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A Pragmatic Analysis of Political Discourse in India-Pakistan Press Conferences: Grice's Maxims and Media Representation in the Aftermath of the Pahalgam Attack (2025)

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Abstract: This study employs pragmatic analysis to examine the press conferences held by India and Pakistan following the Pahalgam attack, which took place on 22 April. This study follows a qualitative approach and applies Grice's Maxims; Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner to analyze the language used by India and Pakistan in their press conferences. The findings show that Indian officials violated the Maxims of Quality and Quantity by giving limited information and using vague or unclear language. This made their statements seem less trustworthy. On the other hand, Pakistani officials followed the Maxim of Quality by giving clear and fact-based responses. The study also highlights the media's role in shaping public opinion and increasing tensions by manipulating information. Overall the study demonstrates how pragmatic analysis uncovers deceptive language and reveals the strategic use of communication during conflict.

Introduction

This research paper delves into the depth of India-Pakistan drone and military conflict as this military conflict from 7-10 May 2025 is considered as the deadliest in decades. As far as the abrupt and barbaric attempts of Indian military against Pakistan are concerned. The Indian media has spread false narratives by accusing Pakistan of launching counterattacks against the Indian cities of Amritsar and Gujarat. Moreover, a deep fake video attributed to Pakistan's Director General of Inter-Services Public Relations (DG ISPR) is currently being shared on the social media platform X. The fabricated clip falsely suggests that India shot down two Pakistani JF-17 fighter jets. In reality, Pakistan has not retaliated and continues to exercise restraint in response to Indian provocations. Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (DG ISPR), emphasized that in the 21st century, every piece of information has a digital footprint, and the content being generated and spreaded by Indians on social media and television lacks authenticity. This paper attempts to incorporate the pragmatic analysis as it examines how the language is used to perform actions, threats, and accusation. Moreover, how context and speaker intention shape the interpretation of language. How Indian media has used these linguistic choices to spread falsification

and fabricated content. The concept of falsifiability is introduced by the philosopher of science Karl Popper in his book *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1934). His theory of falsification contends that scientific inquiry should aim not to verify hypotheses but to rigorously test and identify conditions under which they are false. For example, the hypothesis that "all swans are white" can be falsified by observing a black swan.

"For a theory to be valid according to falsification, it must produce hypotheses that have the potential to be proven incorrect by observable evidence or experimental results. Unlike verification, falsification focuses on categorically disproving theoretical predictions rather than confirming them" (Saul Mcleoad, 2023). Fabricated content is another term for "fake news". There are many reasons to create fabricated content but frequently is to mislead people for financial and political gain. The language played a pivotal role in circulating accusation and intentions of both countries so this paper is going to do the forensic linguistic analysis of two contradictory conferences (India and Pakistan).

Falsification and fabrication can be seen as *deceptive speech acts*. In pragmatics, speech acts are actions we perform through language like requesting, promising, apologizing. When someone fabricates or falsifies information, they're performing a deceptive speech act. The Grice's Maxims (especially the Maxim of Quality: "Do not provide false or misleading information") become central to understanding how these acts can breach the expected cooperative principles of communication. Pragmatics deals with the inferences listeners make when they hear a statement. If someone is fabricating or falsifying information, it can lead to misunderstandings, misinterpretations, or false beliefs.

Significance of the Study

The research is significant because it examines linguistic choices used by the military officers in the conflict of Pakistan and India from 7 May to 10 May 2025, which leads to misinterpretation. Moreover, Paul Grice's conversational maxims of quantity and quality were violated where Indian media and military officers did not provide proper information to the audience. They made false statements to misguide people and provided them with evidences which were not sufficient. The maxims are violated because Indian media and officers deliberately hide the facts and mislead people, creating misunderstanding. The purpose of the pragmatic analysis was to analyze the speaker's intentions for hiding the facts and evidences highlighting how powerful construct ideologies and control information.

Delimitation

The research paper is confined to 6 video clips from the press conferences focusing on the linguistic choices used by both media and military. 4 video clips are taken from the press conferences of Pakistani military and 2 from Indian military and media. The research is delimited to the maxim of quantity and quality.

Literature Review

Pragmatic analysis in political discourse, particularly in conflict situations, plays a crucial role in understanding how language shapes communication, public perception, and conflict resolution. Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975), which includes the maxims of *Quantity*, *Quality*, *Relation*, and *Manner*, provides a useful framework for analyzing how language is strategically used in press conferences, especially during high-stakes international conflicts.

Grice's maxims, particularly the maxim of *Quality* (truthfulness and accuracy), are central to understanding how political leaders convey messages in conflicts. Falsification (deliberately distorting the truth) and fabrication (creating false information) often violate this maxim. AlHamadi and Muhammed (2009) demonstrated that when the maxim of *Quality* is violated, communication breaks down, escalating tensions. In political press conferences, falsification and fabrication can manipulate

public perception and affect diplomatic outcomes.

Chiluwa (2007) highlighted how media, through language and framing, shapes public perception in conflict. The role of media in framing press conferences—whether truthfully or through fabricated narratives—affects how conflicts are perceived. Beard (2000) emphasized that political language can be a tool to either convey truth or strategically mislead, making it crucial to analyze how language is used in politically sensitive moments.

Media framing is critical in conflict situations. Khalid (2014) argued that media can exacerbate tensions by adopting conflict journalism, which often involves exaggerated or falsified information. Conversely, peace journalism offers a more balanced perspective. In the aftermath of events like the Pahalgam attack, these journalistic approaches influence how public perceptions are shaped. The media's selective reporting on political press conferences—often involving falsified or fabricated facts determines how conflicts are framed domestically and internationally.

Grice's maxims help explain how political leaders manage information in conflict. Taylor and Cameron (1987) suggested that these maxims are flexible, allowing leaders to manipulate communication strategically. Press conferences following the Pahalgam attack may involve violations of the maxim of Quality, where political figures either falsify facts or fabricate entire narratives to influence public opinion, justify actions, or deflect blame.

Press conferences, especially during conflicts, are high-stakes moments for political leaders to shape public perception. As Van Dijk (1997) noted, political discourse is often strategic, designed to persuade or manipulate. In the case of the India-Pakistan press conferences after the Pahalgam attack, political figures may strategically use falsified or fabricated information to control the narrative, both domestically and internationally, thereby influencing public opinion and diplomatic outcomes.

This emphasizes the role of Grice's maxims, particularly the maxim of Quality, in understanding how political discourse functions during conflicts. The study of falsification and fabrication in press conferences reveals how language is used to manipulate public perception and shape international relations. By examining the strategic use of language in India-Pakistan press conferences following the Pahalgam attack, this research will offer insights into the role of communication in conflict escalation or resolution.

Methodology

This research aims to conduct a pragmatic analysis of the linguistic choices used by Indian military officers during the military conflict from 7 to 10 May 2025. The study focuses on how the language used in their press conferences contributed to the falsification of reality by utilizing ambiguous, vague, and misleading terms. Specifically, the research examines how those misrepresented word choices align with Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975), particularly the Maxims of Quality (truthfulness) and Quantity (providing sufficient information), and how violations of these maxims may serve to mislead the audience or obscure the truth.

Research Design

This research adopts a qualitative case study design to examine the linguistic strategies used by Indian and Pakistani military officers in their press conferences during the conflict from 7 to 12 May 2025. The descriptive case study approach is applied as it focuses on specific events (the press conferences) within a defined time frame, offering an in-depth analysis of language use in a real-world political context.

The study analyzes spoken language from the press conferences to identify how ambiguity, misleading language, and vagueness are employed to manipulate public perception or obscure reality. It focuses on

violations of Grice's conversational maxims (especially Quality and Quantity), without quantifying the extent of falsification.

Research Objectives

- To use linguistic choices as an instrument to compose falsified and fabricated content.
- To investigate how Indian officials violated the Maxims of Quality and Quantity in their 2025 conflict press conferences through insufficient information and unsupported claims.

Research Questions

1. How are linguistic choices used as an instrument to compose falsified and fabricated content?
2. How were the Maxims of Quality and Quantity violated by Indian officials in their press conferences during the 2025 conflict narrative?

Data Collection and Analysis

The data will be collected from publicly available sources, primarily from YouTube (for video recordings of the press conferences), Google (for articles and transcripts), and Google Scholar (for related literature and analysis). The research will focus on the language used by military officials during the press conferences, looking for instances where they either fabricate information or use ambiguous terms to obscure the truth.

The data will be analyzed using pragmatic analysis, focusing specifically on how conversational maxims are violated. This will involve identifying statements that:

- Violate the Maxim of Quality (through falsification or exaggeration),
- Violate the Maxim of Quantity (by withholding important details or providing insufficient information),
- Strategic uses of language such as ambiguity that deliberately misleads the audience.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based on Grice's Cooperative Principle and the associated Conversational Maxims (1975), which provide a useful lens for understanding how language can be manipulated in communication. Specifically, this research focuses on the Maxim of Quality (truthfulness) and Maxim of Quantity (providing sufficient detail). According to Grice, speakers generally aim to adhere to these maxims for effective communication. However, in political or military contexts, there may be intentional violations of these maxims to achieve specific strategic goals, such as controlling public perception or avoiding responsibility.

The study posits that Indian military officials, in particular, violated the Maxim of Quality by presenting misleading statements that were either fabricated or intentionally vague. These violations could include withholding critical information, avoiding direct answers, or presenting unsupported claims. For example, military officials may have underreported the extent of a military operation or avoided acknowledging key facts that could have undermined their narrative.

This study applies a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework using the micro–meso–macro model, supported by pragmatic analysis through Grice's Cooperative Principle. At the micro level, the analysis examines linguistic features and pragmatic meanings, focusing on violations of Grice's Maxims of Quantity and Quality, such as vague language, omission of details, and unverified claims. The meso level analyzes discourse production and purpose, considering the role of government and military spokespersons and their strategies to control narratives and influence public opinion. At the macro level, the study situates the discourse within broader social, political, and ideological contexts, showing how selective information, religious framing, and misinformation function as tools of power and ideological manipulation.

Sample

The sample for this research includes press conferences held by Indian and Pakistani military officials from 7 May to 12 May 2025, during the period of escalating military conflict. These press conferences were selected due to their prominence in public discourse, as they represent key moments of official communication between the two countries during a tense and highly sensitive period.

The focus is on the Indian military press conferences, as the study aims to analyze how linguistic choices contributed to the misrepresentation of reality and falsification. However, the inclusion of Pakistani military conferences is also necessary to offer comparative insights into how language is used differently or similarly in both contexts. In particular, the study focuses on how conversational maxims are either upheld or violated, with a special emphasis on the intentions behind these choices.

Selection Criteria

Press conferences were selected based on their relevance to the conflict (from 7 to 12 May 2025), the presence of key military spokespersons, and the public impact of the statements made. All data used will be publicly available and retrieved through online platforms (YouTube, Google, Google Scholar), ensuring a broad sample of discourse.

Research Tools

The primary data sources for this research are:

- **YouTube:** For accessing video recordings of press conferences, which will be transcribed for analysis?
- **Google:** For locating online news articles and full-text transcripts of the military statements.
- **Google Scholar:** For gathering scholarly articles and analyses of the military discourse during the specified period, offering contextual background and secondary sources to support the analysis.

Analysis

This analysis utilizes a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, examining the 2025 India-Pakistan conflict through three interconnected levels: micro (linguistic choices), meso (production and circulation of narratives), and macro (sociopolitical and ideological contexts). The core of this study focuses on the pragmatic analysis of official discourse, specifically how Grice's Maxims of Quality and Quantity were either upheld or violated during military press briefings.

Micro-Level Analysis: Linguistic Evasion vs. Clarity

At the micro level, the focus is on how meaning is constructed through specific language choices. During the conflict that followed the April 2025 Pahalgam Attack, a sharp contrast emerged between the communicative strategies of the two nations.

Indian officials consistently violated the Maxims of Quantity and Quality by providing vague, non-specific responses that withheld key details. This is exemplified in Extract 1, where Air Marshal A. K. Bharti addressed the potential loss of a Dassault Rafale fighter aircraft:

"You know we are in combat scenario and losses are a part of combat... As for the details, what could have been? How many numbers? Which platform did we lose? You know in this at this time I would not like to comment on that because we are still in combat situation..."

By explicitly refusing to share information, Bharti violated the Maxim of Quantity, using "linguistic avoidance" to control the narrative and shield national integrity. This ambiguity continued in Extract 3, where Bharti claimed, "we have down a few planes numbers," while simultaneously admitting, "we do not have wreckage with us". Such self-contradictory statements flout the Maxim of Quality, as they lack factual verification and suggest a "scattered mind".

In contrast, Pakistani officials framed their discourse around transparency and directness. In Extract 2,

DG ISPR Ahmed Sharif responded to rumors regarding an Indian pilot in custody:

"I can confirm you very clearly that we do not have any pilot in custody. This is all social media agenda".

Similarly, in Extract 4, Air Vice Chief Aurangzeb Ahmed provided a "brief but comprehensive" statement: "I'll pick up from where I left day before yesterday PAF vs IF 6-nil".

These responses are interpreted as adhering to the Maxims of Quality (truthfulness), Quantity (adequacy), and Relevance, as they provided the specific information required by the audience without evasive vocabulary.

Meso-Level Analysis: Narrative Control and Digital Verification

The meso level examines how discourse is circulated and interpreted. The conflict saw a "bulk of news" broadcasted across international and social media, which often paved the way for fabricated information.

Pakistan's strategy at this level was to position itself as rational and evidence-based. In Extract 5, DG ISPR Ahmed Sharif challenged Indian claims of shooting down a JF-17 by stating, "...at least show me the debris of JF-17...". This emphasis on tangible proof was further reinforced in Extract 6, where Sharif criticized Indian media for using "18th-century tactics" in a modern era defined by "digital footprints" and "digital verification".

Conversely, the sources identify instances of deliberate misinformation aimed at harming Pakistan's reputation. Extract 7 highlights a circulating video where DG ISPR allegedly confirmed the loss of two JF-17s; however, the body language did not match the audio, and no official source confirmed the claim, marking it as a violation of the Maxim of Quality. In response, Pakistani officials provided technical data to support their narrative. In Extract 8, Air Vice Marshal Aurangzeb Ahmed shared "exact range bearings" and "audio from Rafael formation" with the call sign "Godzilla," using radar data to fulfill the Maxim of Quality through solid evidence.

Macro-Level Analysis: Power, Ideology, and Identity

At the macro level, discourse acts as a tool of power and dominance. The sources suggest that Indian discourse utilized a "religious card" to deflect military accountability and frame the conflict as an ideological struggle.

This is most evident in the fabrication of an "enemy image". According to the sources, Indian External Affairs Minister Jaishankar linked the Pahalgam incident to the "religious outlook" of the Pakistani Chief of Army Staff. Furthermore, an Indian media spokesperson introduced narratives claiming Islam is inherently violent and seeks global domination. These claims:

- Violate the Maxim of Quality by misrepresenting a religion practiced by 1.9 billion people.
- Exploit fear to simplify complex political issues into harmful stereotypes.
- Legitimize violence while diverting attention from strategic failures.

The consistent violation of Grice's Maxims—through concealment, softening, or fabrication—functions as a strategic tool to control public emotion and maintain institutional authority. While Indian discourse relied on ambiguity and ideological framing to preserve "national superiority," Pakistani discourse sought "moral legitimacy" by emphasizing transparency and digital accountability.

Conclusion

The war discourse from both the sides has completely different approaches. Indians throughout concealed the true circumstances and delayed the delivery of figures. They kept on choosing the indecisive vocabulary and left the duty of fact finding to their audience. They shot the arrows in air, which lack firm foundation and back of authentic source. On contrary all the information from Pakistani side was by the official representatives of three armed forces. They used facts and figures to justify their

stance and put up their point of view in a highly composed manner. They fulfilled Grecian maxims leaving narrow margin for false news.

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