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# **A Speech Act Analysis of the Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan's Speech at UNGA with respect to Islamophobia**

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to highlight the speech acts with respect to Islamophobia discussed by Prime Minister Imran Khan in his speech which he delivered to the United Nations General Assembly on 27, September 2019. This paper analyzed the types of speech acts that were used by Imran Khan, the overlapping of speech acts, and direct and indirect speech acts. To analyze the speech acts from all these aspects, both qualitative and quantitative analysis was carried out. The framework employed for this analysis was the Speech Act theory which was introduced by Austin and Searle. The findings revealed that his speech includes maximum representative and expressive acts while the use of direct speech was also evident. The paper concludes that the speech act analysis highlights the factual, informative, and supportive nature of the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

**Keywords:** Imran Khan, speech at UGNA, Speech acts of Imran Khan, Illocutionary Acts, Speech Act Analysis, Direct Speech Acts, Indirect Speech Acts, etc.

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## **Introduction**

To express themselves humans produce utterances. These utterances consist of words and grammatical structures which perform certain actions via those utterances

that are called speech acts. In linguistics, a speech act is related and studies in relation to the speaker's intention and the particular effects it has on the listener. Essentially, the speech act is for an action that the speaker wants to provoke in his<sup>11</sup> audience. Speech acts might be "requests, warnings, promises, apologies, greetings, or any number of declarations" (Nordquist, 2019) therefore these are very important in communication. The Speech-Act Theory was introduced by Austin (1962) further developed by Searle (1969) and considers utterances at three levels or components:

i. **Locutionary acts:** These are the making of meaningful statements or saying something that a listener understands.

ii. **Illocutionary acts:** These include saying something with a purpose, e.g. to inform the listener.

iii. **Perlocutionary acts:** These are saying something that causes the listener to respond or act.

An illocutionary act is regarded as the "real action" that is performed via utterances and its effect on the listeners is called the perlocutionary effect. According to Austin (1962), the center of his theory is an illocutionary act. Non-linguistic and extra-linguistic knowledge is very much important for clear understanding and production of certain utterances. This theory cannot be understood without pragmatics because an utterance cannot be understood without a suitable context. Speaker and listener relationship, speaker's choice of linguistic form and speaker's communicative competence cover the scope of pragmatics (Nordquist, 2019)

The purpose of this study is to explore the categories of speech acts, overlapping of the categories of speech acts, and direct and indirect speech acts that are working behind PM Imran Khan's speech at UNGA. However, this analysis is related to that part of the speech in which the PM introduced and discussed the concept of Islamophobia. Since the speeches by such dignitaries are delivered mainly with an aim of making people believe what they are saying and the speech acts play the most significant role to achieve this purpose. By doing speech act analysis of such speeches by dignitaries, the researchers can come to know their intended meanings behind the speech.

There are five types of illocutionary acts that are studied in Speech Act Theory or five classes of illocutionary acts as described by Searle (1969) and classified according to the functions performed. According to Austin (1962), speech acts have also classified on the basis of their structures. These are; (i) imperative, (ii) declarative, and (iii) interrogative speech acts. Furthermore, speech acts may be direct and indirect. When there is a direct relationship between function and structure of speech acts, they are called direct speech acts. On the other hand, when there is an indirect relation between

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<sup>11</sup> The use of the muscular pronoun is only for the spontaneity of expression in the text and is in no way related to gender bias.

the structure and function of speech acts, these are called indirect speech acts (Nordquist, 2019). According to Searle, there are the following five classes of illocutionary acts:

**Representatives:** These are the kinds of speech acts, that commit the speaker to state what he/she believes to be the case or not. It uses verbs such as a report, concludes, denies, believes, and affirms.

**Expressive:** These are those kinds of speech acts that tell us about the speaker's attitude, psychological state by using verbs such as regret, welcome, thank, congratulate, detest, appreciate, deplore.

**Directive:** When speakers want someone else to do something, they perform a directive speech act by using words such as invite, request, command, beg, challenge, ask, dare, and insist.

**Commissive:** When speakers want to commit themselves to some future actions, they perform commissive speech acts, with verbs such as pledge, swear, warrant, vow, promise, guarantee, undertake.

**Declarations:** These speech acts can change the world via utterances; the speaker can alter the condition of a situation by making the utterance. For example, I pronounce you husband and wife.

By conducting the speech act analysis of political discourse, researchers can explore the implied meanings and net of meaningful structures working behind the utterances of politicians. This paper aims to explore these hidden meanings through the structure of the language used by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Imran Khan.

## **Literature Review**

During his address at United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Prime Minister Imran Khan discussed a "Pakistani perspective on various regional and global issues with a lot of clarity and in a sentimental throbbing" (Khan, 2019). His primary audience comprised of the "international community and the global leadership, involved in strategic planning and decision making." Four main themes or to say more exactly four different global issues were his focus during this speech "all having their intimate connection with the global power play, controlled by international power centers" (Khan, 2019). The third part of his speech was about Islamophobia, which he described as "an engineered fear, hatred or else a prejudice" (Khan, 2019) which is evident in almost all non-Muslim nations towards the religion Islam and Muslims (Khan, 2019).

Imran Khan did "a full-throated defense of Islam," which was perfectly shaped for "a western audience's ears". This is evident from the references which he used like

“Charles Bronson’s Death Wish movie, Monty Python” and “Japanese kamikaze pilots” from World War II. “He built linguistic and pop-culture bridges as he made his points to explain the dangers of Islamophobia and why Muslims are sensitive to attacks on his Prophet Mohammad” (Gulf News, 2020).

An analysis (Asif et al., 2020) of the lexical functions and cohesion in Imran Khan’s this speech revealed that as the lexical cohesive devices have discourse value, which enables them to function as means of interaction aimed at influencing the international community, Imran Khan used some of the explicit lexical cohesive devices to achieve his goals. The speech provided a summary of the information about the content of the discourse. The theme of the speech was important and somehow crucial in the interpretation of the discourse structure, as it helped to withdraw the items into one point, that was, the point of interpretation that limited the listeners to think only about the conventional meaning relevant to the topic. Most kinds of lexical cohesion dominant used in this speech were “repetition.” The second dominant used in this speech was a “synonym.” The third dominant used in this speech was “collocation,” and the next dominant used in this speech was “noun” and the least dominant used was “superordinate.” The most dominant used “repetition” in the speech indicated that he used repetition as an affirmation of meaning and added aesthetic value to the sentence. Related to the theory of Keraf (Zakiyah, 2015), it is mentioned that repetition is a repetition of sounds, syllables, words, or parts of the sentence that are considered necessary to put pressure in an appropriate context. With regards to Islamophobia, therefore, Imran Khan emphasized to the leaders of the world to focus on the core issues, i.e., the radicalization, terrorism, reasons for the misconception of western communities and actions by the west that leads to reactions of Muslims and develop a negative concept of Islam. Consequently, the speech was well-received by the members of the UN General Assembly and the serious audience globally.

### **Research Questions**

This research paper aims at finding out the following research questions;

What types of speech acts were used by the Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan in his speech at UNGA discussing Islamophobia?

What types of overlapping of speech acts occur in Imran Khan’s this particular part of speech?

How many and what types of direct and indirect speech acts have been used by Imran Khan in this particular part of speech?

## **Methodology**

The type of this study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature therefore a mixed methodology has been used in this research paper. The researchers have analyzed the data that have been selected from Imran Khan's speech that he has delivered on 27 September 2019. The speech was delivered in the English language and 94 utterances have been selected from the speech for the speech act analysis in order to explore Imran Khan's hidden intentions and states of mind. The researchers have selected those specific 94 utterances because in those utterances Imran Khan has expressed almost all possible reasons for the western concept of Islamophobia before the world and tried to explain the actual concept of Islam that negates the concepts of the world about Islam. The researchers have used a simple percentage method in order to present the data quantitatively in the form of tables.

## **Qualitative Data Analysis**

This section has analyzed the data that have selected from the speech of Imran Khan. This section has explained answers to all the research questions. The researchers divided the particular part of speech into 94 speech acts out of which 11 were found to be locutionary acts and 83 were illocutionary acts. The researchers after their analysis have given an explanation of those 83 utterances in data analysis according to the classes of speech acts. This section A includes the qualitative representation of locutionary and illocutionary speech acts data as given below:

1. "There are 1.3 billion Muslims in the world." **(Locutionary act)**
2. "There are millions of Muslims living in other countries; European countries and the US as minorities." **(Locutionary act)**
3. "Islamophobia since 9/11 has, has grown at a space that it has become alarming." **(Illocutionary act, representative, direct)**
4. "Human communities live together." **(Locutionary act)**
5. "There should be understanding amongst them." **(Illocutionary act, directive, indirect)**
6. "But Islamophobia is creating a division." **(Illocutionary act, representative, direct).**
7. "Muslim women, wearing Hijab, it has become an issue; it has become an issue in some countries." **(Illocutionary act, expressive, direct).**
8. "Hijab is some sort of weapon." **(Illocutionary act, expressive, direct).**
9. "A woman can take off her clothes in some countries but she cannot put more clothes?" **(Illocutionary act, representative, direct)**
10. "How is this happening? Because of Islamophobia!" **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

11. "And how did this Islamophobia start? after 9/11!" **(Illocutionary act, representative, direct)**

12. "And why did it start? because certain western leaders equated terrorism with Islam, Islamic terrorism! Radical Islam!" **(Illocutionary act, representative, direct)**

13. "What is radical Islam? There is only ONE Islam! and that is the Islam of the followers of Prophet (SAW)." **(Illocutionary act, representative, direct)**

14. "There is no other Islam." **(Illocutionary act, representative, direct)**

15. "Radical Islam! Islamic Terrorism in Islam!" **(Locutionary act)**

16. "What message did the send to the people in the West? And why is there Islamophobia?" **(Illocutionary act, expressive, direct)**

17. "How is a person in New York, in mid-west, in the US, in the Europe, how is he going to distinguish between who is a moderate Muslim and who is a radical Muslim?" **(Illocutionary, directive, indirect)**

18. "Because terrorism has nothing to do with any religion." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

19. "This Islamic terrorism; Islamic radicalism; and sadly used by leaders." **(Illocutionary, expressive, direct)**

20. "This is going to be the main reason for this Islamophobia." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

21. "And it has caused pain amongst Muslims." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

22. "We the Muslim countries watched this Islamophobia travelling abroad; and it is getting worse." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

23. "And may I just say, Mr. President, that in European countries; it is marginalizing Muslim communities." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

24. "And we all know that marginalization leads to radicalization." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

25. "Some of the people who ended up as militant in Syria and other places, were marginalized Muslim communities." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

26. "and my point here is that we must address this." **(Illocutionary, directive, direct)**

27. "I am sad to say that we, Muslim leaders have not addressed this issue either." **(Illocutionary, expressive, direct)**

28. "After 9/11, when this thing came about, war against radical Islam," **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

29. "Rather than Muslim leaders trying to explain to the West that there is no such thing as radical Islam." **(Illocutionary, expressive, indirect)**

30. "Rather than Muslim Leaders trying to explain to the West that there is no radical Islam, in all human communities there are radicals; there are liberals and moderns, all human communities, Christians, Jews, everyone has it, but Islam is not radical, neither Judaism, neither Christianity, neither Hinduism, no religion preaches radicalism. **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**"

31. "The Bases of all religions is compassion and justice, which differentiates us from the animal kingdom." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

32. "But unfortunately the Muslim leadership was so scared of being called radical Islam that they all became moderns." **(Illocutionary, expressive, direct)**

33. "In Pakistan we, we were in the eye of the storm and our government coined the phrase called enlightened moderation." **(Illocutionary, expressive, indirect)**

34. "No one knows what it meant, but everyone started putting on western suits that they were moderates, started speaking even those who did not know English would speak English is because they were moderates." **(Illocutionary, expressive, indirect)**

35. "No one had a clue what it was because we and the Muslim world did not explain to the west that there is no such thing as radical Islam." **(Illocutionary, expressive, indirect)**

36. "One of the reasons why after 9/11, Islam was supposed to be equated with terrorism was suicide attacks because the 9/11 bombers did the suicide attack all sorts of theories came up." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

37. "Because the Muslims are involving in suicide attacks because they will get virgins in heavens." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

38. "What about women suicide attackers?" **(Locutionary act)**

39. "So this bizarre thing happened." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

40. "No one explained and suicide attacks and Islam were equated." **(Illocutionary, expressive, indirect)**

41. "No one did research that before 9/11 the majority of suicide attacks in the world were by Tamil tigers who were Hindus." **(Illocutionary, expressive, indirect)**

42. "No one blamed Hinduism and quite rightly what has Hinduism got to do with what desperate people were doing in Sri Lanka." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

43. "We all know about; we have seen films about Japanese Kamikaze pilots at the end of the Second World War 2 doing suicide attacks do not blame the religion" **(Locutionary act)**

44. "But here we were trying to prove we were moderates and not explaining it to the west." **(Illocutionary, expressive, indirect)**

45. "But the most important thing I wanted to say today in explaining this islamophobia, Mr. President! and I feel is very important." **(Illocutionary, expressive, direct)**

46. "Because I have spent, because of I have played professional sports in England, I have spent a lot of time there." **(Locutionary act)**

47. "So I know how the western mind works." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

48. "And how West views religion." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

49. "Where the misunderstanding about Islam came? And one of the reasons it causes islamophobia?" **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

50. That was in 1989 this book was published, maligning, insulting, ridiculing, our Prophet Mohammed (SAW).” **(Locutionary act)**

51. “An there was the reaction of the Muslim world.” **(Locutionary act)**

52. “The west could not understand what was the problem.” **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

53. Because in the west, because I have spent so much time in the west, religion is perceived completely differently.” **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

54. “They don’t look upon religion like we do.” **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

55. “And so Islam was supposed to be an intolerant religion; it was against freedom of expression.” **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

56. “And Islam took the real beating 30 years ago, I still remember became a watershed” **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

57. “And every 2 or 3 years someone would malign our prophet PBUH, there would be a reaction by the Muslims, and again it was Islam an intolerant religion,” **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

58. “Again this time, I, I blame a certain section of the people in the west who deliberately provoked this, knowing the impact it would have.” **(Illocutionary, expressive, direct)**

59. “But the majority of the people in the West did not understand.” **(Illocutionary, expressive, direct)**

60. “This is where again the Muslim leadership let the Muslims down.” **(Illocutionary, expressive, direct)**

61. “We should have explained to them what our Prophet PBUH, meant, means to us.” **(Illocutionary, expressive, direct)**

62. “So in one minute, I’ll try and explain what it means to us.” **(Illocutionary, commissive, direct)**

63. “Our Prophet was the witness to the divine book The holy Quran.” **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

64. “The Holy Quran is the book of guidance for Muslims and the prophet’s life was living the Quran. He was an example of what Quran guided us to be.” **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

65. “So he is the ideal we all try to get to.” **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

66. “The Prophet created the state of Madina, the first state in Islam.” **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

67. “That state was the basis of a Muslim Civilization which became the predominant civilization for the next 700 years.” **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

68. “And what was that state?” **(Illocutionary, directive, direct)**

69. “I hear such strange things about Islam that it is against women, it against minorities,” **(Locutionary act)**

70. "The first state of Islam in Madina, most, it was the first time a welfare state was set up." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

71. "The state took responsibility of the weak, Widows, orphans, poor people, handicapped, it taxed the rich, spent the money on the poor." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

72. "The state announced that all human beings are children of Adam hence equal, whatever the color of the skin." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

73. "The state announced, the prophet announced, that slavery, the whole system depended on slavery as it did for many years, in the Western societies, the Prophet said that the one of the greatest deeds is to free a slave but because the society depended on slavery, he said but if you have to, treat them as an equal member of the family." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

74. "And as a result something happened in the Muslim world which has not happened in any Civilization." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

75. "Slave dynasty appeared; Slaves became Kings, the Mamelukes, slaves, who became rulers of Egypt." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

76. "In India there were slave dynasties." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

77. "And then with minorities, again you have that Islam is supposed to be against minorities, let me just make this clear!" **(Illocutionary, commissive, indirect)**

78. "In Islam, the Prophet announced that everyone was free to practice his religion." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

79. "It was a sacred duty to protect the places of worships of all religions." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

80. "He announced that every person is equal and front of law whatever his religion or color." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

81. "And this incredible case and I always got less than the fourth Khalifa<sup>12</sup> the head of state of Madina he lost at case a court case against a Jewish citizen." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

82. "So, number one it showed that there was the rule of law; no one was above the law." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

83. "And number two that a Jewish citizen was an equal citizen." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

84. "So, Mr. President! when a Muslim society is unjust with its minorities, it is going against the religion of Islam and our Prophet PBUH." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

85. "So, it is important to understand this the Prophet lives in our hearts." **(Illocutionary, directive, direct)**

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<sup>12</sup> Refers to the Caliph of Islam Ali bin Talib (RA)

86. "When he is ridiculed, when he is insulted, it hurts the, as we human know, we human beings understand one thing that the pain of the heart is far farfar more hurtful than physical pain. **(Illocutionary, expressive, direct)**

87. "And that's why the Muslim react." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

88. "And I always thought that if I ever had this stage I would try and explain this to, to the world community especially to the Western communities because having lived in the Western Community people didn't understand this." **(Illocutionary, commissive, indirect)**

89. "When I first went as a teenager to England there was a comedy film on Jesus Christ. **(Locutionary act)**

90. "It is unthinkable in the Muslim societies." **(Illocutionary, representative, direct)**

91. "So we need to explain that look in human community we must be sensitive to what causes pain to other human beings." **(Illocutionary, directive, direct)**

92. "We have in the Western society and quite rightly the Holocaust is treated with sensitivity because it gives the Jewish community pain." **(Illocutionary, expressive, indirect)**

93. "That all we ask that when do not use freedom of speech to cause us a pain by insulting our holy Prophet." **(Illocutionary, directive, direct)**

94. "That's all we want." **(Illocutionary, directive, direct)**

**Quantitive Analysis of Data:**

The speech of Imran Khan in this particular portion which he discussed Islamophobia, contains 11 locutionary acts while the 83 illocutionary acts. This section contains the quantitative interpretation of data and data results have shown in the form of tables and graphs as given below:

**Table 1: Speech Acts' Classes in Illocutionary Acts**

| <b>Acts</b>    | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>%age</b>   |
|----------------|------------------|---------------|
| Representative | 52               | 62.6506       |
| Expressive     | 20               | 24.09639      |
| Directive      | 8                | 9.638554      |
| Commissive     | 3                | 3.614458      |
| Declarative    | 0                | 0             |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>83</b>        | <b>100.00</b> |

Table 1 above shows that out of a total of 83 illocutionary speech acts, 52 are representative, 20 are expressive, 8 are directive while 3 are commissive speech acts used by Imran Khan in his selected part of the speech (Figure 1). Therefore, he has used 62.6506 % out of a total of 100% speech acts are representative speech acts, 24.09639 % expressive speech acts, 9.638554 % directive speech acts, and 3.614458

% speech acts as commissive speech acts. He did not use any declarative speech act in this part of the speech.

Table 2 and below indicate the interpretation of direct and indirect use of speech act. It shows that out of a total of 69 direct speech acts 52 are representatives, 10 are expressive, and six are directive while only one is commissive. Out of 14 indirect speech acts, none is representative, 10 are expressive, two are directive while two are commissive. Therefore, out of a total of 100% speech acts are 83.132525 % are direct while 16.86747 are indirect.

**Table 2. Direct and Indirect Speech Acts' Classes**

| Acts           | Frequency |           | Total     | Percentage       |                 | Total           |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                | Direct    | Indirect  |           | Direct           | Indirect        |                 |
| Representative | 52        | 0         | <b>52</b> | 62.6506          | 0               | <b>62.6506</b>  |
| Expressive     | 10        | 10        | <b>20</b> | 12.04819         | 12.04819        | <b>24.09638</b> |
| Declarative    | 0         | 0         | <b>0</b>  | 0                | 0               | <b>0</b>        |
| Directive      | 6         | 2         | <b>8</b>  | 7.228916         | 2.409639        | <b>9.638555</b> |
| Commissive     | 1         | 2         | <b>3</b>  | 1.204819         | 2.409639        | <b>3.614458</b> |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>69</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>83</b> | <b>83.132525</b> | <b>16.86747</b> | <b>100</b>      |

### Findings and Conclusion

The analyzed data show that representative speech acts were used more than any other class of speech acts in Imran Khan's speech in this particular portion. The findings further revealed that while discussing islamophobia, Imran Khan has thrown questions at the audience before explaining anything about their concept which shows that he had a purpose to challenge or negate the answers to his questions which he believed were present in their minds. Total speech acts that have used in the selected part of speech are 94, of which 83 were illocutionary acts and therefore analyzed.

The overlapping of the speech act classes was also examined. The study has also explored the direct and indirect classes of speech acts. As representative acts were frequently used, (52 out of 83), and using representatives potentially represents the factual, informative, and supportive nature of Imran Khan along with what he believes to be the case or otherwise. It is evident through the use of mostly direct speech that the Prime Minister was quite clear in his intentions and concepts while explaining facts to and sharing information with the audience.

The second most dominant act was expressive (20 out of 83) in this particular part of speech which represents the feelings and psychological state of the Prime Minister and the way he used different statements of pain, likes, dislikes, or sorrow

related to Islamophobia. The third but very less used was directive (8 out of 83) which shows Khan remained less powerful and least dominant to get someone else to do something as he only demanded only two actions., i.e. the Muslim leaders should explain to the world what Islam really is and the other that the western world should not commit acts that create pain in the hearts of the Muslims and cause them to react.

From this result, it can be concluded that the Prime Minister's speech mostly comprised of facts and information meant to express his feelings and psychological state as a representative of his people while demanding certain acts from the representatives of various nations in UNGA to be performed to cater Islamophobia i.e. the west should not malign, insult or ridicule the Prophet of Islam Muhammad (PBUH).

### **Future Recommendations**

For future research the researchers recommend the following:

- i. Future researchers can also conduct the critical discourse analysis (CDA) of this speech with respect to other topics discussed in the speech.
- ii. The researchers have selected the 94 utterances of Khan's speech, and other researchers can investigate the remaining utterances of Khan in this speech.
- iii. The researchers have selected one political discourse, but other researchers can conduct comparative analysis by selecting two political discourses for their study.

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