 Normalized Frequencies of Modal Verbs in Pakistan PTI Manifesto 2024 Per 10000 Words.

| Modals | Self | Others |
|--------------|------------|-----------|
| Will | 152 | - |
| Shall | 16 | - |
| Should | 07 | - |
| Can | 12 | - |
| Could | - | - |
| Must | 04 | 16 |
| Total | 191 | 16 |

This table presents the normalised frequencies of the modal auxiliary verbs for self and other references in the 2024 general election manifestos in PTI. The overall frequencies used for ‘self’ exceed those used for other references, which projects PTI’s image as a strong and resourceful political entity. Among the auxiliary verbs, “will” is used in the highest frequency (n= 152), portraying PTI s the flag bearer of change and action. PTI shows its association of certitude, determination and proactivity through the strategic use of the election manifesto. It refers to epistemic meanings and raises a hope for a better future for the masses.

Similarly, PTI has employed modal auxiliary, though comparably less in frequency, but sixzabl e shall (16), should (7), can (12)” invokes the image of the party as responsible as well as aspirational. The KWIC analysis of these modal auxiliaries conveys the meaning of possibility, capability and obligation. The use of the modal auxiliary verb ‘must’ (n=4) emphasises a sense of duty and moral responsibility, which are linked strategically with the party’s goal.

Screenshot of the AntConc software interface showing the results of a search for the modal auxiliary "should" in the "Model-Auxiliary-PTI-2024-1" corpus. The search results are displayed in a table with two columns: "Left Context" and "Right Context". The table includes columns for line number, the auxiliary "should", and the context text. The context text is color-coded in pink, indicating it is the part of the sentence where the auxiliary is found. The search results show that "should" is used 11 times in the corpus, mostly in the right context of policy statements.

| Line | should | Left Context | Right Context |
|------|--------|---|---|
| 1 | should | most interests, affiliations, and potential conflicts of interest. This information | be made available to the public to enhance transparency. It should also be driven by the vision of nurturing a society where every citizen |
| 2 | should | is honest. These products should be affordable, simple, and accessible. Efforts | should be made to focus on finding common ground and promoting family planning within the framework of religious values. Religious review and up |
| 3 | should | emphasize that family planning decisions are a matter of personal choice and | date should be preserved to make decisions contrary to their religious beliefs. Such extensive public awareness can |
| 4 | should | not be imposed on the needs of the people. Services should be | be informed, argue, and advocate. Efforts should be made to focus on finding common ground and promoting family planning within the s |
| 5 | should | demonstrate respect. To minimize efforts and prevent duplication, these units | hould be merged into a single office under the PM, creating a one-stop service. To expedite the resolution of white-collar crime cases and |
| 6 | should | be measured or disciplinary actions. The key principle guiding the composition | be diversity, inclusion, and independence. These judges should be nominated by their respective Chief Justices based on their experience, know |
| 7 | should | should be in court proceedings, a consistent set of laws and court procedures | and experience in both federal and provincial levels. A world-class Anti-Corruption Academy, adhering to the standards and guidelines of the U |
| 8 | should | and guidelines of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). | should be established. To uphold a truly democratic system, we need to ensure that the results are free from any kind of influence. Journalists should |
| 9 | should | not, expertise, and reputation for upholding the rule of law. These individuals | be independent, fearless, and free from political influence. For their commitment to legal ethics and professionalism, Non-civils should have a distinguished legal career with |
| 10 | should | free. We are to bring regulation in line with these principles. This committee | free from political influence and include members from diverse backgrounds, such as legal experts, representatives from the bar association |
| 11 | should | is invited to ensure that the media is free from any kind of influence. Journalists | and the judiciary, and free from bias. We are to bring legislation in line with these principles. This committee should be free from political influ |
| 12 | should | action should be limited to advisory roles without voting rights. The nominated | ence for their independence and ability to make decisions free from external influence, ensuring the judicial commissioners impartial. Not |
| 13 | should | by government, while involving direct political influence. Their participation | should be allowed to advise roles without voting rights. The nominees should be known for their independence and ability to make decisions free from |
| 14 | should | is competitive should be diversity, expertise, and independence. These judges | representatives of their respective Chief Justices based on their experience, expertise, and reputation for upholding the rule of law. These judges |
| 15 | should | are a matter of personal choice and should be made voluntary. No one | should be committed to make decisions contrary to their religious beliefs. Lauren Johnson, a public administrator, can design programs highlighting the benefits of her |
| 16 | should | should encourage to find sustainable solutions to urban challenges. This program | and to the specific needs and conditions of each city or urban area, considering its unique characteristics and challenges. The goal should |
| 17 | should | for urban areas, considering its unique characteristics and challenges. The goal | be to commission, develop, respect individual needs, and provide information and options that allow individuals and couples to make informed |
| 18 | should | is known for their commitment to legal ethics and professionalism. Non-civils | and experienced legal career with expertise in constitutional law, administrative law, or related areas. A background as a judge, legal schol |

Screenshot of the AntConc software interface showing the results of a search for the modal auxiliary "will" in the "Model-Auxiliary-PTI-2024-1" corpus. The search results are displayed in a table with two columns: "Left Context" and "Right Context". The table includes columns for line number, the auxiliary "will", and the context text. The context text is color-coded in pink, indicating it is the part of the sentence where the auxiliary is found. The search results show that "will" is used 20 times in the corpus, mostly in the right context of policy statements.

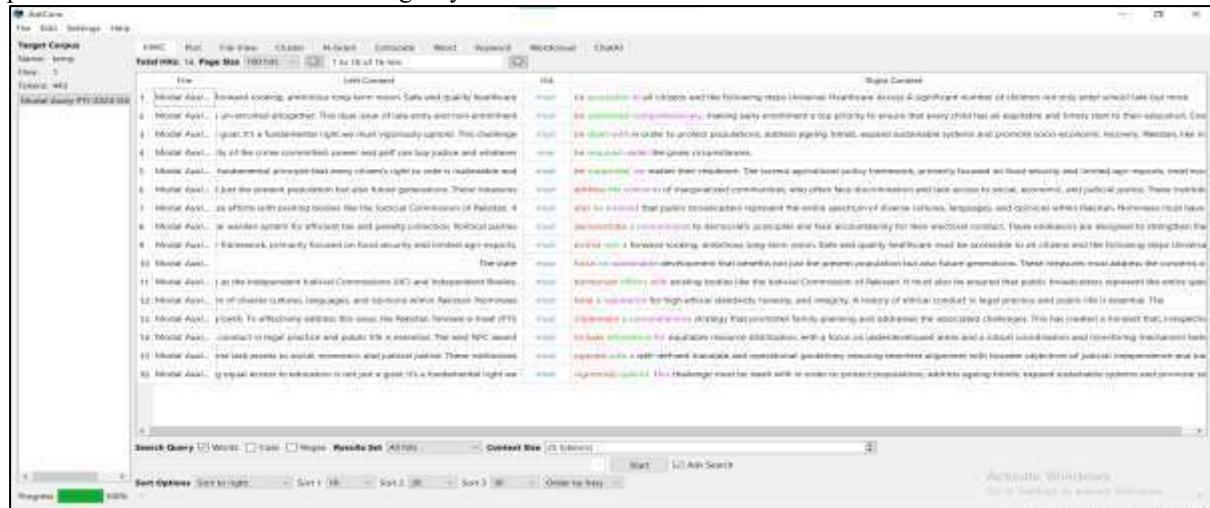
| Line | will | Left Context | Right Context |
|------|------|--|---|
| 20 | will | in densely populated, and less developed areas, PTI believes that the government | create a healthy and sustainable rural sector and needs to adopt an approach that not only improves the quality of life in rural areas |
| 21 | will | should start social protection plans, can be progressive, well-established and strengthened. Land reforms | will address rural inequality and promote local ownership among marginalized communities. PTI understands that rural reform is a key |
| 22 | will | involving the isolated community's interests, implementing the program through pilot projects | area of focus. Poor infrastructure problems, including a rural legal and regulatory framework is also vital. Additionally, learning from |
| 23 | will | will be prioritized, allowing private companies to invest and innovate in these areas. Privatization | best practices abroad, PTI will conduct a thorough assessment to identify available assets that can be leveraged to support development |
| 24 | will | of the pastoral areas. Creating job opportunities should not be limited to just mining, which | should be used to develop. Previous work processes recycling, conserving, and waste-to-energy technologies. The private |
| 25 | will | significantly to the empowerment and employment of the pastoralists that should increase | sector should be encouraged. Previous work processes recycling, conserving, and waste-to-energy technologies. The private |
| 26 | will | products and programs relating the promise embedded in its demographic richness. Urbanization | sector in the rural green spaces, especially ensuring resilient quality of life and environmental sustainability. Strength the legal |
| 27 | will | movement to support reforms that facilitate better access to economic resources, ensuring every person | areas for responsible urbanization. These areas need a long-term plan can be encouraged by a leadership that is not |
| 28 | will | is free. This approach goes above and beyond any bourgeois assistance, given that economic shocks | a PRD, regional approach of their rural socio-economic areas. This plan is aligned with Sustainable Development Goal Addressing the |
| 29 | will | should increase economic resilience in pastoral areas today. PTI believes a pastoral area where every children | affordability of basic needs. A fundamental right that underpins a progressive society. Systems such as the results-based, free school-based (RBS), and |
| 30 | will | is healthy, and operates ultimately reducing poverty and enhancing overall rural safety. PTI | afford private sector investments, create jobs, reduce reliance on imported energy resources, and increase access to clean and safe |
| 31 | will | has created a model that, irrespective of the severity of the crime, constitutes a power and self- | public services, whereas may be required under the given circumstances. |
| 32 | will | is ultimately contributing to gender equality and women's empowerment. By doing the same | create a more balanced, informed growth & prosperity, realizing the promise embedded in its demographic richness. Urbanization |
| 33 | will | isolate women and girls. Promoting these developments in villages with significant positive | should encourage access to markets, healthcare, and educational facilities. Despite these hurdles, the government not only prioritize |
| 34 | will | outcomes are associated with delayed marriages and longer durations of childlessness and nonresidence | education, research, and innovation to ensure that people's right to education and the right of |
| 35 | will | are most formalized and can fully utilize the financial sector efficiently. Areas where 90% | afford healthcare services and infrastructure will be identified. Clear partnerships and legal frameworks for public-private partnerships |
| 36 | will | are over 60 years old. | ensure that girls have the opportunity to complete higher education and pursue their aspirations without considering marriage, which |
| 37 | will | to participate in the real estate, fostering competition and improving service quality. PTI | impacts their education and potentially lead to a more balanced way of family planning with religious communities. Prioritize education |
| 38 | will | can provide guidance in accordance with an individual's specific circumstances and needs. This | today, understanding and potentially lead to a more balanced way of family planning with religious communities. Prioritize education |

It is an interesting finding that not a single instance of a modal auxiliary other than "must" has been found in the PTI manifesto, indicating the representation of rival political parties as devoid of commitment and competence. Modal auxiliaries have been strategically employed in frequency for self and avoiding modals for the representation of the rival political parties in order to foreground its own ideological agenda of projecting the PTI party's leadership as trustworthy, honest and competent. Through this, the PTI establishes its reliability among its voters, establishing its distinct position.

Screenshot of the AntConc software interface showing the results of a search for the modal auxiliary "will" in the "Sukhrat-Auxiliary-PTI-2024-1" corpus. The search results are displayed in a table with two columns: "Left Context" and "Right Context". The table includes columns for line number, the auxiliary "will", and the context text. The context text is color-coded in pink, indicating it is the part of the sentence where the auxiliary is found. The search results show that "will" is used 16 times in the corpus, mostly in the right context of policy statements.

| Line | will | Left Context | Right Context |
|------|------|---|--|
| 1 | will | will lead women into a forward-looking, ambitious long-term vision. Safe and healthy healthcare | be accessible to all citizens and the following steps. Universal Healthcare Access A significant number of children and only when access rate be |
| 2 | will | is imperative that remains unmet amongst. The dual issue of low entry and non-enrollment | the government's responsibility, making every enforcement a top priority to ensure that every child has an equitable and timely access to their healthcare services. |
| 3 | will | is education in rural areas. A fundamental right we must emphasize is upheld. This change | will be made to protect marginalized, address, and ensure sustainable systems and promote state economic security. This |
| 4 | will | will, emphasizing that fundamental principles that ensure citizens' right to vote is in line with | is important, and greater than resilience. The current educational system, principles, priorities, focused on food security and limited agri-export |
| 5 | will | is of rapid population growth. So effectively address this issue. The Human Development Index (HDI) PTI | implementation a comprehensive strategy that prioritizes family planning and addresses the associated challenges. |
| 6 | will | is a major concern that tackles the challenges associated with this issue and increases family planning to ensure a sustainable | government's commitment to the principles of sustainable development, which aligns our commitment and focus areas to social, economic, and political justice. The |
| 7 | will | population and put the potential population back into future generations. These measures | government's commitment to the principles of sustainable development, which aligns our commitment and focus areas to social, economic, and political justice. The |
| 8 | will | will, must implement strict policies with existing policies like the Judicial Commission of Pakistan. It | will also ensure that public bodies represent the entire spectrum of diverse cultures, languages, and opinions while Registry, Administration |
| 9 | will | will, emphasizing a commitment to democratic principles and fair accountability for their administrative conduct. These measures are designed to ensure | representatives of a committee as democratic principles and fair accountability for their administrative conduct. These measures are designed to |
| 10 | will | invest agricultural using traditional, primarily focused on food security and limited agri-export | ensure a more transparent, accountable, and long-term vision. Safe and healthy hospitals must be accessible to all citizens and the following |
| 11 | will | area and facilities to facilitate such awareness campaigns. An integrated family planning, the scope | steps in sustainable development that benefits not just the present population but also future generations. These measures must address the |
| 12 | will | of protected bodies, such as the independent Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and independent bodies | implementation of strict policies with existing bodies like the Judicial Commission of Pakistan. It must also ensure that public bodies represent the |
| 13 | will | area, the entire spectrum of diverse cultures, languages, and opinions while Registry, Administration | represent a representation for legal, ethical standards, integrity, and transparency. A review of ethical conduct in legal practice and public life is essential. To |
| 14 | will | ity. A history of judicial conduct in legal practice and public life is essential. The new NHC, mostly | conduct, especially relevant for established research institutions with a focus on underprivileged areas and a robust communication and monitoring mech |
| 15 | will | the fair administration and transparent service delivery in terms of economic, and judicial justice. These measures | anism, which is well-defined, transparent, and comprehensive guidelines, ensuring sufficient dialogue with broader representation of justice for independent |
| 16 | will | will, emphasize justice. This change must be direct and in order to protect populations, address sustainable policies and | and transparent justice. This change must be direct and in order to protect populations, address sustainable policies and |

It is very interesting to find that a minimal reference has been made for rival parties in the under-analysis manifesto. Whereas, in contrast to a high frequency of self-references, the use of modal auxiliaries to refer to political rivals is quite insignificant. There has been identified only a one modal auxiliary 'must(n=16). The sparse other references show that the party's own commitments and agency have been highlighted in the manifesto rather than external obligations. It suggests less preference of the party to point to external potential as well as possibilities and a refers to internal agency rather than external commitments.



5. OVERALL DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

In this section, the data were analysed using corpus-based methodology for the critical discourse analysis of three political parties' manifestos for the election year 2024. ANTCONEC 3.4.4. was used to extract the frequencies of modal verbs were and Concordance lines were studied. Based on the linguistic features of the political discourse in the manifestos, the data was interpreted. The quantitative data was complemented with qualitative interpretation which helped to cross-check the validity and credibility of the results. The analysis indicates the ideological intent of the modal auxiliaries in the discourse of the political parties. The frequencies and distribution analysis with the help of the corpus tools has presented a comprehensive picture of how and to what extent different discursive strategies are employed by the selected political parties to construct political identities and ideologies.

It is found that the use of will and shall is predominant in the electioneering campaign manifestos of the selected political parties. The basic purpose these modal auxiliaries serve is to indicate political will and commitment, promises, and pledging. Through these, the political parties attempt to persuade the masses to support these political parties in the elections. As evident by the KWIC analysis, the modal auxiliaries reinforce their individual political ideologies and construct their positive image to elicit public support.

The analysis of the under comparison political parties points to an interesting finding of the use of minimal references for the rival political parties. In the manifestos of PML-N and PPP, the normalised frequencies of the modal auxiliaries in 4, respectively, whereas the PTI election manifesto of 2024 only modal auxiliary 'must' has been employed in the normalised frequency pf 16. In the "others" category, the modal verbs have been found very infrequently. It indicates that the identity of the party has been presented based on its own commitments, capacities, and responsibilities rather than validations from outside.

5.1 Limitations of the Study and Future Directions

The present study has examined a small-sized specialised corpus of the 2024 general election manifestos of the three major political parties in Pakistan. The scope of the present study was limited to one aspect of linguistic resources, i.e. modality, in line with the research questions. However, future research can extend and carry forward this groundwork by expanding the corpus to include multiple election cycles, speeches, and televised debates, while also analysing a broader set of linguistic features, offering a nuanced insight into political discourse.

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