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BRINGING KASHMIR CLOSER: AN AI-ASSISTED PROXIMIZATION ANALYSIS OF IMRAN KHAN'S 2019 ADDRESS TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Abstract
This study examines how the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, used language to turn the Kashmir dispute into an urgent concern for the international community in his address to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on 27 September 2019. Earlier studies of the address have mostly listed its themes or described its cohesion; less attention has been paid to how it builds a sense of approaching danger. The study combines Fairclough's three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis with Cap's spatial–temporal–axiological (STA) model of proximization, and adds two AI-assisted procedures: first-pass annotation of proximization markers by a large language model, checked by the researcher, and lexicon-based sentiment scoring with VADER. The data is a published transcript of the address (2,575 words, 212 sentences). Of all sentences, 57.5% carry at least one proximization marker, rising to 65.0% in the Kashmir section, which takes up just over half of the address. Islamophobia is framed mainly through clashes of values, while the Kashmir section fuses all three strategies and builds towards a temporal climax around the analogy of Munich 1939. The address contains no hedging modals (may, might) and keeps direct address to the audience (you) almost entirely for the Kashmir section. The sentiment tool broadly agreed with the manual reading but scored a third of the proximization sentences as neutral, including the Munich analogy. The study argues that Khan proximizes from the periphery, moving his audience's historical memory towards Kashmir, and that AI tools serve critical discourse analysis only when their output is read critically.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis; proximization; Imran Khan; United Nations General Assembly; Kashmir; AI-assisted discourse analysis; large language models

1. Introduction

Politics is certainly and unquestionably connected to power. A political actor can impose an ideology through physical coercion, but it is much more effective to persuade people voluntarily, that is, to "exercise power through the manufacture of consent . . . or at least acquiescence towards it" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 4). Language is the main means of doing this. Political discourse is the use of language to achieve political ends, and politicians learn throughout their careers to use language rhetorically, persuading their audiences through careful and often subtle choices of words. Orwell (1946) went as far as to say that in his age nobody could keep out of politics, because all issues had become political issues.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is not just an organisation; it is a forum where a leader can convey the problems of his nation to the world and try to change how the world sees them. The annual general debate gives every member state the same platform, but not the same share of attention. Leaders of smaller or less powerful states face a particular problem: they must persuade a distant audience that their concerns are also the world's concerns.

On 27 September 2019, Imran Khan, then Prime Minister of Pakistan, addressed the 74th session of the General Assembly at its ninth plenary meeting. It was his first address to the Assembly, and it came just over seven weeks after India revoked the special constitutional status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 on 5 August 2019. Khan spoke on four issues: climate change, the flight of illicit money from poor countries, Islamophobia and Kashmir. The speech was widely discussed in Pakistan and abroad, and it has since become one of the most analysed political speeches in Pakistani discourse studies.

That popularity is also the problem this study starts from. The address has already been examined with Fairclough's three-dimensional model (Rabbani et al., 2021), van Dijk's macro- and microstructures (Afzal et al., 2022) and Halliday and Hasan's model of lexical cohesion (Asif et al., 2020), and it has been compared with Donald Trump's rhetoric on Islamophobia (Asif & Shoukat, 2026). These studies agree on what Khan talked about. They say much less about how the speech works on its audience: how it makes a dispute in South Asia feel close, urgent and morally binding to delegates in New York. The concept of proximization (Cap, 2013, 2017) was developed for exactly this question, but to the best of the researcher's knowledge it has not yet been applied to this address.

A second gap is methodological. Large language models (LLMs) are now being tested as annotators in political science, pragmatics and discourse research (Gilardi et al., 2023; Yu et al., 2024), and corpus linguists have begun to ask what such tools can and cannot do (Curry et al., 2024). Most critical discourse studies of Pakistani political speeches, however, still rely either on fully manual reading or on simple word lists. This study tries a middle path, in which AI-assisted procedures annotate and score the text and their output is then checked and interpreted within an established critical framework.

The study asks four questions:

RQ1. What lexical, pronominal, modal and interrogative choices characterise Khan's 2019 address to the UNGA?

RQ2. How does Khan use spatial, temporal and axiological proximization to present Kashmir, and his other themes, as urgent concerns for the international community?

RQ3. How do the discursive and social contexts of the address account for these choices?

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RQ4. What do AI-assisted procedures (LLM annotation and automated sentiment scoring) add to the critical analysis of the speech, and what do they miss?

The study helps in understanding the role of language in shaping public opinion and how political leaders present their thoughts through rhetoric. It also offers a replicable way of combining critical discourse analysis with AI-assisted tools, which other researchers can apply to political speeches in Pakistan and elsewhere.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Discourse, Political Discourse and Critical Discourse Analysis

The term *discourse analysis* was first used by Harris (1952) for a method of analysing connected speech or writing beyond the limit of a single sentence. In later work it came to mean the study of language in use, that is, of the meanings people give to language and the actions they carry out with it in specific social contexts. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) adds a political edge. For van Dijk (2001), CDA studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in social and political contexts. Wodak (2001) similarly describes it as the critical study of social inequality as it is expressed, signalled, constituted and legitimised through language use, and Fairclough (2001) presents it as a form of critical social science that tries to illuminate the problems people face in particular forms of social life and to offer resources for tackling them.

Political speeches have long been a favourite object of CDA because they are planned, public and openly persuasive. Studies typically examine pronouns, which divide speakers and audiences into in-groups and out-groups (Wilson, 1990); modality, which signals how certain or how obliged a speaker presents himself and others (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014); and the strategies through which actions are legitimised (Reyes, 2011; Van Leeuwen, 2007). Chen (2018), for example, analysed Donald Trump's inaugural speech through transitivity, modality and personal pronouns and found that Trump relied on material and relational processes, first-person pronouns and high modality to present himself as the agent of change and to build close relations with his audience. Bukhtiar (2020) applied Fairclough's model to Barack Obama's COVID-19 speech and showed how historical references, inclusive pronouns and the repetition of phrases were used to call for unity, love and peace.

2.2 Previous Studies of Khan's 2019 Address

Khan's 2019 address has attracted unusual scholarly attention. Rabbani et al. (2021) applied Fairclough's three-dimensional model to the speech to find out its real intention and identified four main topics, on each of which Khan tried to offer a solution. Asif et al. (2020) examined lexical cohesion in the address and argued that reiteration and collocation served as means of interaction aimed at the international community. Afzal et al. (2022) used van Dijk's macro- and microstructures and found that pronouns, rhetorical questions and modality carried Khan's ideological positions on climate change, corruption, Islamophobia, terrorism and Kashmir. Asif and Shoukat (2026) compared the address with Donald Trump's campaign rhetoric to show how Islamophobia is represented ideologically in both, and Farhan et al. (2021) set Khan's later UNGA speech against Narendra Modi's, finding sharply different ideological bases.

Taken together, this literature has mapped the themes and devices of the address well. What it has not done is explain the speech as a construction of threat, that is, show how distance,

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time and values are manipulated so that a regional dispute appears to endanger the audience itself.

2.3 Proximization and the Language of Threat

Proximization theory grows out of Chilton's (2004) deictic space theory, in which speakers position people and events relative to a deictic centre of "here", "now" and "right". Cap (2013) defines proximization as a forced construal in which distant entities and events, located outside the deictic centre (ODC), are presented as moving towards the speaker and addressee inside it (IDC), so that a threat appears close and action against it appears legitimate. His spatial–temporal–axiological (STA) model distinguishes three strategies. Spatial proximization presents ODC actors as physically encroaching on the IDC. Temporal proximization presents the threat as imminent or momentous, often by collapsing the future into the past through historical analogy. Axiological proximization presents a clash between IDC values and ODC ideology that is likely to turn into physical conflict (Cap, 2013, 2017). Cap developed the model mainly on American discourse about the war on terror, in which a powerful state justifies its own intervention.

In Pakistani research, proximization has been applied to war poetry from Afghanistan and Kashmir (Khan et al., 2023) and, through Chilton's deictic framework, to Indian newspaper headlines on the 2019 Pulwama crisis (Wasim et al., 2023). Both studies show that the framework travels well to South Asian conflict discourse. Neither, however, examines how a head of government from a smaller state uses proximization to make an international body take up his cause. This is the gap the present study addresses.

2.4 AI and Computational Tools in Discourse Analysis

Corpus methods have long been combined with CDA to make claims about frequency and pattern more reliable (Baker et al., 2008). Recent work extends this to artificial intelligence. Gilardi et al. (2023) reported that ChatGPT outperformed crowd workers on several text-annotation tasks in political science. In linguistics, Yu et al. (2024) found that GPT-4 came close to a human coder in annotating the components of apologies, while Curry et al. (2024) warned that ChatGPT's analyses of keywords and concordance lines were generic and hard to replicate. Lexicon-based sentiment tools such as VADER (Hutto & Gilbert, 2014) offer a cheaper and fully transparent alternative, but they score words rather than meanings. The lesson of this literature is that AI tools can speed up and systematise annotation, but their output needs human checking and critical interpretation. That is the stance taken here.

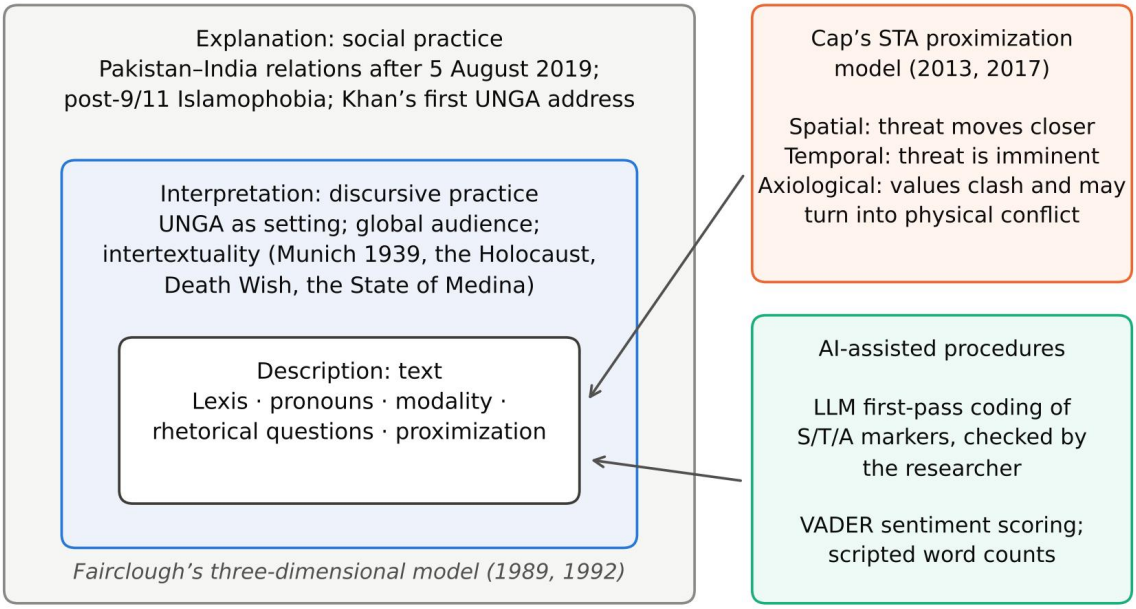
3. Theoretical Framework

The study uses Fairclough's three-dimensional model (1989, 1992) as its overall frame and Cap's STA model of proximization (2013, 2017) as its main tool at the level of the text. According to Fairclough, every communicative event, whether a phone call, a television debate or a speech, has three dimensions, which is why the model is called three-dimensional. It is a text; it is a discursive practice involving the production and consumption of that text; and it is a social practice, shaped by its social context and helping to shape it. Corresponding to these three dimensions are three stages of analysis: description, interpretation and explanation (Fairclough, 1989).

At the stage of description, this study examines vocabulary, pronouns, modality, rhetorical questions and proximization markers. At the stage of interpretation, it asks who produced the address,

for whom, in what setting, and which earlier texts and events it draws on. At the stage of explanation, it relates the address to the situation of 2019: Pakistan–India relations after the revocation of Article 370, the global discourse of Islamophobia after 9/11, and Khan's position as a newly elected prime minister on his first visit to the Assembly. Proximization links the three stages, because the construction of threat is visible in the text but makes sense only against the speaker's purposes and the context of the speech. The AI-assisted procedures operate at the stage of description and are treated as aids to the analyst's reading, not replacements for it (Figure 1).

Figure 1: *Analytical Framework of the Study*



4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The present research is mixed in nature. It is qualitative in the sense that the speech is analysed through close reading and interpretation within a critical framework, and quantitative in the sense that frequencies, rates and sentiment scores are calculated to support that reading. The design is a single-text case study, since the aim is depth rather than generalisation.

4.2 Data

The data is the English transcript of Imran Khan's address at the 74th session of the UNGA on 27 September 2019, as published by *Business Recorder* (2019) on the day of the speech. Khan delivered the address in English. The transcript was copied, cleaned of headings and extra information, and saved as plain text. It contains 74 paragraphs, 212 sentences and 2,575 word tokens (844 word types), with a mean sentence length of 12.1 words. The published transcript is a condensed record rather than the verbatim record of the meeting: some passages are shortened, and informal abbreviations such as "b/w" and "govt" appear in it. Quotations in this article reproduce the transcript as published. Following the speaker's own announced structure ("First, let me talk about climate change"; "My third point is Islamophobia"), the text was divided into five sections: the opening, climate change, corruption and money laundering, Islamophobia, and Kashmir and India (Table 1).

Table 1: *Profile of the Address by Section*

Section	Paragraphs	Sentences	Words	Share of words (%)	Questions	Mean VADER score
Opening	2	3	55	2.1	0	−0.02
Climate change	6	16	194	7.5	0	+0.10
Corruption and money laundering	8	21	313	12.2	3	−0.20
Islamophobia	21	55	683	26.5	4	−0.05
Kashmir and India	37	117	1,330	51.7	15	−0.11
Whole address	74	212	2,575	100.0	22	−0.08

Note. Words are word tokens (alphabetic and numeric strings). The mean VADER score is the average sentence-level compound score (range −1 to +1).

4.3 Procedures

4.3.1 Lexical and Grammatical Profile

Word tokens, sentences and paragraphs were counted with a short Python script written for the study. Sentences were split at final punctuation, with exceptions for abbreviations such as "Mr.". Content words were grouped into word families (for example, *Kashmir*, *Kashmiri* and *Kashmiris*), and possessive forms were counted with their base word. Personal pronouns were grouped into four sets (*I/me/my*, *we/us/our*, *you/your*, *they/them/their*) and modal verbs into seven (*will*, *would*, *must*, *can*, *could*, *should*, *may/might*), including negative and contracted forms. Interrogative sentences were counted from final question marks. Rates are given per 1,000 words so that sections of different length can be compared. The opening (55 words) is too short for stable rates and is left out of the rate comparisons.

4.3.2 LLM-Assisted Proximization Coding

Proximization markers were annotated at sentence level using the coding scheme in Table 2, which operationalises the three STA strategies described by Cap (2013, 2017). A sentence could carry more than one code. A first pass was carried out with a large language model, Claude (Anthropic; model claude-opus-5-5), in October 2026. The model was given the definitions in Table 2 and the full numbered list of sentences, and it assigned zero or more codes to each sentence. Every code it proposed was then checked by the author against the definitions and the context of the sentence, and was accepted, revised or removed. The counts reported below are the checked counts. The complete coding sheet is provided as supplementary material so that the coding can be inspected and replicated.

Table 2: *Coding Scheme for Proximization (Based on Cap, 2013, 2017)*

Code	What is coded	Typical forms	Example from the address
S: Spatial	Actors or events outside the deictic centre (ODC) shown moving towards, or physically acting on, the in-group (IDC)	Noun phrases of troops, numbers of people; verbs of motion, confinement and attack	"They escalated the number of troops in Kashmir and put 8 million people under curfew."

Code	What is coded	Typical forms	Example from the address
T: Temporal	The threat presented as imminent, escalating or about to recur	*will* + catastrophe; "now", "this is the time"; analogies between past and future	"I feel we are back in 1939; Munich."
A: Axiological	A clash between in-group values and out-group ideology presented as likely to turn into physical conflict	Noun phrases naming ideologies and values; comparisons with Nazism; moral contrasts	"They believed in racial superiority the same way that the Nazi's believed in the supremacy of the Aryan race."

Note. A sentence could carry more than one code. Sentences that mention a topic without presenting it as an approaching threat were left uncoded.

4.3.3 Sentiment Scoring

Each sentence was also scored with VADER (Hutto & Gilbert, 2014; Python implementation, version 3.3.1), a lexicon- and rule-based sentiment tool that returns a compound score from −1 (most negative) to +1 (most positive). Following the tool's conventions, sentences scoring −0.05 or below were treated as negative, those scoring 0.05 or above as positive, and the rest as neutral. VADER was chosen because it is free, transparent and widely used, not because it captures political meaning; one aim of the study (RQ4) is to see where it fails.

4.4 Analysis

The quantitative results were used to locate patterns, and every pattern was then interpreted through close reading of the relevant passages, moving from description to interpretation and explanation as Fairclough's model requires. The analysis is concerned with how Khan represents events and actors, not with judging whether his factual claims are correct.

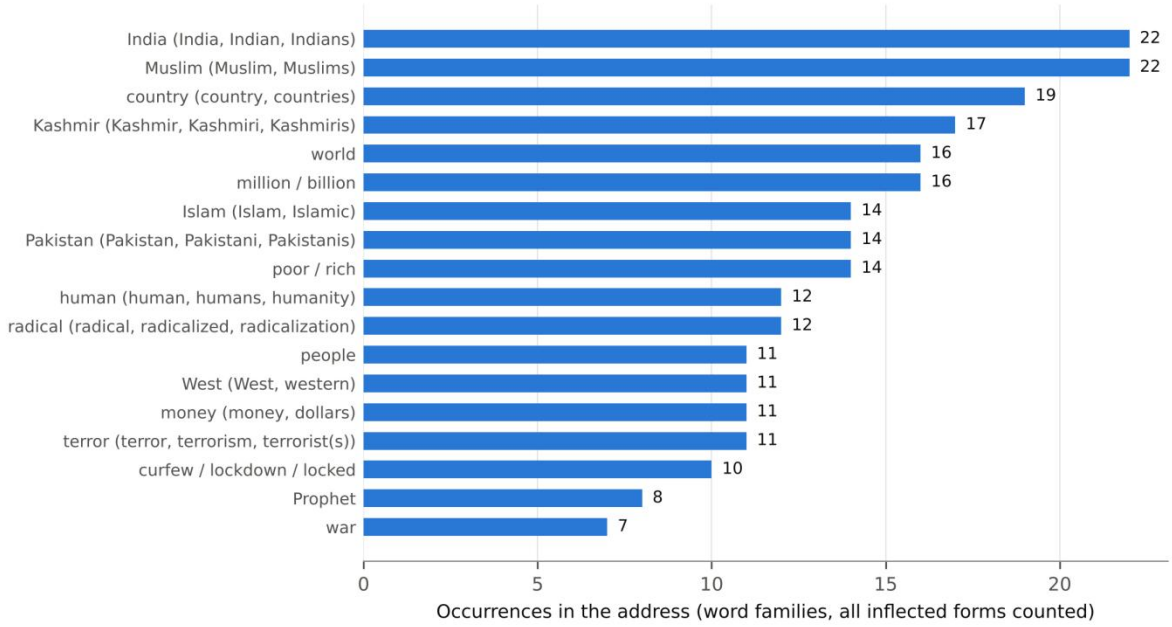
5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Description: Lexis, Pronouns, Modality and Questions

The address gives very unequal space to its four themes (Table 1). Kashmir and India take up 51.7% of the words and 117 of the 212 sentences; Islamophobia takes 26.5%, corruption and money laundering 12.2%, and climate change only 7.5%. The speech therefore moves from problems the world already accepts as shared towards the issue that mattered most to the speaker, and gives that issue more than half of its length.

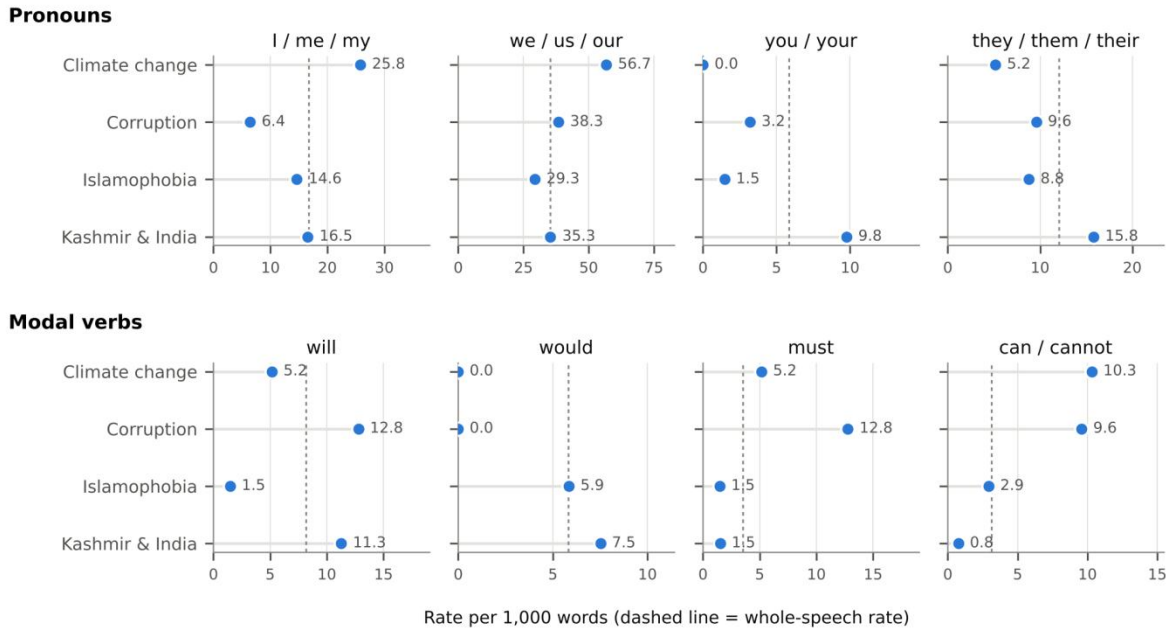
The vocabulary reflects this movement (Figure 2). The most frequent content-word families are *India* (22) and *Muslim* (22), followed by *country* (19), *Kashmir* (17) and *world* (16). Words for large numbers (*million*, *billion*) are almost as frequent (16), because Khan supports nearly every claim with a figure: "80 percent of our water", "8 million people under curfew", "900,000 troops", "1.3 billion Muslims". Two further families stand out. The *radical* family (*radical*, *radicalized*, *radicalization*) occurs 12 times and the family *curfew/lockdown/locked* 10 times. Together they sketch a causal chain that runs through the second half of the address: confinement produces radicalization, and radicalization produces violence.

Figure 2: *Most Frequent Content-Word Families in the Address*



The pronoun profile shows who is speaking to whom (Figure 3). *We/us/our* is the most frequent set overall (35.3 per 1,000 words) and peaks in the climate section (56.7), where Khan speaks for Pakistan ("We depend on our rivers; we are mainly an agricultural country"). *I/me/my* is also highest there (25.8), as Khan positions himself as a leader who sees an urgency that others miss: "I don't see world leaders realizing the urgency of the situation." The clearest shift concerns *you*. Second-person forms are almost absent until the Kashmir section, which contains 13 of the 15 instances (9.8 per 1,000 words). There Khan turns from describing to addressing: "This is why you came into being in 1945!"; "You are the one who said Kashmir's right to self-determination". *They/them/their* is also most frequent in the Kashmir section (15.8), where it refers mostly to India, the RSS and the Indian forces. In Wilson's (1990) terms, the pronouns divide the world into an inclusive *we*, a responsible *you* and a threatening *they*.

Figure 3: Pronoun and Modal Verb Rates by Section



The modal verbs point the same way. The address contains no instance of *may* or *might*, the usual markers of tentative possibility in English. Khan's predictions are made with *will* (21 instances) and his demands with *must* (9). *Must* is concentrated in the corruption section (12.8 per 1,000 words), where obligations are placed on rich countries and international lenders: "The rich countries must show political will"; "The world bank, the IMF, and the Asian developing bank must find a way to stop this plunder." *Will* is frequent both there (12.8) and in the Kashmir section (11.3), where it is mostly predictive and nearly always predicts disaster: "There will be another Pulwama incident"; "I fear there will be a bloodbath." *Would* is highest in the Kashmir section (7.5), where it carries the hypothetical comparisons discussed in Section 5.3. The most hopeful modal of the address, *can*, is most frequent in the climate section (10.3 per 1,000 words; "We can do great things") and almost disappears from the Kashmir section (0.8). In Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) terms, the address combines high-value epistemic modality with strong deontic obligation and leaves its audience little room for doubt.

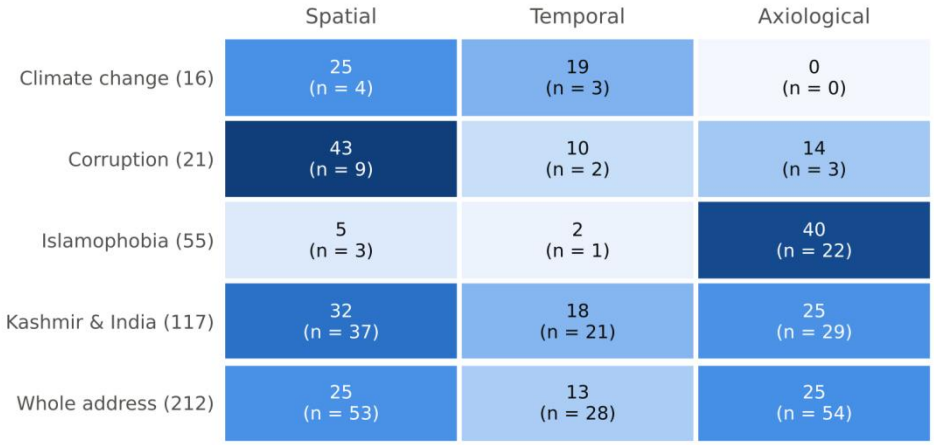
Of the 22 interrogatives in the transcript, 15 occur in the Kashmir section. None of them asks for information. Some challenge the audience's moral consistency ("How would the Europeans react? How would any human community react?"), some predict ("What will happen when the curfew is lifted?") and some voice grievance ("Are we children of a lesser God?"). The questions do work that statements could not do politely at the UN: they accuse without naming the accused ("What kind of a mindset locks up 8 million people?").

5.2 Proximization Across the Address

Of the 212 sentences, 122 (57.5%) carry at least one proximization code: 53 spatial, 28 temporal and 54 axiological. The strategies are not evenly spread (Figure 4). The climate and corruption sections rely mainly on spatial proximization, which presents environmental damage and money as flowing towards or away from poor countries. The Islamophobia section is almost entirely axiological: 22 of its 26 coded sentences contrast the values of Islam with Western misperceptions of

it. Only the Kashmir section uses all three strategies at high rates (spatial 32, temporal 18 and axiological 25 per 100 sentences), and 65.0% of its sentences carry at least one code.

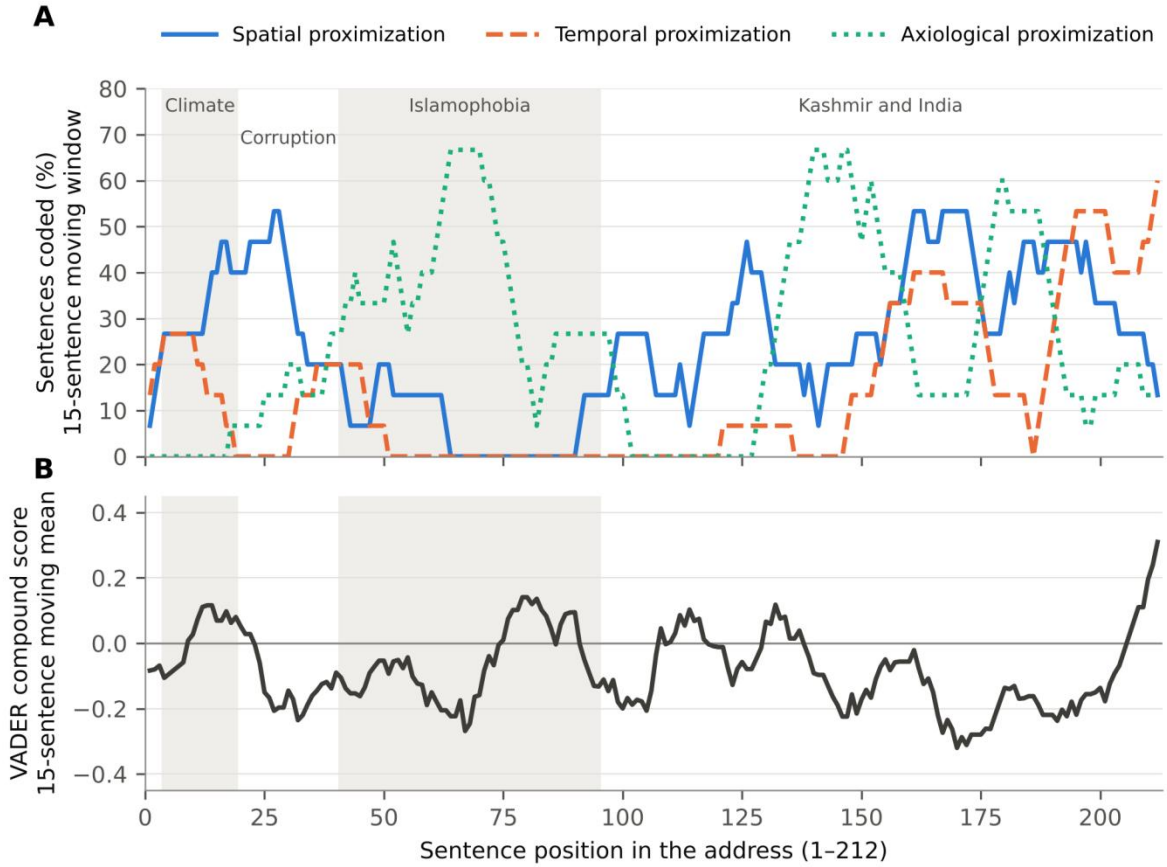
Figure 4: Proximization Strategies by Section (Coded Sentences per 100 Sentences)



Note. Cells show the number of sentences carrying each code per 100 sentences in the section; raw counts are in brackets. Sentence totals for each section are given after its name. A sentence can carry more than one code. The opening (three sentences, one temporal code) is included in the whole-address row.

The order of the strategies matters as much as their frequency (Figure 5). Axiological proximization peaks twice, first in the Islamophobia section and again in the passage on the RSS. Spatial proximization rises in the middle of the Kashmir section, where the curfew and the troops are described. Temporal proximization comes last: 10 of the 28 temporal codes fall in the final 30 sentences, which make up only 14.2% of the address. Of the 13 sentences that carry two strategies at once (Table 3), 11 are in the Kashmir section. The address therefore builds its case in layers. It first sets up a conflict of values, then shows that conflict taking physical form, and finally tells the audience that the moment to act is now.

Figure 5: Proximization and Sentiment Across the Address



Note. Panel A shows the share of sentences carrying each proximization code; panel B shows the mean VADER compound score. Both use a centred moving window of 15 sentences. Shaded bands mark alternate sections; the first three sentences form the opening.

Table 3: *Sentences Carrying Two Proximization Strategies*

Section	Sentence (as in the transcript)	Codes
Climate change	80 percent of our water comes from the glaciers and these are melting at an alarming pace.	S + T
Climate change	If nothing is done, we fear humans are facing a huge catastrophe.	S + T
Kashmir and India	The hate ideology allowed RSS goons under Modi's CM ship in Gujarat to butcher 2000 Muslims.	S + A
Kashmir and India	This racial superiority; what does he think is going to happen when he lifts the curfew?	T + A
Kashmir and India	But what will happen when 8 million Kashmiris come out of a lockdown and face 900,000 troops?	S + T
Kashmir and India	I fear there will be a bloodbath.	S + T
Kashmir and India	This will only lead to further radicalization.	S + T

Section	Sentence (as in the transcript)	Codes
Kashmir and India	The phrase Islamic terrorism allows India to dismiss human rights and further increase cruelty on the people of Kashmir.	S + A
Kashmir and India	There will be another Pulwama incident because of their cruelty in Kashmir, they will blame us and try to bomb us again.	S + T
Kashmir and India	Don't you think that 180 million Muslims will be radicalized in India as they see 8 million Kashmiris locked up?	S + T
Kashmir and India	Two nuclear-armed nations almost went head-to-head in February.	S + T
Kashmir and India	If a conventional war starts between 2 countries, nuclear countries anything could happen.	S + T
Kashmir and India	This is not the time for appeasement like that in 1939 in Munich.	T + A

Note. S = spatial, T = temporal, A = axiological. Sentences are listed in the order in which they occur.

5.2.1 Spatial Proximization

Spatial proximization in the Kashmir section works through numbers and verbs of confinement. India "escalated the number of troops in Kashmir and put 8 million people under curfew"; Kashmiris are "caged like animals in homes"; "13,000 boys [are] picked up & taken to unknown locations". The figure of 8 million is repeated five times, so the size of the confined population becomes a refrain. The threat then expands outward from Kashmir. The "8 million Kashmiris" are joined by "180 million Muslims" in India who "will be radicalized" and by "1.3 billion Muslims who are watching this". Finally it reaches the international system itself: "Two nuclear-armed nations almost went head-to-head in February", and "If a conventional war starts between 2 countries, nuclear countries anything could happen." Spatial proximization therefore works in two directions at once. It brings the Indian forces closer to the Kashmiris, and it brings the consequences of the conflict closer to everyone else.

5.2.2 Temporal Proximization

Temporal proximization is concentrated at the end of the address and rests on two devices. The first is prediction with *will*. The future is presented as already decided: "There will be another Pulwama incident"; "they will blame us and try to bomb us again"; "This will only lead to further radicalization." The second and more striking device is historical analogy: "I feel we are back in 1939; Munich. Czechoslovakia has been taken." The analogy does what Cap (2013) describes as conflating the future with the past. The audience is invited to see the present as the moment before a war that everyone in the hall knows did happen. (Historically, the Munich Agreement was signed in September 1938 and Germany occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939; the speech fuses the two moments into one.)

The analogy also reframes inaction. Appeasement at Munich is remembered as a moral and strategic failure, so a UN that does nothing on Kashmir is placed in the position of the powers that sacrificed Czechoslovakia. Khan returns to the analogy in his closing lines ("This is not the time for appeasement like that in 1939 in Munich") and ends with a deadline expressed through repetition: "This is the

time when you, the United Nations, must urge India to lift the curfew […] and this is the time when the UN must insist on Kashmir's right to self-determination!"

5.2.3 Axiological Proximization

Axiological proximization prepares the ground for the other two strategies. In the Islamophobia section it is defensive. Khan contrasts the values of Islam, as he presents them, with Western misreadings: "There is only ONE Islam and that is the Islam of the Prophet (PBUH)"; "the basis of ALL religions is compassion and justice"; the State of Medina "took responsibility of women; widows, the poor". The threat here is not yet physical. It is the marginalization of Muslims, which "creates room for and leads to radicalization".

In the Kashmir section the same strategy turns offensive. The RSS is described as "An organization inspired by Hitler and Mussolini", whose members "believed in racial superiority the same way that the Nazi's believed in the supremacy of the Aryan race". The comparison with Nazism is the axiological counterpart of the Munich analogy. Once the out-group's ideology has been equated with the ideology of 1939, its actions in Kashmir can be read as the first stage of something larger, and the claims that "This ideology of hate murdered Mahatma Gandhi" and "allowed RSS goons […] to butcher 2000 Muslims" show the ideology already turning into violence. Axiological proximization is also turned on the audience. "Materialism has trumped humanity", Khan says, because "the world did nothing & sees India as a huge market". The values under threat are not only those of Kashmiris but those the UN itself claims to stand for.

5.3 Interpretation: Discursive Practice

The speech was produced at the United Nations General Assembly, a platform where world leaders express their opinions in front of the world and try to change negative beliefs about their states. It was delivered by Imran Khan, a former cricket captain who had struggled for twenty-two years in politics before becoming Prime Minister in 2018 and who was speaking at the Assembly for the first time. Pakistan had for decades faced accusations of supporting militancy, and Khan used the address to answer them by presenting Pakistan as the victim of a war it "had nothing to do with" ("70,000 Pakistanis lost their lives") and by inviting "UN observers to come and see for themselves".

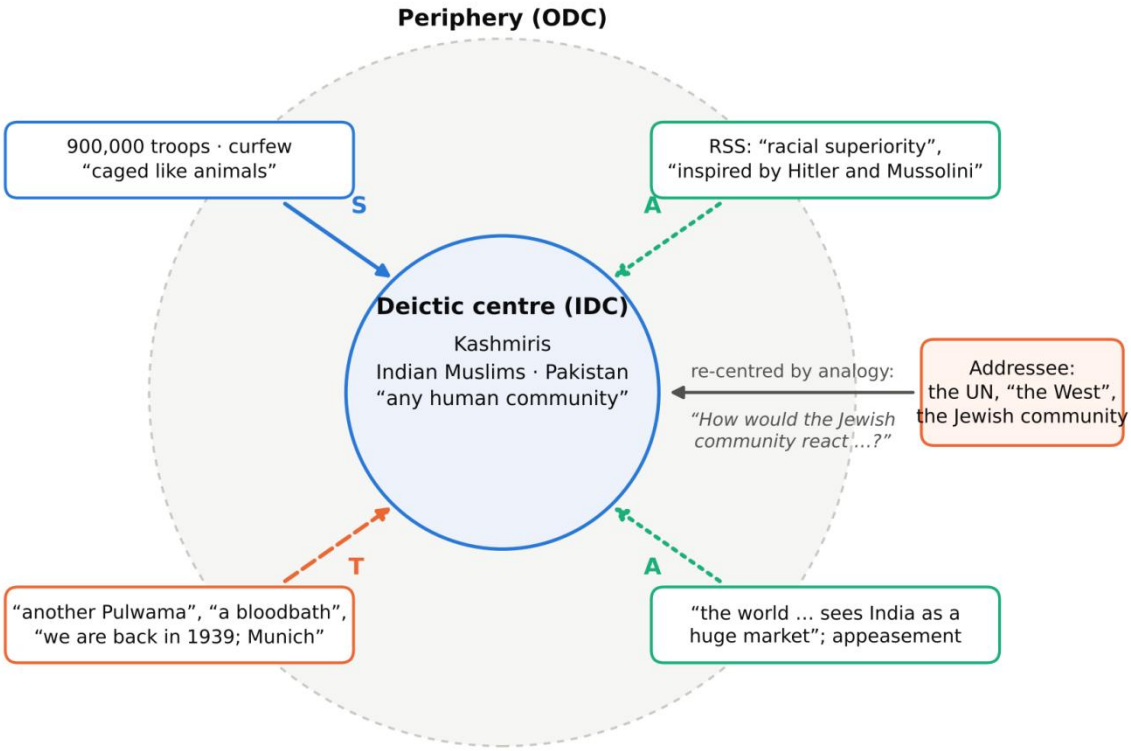
The audience of the speech was layered. In the hall sat heads of state and diplomats; beyond them were Western, American and Indian media, and the Pakistani public watching at home. Khan addresses these audiences differently, and the shift is visible in his pronouns. To the domestic and Muslim audience he offers a shared *we* and "our Prophet". To the delegates he speaks as *you*. To the Western audience in particular he appeals through knowledge he claims to share: "I've played cricket in the West & I know how the western mind works."

Intertextuality is the main resource of this discursive practice. The address draws on at least four bodies of earlier text and memory: the Islamic tradition (the Prophet, the State of Medina, the fourth caliph who "lost a court case against a Jewish citizen"); the European memory of the Second World War (Hitler, Mussolini, the Holocaust, Munich); popular film (the "trailer" of Modi's campaign rhetoric and the vigilante film *Death Wish*); and the UN's own history ("This is why you came into being in 1945!"). The selection is strategic. The Islamic references speak to the Muslim audience and defend Islam against the charge of intolerance; the European references speak to the Western audience in its own historical vocabulary.

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This choice of references explains a feature of the address that the STA model, built largely on the discourse of powerful states, does not fully anticipate. Cap's (2013, 2017) examples mostly show a speaker who brings a distant threat into the audience's home. Khan cannot plausibly claim that Kashmir threatens New York or London. Instead he moves the audience. Through counterfactual questions ("How would the Jewish community react if even 8000 Jews were under lockdown? How would the Europeans react?") he places the Western listener inside the deictic centre, next to the Kashmiris, and asks him to feel the threat from there (Figure 6). This study refers to this as *proximization from the periphery*: the threat stays where it is, and the audience's moral and historical memory is brought to it.

Figure 6: The Deictic Space Constructed in the Kashmir Section



Note. S = spatial, T = temporal, A = axiological proximization. Quotations are from the transcript. The arrow from the addressee shows how counterfactual comparisons relocate the audience inside the deictic centre.

5.4 Explanation: Social Practice

The third dimension relates the discourse to its social context. At the time of the address Pakistan was facing serious economic difficulties: inflation was rising, businesses were struggling, and the government had agreed a new loan programme with the IMF earlier that year. This context explains why the address turns to money before it turns to religion or Kashmir. Khan presents Pakistan's debt as the result of elites who plundered the country ("in the 10 years preceding that our total debt went up 4 times") and asks rich countries to stop the "flight of capital". The economic argument links the domestic anti-corruption agenda on which Khan had campaigned with an international demand.

Islamophobia formed the second context. After 9/11, Islam was widely associated with terrorism in Western media and politics, and Khan presents

himself as the Muslim leader who will finally explain Islam to the West: "I always imagined what I would say and educate the world about Islam if I ever stood on this forum." His insistence that "no religion teaches violence", and his comparison with the Tamil Tigers and the Japanese kamikaze pilots, are attempts to break the link between Islam and terrorism, while his account of a book that ridiculed the Prophet is an attempt to explain Muslim anger to a Western audience.

Kashmir was the lifeline of the speech. The revocation of Article 370 on 5 August 2019, and the restrictions and communications blackout that followed in the region, had made Kashmir the most urgent issue in Pakistan's foreign policy, and Pakistan's diplomatic aim was to internationalise it. India, for its part, treated the change as an internal matter. The address should be read against this asymmetry. Because the dispute was defined by one side as domestic and received limited attention from the major powers, Khan needed to make it international, and proximization was the means. By stretching the threat in space (to 1.3 billion Muslims and to two nuclear states), in time (back to 1939) and in values (to humanity itself), he turns an issue that others defined as internal into a test case for the organisation: "It is a test for the United Nations."

The same social practice also shows the limits of the strategy. Lines that made the speech popular at home, such as the declaration "We will FIGHT!", can be heard by other audiences as escalation, and Khan has to add at once: "I am not threatening here about nuclear war; it is a worry." Proximization raises the stakes enough to win attention, but it also exposes the speaker to the charge of threatening the forum he is appealing to.

5.5 What the AI-Assisted Procedures Added and Missed

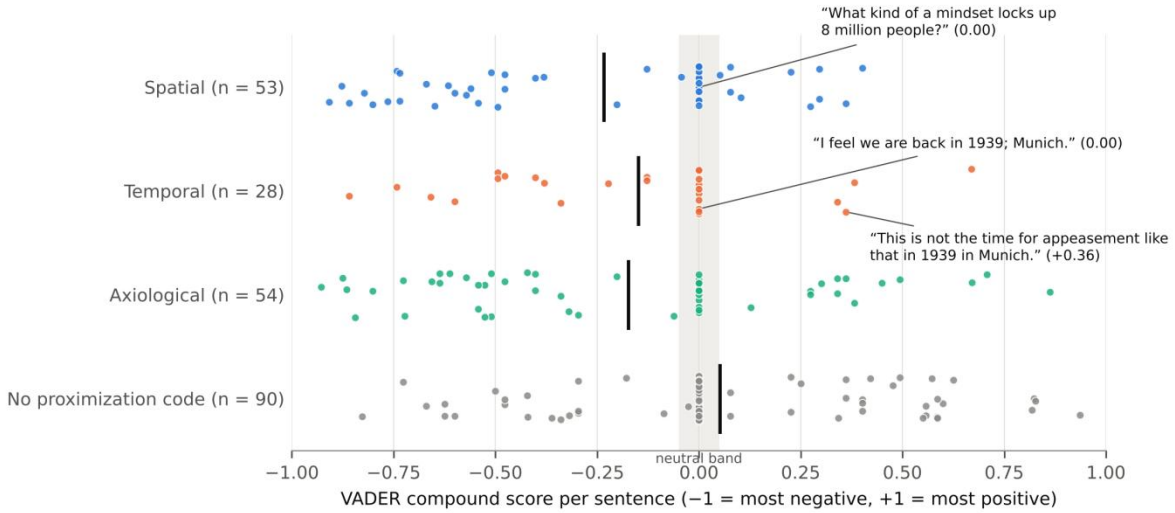
The two AI-assisted procedures were useful in different ways. The LLM first pass produced a complete and consistent map of proximization across all 212 sentences, which a reader drawn to the most striking passages could easily miss. The distributions in Figures 4 and 5, especially the late concentration of temporal codes, come from that systematic pass. At the same time, the model's codes could not simply be accepted. Proximization depends on who is placed inside the deictic centre, and that is a matter of interpretation rather than vocabulary, so every code had to be checked against the context of the speech.

The sentiment scores show the limits of automated reading more sharply (Figure 7). On average the two procedures agree: sentences with a proximization code have a mean compound score of −0.18, while uncoded sentences average +0.05. But 40 of the 122 coded sentences (32.8%) were scored as neutral, and 25 (20.5%) as positive. The neutral group includes some of the most threatening lines of the address, such as "What kind of a mindset locks up 8 million people?" and "I feel we are back in 1939; Munich." (both 0.00). The closing appeal to the UN is scored strongly positive (+0.67), because the lexicon reads *United* in "United Nations", *free*, and *determination* in "self-determination" as positive words; the line "This is not the time for appeasement like that in 1939 in Munich" is scored positive (+0.36) only because the lexicon treats *like* as a positive word. This explains the sharp rise at the end of Figure 5B, where the moving average of sentiment climbs just as temporal proximization reaches its peak. The tool also errs in the opposite direction. The most negative sentence in the whole address (−0.93) is a defence of Islam, "No one blamed religion when they carried out suicide attacks and rightly so

because no religion teaches violence", which VADER reads through the words *blamed*, *suicide*, *attacks* and *violence*.

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Figure 7: VADER Sentiment Scores of Sentences by Proximization Code



Note. Each dot is one sentence; sentences with two codes appear in both rows. Black bars mark group means. The shaded band is VADER's neutral range (−0.05 to 0.05).

The reason is the same in every case. Proximization is built through deixis, analogy, numbers and history rather than through emotional vocabulary, so a tool that scores words will miss much of it. This supports the cautious view of Curry et al. (2024): AI tools can make critical discourse analysis more systematic and transparent, but the critical part still has to be done by the analyst.

6. Conclusion

This study examined the language used by Imran Khan in his address to the UN General Assembly on 27 September 2019. Earlier research had established what the speech was about: climate change, corruption, Islamophobia and Kashmir. This study has shown how it works. Khan gives more than half of the address to Kashmir and leads up to it through themes his audience already accepted as global problems. In the Kashmir section he combines spatial, temporal and axiological proximization, using numbers of confined people, predictions of violence, comparisons with Nazism and the analogy of Munich to present the dispute as an imminent threat to the international order. His pronouns shift from an inclusive *we* to a direct *you*, his modality admits no doubt, and his questions accuse without naming.

The main contribution of the study is the notion of proximization from the periphery. Where Cap's (2013, 2017) model describes powerful states bringing distant threats into their audience's home, Khan's address shows the leader of a smaller state doing the reverse: moving his audience, through its own historical memory, towards a threat it would otherwise regard as remote. Further research could test this notion on UNGA speeches by other leaders of smaller states and on Khan's later addresses to the Assembly.

Methodologically, the study shows that AI-assisted tools can be built into critical discourse analysis without giving up its critical aims. An LLM provided a systematic first-pass annotation that the researcher could check, and a sentiment tool provided a useful contrast that exposed what word-based scoring cannot see.

The study has limitations. It analyses one speech, so its findings describe this address rather than political discourse in general. The transcript used is a published, condensed version of the address

rather than the official UN verbatim record (A/74/PV.9), and a comparison with that record would strengthen the counts. The proximization coding was produced by one model and checked by one researcher; agreement with a second human annotator would make it more reliable. Finally, VADER was designed for social media text, and a tool trained on political speech might perform differently.

Declarations

Use of generative AI. Claude (Anthropic) was used for first-pass annotation of proximization markers, as described in Section 4.3.2, and to assist with drafting and language editing. The author checked all codes and all text and takes full responsibility for the content of this article.

Origin of the article. This article is developed from the author's undergraduate (BS) thesis.

Conflict of interest. The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Data availability. The transcript analysed is publicly available (Business Recorder, 2019). The coding sheet is provided as supplementary material, and the analysis scripts are available from the author on request.

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