

RELIGIOUS IDEOLOGY & DISCOURSE: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PAKISTANI RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS' SPEECHES

Munaza Noor

Lecturer, Department of English
The Women University Multan, Pakistan

Abstract

The present study is an effort to deconstruct the religious discourse of Pakistani religious scholars' speeches. This intends to examine religious discourse and ideology by using Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The linguistic structures (contrastive pair), figures of speech (metaphors, similes, personification) and interactional conventions (use of interrogatives, imperatives, pronominal use) followed by the scholars have been critically analysed to show the way they are used to inculcate certain religious ideologies in the minds of masses. Thus religious discourses are a means of putting masses in particular subject positions where they readily accept various ideologies considering them natural and common sensical. The present study tries to deconstruct these common sense religious ideologies in Pakistani religio-sociocultural context.

Keywords: Religious Discourse, Ideology, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

1. Introduction

The present study aims at exploring how Pakistani *ulema*¹ (religious scholars) propagate certain ideologies through their religious speeches. The mindset of a society is shaped in a particular mould through ideology loaded discourses. The religious discourse is ideologically charged and reflects a certain worldview. The focus of the study is on the use of particular linguistic structures/devices used by Pakistani *ulema* to inculcate certain religious beliefs in the minds of common people.

1.1 Religion, Discourse & Ideology

Language is an intrinsic part of a society. It is a sort of social practice. Fairclough (2001) and Van Dijk (1998) consider language one of the strongest means of propagating ideologies and these common-sense assumptions are ideologically shaped by relations of power.

Discourse and social practices are interrelated. Religion as a powerful institution in Pakistani society structures religious discourse in a particular way (Fairclough, 2001:23). Religious scholars enjoying privileged status in the society are in a position to control the actions and thoughts of the masses. People internalize these ideologies and these ideologies become a part of their commonsense assumptions about the world.

This study views religion from discursal perspective. The study of religion in the context of this research is a sociolinguistic one. The emphasis remains on religion as preached by religious scholars.

¹ * Definition of religious terms are given in appendix I

1.2 Significance of the Study

This study seeks to develop consciousness of religious discourse among people. It aims to explore linguistic devices employed by religious scholars to inculcate implicit and explicit ideologies in the mind of common people. The language awareness will enable them view Islam in a larger perspective.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Ideology

Ideology has been considered “the most elusive concept in the whole of social science” (McLellan 1986:1). Hawkes (1996:5) writes that Ideology refers to distortion of relationship between ideas, matter and representation. The concept of ideology has been established from the work of Marx and Engels. They correlated ideology to power, dominance and class conflict (Grossberg et al: 1998).

Althusser (1971, cited in Abercrombie et al. 1980:22) talks about the institutions of RSA and ISA. He believes that institutions like the “Repressive State Apparatuses” (eg, government, army and police)”, and the “Ideological State Apparatuses” (eg, religion, education and mass media)” play an important role in the society.

Durkheim (cited in Karen: 1995) relates ideology to religion. He searched for reality underlying religions talking about collective conduct as collective representation in action. He asserted that religions, just like other social organizations set down the rules to reason and behave and become a part of common sense and place people into the position of obedience.

Foucault’s views (1972) are distinctively related to discourse and ideology. Foucault believes that power is enacted and exercised in society through discourses. Through these discourses certain groups or practices are excluded from the production of knowledge and some others are considered privileged. He also asserted the dialogic nature of discourse (Mills, 1997).

2.2 Discourse

The term discourse is used within various disciplines such as sociolinguistics and discourse analysis carrying multiple meaning. In linguistics, Brown and Yule (1983) consider it as language in use. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), on the other hand, think it as “extended piece of text which has some kind of internal organization, coherence and cohesion” (cited in Mills, 1997:9). Fairclough integrated Foucault’s definition of discourse with a systemic functional linguistics and presented a comprehensive framework of critical discourse analysis (Mills, 1997).

2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis was considered a domain of linguistics (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Brown & Yule, 1983). With the rise of sociolinguistics in 1960s the focus on discourse studies gained new dimension. There was an increased interest in conversation analysis (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) and much focus paid to language in use instead of studying language in its abstract form. Van Dijk (2001) opines that much of these formal paradigms such as pragmatics, sociolinguistics and

conversational analysis, were asocial or uncritical. They were asocial as they did not link the texts with the social world in which they were created.

Fairclough's CDA (2001) can be regarded as a tool to analyze discourse for the purpose of highlighting ideological struggle and the inequalities in society that are exhibited in discourse. Contrary to Fowler et al's critical linguistics, there is a framework in CDA which shows a clear relationship between discourse, society and institutions. This intricate relationship between discourse, society and institutions contributes towards discourse production.

2.4 Religious Discourse & CDA

Religion as a social institution is embodied into certain discourses. With the advancement of learning in 21st century religious discourse is being studied objectively like all other discourses. Though there are just a few researches in this area. Wijzen (2009) argues that there has been dissatisfaction among religious scholars with objective definitions and methods of studying religion. Wijzen (2009) expects that critical discourse analysis (CDA) can close this gap. As it combines sociological analysis with linguistic analysis.

The present research bases its foundation on the previous studies of discourse, ideology, critical discourse analysis (CDA) and religious discourse. Furthermore it attempts to look into relationship between above mentioned strands in order to understand the ideological significance of religious discourse in context of Pakistan.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Questions

1. What kind of linguistic structures/devices are preferred by religious scholars to inculcate religious ideologies in masses?
2. What interactional strategies are used by *ulema* to connect with the masses?

3.2 Theories and Framework of Research

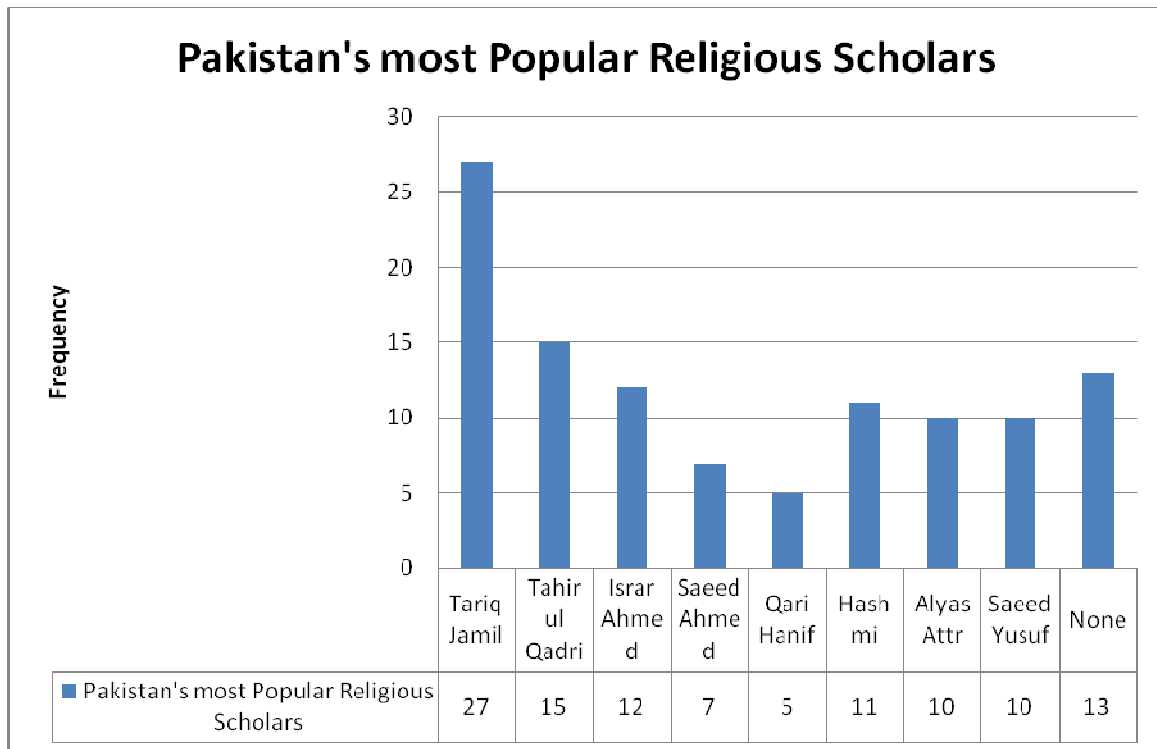
The framework used for data analysis in current research is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) based upon Fairclough's (2001, 2003) theory as discussed earlier. The purpose of using CDA in this study is to detect effectively the implicit ideologies embedded in Pakistani religious scholars' speeches.

3.3 Data Collection

Data collection and sampling is the most important part of a research as information is gathered from a "sample" and subsequent findings are applied to a broader population. The sample should be a true representative of the target population (O'Leary, 2004:73). The sample of this study consists of five speeches of different Pakistani *sunni ulema* (religious scholars). The reason for selecting *sunni* sect is that it is the largest sect followed by about 80 % people in Pakistan (Malik, 2006:34). In Pakistan, there are many religious scholars and it was not easy to choose a sample which is true representative of them. For this purpose a small scale survey was conducted. A form (see Appendix I) was distributed among 100 participants randomly.

Figure: 1

Pakistan's most popular religious scholars



The result of the survey (see fig 1) helped determining the sample. The top five most popular scholars' speeches have been taken as representative sample which include:

1. Moulana Tariq Jamil
2. Dr Israr Ahmad
3. Dr Tahir ul Qadri
4. Moulana Hashmi
5. Moulana Yousuf.

The data has been collected from different videos of these *ulema* (religious scholars) available on internet and shops.

4.CDA of Religious Scholars' Speeches

During the speech speakers use different linguistic structures/ devices that have been analyzed below.

4.1 Metaphors

The metaphors in following examples have been underlined. The speaker uses metaphors from different domains of life.

4.1.1 Concretive Metaphor

1) *Allah ne insan ke dil me apni mohabbat ka aik taar rakha aur nabion ki mehnat se is ko cherny ke asbab peda key*

(God put a string of love in human heart. And the efforts of prophets produced the causes of playing it.)

Here in (1) an abstract idea (i.e. love of Allah) is compared to a concrete object—a violin. That violin of love can only be played through teachings of prophets. The place of prophets is being highlighted here. In Islam, as scholar contends, prophets are highest in rank in the whole creation. Islamic teaching concerning all messengers of Allah as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohammad is the same. The speaker further argues that Islam declares them all as men raised to the station of prophecy. Their only distinction is that they receive God's revelations to hand over to their followers. So the respect for prophet is essential part of religion Islam.

4.1.2 Animal Metaphor

2) *Aik kutta ...kabhi is ki wafa dekhi hai? Agr palto kutty ko koi roti daalny wala na ho to whi para mer jay ga magar ghar na chory ga...wafa is ka naam hai. mery nabi ne ansoo bhaey aur tum kehty ho k Allah bakshey ga. Kia me kutty se bhi nechy chala jaon?*

(A dog... Have you ever seen the faithfulness of a dog? If nobody is there to feed a pet dog, he will die there but won't quit home...this is faithfulness. Even my Prophet shed the tears (with the fear of Allah) and you say Allah would forgive you. Am I inferior even to a dog?)

The extended animal metaphor of dog is underlined in (2). This chunk is part of a long sentence that contains 32 clauses. Here the faithfulness of human beings to their Creator has been compared to the faithfulness of a pet dog to his master. Whatever happens, the pet dog never leaves the door of his master. Similarly, faith requires unquestioned submission to the will of Allah. Whatever trials and turmoil human beings have to face, they should bear them with patience. This is true faithfulness to Allah.

4.2 Similes

Simile is defined as “a figure of speech in which one thing is likened to another, in such a way as to clarify and enhance an image. It is an explicit comparison (as compared to metaphor, where the comparison is implicit) recognizable by the use of the words ‘like’ and ‘as’” (Cuddon, 1991). During the speech the scholar uses different metaphors to explain certain points.

4.2.1 Humanistic Similes

3) *Allah ne insan ke ander apni talab asy bher di hai jasy hamary ander roti paani ki talab hai*

(God has filled human beings with a drive of His quest which is just like the drive of food and water in humans)

Here in (3) the scholar takes the example from human life and compares the quest for Allah with the drive of food and water in human beings. Hunger and thirst are basic human needs without

which human beings cannot live. As food and water are necessary in order to sustain body, a union with Allah is obligatory to keep the soul alive and satisfied. According to the speaker, any act of worship in Islam is considered a means of approaching Allah.

4) Tumhe Allah ne bnaya hai.....Us ne banaty huy jesy aik engineer motor banata hai to is me diesel engine rakhta hai, is me petrol dalo to khatam aur petrol engine rakhta hai to is me diesel dalo to khatam.

(Allah has made you...like an engineer who makes a motor and puts a diesel engine in it. If you fill petrol in this diesel engine, it will break down. And if that engineer puts a petrol engine in this motor and you fill diesel in it, it will break down too.)

In (4) human beings are compared to an engine and Allah to an engineer (as underlined). As an engine breaks down when it is not fuelled with right lubricant, humans too break down if they are not filled with the light of right faith. So the speaker asserts the truthfulness of Islam and falseness of other religious doctrines which, according to him, curb the true potentials of human beings.

4.2.2 Disease Simile

5) Jab tak insan ki Allah tak rasaai na ho wo preshan rhey ga. Is ki misaal asi hai k dard is k, zakhem is ke seedhy ghutny per hai aur wo dawa laga raha hai ulti taraf k ghutny per.....to araam is ley nahi ata k jahan dard hai , zakhem hai wha wo dawa nahi laga raha...insan ki beqrari ki asl roh hai jism nahi.

(Until a person finds God, he remains restless. His condition could be compared to a person whose right knee is injured and he applies medicine on left knee. So he cannot get comfort because he does not apply medicine on injury. The real cause of human restlessness is soul not body.)

The metaphor of disease and sickness has been employed in (5) by the speaker in order to show the undermining effects of distancing from Allah. The scholar asserts that the real cause of human suffering is soul not body. As soul seeks to find Allah and unless and until it finds Him, remains restless. The search for material remedies to alleviate misery is just like applying medicine on wrong part of body instead of real wound and pain. The metaphorical representation of disease has ideological significance. It tends to make the search for Allah in greater interest of human race and the opposite situation as undermining the rest and peace in human life.

4.3 Contrastive Pairs

The contrastive pair is an important aspect of public speaking. The contrastive pair contains two parts which are in some way in opposition to achieve a particular effect and emphasis (Abbas, 2005). The scholar employs contrastive pairs at number of places in order to enhance the ideological effect of the statement. The contrastive pairs have been underlined in examples (8) and (9).

8) *Allah ne sari dunya k mardo aurto ko chahe wo stage pe nachney wali ho ya musally pe beth k saidy krney wali ho, chahe wo stage pe gitar bajany wala ho ya miber-e-Rasul pe beth kar Allah ki baat sunany wala ho, sab ki fitrat aik bnai hai.*

(God has made ... all the men and women of the world. Whether a woman is a stage dancer or a pious woman, god has endowed them both with similar nature. Whether a man is a guitarist or a preacher, they too have been given similar nature.)

9) *Koi insan , koi mard aurat wo New York me rahy ya Arab waly choty sheher me rahy, ye fitrat badal nahi sakti*

(Whether a person lives in New York or Arab, his/her nature cannot be changed.)

In (8) and (9) the scholar takes the examples of the people from different walks of life such as dancer and priestess, singer and religious scholar. By giving examples of the professions that are considered a pole apart in religion, he makes the point that all these people though apparently different, are inherently similar in nature. The scholar further explains that Allah has made one nature for all humanity but it is humans' own choice to choose the path of goodness or evil. Structurally (as underlined above) the first part of the contrastive pair denotes wrong doings or evil actions and second part the goodness and righteousness. So, the guitarist and dancer are included in the category that has negative connotation and preacher, worshipper in the positive one. The ideological effect is not explicit but implicit and implied through the use of opposite categories.

10) *Allah ne hame imtihan me dala aur aik jannat banai aik jahannam banai ,aik taraf shaitan ko khara kia aik taraf nabion ko khara kia, aik taraf such ki roshnian hain aik taraf jhoot k andhery hain, aik taraf iman ka noor ha aik taraf kufr ki tarikiyan hain , aik taraf paakdamni ki roshan shahra hai aik taraf naafrmaani k khaddy hain*

(God puts us in a trial and made a heaven and a hell. He placed Satan on one side and prophets on other. There are lights of truths on one side and darkenesses of lie on the other. On one side there is light of belief and darknessess of disbelief on the other. On one hand there is a lighted road of piety and the ditches of disobedience on the other.)

The underlined contrastive pairs in (10) show that the contrast between goodness and evil has been highlighted here with imagery of light and darkness. Here, the contrastive pairs seem to emphasize that the path of goodness leads towards illumination of human life and soul. On the contrary, the path of evil leads to darkness and degeneration. The issue of free will is being emphasized as it is human beings choice to choose either of these two paths. Thus speaker deconstructs the elements of determinism in human life.

11) *Wo jo karta hai to is se koi rukwa nahi sakta, wo rokta hai to is se koi karwa nahi sakta.*

(If He wants to do something, nobody can stop Him. If He denies anything to somebody, nobody can force Him to change His decision.)

In (11) the speaker asserts that Allah is all powerful. Nobody can stop or make Him do anything. He is omnipotent. Thus, the scholar is making the audience realize and accept the supremacy of Allah.

12) *Flana bura hai hum achy hain, hum sacchy hain wo jhoty hain, hum haq hain wo batil hain. me bhi keh sakta hun tumhary andar nafrat ki aag bharka sakta hun lekin me ne Allah ko jaan deni hai.*

(He is bad and we are good, we are true and they are liars, we are right and they are wrong. I can also say such things and can raise the fire of hatred among you but I am to give soul to God.)

In (12) the scholar deconstructs the bi polar divisions of centre and margin existing in different *masalik* (religious schools of thought) as every *maslik* considers itself right and others wrong. He asserts that one should not divide society on the basis of good, bad, right, wrong etc. He excludes himself from this category, thus placing himself above the other religious scholars who spread religious extremism in society. The speaker is suggesting himself a peace maker that brings harmony in different sections of the society.

4.4 Interrogatives

The use of interrogative mood is another rhetorical device used in public speaking. The scholar asks questions from the audience at a number of occasions. The use of interrogatives indicates the power relation between the speaker and the audience. The speaker is in the position to demand response from listeners.

13) *Isy shafaf doodh me badalna ye gaey ka kaam hai? Gwaly ka kaam hai? Zameendar ka kaam hai? Kashtkar ka kaam hai? Ya kisi science daan , doctor ka kaam hai?*

(Who converts it (grass) into clear milk? Is it the work of cow? Is it the work of milkman? Is it the work of landlord? Is it the work of farmer? Or is it the work of scientist or doctor?)

14) *Mery Arfwala ke bando aik bat ka jawab do agr me is rat ko khara kar dun to koi hai mery siwa din lany wala?*

(My people of Arifwala! Give answer to one question. If I sustain night, is there anyone who could bring the day?)

15) *Abhi suna tum ne?*

(Have you heard now?)

In above mentioned examples (13) ,(14) and (15) the speaker takes examples from daily life and asks audience about the phenomena of turning grass into milk and night into day. The use of rhetorical questions is an effective tool to create a powerful emotional impact on the listeners. Thus in return listeners tend to share the supremacy and omnipotence of Allah with the speaker. So, the speaker is using questions to bring listeners to his own point of argument and make them agree with him.

4.5 Imperatives

The speaker uses imperatives during the speech. The use of imperatives is also a manifestation of power relationship between the speaker and the audience. The scholar is controlling the discourse, he is giving direct commands to his listeners. In this way, he seems to direct their behavior. Some examples of imperatives used during this speech are following:

16) *Behno ko hissa do*

(Give sisters their right.)

17) *Tableegh k kam ko sanjeedgi se lo*

(Take preaching seriously.)

18) *Zaban ko ghebat se bachao*

(Save your tongue from backbiting.)

19) *Maaf karna sekho*

(Learn to forgive.)

Imperatives are mostly used by the speaker for the preaching of the basic teachings of Islam as can be seen in (17), (18) and (19). These teaching are related to the social lives and actions of people. Thus giving command to listeners, the speaker wants to bring reforms in their lives. This also is an ideological representation of an ideal society. The use of imperatives put the audience into a particular subject position where their identities and ideologies are being shaped by the speaker: how are they supposed to behave in society in order to become good Muslim.

4.6 Pronominal Use

The use of pronouns is an important strategy of persuasion in public speaking (Abbas, 2005). The scholar addresses audience as *mery bhaio* (my brothers) and *mery dosto* (my friends) in order to create a friendship and a sense of solidarity. The speaker starts the speech with *aap* and switches to *tum* later. This shift from *aap* to *tum* creates a sense of intimacy between the speaker and the audience and makes them more flexible to absorb the dissemination of different ideological beliefs.

Speaker adopts direct and indirect warning strategies for the people by using *tum* (you) or *unho* (they).

20) *Tum bhai bhai se nahi bolty*

(You do not speak to your brother.)

21) *Unho ne kaha Allah bakhshey ga.....*

(They said God would forgive.)

In above mentioned examples (20) and (21), the speaker is using inclusive *tum*. It is not only referring to Muslims who are present in the gathering but the Muslim all over the world. By using the word *tum* (you), he is directly blaming them for their wrong deeds. On the other hand *unho* (they) has been used for not putting the blame directly on the audience but to generalize it. When talking about Allah, Prophet Mohammad and Quran the speaker relates them with himself.

Thus he says *mery Quran* (my Quran), *mery Nabi* (my Prophet), *mera Allah* (my God). This explicitly indicates the ideological position of the speaker who thus shows his allegiance to God and Prophet Mohammad. In this way a binary opposition of Us/They is created which excludes the masses from this relationship.

22) *Mera Allah kehta hai k mery moqably me koi nahi*

(My God says that nobody is in my competition)

23) *Mery Nabi ne farmaya*

(My Prophet said)

4.8 Discussion

The analysis indicates that the speech of religious scholar is ideologically charged. The speech consists of different ideological beliefs regarding Islam. The heart of the matter is that Muslims all over the world and in Pakistan should try to live a life that is according to will of Allah. Allah should be the only purpose of their lives. The scholar uses different linguistic strategies such as metaphors, similes, contrastive pair, parallelism, imperatives and interrogatives to emphasize his points.

The linguistic devices show that parallel structures are excessively used in the speech. The religious scholars enjoy the privileged position in the whole gathering and exhibit full control over the discourse and frequently use imperative and interrogative moods in the speech. The listeners are constrained to operate within subject positions created by the speaker. Thus, the speech can be regarded a manifestation of enactment of power relationship through discursal practices.

Just like all other forms of public speaking (e.g. political speeches) these religious gatherings are also characterized by unequal power relations where topics are controlled by the speakers. The speakers enforce feedback from the listeners in the form of the expression of their appreciation. Moreover, this also shows the successful communication of the message, which is conveyed in the speeches by the scholars.

Thus, the speeches of religious scholars not only disseminate ideological values linguistically and structurally but through the use of interactional conventions as well.

5. CONCLUSION

As far as the first question is concerned it is quite evident from the present study that religious scholars use different linguistic strategies in order to create an emotional effect and to inculcate religious ideologies in the audience. The use of parallel structures, repetitions of lexical item, contrastive pair not only sounds pleasant to the audience but makes them more prone to accept the ideological representation of the world.

The use of the figures of speech is another important aspect of religious discourse. Metaphors and similes are excessively used. So, it can be concluded that religious language is highly metaphorical. One reason of using figurative language is that religion is all about abstract

concepts and ideas such as God, heaven, hell, mercy, devotion etc. In order to make common people understand and imagine those abstract entities and ideas, the scholars bring the example from the real life. This strategy helps to show connection between abstract ideas (God, Heaven etc) and their wordly representation (monarch, garden etc). The speaker's ability to present a similarity between two concepts establishes him a successful speaker that is an essential part of public speaking i.e. religious speeches.

The scholars have the power of knowledge which the listeners do not have. This gives scholars a privileged position in the gatherings that is manifested through the use of interactional strategies. This is the manifestation of power relations among the speakers and audience. The power flows from the speakers to the listeners and the listeners are placed in subject positions where they accept ideological representation of the world. Said (1978) observes the same regarding written discourse:

“Sometimes the reader resorts to text because he does not know or comprehend the reality he wants to understand; at other times he reads and believes the text because it has been approved by other readers. It is here that the reality described and constructed by the text acquires a greater authority and use, greater even than actuality it describes. There is a rather complex dialectic of reinforcement by which the experiences of readers in reality are determined by what they have read in a text.” (Said, 1978: 94)

The same thing can be applied to the spoken discourse (e.g. religious gatherings) too. It is assumed that written as well as spoken discourses are constrained by power relations existing in the society. The speaker uses imperatives, interrogatives and pronouns (you, my friends, brother) in order to create a sense of friendship between him and the audience. This “synthetic sisterhood” (Abbas, 2005) is an effective device used by the speakers to convince and persuade people and it also gives them effect of sharing the position and power of speakers.

There are still many areas for research in this field. Further studies can be carried out focusing on different religious discourse such as religious sermons delivered in the mosques, religious programs shown at different T.V. channels, religious references used in politics etc. The findings of this research will help people to be aware of ideologically loaded language of religious discourse and view religion in general and Islam in particular in a broader perspective.

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Appendix I

Definition and Explanation of Religious Terms

Religious Term	Meaning and Explanation
Hadith	Tradition and saying of Holy Prophet
Majlis	Religious gathering, assembly, meeting
Momin	Firm believer, Faithful Muslim
Muslim	One who professes Islam
Quran	central <u>religious text</u> of <u>Islam</u> , which <u>Muslims</u> believe to be a revelation from God

Sunni	Orthodox Muslim
Ulema	Religious scholars, learned man

Appendix II
Survey Form

Which Pakistani religious scholar's speeches do you listen the most?

.....

Name of the Informant.....(Optional).....

Age

Gender : Male / Female

Profession.....