

Combating Islamophobia: A Transitivity Analysis of Selected Muslim Leaders' UNGA Speeches

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ABSTRACT

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This study focuses on the transitivity patterns employed by Imran Khan (the ex. prime minister of Pakistan), Mahathir Mohammad (The ex. prime minister of Malaysia), and Recep Tayyip Erdogan (the president of Turkiye) in their United Nation General Assembly speeches to combat Islamophobia. Using Fred Halliday's model of transitivity patterns, besides looking at the similarities and differences found in the selected speeches, the study also investigates the role that transitivity patterns play in the meaning-making process. The researchers, for this purpose, opt for a qualitative analysis that identifies and studies these patterns while drawing conclusions regarding their effect. After classifying the transcripts of the speeches into clauses, specific data tables and charts were used to label and analyze the data acquired. The analysis of the data shows that, in the eighty-five (85) clauses in Khan's speech, thirty-one (31) in Mohammad's speech, and twenty-one (21) clauses in Erdogan's speech, different numbers of types of transitivity processes have been used. Khan and Muhammad use five and Erdogan uses four (out of the six process types proposed by Halliday). The study, therefore, concludes that the more prominent process types in all three speeches are material and relational processes. All other processes have a different distribution in the selected speeches. The basic idea that these speeches convey is that Islam is a peaceful religion that respects humanity irrespective of a person's race, religion, and color. The themes highlighted in these speeches are misrepresentation, suppression, and exclusion of Muslims in the world, and the speakers try to present the true picture of Islam contrary to what is presented by the West.

Keywords: Combating Islamophobia, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Ideational Meta-function, Transitivity Analysis, Meaning-making process, UNGA Speeches

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The current study analyses the speech patterns employed by Imran Khan (the ex. prime minister of Pakistan), Recep Tayyip Erdogan (the president of Turkey) and Mahathir Mohammad (The ex. prime minister of Malaysia) in their UNGA speeches to combat Islamophobia. This is done by employing Systemic Functional Grammar (henceforth SFG) and particularly by analyzing the transitivity patterns used by Khan, Erdogan, and Mohammad. Doing so, it also analyses, alongside the rhetorical patterns employed in these speeches, the role played by transitivity patterns in the meaning-making process and the way this all works out in the speeches being considered.

The reason why the researchers of this study have made use of SFG is that it is helpful in determining the explicit meaning of a text and shows, through its various details, how linguistic and rhetorical patterns create meanings in a string of utterances and words, including those that are not always evident to readers and listeners. Functional analysis of language, in other words, assists in understanding the links between meanings and phrasings that account for the production of linguistic features in a text. It also shows how one encodes his experiences of the real world and the world of his awareness into words, which is why the transitivity framework is also known sometimes as the experiencing-meaning framework. It is an extremely useful and vital instrument for researchers to assess the substance of a message as provided by a writer or a speaker. Halliday (1994) identifies transitivity as follows:

A fundamental property of language is that it enables human beings to build a mental picture of reality, to make sense of their experience of what goes on around them and inside them. ... Our most powerful conception of reality is that it consists of “goings-on”: of doing, happening, feeling, being. These goings-on are sorted out in the semantic system of language, and expressed through the grammar of the clause ... This ... is the system of TRANSITIVITY. Transitivity specifies the different types of processes that are recognized in the language and the structures by which they are expressed. (p. 106)

Applied linguists have made use of transitivity to analyze a number of different kinds of texts. Some, for example, have used it to analyze different discourses in literary works (Huang, 2001; Gong & Fang, 2005; Zheng, et. al., 2014; Sung and Shen, 2006), the others have used it to analyze the inaugural addresses of Mutharika (Kondowe, 2014), Bush (Chen, 2008), Obama (Wang, 2010), Kennedy (Li, 2010), and Trump (Zhao and Zhang, 2017). Recently, Rehman (2020) used transitivity to analyze Khan and Mohammad's 74th UN General Assembly speeches. The current study adds to this by focusing on and analyzing the selected UNGA Speeches of Khan, Erdogan, and Mohammad in order to find how these selected Muslim leaders used different transitivity patterns in their attempts to combat Islamophobia and what role these transitivity patterns play in their doing so.

A brief explanation of “Islamophobia” and a quick review of critical scholarship in line with the argument of this study would be in order. “Islamophobia” is a word that has steadily been gaining popularity in the media and in scholarly fields. It has become a thing of public debate and is discussed even by men of politics. The word itself is derived from the Arabic “Islam” and the Greek “phobos” and translates roughly as “an irrational fear of Islam.” In its usage, it encompasses a wide range of debates, rhetoric, and actions that stem from either a misconstrued understanding or else an actual “irrational” fear of the faith.

While the term Islamophobia might be a relatively new phenomenon, it is valuable nevertheless as a means to combine, for the sake of ease of expression, several diverse characteristics and behaviors under a single label. Some, however, argue that the word is usually deployed in a way that protects Muslims from criticism. According to Fred Halliday (2013), for instance, this word is incorrect and should be replaced with something that indicates that what one is talking about is being “anti-Muslim” rather than “anti-Islamic” (p. 103). However, the term has found a place in everyday usage and in the work of major international organizations—including, among others, the Council of Europe (CE), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the United Nations (UN).

According to Ergin Ergül (2017), the term “Islamophobia” was used first in French orientalist writings sometime in the year 1910 and was established by the 1990s in the English language. In 1997, an English think tank named Runnymede Trust released a report which, according to Ergül, was the first to use this term in a technical and professional context. This report, he says, brought the term into popular use and drew the attention of international and academic circles toward biases faced by Muslims. Following the 9/11 attacks and the reactions of the world to them, the term “Islamophobia” is slowly being accepted as a reference to discriminatory behavior and ideas that paint all Muslims with the same brush and often mar the reputation of Muslims and Islam without engaging in nuanced debate.

It follows from the foregoing discussion that Islamophobia, as a term, refers to biases and views that sprout from misunderstandings and propaganda regarding Islam and Muslims. The mainstream western discourse with a minority of writers whose use of the term shapes public opinion, for instance, have misrepresented Islam and continue to misunderstand various religions of the world (Arjana, 2020; Carrette and King, 2005; King, 1999; Masuzawa, 2005) and particularly the religion of Islam (Lean, 2018; Lyons, 2012; Quinn, 2008). The discussion also shows that many authors, both Western and otherwise, have also spoken out against stereotypes that paint Muslims as violent, backward, etc. Khan, Mohammad and Erdogan have also argued against popular stereotypes in their UNGA speeches and have put forth the view that Islam as a religion promotes peace, justice, brotherhood, love, and mutual aid.

The concepts described in SFG are related to the multi-functionality and multi-dimensionality of sentences, with a “sentence” being a grammatical structure linked via a strong flow of communication functions that inform the numerous interactions taking place among people as they plan and go through the actions of everyday life (Eggins, 2004). According to Wang (2010), Halliday’s “Systemic Functional Grammar” comprises “three Meta-functions,” which are Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual. The Ideational Meta-function has to do with the essence of the sentence and the meanings of available word choices. In the words of Downing and Locke (2006), it “allows us to encode, both semantically and syntactically, our mental picture of the real world and the worlds of our imagination” (p. 110). The study of this meta-function includes assessments of both transitivity and modality, with transitivity analyses focusing on the material, mental, relational, behavioral, linguistic, and existential processes in the sentence and modality analyses focusing on modal verbs, tenses, and personal pronouns. The interpersonal meta-function, on the other hand, deals with the relationship between individuals and society and defines all of the procedures through which a speaker attempts to enter a speaking situation in order to act out specific speech acts. The textual function, finally, deals with the demands of a discourse by relating it with a real-world situational setting and all of its textures and textual requirements.

Several studies have analyzed, using SFG transitivity analyses, the speeches given by various leaders and politicians from around the world. These include, for example, the analysis of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton’s speeches by Zhang (2017), the analysis of Donald Trump’s speech by Zhu and Li (2018), and the analysis of Barack Obama’s speech by Wang (2010). Transitivity, as has already been discussed, is manifested in the Ideational meta-function, and deals, according to Halliday (1967), with the manifestation of the speaker’s or writer’s inner world and their experience of the world around them in the form of words and sentences. In other words, it deals with the manifestation of their responses to, cognitions, perceptions and comprehensions of the world in linguistic form. Wang (2010), for this reason, said that transitivity imparts knowledge and communicates to the receivers of the message a picture of the world they are not familiar with.

Ahmed and Muhammed (2019), in “A Critical Discourse Analysis of Islamophobic Discourse on Selected American and British News Websites,” have employed Fairclough’s (2010) “three-dimensional method,” which they believe has built upon Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar, to analyze American and British News coverage of Islam. They also show that the depiction of Muslims in Western News websites can be summarized in five themes: interaction with non-Muslims, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the Sharia, violence, and women.

Yujie and Fengjie’s (2018) study, on the other hand, looks at Donald Trump’s first presidential address. Their analysis seeks not to just contribute to the study of politics and current affairs, but to also look at the roles played by transitivity

processes in society. Their analysis shows that, of the various transitivity processes available, Trump mostly makes use of the material kind and, after material processes, he employs mostly relational and mental ones. Yujie and Fengjie also note that material processes are employed when talking about the authority of individuals, the relational process is used when discussing foreign interactions, and the mental process is employed when addressing the audience in a way that might build for them a vision of the future.

Cervi's (2020) study, in a similar manner, looks at a selection of thirty speeches that were given by the Spanish leaders Abascal and Salvini during the last three elections (General, Regional, and European). It concludes that Santiago Abascal and Matteo Salvini, despite seeming to be quite similar in expressing Islamophobic ideas, manifest two different kinds of Islamophobia. It observes that Abascal, in his speeches, presents the Muslims as being ontologically and culturally incompatible with Spain which, he claims, is defined by its anti-Muslim history, while Salvini swings between what may be termed as "ontological" and "banal" Islamophobia. The study uses a qualitative clause-based semantic analysis.

The current study has also made use of the above-mentioned theory but has employed it for the study of the UNGA Speeches of Khan, Erdogan, and Mohammad. It deals explicitly with the theme of Islamophobia. First, it analyses the ways in which these leaders have sought to defend their faith, using transitivity patterns to see what kinds of connections are being made and for what reason. Doing so also allows the researchers to explore the way transitivity is connected to the meaning-making process. Finally, by focusing on the transitivity patterns employed by specific leaders, we also get some insight into their thought process, personalities and, at the very least, the personae they wear in public.

Analysis and discussion

This study is an SFG transitivity analysis of Khan and Mohammad's 74th and Erdogan's 75th UNGA speeches. In SFG, transitivity is a semantic concept, which refers to a system for expressing the entire clause. The clauses for this analysis come from the selected speeches whose transcripts were obtained from the BBC News website: www.bbc.co.uk. It is pertinent to mention here that although the themes of these speeches are varied, this study focuses on Islamophobia for this transitivity analysis. The researchers use a qualitative approach to conduct this study. They have collected the data from within the relevant parts of the speech(es), arranged it into categories, calculated the percentages of each transitivity process, and then analyzed and interpreted it (in the forthcoming pages) in the light of the chosen topic. The analysis is conducted in four stages:

- The researchers have, in the first stage, extracted the ranking clauses and determined the number of clauses utilized by Khan, Erdogan, and Mohammad.

- In the second stage, they have used Halliday’s (1994) process distribution criterion to find the process types of the selected clauses. This involved evaluating the quantity, the types of participants (actor, senser, sayers, etc.), the voice, and the phonological features of the chosen verb (process).
- In the third stage, the researchers have divided the speeches into three portions and compared how many different types of processes Khan, Erdogan, and Mohammad had used to defend against Islamophobia.
- In the fourth and final stage, they have interpreted and explained the process types considering their respective functions. Since language is context-dependent, the researchers, in this stage, have analyzed the processes being studied using their social, situational, and historical contexts.

This section deals directly with the analysis of the collected data. As it has been mentioned earlier, we began by extracting from the selected speeches the clauses related to the theme of Islamophobia. A total of one hundred and thirty-seven (137) clauses were extracted. Eighty-five (85) clauses were taken from Khan’s, thirty-one (31) from Muhammad’s, and twenty-one (21) from Erdogan’s UNGA speech. The distribution of the processes and their interpretation is presented under the following subheadings:

Distribution of transitivity patterns in Khan’s 74th UNGA speech

Khan has used a total of eighty-five (85) processes in his speech to combat Islamophobia. Of these, twenty-six (26) are relational, twenty-five (25) are material, fourteen (14) are mental, ten (10) are verbal, and ten (10) are existential. The following table summarizes this distribution with some examples:

S. No	Process types	Number	Example
1	Relational process	26	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My third point is Islamophobia. 2. Muslim women wearing Hijab has become a problem. 3. What is radical Islam? 4. It is marginalizing Muslim countries. 5. The Muslim leaders were unable to explain.
2	Material process	25	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is creating divisions. 2. Certain western leaders equated Islam with terrorism. 3. This bizarre thing happened.

			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. They carried out suicide attacks. 5. Muslims would react.
3	Mental process	14	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is alarming. 2. It is seen as a weapon. 3. I know how the western mind works. 4. The west could not understand. 5. They do not look at religion the way that we do.
4	Verbal process	10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We failed as Muslims of the world to explain. 2. None blamed religion. 3. West would term them intolerant. 4. I blame some people in the west. 5. State announced.
5	Existential process	10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are 1.3 billion Muslims in the world. 2. Muslims living across all continents. 3. There is only one Islam. 4. That is Islam of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. 5. Why is there Islamophobia.

The most significant process in Khan’s 74th UNGA address is the relational process. Twenty-six of the 85 processes that deal with Islamophobia belong to this category. Thompson (2004) defines the relational process as “the depiction of the relationship between numerous things or the creation of the relationship between diverse actions, facts, and objects” (p. 101). Using this process as his rhetorical tool, Khan has tried to educate the West about Islam and its doctrines and remove what he sees as misunderstandings creating a rift between the two. For example, he uses the terms like ‘radical Islam,’ ‘radical Muslim,’ and ‘moderate Muslim,’ to illustrate the West’s view of Muslims and Islam, and then attempts to associate Muslims and Islam with peace, despite the West’s terms and definitions, by using terminology such as the ‘state of Madina,’ ‘welfare state,’ ‘only one Islam,’ ‘the Islam of the Holy Prophet ﷺ,’ and ‘compassion.’ All these expressions imply that Islam promotes love, respect, and harmony with other people.

The material process, in this speech, is the second most prominent process. In discussing Islamophobia, Khan has employed a total of twenty-six of these processes, which might be the clause of “doing and happening” (Halliday &

Matthiessen, 2013, p.224). The material process, in other words, depicts not only physical but also abstract actions. By employing material processes, Khan informs the West that there are real-world implications of misrepresenting Muslims all over the world. For example, he utilized the material process of “creation” and the goal of “division” to remind the world that if it continues to misrepresent Muslims around the globe, it will create rifts and divisions among the world’s communities and that unity and harmony among the countries will suffer. Similarly, he also uses material processes like “malign,” “hurt,” and “react” to warn the west that if it continues to show hatred for Muslims and Islam, it will create an environment of hostility, lack of trust, and discrimination across the globe, convincing some that the Muslims are an ‘enemy’ and others that they can expect nothing more than oppression and misrepresentation from the West, which obviously cannot have any desirable outcome.

Unlike these material processes, mental processes, such as hearing, seeing, liking, fearing, and understanding, are related to mental and psychological activities. They symbolize people’s awareness of their own existence and thoughts. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), the processes contain at least one human participant, because someone must experience or think what is being experienced or thought. Khan utilizes mental processes in his speech to express his thoughts on the current situation and articulate his concerns, especially his fear that about the Western perception of Islam differs dramatically from what Islam teaches its adherents. Some of the phrases and terms that he has used, like “imagined,” “thought,” “treated,” and “understood,” when combined with “intolerant,” “unjust,” and “bizarre thing,” imply that the people in the West believe that Islam is a religion that teaches hatred to its adherents. Khan evokes, in his speech, the example of “the State of Madina,” which he thinks was essentially a “welfare state,” to counter this view.

Verbal processes, according to Halliday (1994), are the acts of expressing or communicating something. Khan used such statements as “announced,” “ask for,” and “blame” to convince the west that their definition of Muslims is incorrect and that it causes the international community to misunderstand and misrepresent Muslims. Alongside this, he employed this process in telling the world to drop the blame game between religions, countries, and groups, so that the world might work towards a vision of peace and prosperity.

Khan employed a total of ten existential processes in his speech. These processes point towards something that exists or comes to exist, making this ‘existent’ the most important component of the speech act (Thompson, 2004). Khan employs this process in his speech to discuss and point out some of the misconceptions that exist in Western society about Muslims and Islam and to demonstrate, in their stead, the actual teachings and beliefs of Islam. Clauses like “Why is there Islamophobia?”, for example, imply that the West should avoid exhibiting hatred, disdain, and fear towards Muslims, and consider where these

problems come from. Similarly, the line “There are radical fringes in every community” points to the fact of extremism as it exists in all societies to question and debunk the simplistic association of extremism with Islam.

Distribution of transitivity patterns in Mohammad’s 74th UNGA speech

Mohammad used a total of thirty-one (31) clauses in his 74th UNGA speech to combat Islamophobia. Of these, eighteen (18) are material, five (5) are mental, two (2) are verbal, two (2) are relational, and four (4) are existential, while behavioral processes have not been employed at all. The details of these processes are as follows:

S. No	Process types	Number	Examples
1	Material process	18	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seizing Palestinian Land 2. Expelling its 90% Arab Population 3. Wars have been fought in many countries 4. Military actions against acts of terrorism will not succeed 5. Muslim countries have been destabilized
2	Mental process	5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We need to identify the cause 2. The great powers refuse to deal with the root cause 3. They prefer military actions. 4. They cannot trust
3	Existential process	4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have terrorism. 2. There was none before or at least on the present scale. 3. There is enmity towards Muslims or Islam.
4	Verbal process	2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. And refused Asylum 2. One cannot deny
5	Relational process	2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The first act engineered by the west is creation of Israel. 2. Muslims are accused of terrorism.

The most prominent process in Mohammad's speech is the material process, which, as it has already been mentioned, relate to "doing and happening" phrases. Mohammad employs this process to demonstrate that Muslims were physically tormented by the West, in their own countries as well as in countries where the Muslims are in minority. He points out that Muslims have been portrayed incorrectly by the West, are accused of terrorism, and have had their lands and homes seized. The words through which he evokes this process include "seizing," "expelling," "destabilizing," "forcing," "massacred," "killing," and "raping," all of which have been used to demonstrate how the West has treated Muslims across the globe. He also uses them to show the West's hostility towards Muslims and Islam, pointing especially to the creation of Israel, the Afghan invasion in 2001, and the Iraq war as examples and evidence.

In a similar manner, Mohammad has made use of mental processes such as "identify" and "considered" to point out that the West has misconstrued the facts by associating Islam and Muslims with terrorism and that vision of Islam that is presented by the West differs greatly from the way Muslims understand their faith. Furthermore, by employing the phrase "dare not return," he indicates that Muslims, in certain parts of the world, have been forced to flee their homeland, and they have been suppressed in a way that makes it difficult for them to return to their homes. He bemoans the fact that, even as the world is witnessing the situations in Afghanistan and Palestine, where thousands of Muslims have been driven out of their homes in the name of the so-called war on terror, no real attempt has been made to help the people. He argues, in other words, that instead of condemning Muslims for terrorism, the West should investigate its causes and get to the actual root of the problem, which according to him, has more to do with the unlawful occupation of places like Palestine.

Alongside these, Mohammad has also made use of two verbal processes, "accused" and "deny." These two, when combined with "terrorism" and "land," express the same message that has been outlined above. According to Mohammad, the Muslims, after being driven out of their countries, are denied the right to live in their lands, and any attempt that is made to reclaim their territory is viewed as an act of violence. Islam, he believes, is thus accused of terrorism without looking at the true cause of the problem.

Mohammad also makes use of two relational processes in his speech which connect objects and ideas. In trying to show how the history of terrorism is not unconnected to the West, Mohammad employs the value "the first act," the process "engineered," and the token "state of Israel." All acts of terrorism, he claims, are a result of the creation of Israel, which was made possible through the confiscation of Palestinian territory.

Mohammad makes use of four existential processes which, as it has already been pointed out, are employed usually to inform people about the existence of

things in the actual and imaginary worlds. Mohammad, for example, has used clauses like “There is hatred toward Muslims and Islam,” “There was enormous migration,” and “There is enmity toward Muslims and Islam” to inform the audience that the West has treated Muslims differently from how it has treated other groups. He also implies, in so doing, that the West has harbored and continues to harbor anti-Muslim sentiments.

Distribution of transitivity patterns in Erdogan’s 75th UNGA speech

Erdogan has used a total of twenty-one (21) processes in his 75th UNGA speech to combat Islamophobia. Of these, ten processes (10) are material, four (4) are mental, five (5) are relational, and two (2) are verbal, while existential and behavioral processes have not been used at all. The details of this distribution are summarized in the following table:

S. No	Process types	Number	Examples
1	Material process	10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia have reached an alarming level 2. Fueled by prejudice and ignorance 3. Who legitimize hate speech by abusing freedom of expression
2	Relational process	5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Those who are primarily responsible for this dangerous course are politicians. 2. What happened during the pandemic has shown us 3. Sustainable developmental goals can be an important guide in combating all kinds of global crisis
3	Mental process	4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I want to draw your attention to a problem 2. That threatens humanity 3. But for some reasons considered invisible 4. The OIC has recognized this day
4	Verbal process	2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I urgently call on all international organizations

			2. I reiterate my call for March 15 as “international Solidarity day against Islamophobia
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In his speech, Erdogan uses material processes, or processes of “doing and happening,” to demonstrate to the world how the West has historically treated Islam and Muslims. Among the many terms that he employs, words like “influenced,” “fueled,” and “accelerated,” along with the aims “bias,” “ignorance,” “racism,” and “hate speech,” demonstrate that the West has been physically and ideologically targeting Islam and Muslims. It has spread prejudice towards Islam by misrepresenting Muslims and equating them with terrorism and violence. He also implies, through his words, that he would like the International Community to help prevent acts of racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and hate speech.

Alongside these, Erdogan employs four mental processes by making use of the words “want,” “threatens,” “considered,” and “recognized” to demonstrate that the Muslim community seeks real representation in the West. He points out that Muslims have been portrayed as a menace to the international community and tries to persuade them that Muslims should be given an authentic representation and that Islam should be portrayed as it really is, a religion that is built on peace and prosperity.

Expressing his concerns regarding Islamophobia, Erdogan evokes a few verbal processes by using words like “call on” and “reiterate.” He urges the entire world, especially the United Nations, to announce March 15th as an annual International Day of Solidarity against Islamophobia in memory and mourning of the Christchurch incident that took place in New Zealand on the 15th of March, 2019, when unarmed Muslims were shot dead by a lone shooter. This incident, it must be remembered, was one of the bloodiest attacks to have targeted Muslims, as was pointed out by the OIC secretary General Dr. Yousef al Othaimen, with ninety-nine dead and many more injured, and was motivated by anti-Muslim and anti-migrant sentiments (Soliman, 2021). Erdogan, in his speech, calls on the international community to denounce all such acts of violence, including those that target Muslims.

Erdogan has employed a few relational processes, such as in the clause “Muslims are especially vulnerable to these inclinations,” to remind the world that the Muslims in the West are victims of racism, xenophobia, and hate speech, and that to bring peace and harmony to the world, all of this must be prevented and respect must be accorded to the Muslims.

Similarities and differences in the selected speeches

Some attention must be paid to the similarities and differences that exist within these speeches and what they reveal about the three leaders and their concerns. The most important similarities, in these cases, would be three. Firstly, all three leaders use examples from Western history and the conduct of various Western countries over time to strengthen their case. They talk, for instance, about the “creation of the state of Israel,” the “exclusion of Muslims from mainstream world politics,” the false and misleading “relation of Muslims with terrorism,” and the ‘othering’ of the Muslims.”

Secondly, they mostly employ material and relational processes. Such extensive use of material processes shows that the three leaders are concerned with (or want to show that they are concerned with) actual problems, real-world implications, and practical solutions to Islamophobia. Their use of relational processes, on the other hand, allows them to talk about the cause of terrorism, what they see as the real face and true nature of Islam, and the history of Muslims and of the West.

Thirdly, all three leaders have focused on the idea of finding the root cause of terrorism and have chided the West for naively connecting it to the Muslim faith instead of looking for the real causes behind this problem, presenting themselves thus as leaders of and representative of the true face of the Muslim world.

The major differences that can be identified are also three. The first of these is that the three leaders cite different reasons for the lack of harmony between the Islamic and the Western world. Khan, for instance, relates this fact to the rise of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) ideology in India, the 9/11 attacks in America, and the resultant wave of propaganda against and suppression of Muslims. Mohammad, by contrast, traces this divide to the illegal occupation of Palestinian land and the creation of the state of Israel. He believes that the West forcefully created an illegal state and that the efforts of Palestinian Muslims to reclaim their land are being falsely depicted as terrorism. Erdogan, meanwhile, targets several political figures, saying that the leaders of the world need to work towards the elimination of racism, Islamophobia, and xenophobia from the world and urging them to include Muslims in the mainstream of the world’s politics.

The second major difference that can be seen, and which is illustrated best by juxtaposing the three tables above, relates to the division of the transitivity processes. The percentages of the processes, for each speech, are different, which means that one can look at the concerns of each leader in a lot of detail. Khan, for example, uses relational processes and material processes more than others, which indicates that he is concerned, on the one hand, with the image of Islam as it exists in the world and with building a different image in its stead, and with practical real-world problems on the other. Mohammad, unlike Khan, uses only material

processes more than others, which reflects his concern with actual real-world problems, possible causes, and practical solutions. Erdogan, similarly, is also concerned with material processes and with evoking change in the world (which is also seen in his choice of verbal processes).

Finally, it must be noted that the three speeches make use of different tenses and voices. Khan, for example, uses mostly the active voice and speaks often in the present tense. In addressing the mistakes made by the West, he takes on a direct stance and relates it directly to the problems that exist in the Muslim world. He makes statements like “the West could not understand,” “I blame the West,” and “the West who provoked the Muslims” to make his stance clear and put it across as boldly as possible. He even uses first-person pronouns “I” and “we” to make himself seem unapologetic and suggest that Muslims have a voice that cannot be ignored. Mohammad, on the other hand, makes greater use of passive forms, while also making use of the present tense. He used words like “expelled,” “oppressed,” and “massacred” in passive constructions to hide the actor and indirectly convey his message. Erdogan, similarly, has made use of passive forms as well, staying more polite, positive, and indirect as compared to Khan, though he also, in his own way, indicts the west.

The projected images of the speakers

Alongside these differences, it might also be pointed out how this choice of processes seems to reflect the image a specific speaker wishes to create. Khan, for instance, makes maximum use of relational processes and, thus, presenting himself like a teacher of sorts seeking to correct falsehoods. His second most used process is the material one which he uses to suggest that these misunderstandings and misrepresentations have real-life consequences. Verbal and mental processes serve as support for this image and the existential ones allow him to make claims regarding the world and question popular opinions.

Mohammad, on the other hand, makes greater use of material processes in a way that creates for him an image of an enraged fighter pointing out material wrongs. Mental processes, which follow material processes in terms of usage, allow him to further back this up with the idea that the West has misunderstood and misrepresented Islam, thus allowing him to, in his existential processes, claim that “There is hatred toward Muslims and Islam.” His image, then, is less of a concerned leader correcting an image and more of one enraged by what the West has done to him and his people.

Erdogan, similarly, presents himself as someone exposing the West. His stance, however, is slightly different, in that the second most used processes after the material ones for him are also mental, but they are used more to express a desire for improvement. For him, he is not there to rage on the West’s misconduct, but to express the Muslims’ desire to be properly understood. As such, his verbal processes

include calling on the West to hold a day against Islamophobia and his relational processes are used to point out that Muslims are suffering.

As such, the three leaders' choice of processes as well as the way they use those processes through specific word choices also reflects and supports the image they are projecting: Khan as a leader concerned with correcting the world's problems, Mohammed as one enraged by the West's misconduct, and Erdogan as one calling on to the West for change.

Discussion in the foregoing pages makes use of the transitivity processes identified by Halliday (2004) to look at three speeches given by three Muslim leaders in their attempts to combat Islamophobia. It demonstrates that transitivity analysis can help understand various aspects of a text and how it creates meanings. It may also, when paired with other aspects of discourse and grammatical analysis, help look at the way a text states and implies various meanings to help the speaker or the writer achieve their goals.

The analysis has shown that, in addressing the problem of Islamophobia and terrorism, the three leaders have presented themselves as practical, dynamic, and sincere to the Muslim world. Khan, for instance, puts himself forth as someone who is willing to fix responsibility by calling out names and speaking back to the West. He does this by being direct and using the active voice, while also making abundant use of relational and material processes, creating an image of a leader who is sincere, concerned, and practical. Mohammad and Erdogan, on the other hand, use the passive voice and focus more on material processes, thus creating the image of a less fiery, but no less practical or sincere persons. At the same time, however, it should be noted that the images projected by these leaders are developed also by their choice of processes and words. Khan, while being direct, presents himself more as someone applying a corrective, Mohammad as someone who is enraged by the West's misconduct, and Erdogan as someone calling the West to improve. How conscious this use of voice and processes is, however, is not something that can be determined, but one may consider what images (of leaders) these choices create for a better understanding of their apparent message, which (collectively) aims to look at the true causes of Islamophobia and finding ways to fix it.

Islamophobia is one of the many themes touched upon in these speeches. Similarly, other aspects of SFG and discourse, rhetorical and grammatical analyses, have not been used in this study, which shows how language works and how it interacts with the world. One might, in other words, conduct a transitivity analysis of not just various texts, but various themes in the same text, and couple it with other aspects of discourse, rhetorical and grammatical analyses, to explore many ways in which language works and is being employed in current times. In fine this study is part of a greater whole that continues to unfurl.

This study sheds some light on the politics of the selected leaders and on the images they seek to project. It also shows how and why transitivity analysis might be both beneficial and interesting in helping one study language that forms a major part of how we understand, see, and interpret the things around us. It also shows that researchers need to carry out such analyses frequently in order to create a better public understanding of the world politics and enable themselves and readers to do more careful decision-making. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of rhetoric itself by showing how the language of effective speakers may assist one in improving speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills.

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The authors declared no conflicts of interest with respect to the authorship and publication of this article.

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