LANGUAGE OF POWER AND THE WORLD PEACE

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Abstract: The statements that come from the seats of power have their own influence on the course of world history. Many times these statements ease the tension and pave the way for peace in the world, while other times statements lead to the start of wars. The contemporary world witnesses many such instances where languages of power disturbed the world peace and nations plunged into war. Many believe that the language of power conveys its own authority and needs to be understood in the proper context to save the world peace.
In the period of time after the 1990s, rulers of both the East and the West have been engaged into war of words which conveyed messages of power enhancing tension and escalating wars which broke the world peace. The war of words with the authority of influencing the course of action can be seen in the light of power, therefore being named the Language of Power.
The present study explores the role of the language of power in breaking the peace of the world. There has been operated a selection of certain statements made by powerful country leaders in the light of analyzing the effects of those statements in the context of world peace.

Keywords: language of power, world peace, nation, Eastern vs. Western world, contemporary politics

Introduction

Language use for public discourse is different from interpersonal communication. Language for public discourse has its own importance in the power structure and the peace of the world. What is important is that the public discourse should be responsible and accountable otherwise language serves as a tool to fulfill vested interests and monopolize the power to further advance one's own interest, which can destroy the world peace.

The public discourse of language is used both by institutions and individuals. In public discourse, institutions like UNO, NATO, Arab League, ASEAN, BRICS, WTO, WB, IMF etc use that type of language important for the development and peace of the world. A well balanced use of language by institutions promotes peace in the world and a language of foul used by institutions encourages dissent and poses threat to the world peace. The same pattern applies to the world leaders occupying the important and powerful seats of the countries and the world, such as the president of the United States of America, Prime Minister of United Kingdom, President of France, Prime Minister of Israel, President of Russia, Chancellor of Germany, King of Saudi Arabia, Supreme Head of the State of Iran; heads of many nations having weight age in the world affairs, leaders of organizations like Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Hezbollah, Irish Army, RSS etc. The leaders of any important organizations which have weight in the world affairs should use a balanced language for public discourse. The misuse of language for public discourse creates

tension and leads to war. What the world witnessed many times is that the use of foul language by leaders of important countries plunged the world into war: the wars of Afghanistan, Iraq, or Syria are few examples.

The present paper studies the effect of the use of language by leaders of powerful countries and explores the relationship between language and power. What here has been termed as the language of Power is connected to the person who uses language, commands the power structure, and has powerful weight age to implement the language of power. The language of power is a combination of two important areas of studies. The word 'Language' is associated with the discourse of linguistics, communication and media, while the word 'Power' is a key concept from the field of study of International affairs and Political discourse. So, the phrase, the Language of Power is a combination of two important words from two different fields of study, convening the meaning of exercising/conveying the authority through use of language.

The degree of authority conveying through the use of language depends upon the power a person holds. The degree of the language of power of the President of United States of America would be different from the power of the president of Afghanistan or Iraq or Lebanon or Somalia. In the same way the effect of the language uses by the various leaders would be different in influencing the course of the peace of the world. An American President's language of public communication would be more effective and influential than the head of the states of the Arab world or other nations.

The world division between the 'Occident' and the 'Orient', which denotes the 'Western world' and 'Eastern world' would also have different power levels of influence. The 'Western world' would be more powerful in influencing the peace of the world than the 'Eastern world' as the economic, scientific, military and world leadership is in the hands of the Western World and because the major policy making of the world and leadership of the world organizations like UNO, IMF, and WB are held by the West.

The present paper has studied the role of the 'language of power' in the context of the world peace. As we can see the world is undergoing peace processes while a major part of the world in under constant violence. The paper has been divided into three major parts. Part one narrates the definition of 'language of power'; part two is related to exploring the use of language of power after 1990 and part three is related to the results of the use of language of power in the context of war and peace of the world.

The present paper is important from the point of view of the world peace. Generally speaking, international organizations like UNO, which has been entrusted with the responsibility of the world peace, does not heed on the use of the language by the powerful leaders or organizations and as a result the situation deteriorates and the wars erupt in the world, leading to the death and destruction of the world and even posing an existential threat to humanity.

Defining Language of Power

Numerous theories have been put forward to show the close relationship between the language and power. Language is used to demonstrate the power in numerous contexts and power too is used to give language a particular meaning in a particular context. In the words of Weiß & Schwietring, "The 'power of language' not only means language in the service of power; language can also undermine power. And above all, as language, it possesses itself power of a very special kind. The relation of language and power is ambivalent."[1]

The language of power in the present paper is used in the context of public discourse and is different from the "Power of Language". The present paper has explored the relationship

between language and power and how power is expressed through language and influences the course of the world, particularly the world peace.

'Language of power' is different from the 'power of language' as the former denotes the external power through the language use by an important person sitting on the powerful position of a nation or an organization and influences the large masses while the latter denotes the intrinsic power of the language conveyed by a person to influence the others. In the case of 'Power of Language' the important point is the use of the language to communicate effectively, the matter not being who is using the language, while in case of 'Language of Power' the important element is not language but the power that is being used.

So, the 'language of power' can be defined as the power that is conveyed through the use of language by the powerful person, applying both in the private and in the public discourse. The important thing in 'language of power' is the person who holds the power, not the language. The statements given or communication with people in public by the powerful persons are few examples of 'language of power', if these statements or public communication deliver any message or order to the people.

In 'language of power' there is need to see the power structure of the nation and the world. How much power a nation or an organization wields? Who are the people who hold the power? What are their positions in the hierarchy of power? Who holds the ultimate power in the structure and from where the power flows in the system? These are few questions whose answers define the 'language of power' both in the context of the nation and the world.

Being a recent field of study, the 'language of power' should draw the attention of the scholars of 'power' and 'language' and thus help to understand the power structure and power centers of the world to establish peace in the world by bringing new mechanism to check the misuses of power through language in public discourses.

Exploring the Language of Power

The decade in which USSR collapsed led to the occurring of unprecedented events in the history of world peace at regional and national levels. At regional level, the Middle East led the crisis of world peace which extended to Central Asia involving the major and minor powers of the world. The period from 1990 to 2011 witnessed the fall of the two powerful rulers of the Arab world –Saddam Hussein of Iraq and Col. Qaddafi of Libya and presented the case of 'Language of power' involving the rulers of the West and the East. The war of the words which started with the invasion of Iraq on Kuwait could not end even today after twenty five years of death and destruction. Undoubtedly, the beginning was done by Saddam Hussein, the president of Iraq. With the passage of time, the war not only fought physically but also fought psychologically by dividing the world into the West and the East. This war had nothing to do with religion as portrayed by the Eastern rulers and supported by the radicals. What the people of the East failed to understand was that the war between the rulers of the West and East was a classic display of defending the interests of their own countries, advanced with the use of the language of power which resulted in the eruption of war. The typical nature of the language of power and the continuous statements and counter statements and public communication to mobilize the public opinion of the world and the citizens of their own nations made problems more complex.

The motive behind the war between the West and the East was kept out of people's thoughts and projected the war as just and in line with international laws. When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, the excuse given was the anti-Iraq stand by the ruler of Kuwait as one of the

main reasons. In his interrogation, Saddam Hussein states that the language that the officials of Kuwait used e.g. ""We'll make the economy in Iraq so bad, one would be able to sleep with an Iraqi woman for ten dinars." [2] hurt the national pride of Iraq which led to indulgence into a war of words with Kuwait. The complaint of the leader of Iraq to Saudi Arabia that "if Kuwait did not stop interfering in Iraqi affairs, he would make the Kuwaiti dinar worth ten fils"[3] further ignited the situation. This sort of statements made the reconciliation between two neighboring countries difficult and threatened the world peace. In the context of these two statements there are found different levels of degree of powers. One had power to bring the change, as the case of Iraq shows, and another could not, as the case of Kuwait shows. In both these cases, there is display of the language of power which has broken the world peace.

In the case of the war between the United States of America and Iraq the language of power was at a higher degree than the Iraq-Kuwait case, where USA hegemony was more obvious than Iraq's. According to Noam Chomsky, 'hegemony' leads the 'power to define' and 'manufacture Consent'? [4] In such cases, the language of power becomes more hegemonic and effective. The war of words that started between the ruler of Iraq and United States of America was not the tussle of the Western and the Eastern worlds and values but it was a war of commercial interest advanced through the use of power. The language of power did not only hide the main motive behind the Gulf war but also brought the art of manufacturing of the consent. Iraq was a part of the "Axis of Evils" in the language of USA and USA was seen as enemy of Islam and Arab world by the leader of Iraq. What one can observe in the public statements of the leaders of Iraq and USA is shifting stand on issues and the source of power. Till 2003, the language of power of Iraq centered on the sovereignty of the nation and in later stage moved to the divine power. In his one of the speeches on the eve of 2003 war Saddam Hussein addressed to his people in these words: "Oh, Allah, pray guide the along the road of righteousness if You so decide. Otherwise, smite them with Your wrath and smash them with Your destruction blow, for they are a group of criminals." [5] And what Bush the Junior said ""In this conflict America faces an enemy that has no regard for conventions of war or rules of morality." [6]

Another case of use of language of power is the war of words between USA and the leader of Al-Qaeda in pre- and post- 9/11 attack on USA. Osama Bin Laden, once the blue eyed man of America in Afghanistan, was declared a 'terrorist' from a 'Mujahid'. His declaration from 'good' to 'bad' can be seen in the spectrum of the language of power. The case of Al-Qaeda as a non-state actor could not wield as much as power as America as a hegemonic state could do so in the war of words. The war of the words continued for 20 years centered around the 'good forces' and ' bad forces', calling each other the enemy of humanity. The 9/11 attack and the dictum used by Mr. Bush "You're either with us or against us in the fight against terror." [7] changed the whole set up of language of power. Now no more counter 'language of power' to USA. The war in Afghanistan extended to Iraq. Saddam Hussein toppled and Iraq was freed from a dictator. The language of power which started with threat of Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD) ended with plantation of democracy.

The theocratic state of Iran, another member of the 'Axis of Evils', [8] was involved in war of words with 'Great Satan'. [9] In war of words further turning points came with the involvement of Libyan ruler Col. Qaddafi. The tussle between USA and Libya which started for the hegemony of Africa ended with the death of Col. Qaddafi in 2011 in a NATO led attack. The language of power which was used for so many years for asserting hegemony ended with no victory for the West as from the very beginning the discourse moved on wrong presumptions and on wrong paths from both sides and thus put the peace of the world at stake.

The use of powerful terminologies to attract the attention of the world community is an important aspect of the language of power. The ultimate victory is for those who hold the highest power in the war of words. The hegemony is for those who have the ability to change the course by means of the use of power.

Thus, the language uses by the western leaders would be more powerful and effective to influence the course of peace in the world than those of the leaders of the East. The leaders and organizations of the East are not in the position to counter the hegemony wielded by the West in present time. The language of power of the West is more vocal than that of the East. So, the responsibility to bring the peace too lies on the West.

War and Peace

The language of power plays an important role in the war and peace of the world. The wars that were fought after 1990, whatever the aims were, culminated into wars of the language of power. The negligence shown by the world community to keep silence on the war of the words paid the price with death and destruction. As per a study by Crawford, there have been between 134,000 to 250,000 civilian deaths. [10] while as per the estimate of 'Iraq Body count' till today the number of civilian deaths is between 174,342 and 194,777. [11]

UNO as an international organization needs to come out from the block politics. For the peace of the world, it is essential to have a check on the language of power, particularly the power holders of powerful nations. A legitimate power like a nation is more dangerous if it uses power indiscriminately as it commands the sanctity of a large group of the people. In the case of illegitimate power like non-state actors, the language of power has limited influence and power of destruction as it commands less respect and support of the people. The power of the terrorist organizations can cause sporadic destruction not the large scale destruction as in the case of a state can be seen. In the case of 09/11, the opinion for perpetuating such a large scale death by a non-state actor is under suspicion. Even on certain question, the 09/11 Commission Report kept silence. [12]

For world peace, there is need to check the war of words in the context of the language of power. As responsible world citizens, the people around the world have to understand the destructive language of power. What in present can be observed is the unchecked flow of language of power in many parts of the world which can be observed as leading to ongoing violence. The lukewarm response of Islamic world against the use of the language of power by the numerous radical organizations which are involved in violence around the world is not a good sign for the world peace. The failing of the world powerful nations against violence is another point of worry for the world peace. In the same way, to protect the interest of few countries at the cost of the world peace cannot be accepted too. In each case of violence due to war of words there is need to take a balanced approach based on mutual respect and in the best interest of the peace of the world.

A peaceful world is important for the economic development of the world and progress of the humanity. War cannot be allowed at the cost of the world peace. There is needed a collective approach to achieve the shared goals of humanity. And for this there is no place for the use of language of power for advancing the interest of few but all; accountability of the power holders before the world organizations and the world community is essential.

Conclusion

The present paper has studied the relationship between the language of power and the peace of the world in the context of few nations and the 'Western World' and the 'Eastern World'. The present paper studied the language of power from 1990 own wards and found that language of power plays an important role in the peace of the world by influencing the decision making of the public, government of the nation and international community. The more powerful a nation is the more dangerous is the language of power. A powerful state can be more dangerous for the world peace than a less powerful nation or organization. There is need to check the reckless use of the language of power for the world peace. Otherwise the language of power which led the war of words would be the start of death and destruction for the world community. This paper has limitations yet it opens a new path of study to understand the relation between the language and power which could be used for maintaining the world peace by solving the complex power flow which is causing the ongoing violence in the world.

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