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**WHEN WORDS GOVERN: POWER, PERSUASION, AND CRISIS IN
PRESIDENT ASIF ALI ZARDARI'S MARCH 2025 PARLIAMENTARY
SPEECH**



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Abstract

The present article investigates the speech delivered by the President of Pakistan at the Joint Session of Parliament of 25th March 2005, which was not just the constitutional obligation of the President but a genuine political talk. The essay is analysed with qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis that happen in the context of transition of economy, coalition politics and parliamentary sensitivity during a period of federal stability, institutional reassurance and collective national purpose construction. According to the analysis that is used in the address by mainly a persuasive and reconciling language if the President is recognized as a stabilizer in the democratic setup of Pakistan. Invoking the principles of consensus, responsibility and common progress leaves economic recovery, social welfare, inclusive development, security and federal harmony interwoven as the goals at hand. The results indicate that the speech serves two purposes; it helps to govern by projecting hope and continuity, and it is also a reminder of the constitution, which reminds that big decisions in the country need consultation and balance. The address, in particular, is an intriguing yet relevant criticism of federal politics, specifically the Indus, and questions of institutional authority. The study concludes that Zardari's speech to Parliament is an example of how political language can affect the national narrative, help to manage conflict, and become a discursive hub of governance. That is why the current address can be considered as a paradigmatic example of the rhetorical presidency in the modern political context in Pakistan.

Keywords: political discourse, rhetorical presidency, federal stability, reconciliation politics, parliamentary speech, Pakistan, qualitative analysis

Introduction

The speech that President Asif Ali Zardari addressed to the Joint Session of Parliament on 20th March 2005, holds a significant position in the contemporary political history of Pakistan because it was delivered during the time of transition, negotiation and institutional sensitivity.

It was presented in the beginning of the new parliamentary year like a model of ceremony and politics at the time when a time of real economic restructuring, of coalition government was under way, and the intensity of tension in the parliament was also felt in the bar association rooms (Pakistan Planning Commission, n.d.). In this context, the presidential speech was no longer just a political procedure, but became a political narrative that reflects the priorities of the country and concerns of the federation, as well as continuity of democracy (what is being said in the country – Arab News, 2025). This speech has a lot to do with Zardari's political career as a civilian president whose past has always been dominated by the image of balancing, coalition management and the

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language of reconciliation. His presidential tenure is a form of political leadership in which symbolic power is joined with the power of shaping the tone of the government without the executive control. The March 2025 address is particularly fascinating as an example of a civilian chief of state intervening discursively in a context that calls for reassurance, coordination and institutional stability, as the federation requires. This makes the March 2025 address particularly interesting because it demonstrates how a civilian chief of state intervenes discursively in a situation when the federation is in need of a reassuring, coordinating and stabilizing moment of institutional stability.

The issue tackled in this study is that of the ceremonial versus the real political testing times of the Presidency. The presidency was caught between an opposition with an outcry and a coalition government that needed to be supported; in March 2025, there were also federal-provincial issues which needed to be handled carefully (Jongore, 2019). It posed a rhetorical riddle: what kind of language could the President use that would not transgress the constitutional boundaries but would have political leverage? Rhetorical persuasion, this study suggests, is the key to the matter and the use of language as a tool of mediation, guidance and institutional legitimacy becomes the key to Radio Pakistan (Radio Pakistan, 2025).

Zardari's speech is a reflection of a civilian presidency, marred with coalition politics, institutional balancing and the requirement to manage federalism concerns without the use of authority. The speech, which was delivered amid the opposition's protest, and the visible strain in the ruling arrangement, highlights the President's constitutional role that goes beyond ceremony to mediation in the background, thus making the office look like a bridge between the government, parliament and the federation (Press Information Department, 2017).

This study aims to explore the use of persuasive language strategies in Zardari's speech to address the country's concerns and to make the presidency a stabilizing force in the federation. The speech is rich in analysis, especially since it consolidates themes of economic improvement, social justice, development, security and consensus building in one discursive frame (The Nation, 2025a). The speech does not so much address the issues of these concerns individually, but rather links them together under a bigger framework of national recovery and communal consciousness. This enables the ability to analyze the speech as a carefully crafted performance of federal stability as opposed to a political speech (The Nation, 2025b).

Therefore, the purpose of this article is to explore the Joint Session of March 2025 as an instance of a presidential narration that took place through words of balance, reassurance, and inclusion. The study highlights the President's role as a mediator between institutions, as a guardian of democratic atmosphere and as a constitutional voice, which goes beyond the partisan divide (Pakistan Today, 2025). The article seeks to demonstrate how language can make the presidency more than a mere figurehead, more than a symbol of authority, more than a mere executive, all while fostering consensus in a federation where consensus is a key element to governance (Dawn,

2025).

Literature Review

Historical discourse

Political speeches in Pakistan have been going beyond the formal speech in the sense that they have been used as the discursive events in which political leaders have shaped the national identity, institutional powers, and political direction. Presidential rhetoric has in particular matured in tandem with Pakistan's constitutional and democratic evolution, marking a progression in the country's civil-military dynamics, party politics, federalism, and expectations of leadership (Marwari, Dino, & Ullah, 2024). Previous presidential speeches had a more strongly ceremonial character, but gradually they began to provide an arena for the public discourse on governance, national security, development and reconciliation. This change indicated that parliamentary discourse in Pakistan is not rigid, rather it changes in response to political circumstances and becomes more strategic when the nation's legitimacy is being challenged (Allah & Khan, 2020).

Past analysis of Pakistan's political discourse indicates that the Pakistani leadership has repeatedly created what they see as stories of unity, progress and national survival in the Parliament. From this angle, presidential speeches are significant documents in terms of the language of leadership in the institutional framework of Pakistan. They also expose methods of negotiating political authority beyond policy or law, and show how this is done through language. This March 2025 address is part of this wider practice but also represents a more modern approach championing the values of reassurance, inclusivity, and constitutional balance (Ahmad, 2024).

The Zardari doctrine

Asif Ali Zardari's style of politics is on the one hand the result of the concept of "reconciliation politics" (mufahimat), on the other hand referring to his minimalist or anathema attitude toward sectarianism in Pakistan. President Zardari from 2008-13 had inculcated into himself the image of a person who explores compromise and coalition management and isn't afraid of tempering with people with it so that things go their way. Sometimes described as being aimed at democratic continuity by being focused on minimising institutional conflict and at avoiding closing political avenues. This modus operandi has been termed his leadership style and politically as "Zardari Doctrine" (Press Information Department, 2017), a unique political approach. This style has come to be known as his leadership style and has been referred to in the political arena as a unique political approach, formally known as the "Zardari Doctrine" (Press Information Department, 2017).

The coherence of reconciliation appears to get a new lease on life in 2024-2025, particularly as the drive towards government of the people moves into a new phase with the transition to a coalition government and parliamentary opposition and tensions over the federal government. This newly thrust attention is acknowledged in the March 2025 address, where consensus, institutional

harmony, and a sense of shared responsibility are singled out. Extreme terms are not used in the speech, and instead, the discussion of the presidency towards the end of the speech tries to show that the presidency is a neutral vehicle that can be flexible enough to give back and respond to various political influences to both sides. This rehash of reconciliation of politics signals continuity with the past, not just in the sense of effects on the public, but with respect to Zardari as a civilian head of state in a disjointed political context.

Theories of power and persuasion

The study uses the concepts of the Rhetorical Presidency and Political Discourse Analysis, which is about the communication of power through language (Understanding the Rhetorical Presidency, 2009). Political Discourse Analysis assumes that political language is embedded in a social context and that it is intended with a particular political agenda. Political speeches do not only reflect political reality but also contribute to its creation. In this context, such features as the use of pronouns, repetition, evaluative language, metaphor, and thematic framing are the key elements in comprehending the persuasion and legitimation of the leader and audience. They are particularly useful in the analysis of parliamentary speeches, which may be formal and yet have a deeper political message (The Rhetorical Presidency, 1997).

It is also important to the concept of the Rhetorical Presidency, as it demonstrates an approach to governance in which a growing number of political leaders communicate directly with the public. Presidents may use speeches to influence public opinion, to define the policy discussion, to define national purpose, and to rely not just on institutional power. With parliamentary speeches, rhetoric serves as a way to claim relevance, to set limits on interpretation and to make the presidency seem like a stabilizing force. This rhetorical theory provides a why explanation for the importance of the speech beyond what it says, for how it says it (The Two Rhetorical Presidencies, 1997).

Theoretical Perspectives on Presidential Rhetoric and Crisis Communication

Presidential communication has been based on theories like the rhetorical presidency that deals with how presidents use rhetoric to influence people and policymaking, although it has grown to meet the needs of globalization and changing media environments, spawning the notion of the ubiquitous presidency. Global rhetorical presidency emphasizes the way how the president's address international audiences with adding elements of body, place, image, audience, and circulation, and this role of rhetoric in public diplomacy and foreign policy (Prasch, 2023). Media changes and trends of communication have further destabilized traditional modes of rhetoric, where the ubiquitous presidency prioritizes the continual presence and availability of politics in modern times (Scacco & Coe, 2016).

Comparative analysis demonstrates how cultural, social, and media elements such as race and

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gender shape and influence the styles of presidential communication, and how the same are altered to appeal to the various audiences (Stuckey, 2010). Furthermore, a critical role in democratic transitions is played by the rhetoric of presidential discourse, because the strategies of rhetoric like inaugural addresses and crisis responses may facilitate or impede the process of change in politics and in the institutions, in accordance with the political and institutional context at large (Campbell & Jamieson, 2014; Livingston, Denton, & Hahn, 1986).

Although the rhetorical presidency paradigm is useful, researchers emphasize the necessity to incorporate new insights to explain the dynamics of digital media, transnational communication, as well as the increasing diversity of presidential leadership during the twenty-first century. The rhetoric of crisis in presidential speeches has received extensive discussion as a special form of rhetoric whose goal is to reassure the audience, unite, and restore the collective identity (Ihle, 2025). Having considered the concept of rhetorical situation developed by Bitzer (1968), crisis communication can be viewed as the result of exigence which requires immediate reaction and usually forces a president to put events in a perspective that will give moral clarity and regain the trust of people. The dramatist approach by Burke also underscores the way crises are framed by rhetoric, i.e., act, agent and purpose to allow the presidents to simplify situations by framing them in terms of good versus evil or safety versus danger.

Research gap

In South Asia, there has been an increasing interest in political discourse, but very little focus has been placed on presidential parliamentary speeches as texts of their own. In contrast to the face-to-face speeches, election movements or confrontational political discourse, ceremonial and constitutional addresses have been under-investigated in the existing studies (The Nation, 2025). This fills a gap in the literature, especially on how a civilian president's use of parliamentary speech can help to bridge between institutions and indicate federal balance. But the March 2025 address is a valuable lens through which to explore the ways in which the idea of reconciliation, the discourse of the president, and the discursive power converge (Dawn, 2025).

Link to the present study

The present study is a development on these strands, as the speech is a text in which history, ideology, and persuasion converge. It is a continuation of the parliamentary rhetoric of Pakistan and illuminated by Zardari's approach to reconciliation and a wider body of theories on how to persuade people politically (Pakistan Today, 2025). The article aims to demonstrate how the presidency can serve as a rhetorical center of stability in times of political change. Thus, the aim of this literature review is to provide a background of understanding of the address, not as a standalone speech, but as an integral component of a larger discursive and constitutional pattern (Radio Pakistan, 2025).

Objectives of the Research

- To recognize the rhetorical strategies (persuasion, reconciliation, critique) in the March 2025 speech.
- To explain the link of 'economic-security nexus' in Pakistan being addressed in the speech.
- To assess the effectiveness of the President as a Federal-provincial mediator (e.g., Indus water dispute).

Research Questions:

- **RQ1:** How does President Zardari's discourse change the nature of a "ceremonial" presidency into an "active" political "governing" Presidency?
- **RQ2:** How did the speech try to reconcile the macro-economic benefits with micro-economic hardship for the public?

Research Method

Methodology

Qualitative research design is used in this study because President Asif Ali Zardari's speech to the Joint session of the Parliament on 10th March 2025 is an ideologically charged and politically significant text. The speech is not treated as just a ceremonial address but as a "discursive event" where language is being used strategically to 'frame' the issues that are discussed at the national level, as well as to 'showcase' leadership and to 'negotiate' meanings of what governance, unity, and crisis means (Sreekumar, 2025; Jilcha, 2025). Given the purpose of the study to explore how meaning is created through political speech, a qualitative approach is the most suitable to capture the essence, precision, and rhetorical qualities of the speech (Waqar et al., 2025; Qadus et al., 2025).

The research approach used is qualitative content analysis which enables a systematic and detailed analysis of the transcript. In this way, the speech was read many times to look for meaningful units of speech, common phrases, and signs of a discourse, which help to communicate the political message (Denzin and Lincoln 2018). Special focus was paid to portions of the speech in which the speaker spoke on governance, economic stability, social justice, institutional trust, federation, national development and state responsibility. These segments were then coded based on their communicative and ideological function, allowing the speech to be investigated and to draw a coherent political narrative (as per the references of Kissova, 2021; Raza and Akbar, 2012).

Thematic analysis is also employed in order to identify and interpret the main themes that recur across the address, in addition to the content analysis. There is a significant focus on the themes of national consensus, public relief, inclusive development, federal harmony, economic recovery, institutional legitimacy, and collective responsibility in the speech. Rather than these themes being

discussed as singular rhetorical devices, they were analyzed as they fit into a broader rhetorical framework within which the President portrays the challenges and opportunities of Pakistan (Matytsina, 2019). The thematic analysis uncovered the way in which this speech oscillates between reassuring and warning, praising and cautioning, developing and depriving, and thus constructs a multilayered and convincing political message.

The main data sources used in this study are official transcript of the address given on 10th March 2025 and the video recording of the Joint Session of Parliament. The combination of both sources adds to the credibility of the analysis since the transcript shows exactly what they said, and the video shows their tone, pauses, emphasis, and delivery. This can be especially useful in CDA-based research, where meaning can be affected by the way something is said, as well as the content of the statement itself in a particular institutional context. The parliament itself is also important as it gives the speech its analytical value because it puts the speech in a formal democratic and constitutional setting (Crotty, 1998).

There were a few steps involved in the process of analysis. The first stage involved a detailed reading of the text which helped to establish a general picture of the speech's form and main political issues. Second, the text was divided into meaningful units that were identified as new topics, rhetorical focus, and ideology content. Third, these units were classified and clustered into larger themes important for the research focus (Charmaz, 2014). Last, the themes identified were placed in a broader political and social context in Pakistan, particularly the themes of governance, federal relations, economic hardship and national cohesion. This was a systematic and interpretive analysis process that was step by step.

The methodological structure of the study is particularly applicable as the speech itself is full of rhetorical contrasts and of political symbolism. It celebrates economic advancement and still points out poverty; it advocates unity in the nation and warns of policies that are unilateral; it values development and emphasizes equity and inclusion. These kinds of paradoxes and oppositions can best be analyzed in qualitative terms, where the researcher can analyze the meaning of the speech as well as the deeper meanings found in the structure and language of the speech. In this way, the methodology opens up the possibility of a more complex understanding of the speech as a means of persuading, authorizing and constructing a nation (Wodak and Meyer, 2016).

In general, the overall methodology allows analysis of the presidential address as a linguistic phenomenon and a political move. Qualitative content analysis is used in conjunction with thematic analysis to systematically and interpretatively reflect the common themes in the speech, persuasive strategies, and ideological positions. This allows a more comprehensive view of the discourses of Zardari which emerges in the context of language, power and political meaning (Jalal, 1995; Rahman, 2002).

Data Analysis and Results

An analysis of President Asif Ali Zardari's speech of 10th March 2025, highlights a positive and development-oriented tone. The concept of progress/success, trust in institutions, sense of responsibility and national aspiration are always central to the speech (Kissová, 2021). The speech is not just a symbolic gesture, but an effective political document, connecting leadership, governance, development, and hope for inclusion.

Rhetorical patterns

The speech's rhetorical organization focuses on praise, encouragement and direction. A theme that is particularly prominent is the repeated focus on economic development, investment and stability. The positive news about growing foreign exchange reserves, foreign direct investment, market performance, and economic statistics provides an optimistic story of recovery for the nation. These references appear rhetorically, as they attempt to give an impression of confidence and of the state's trajectory towards a more stable and prosperous future (Rajini, 2020; Parashari, 2024).

The second broad theme is the language that is used to evoke a sense of collective responsibility. Parliament, ministries, provincial institutions and the public are kept in focus repeatedly in the speech while they have been playing their part in the progress of the Republic of Pakistan. We share a civic vision through words like unity, consensus, development, transparency, fairness, and prosperity. This rhetorical style is set against a background of cooperation and constructive participation, and it provides a very optimistic tone to the speech (Rajini, 2020).

Social uplift and long-term investment in the country are also on the strong agenda of the speech. Empowerment of women, development of youth, education, health, and capacity building are highlighted as key factors of progress. This imparts to the discourse a forward-looking feel since it relates current policy to future vitality. This is because development of speech is not only economic but also social and moral responsibility (Orungbeja and Ajilore 2023).

Thematic emphasis

Thematic analysis reveals certain themes that are highlighted in the speech as particularly important: economy, social welfare, federal harmony, connectivity, climate resilience, and national development. There seems to be an economic growth theme, followed by social welfare and institution-building. These sections are positive, aspirational and nation building in nature (President of Pakistan, 2025). The concept of inclusive, balanced and equitable progress for Pakistan is reiterated in the speech.

There is a place of attention, an inclusive development. There is persistent emphasis on the need for national development to achieve progress across all provinces, districts and communities in the address. The unity and forward-thinking nature of a growing federation will be reinforced by this all-inclusive approach. Similarly, the construction of infrastructure, improving connectivity, the agricultural sector, and technology are highlighted as key factors that will enable continued growth. These themes are not given alone, but in the context of the overall aims of the country towards prosperity.

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Another common theme is empowerment of the public. Women, youth, workers, farmers and small businesses are discussed in some detail in the address, which reflects a wide appreciation of social improvement. Practical solutions proposed to build a stronger Pakistan include BISP, education, scholarships and health and youth entrepreneurship. This means that the talk is highly constructive; progress is envisioned through care, opportunity, and participation.

Frequency of themes

Thus, the thematic structure of the speech can be summarized as follows:

Theme	Approximate Emphasis
Economy and Growth	30%
Social Welfare	25%
Connectivity and Development	20%
Institutional Harmony	25%

This distribution reflects a balanced and optimistic speech structure. Economic development is the focus of social welfare and institutional cooperation. There is also a strong focus on connectivity and development, particularly in terms of roads, railways, CPEC, Gwadar, and regional integration. The idea of institutional harmony is present in the speech in terms of consensus, cooperation, and progress.

Findings

The speech seems to have a very positive and informative political style of communication as evident from the findings. This draw of its charm lies in its combined role as an economic development tool, a social development tool, and a national integration tool. The address is not confrontational, rather it creates a climate of trust, positive movement, teamwork. This makes the speech suitable for analyzing it as positive speech in the Parliament.

Additionally, repeated opportunity component is found in future of Pakistan in the speech which is another significant finding. Other areas where developments are still elaborated include Climate Action, transport, healthcare, education, SME sector, agriculture, and IT. The tone of the address is forward-looking, accentuating a visionary aspect to the address. It implies that leadership is not just “command”, it is envisioned as a direction for development and joint achievement of success.

Interpretation

The entire derogation of the discourse of the Speech is a sample of positive political narration. It conveys a positive vision of Pakistan by using messages of development, integration, empowerment and institutionalization etc. The overall tone of the speaker is positive and the

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speech frequently appeals to Parliament and the nation to work together and create a better future for the nation. This ensures that the message is clear, symbolically and practically political.

In conclusion, the speech provides a good example of the potential of parliamentary language as a motivator as well as a direction of the national course. Its strengths are particularly in communicating policy issues in a broader sense of the 'common journey' represented in pictures. As such, the speech is more of a positive political statement, where pillars of governance, development and unity are underscored as interconnected for the promise of a prosperous Pakistan.

Discussion

The findings show that the President's address before the parliament on 10 March 2025 is a constitutional connection between the federal, provincial and people's expectations. Each of the times when he was called on "To speak with balance, to speak inclusively, to speak in terms of national continuity," he is presented with a representative, balancing and inclusive figure, the pivot of the federation. It is not through confrontation, but through language of unity and consensus of even shared responsibility with a Parliamentary center of the national coordination.

Federation and constitutional balance

Another conclusion reached from analyses is that the speech presents the President as a mediator, acting as representative for the federation as a whole, not just for a certain political block. This manifests itself, inter alia, in the fact that there is always a predominant concern with equality of development, with provincial participation and with the idea of a non-neglected district or region. The discourse is not only Federal harmony, it is also enacted Federal harmony – which is a sense of growth, a sense of welfare, and hence a sense of trust in institutions which is an integral part of national cohesion. In this regard, the speech further helps consolidate the president's gaze as one of the constitutional type, who helps with stability in political and administrative tension.

This is more apparent in a section of Indus river system. Along with the appreciation of federating units comes a distinctly Federalist approach in the speech to the issue, as it is one of those that have to be addressed with consultation, consensus, and sensitivity. It takes water policy from a technical level to a constitutional balance and trust of the province-level. This is a political speech of great importance and it is also a participation in an imagining and defence of federation.

Policy influence and Indus River concerns

The criticism of unilateral making of water-related decisions is particularly important as it shows how the president's speech can influence the policy debate without giving a call-out. The speech is not against development or planning, rather calling for plans that are "shared, consultative, and acceptable to all stakeholders. This rhetorical posture is important because it renders the President's speech public and makes it a call for consensus at the national level regarding the need

for national infrastructure and water governance. The speech's intent is to establish a moral and constitutional barrier to the approach of policy.

Its wider implications are the potential effect of the policy wariness which may follow this intervention about the Indus River system. The speech does not set up an executive's power to make it happen but goes on to strengthen the call for discussion and consultation at the federation level. The address is thus a subtle yet symbolic political pinch. It enhances the difficulty in taking the large water decisions; it makes them more intertwined with provincial trust and sustainability as well as with the long term stability of the country.

Security and civil-military framing

There's also a huge element of power dynamics in the speech – and that's in relation to the security narrative. The President extols the Military and stresses the team effort in combating terrorism, it's constitutional and civilian. This is important in such a political context because the narratives of insecurity have a strong overall civil-military flavor, thus establishing a narrative of cooperation rather than contestation. The speech makes defense and internal security into political matters, and preserves the “civilian institutional voice” of the presidency.

It is a framing which could be termed “push” from the civil-military point of view, and “enlightened” in the sense of the discourse. The President's talk focuses on security policy, but also he attaches importance to sacrifice; although the same time the speech highlights the need of a democratic coordination, institutional trust and political consensus for national stability. Security, in this case, is an institutional responsibility, but also a part of a larger story of civilian government and national unity. A moderate rhetoric which respects the civilian constitutionality and also upholds the state.

Broader interpretation

Taken together, the analysis suggests that not only is the address significant in terms of its message, but it is also significant in terms of its political message construction. It not only affirms but also guides and warns while providing the president with a unique mediating function in the federation. The message of the speech is incredibly effective when using the language of consensus, inclusion and the constitutional obligation, leaving the speech to endure as a means of public attention to governance and policy. It gives national legitimacy to federalism as a dynamic principle not just as a formality.

The speech also shows signs of being a contribution in that some policy fields are welcomed together into one institutional package – the ‘economy, security, development, water governance’. This is why the speech at the address is so a powerful political speech. It never divides issues, but rather it establishes them in the framework of a purpose of a Pakistan as a federation, which is united by dialogue, fairness and collective responsibility.

Conclusion

To gain a deeper understanding of how, at the time of democratic power-sharing crisis, facing the twin crisis of economic austerity imposed by the IMF, increasing water crisis among the provinces, and risky situation of the coalition government, President Asif Ali Zardari used an IMF-convened speech for the Joint Session of Parliament on March 10, 2005, in a subtle and calculated manner to transform the constitutional formality of forgery into a pretty stroke of status quo preserving trickery, keeping the Constitution of Pakistan intact, and therefore, peace in Pakistan intact as well. Further, in addition it has proved that the speech made by Zardari in the Joint Session of Parliament was a politically orchestrated piece of speech in which the idea of “language” was playing a pivotal role to/text to create the meaning of the national enterprise. The speech is not the mere ceremonial speech, but it is a story of governance, unity, institutional faith and constitutional duty. It’s important because it defines the political moment, brings public attention to a political issue and sets up a sense of community around a political issue. In this particular regard, speech is a reflection of the idea that political power frequently works in the form of speech as well as action.

One of the major findings of the study is the concept of the president as a conciliator in the federation for the centre. In the president’s speeches the term consensus and the term inclusion are often mentioned together with the terms development and shared responsibility, thus miniscoping the unity of the presidency in the unification of dissensus, disintegration, or political and geographical interests. Parliament exists in a rhetorical world, and such rhetorical positioning is especially significant for the tone and mood of parliament, as well as the public. The President is not a partisan, but the voice of balance, restraint, and continuity of America’s voice of the constitution.

The speech is also a tacit check on the unilaterality of the Executive. It continually reminds people that important issues of the nation must be based on consultation, provincial sensitivity and collective agreement, and confrontations must be avoided. This is definitely evident in the discourse on Federal Balance and Indus water dispute where consensus is absolute requirement for sustainable governance. It is a product which aids to move forward in the state and at the same time to inspire constitutional caution. The balance of these ensures the speech has its distinctive political potency.

The other priority finding is an address that is an integrated national vision covering several policy areas. Economic security, social welfare, connectivity, climate change and security and federal harmony have been viewed as interdependent areas of Pakistan’s future. This integration will serve as more than an agenda of policy concerns, it will be a story of direction and possibility. The President’s talk of progress and communal responsibility imparts an institutional and persuasive tone to the speech that looks forward.

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The study concludes that overall, a good paradigm of how words control the political narrative is represented in the parliamentary speech from 20 March 2025. It shows how a presidential speech can define the national conversation, establish foundational concepts and establish guidelines for unilateral presidential exercise of the power with skillful words. Lastly, the address's statement of leadership is a rhetorical strategy that maintains the comfort, the counsel, the meaning and the politics.

Recommendations

For Policymakers

Federal projects ought to be launched with better initial consultation and coordination between the center and federating units, to minimize the potential for public constitutional opposition. Consultation processes which enhance trust and ensure federal harmony should be implemented to discuss large decisions related to water, resources, development, and provincial interests. This would contribute to maintaining a policy implementation that is inclusive, durable, and institutionally acceptable.

For Future Research

Further research could be conducted to determine the effects on the actual application of the 18th Amendment due to this change in rhetoric in presidential speech. A longitudinal study could be used to compare several parliamentary speeches across time to see if the rhetoric of balance, consultation, and consensus is reflected in the institutional conduct of the parliament. This study would help, if conducted, to understand the nature of the discourse, whether it is symbolic, or becomes a meaningful one in constitutional practice.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

This appendix presents the authentic transcript of **President Asif Ali Zardari's Address to the Joint Session of Parliament on March 10, 2025**, which serves as the primary data for this Qualitative Discourse Analysis.

Transcript of Analyzed Speech

Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, members of the Parliament, distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen; Assalamualaikum!

It is my singular privilege as your civilian President to address, for the 8th time, this August House at the beginning of another parliamentary year. This moment marks not only the continuation of Our democratic journey

..... Let us put national interest first. Set aside personal and political differences. Let Us work together to revive the economy, strengthen our democracy, and uphold the rule of law.

Let us strive to build a Pakistan that is just, prosperous, and inclusive.

Make the best use of this parliamentary year.

Thank you.

Pakistan Paindabad!

The transcript has been verified against official president.gov.pk archives and cross-checked with the YouTube live recording for accuracy and completeness. The complete transcript of the speech Is not included in this document; it can be accessed online at:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/Za7ixk1HxX8?si=UaAKsD2wQK1tex9u/>