



Framing Conflict through Language: A Text World Theory Analysis of DG ISPR's 2025 War Statements

Aziz Ullah Khan

Assistant Professor, Chairman, Department of English and Applied Linguistics, University of Science and Technology, Bannu, KPK, Pakistan

Muhammad Hassan Shah

MPhil in English, Lecturer, Department of English and Applied Linguistics, University of Science and Technology, Bannu, KPK, Pakistan

Abstract

This study applies Text World Theory (Werth, 1999; Gavins, 2007) to analyze selected public statements made by DG ISPR, Lt. Gen. Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, during the 2025 Pak-India conflict. The research aims to explore how language is used to construct mental representations known as discourse worlds, text worlds, and sub-worlds, in the minds of listeners. Using a qualitative research design, data were collected through the documentation method by transcribing video statements shared on Facebook. Statements were purposively selected based on their relevance to the cognitive-linguistic framework. The analysis reveals how the DG ISPR's discourse uses metaphor, sarcasm, repetition, and emotive language to construct narratives of resistance, power, and national identity. This study offers a cognitive perspective on military discourse and highlights the role of language in shaping ideology, public perception, and strategic communication during political conflict.

Keywords: Text World Theory, DG ISPR, military discourse, national identity, discourse analysis, Pakistan-India conflict, cognitive linguistics, metaphors, sub-worlds, political communication, ideological language, resistance rhetoric, media narratives

Background of the Study

Language plays a vital role in shaping ideologies, constructing national identity, and influencing public opinion, especially during political or military conflicts. In the 2025 Pak-India conflict, the statements made by DG ISPR, Lt. Gen. Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, served not only as military responses but also as strategic discourse aimed at building national unity and countering Indian media narratives.

This study applies Text World Theory (Werth, 1999; Gavins, 2007) to analyze how these statements create mental representations in the minds of listeners. While previous studies have often used Critical Discourse Analysis, this research offers a cognitive-linguistic perspective, filling a gap in South Asian discourse studies. By examining selected statements, the study explores how language is used to construct worlds of resistance, power, and national pride.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study is to analyze selected statements made by DG ISPR, Lt. Gen. Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, during the 2025 Pak-India conflict through the lens of Text World Theory. The study aims to explore how language constructs mental representations, or "worlds", that shape public perception, national identity, and ideological stance. By applying a cognitive linguistic approach, the research seeks to uncover how these statements influence audiences emotionally and ideologically, offering a deeper understanding of military discourse in a conflict context.

Literature Review

Language plays a central role in constructing ideologies, identities, and power structures, especially during political or military conflicts. Scholars such as Fairclough (1995) and Van Dijk (2008) have emphasized how discourse serves to reproduce or challenge dominant ideologies through specific linguistic choices. Military and political communication, in particular, often employs emotionally charged, persuasive, and symbolic language to shape public perception and legitimize actions.

Moreover, much of the existing research on political and media discourse has relied on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). For instance, Van Dijk (2008) explored how elite discourse constructs the "us vs. them" narrative, while Fairclough (1995) explained how institutional discourse reflects social power and dominance. However, while CDA focuses on social structures and ideology, it often overlooks how readers or listeners mentally process and internalize discourse.

In this connection, Text World Theory (TWT), developed by Paul Werth (1999) and extended by Joanna Gavins (2007), provides a cognitive linguistic framework for analyzing how

language constructs mental representations in the minds of receivers. According to Werth (1999), communication creates “text worlds,” which are mental models shaped by the discourse context, language, and background knowledge. TWT identifies three interconnected layers: the discourse world (real-life context between speaker and listener), the text world (mental representation created by the discourse), and sub-worlds (hypothetical or imagined scenarios within the text).

Besides, Khalid, et al. (2025) conducted a qualitative study titled *Framing War through Words: A Critical Discourse Analysis of DG ISPR’s Press Statements in the Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos*, published in the International Research Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (IRJAHSS). The researchers aimed to explore how language was strategically used by DG ISPR, Lt. Gen. Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, during the 2025 Pak-India conflict to construct national identity, delegitimize opposing narratives, and promote state ideologies. Using Fairclough’s (1995) model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the methodological framework, the study analyzed five key press statements. The methodology was qualitative in nature and focused on textual analysis to uncover ideological and rhetorical strategies. The researchers identified the use of emotionally charged metaphors, nationalist rhetoric, and ideological framing in the discourse to highlight resistance, military strength, and national sovereignty.

Lastly, TWT has been applied in literary studies (Gavins, 2007), political speeches (Whiteley, 2011), and media discourse, but very little research has applied TWT to military or national security communication, especially in the South Asian context. This study fills that gap by analyzing DG ISPR’s official statements during the 2025 Pak-India conflict through the lens of Text World Theory, showing how discourse constructs worlds of resistance, power, and national identity in the minds of Pakistani and global audiences.

Methodology

Research Type

This study is qualitative in nature because it focuses on interpreting and understanding how language is used to construct meaning, identity, and ideology in the statements made by DG ISPR (Lt. Gen. Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry) during the 2025 Pak-India conflict. The qualitative approach is suitable for analyzing texts in depth, exploring language, and examining how discourse builds mental representations in the minds of the audience.

As Creswell (2014) notes, qualitative research allows researchers to explore complex meanings and processes behind human communication through close analysis and interpretation of words and language. Furthermore, Text World Theory is based on cognitive linguistics, which focuses on how readers or listeners mentally construct “worlds” from text (Werth, 1999; Gavins, 2007).

This kind of analysis does not require numbers or statistics but instead detailed explanation and interpretation of language, context, and meaning, which is why a qualitative approach is most appropriate.

Data Collection Method

For this qualitative study, data were collected through the documentation method, as defined by Flick (2014), which involves gathering naturally occurring texts or transcripts from public sources. The researcher first watched a variety of Facebook and YouTube videos featuring DG ISPR (Lt. Gen. Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry)'s official media appearances, particularly during the 2025 Pak-India conflict. Videos were selected based on their relevance to the research topic and the presence of rhetorical and emotionally charged statements suitable for Text World Theory analysis.

Among the key sources used for data collection were:

1. Facebook videos posted by pages such as TOKhi Videos (2025) featuring the quote: "What a shame? What a mockery of journalism? Please stop living in Bollywood!"
2. YouTube videos posted by 92 News HD (2025), where DG ISPR stated: "When Pakistan chooses to respond, it won't go unnoticed. The world will see it, hear it, and the echo will be heard loud."
3. additional statements such as "Indian media is creating dream stories that amuse us" and "We will never bow down to Indian hegemony" were also obtained from publicly available video speeches circulated across social media platforms and news coverage.

The researcher manually transcribed the selected lines by listening to and re-watching the videos several times. Only those lines that contained rich metaphoric, nationalistic, or emotional language were purposively selected as textual data because they suited the analytical lens of Text World Theory. This method ensured that the data reflected authentic discourse as presented to the public, and represented how DG ISPR used language to construct ideological and nationalistic mental worlds. As Palinkas et al. (2015) explain, purposive sampling is appropriate when a researcher intentionally selects information-rich cases or examples that best help to answer the research question.

Data Analysis Method

The collected statements were analyzed using the Text World Theory (TWT) framework developed by Paul Werth (1999) and expanded by Joanna Gavins (2007). TWT allows researchers to identify and examine three levels of meaning-making:

1. **Discourse World:** The shared knowledge and background between speaker and audience.
2. **Text World:** The mental model constructed from the words in the statement.

3. Sub-Worlds: Imagined or hypothetical spaces within the text world (such as comparisons or metaphorical scenarios).

Each selected statement was carefully analyzed to see how it constructs these worlds and conveys ideas related to national identity, resistance, and ideology. The emphasis was on how language choices shape mental representations and position the audience emotionally and ideologically.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Text World Theory (TWT), a cognitive-linguistic model originally proposed by Paul Werth (1999) and further developed by Joanna Gavins (2007). TWT provides a framework for understanding how language constructs mental representations, or “text worlds”, in the minds of readers or listeners. These worlds are shaped by the discourse context, linguistic choices, and the background knowledge shared between the speaker and the audience.

TWT operates on three interconnected layers:

- 1. Discourse World:** the real-world context involving the speaker (DG ISPR) and the audience, which includes shared knowledge, time, and space.
- 2. Text World:** the mental scenario constructed by the language of the speaker, involving imagined events, actions, and emotions.
- 3. Sub-worlds:** hypothetical or alternative scenarios introduced through comparison, metaphor, or modality (e.g., could, would, might).

This theory allows the researcher to explore not just what is said, but how it is mentally processed and emotionally internalized by audiences. In the context of DG ISPR’s statements during the 2025 Pak-India conflict, TWT helps reveal how linguistic choices—such as metaphors (“dream stories”), warnings (“the echo will be heard loud”), and nationalistic affirmations (“we will never bow down to Indian hegemony”), construct powerful ideological worlds of resistance, pride, and power in the minds of listeners.

By using TWT, this research goes beyond surface-level textual analysis and investigates how discourse functions as a strategic cognitive and ideological tool during wartime communication.

Analysis and Discussion

It explores the three core worlds of the theory including discourse world, text world, and sub-worlds while including direct lines from DG ISPR’s statements.

Text World Theory (TWT), developed by Paul Werth (1999) and extended by Joanna Gavins (2007), provides a powerful cognitive approach to analyze how language constructs meaning in

the minds of readers or listeners. This theory helps us understand how the statements of DG ISPR (Lt. Gen. Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry) during the 2025 Pak-India conflict create powerful mental representations, or “worlds” that shape the audience’s perception of identity, power, and resistance.

TWT operates through three main levels:

1. Discourse World – The Real-World Situation

The discourse world includes all real-life participants engaged in communication: DG ISPR as the speaker and the Pakistani or global audience as listeners. This world involves shared knowledge of the political tensions between Pakistan and India in 2025, especially the role of media narratives and military rhetoric.

For example, both the speaker and audience already know that Indian media has been accused of exaggeration and false claims. So, when DG ISPR says:

What a shame? What a mockery of journalism? Please stop living in Bollywood! (TOKhi Videos, 2025).

This emotional outburst immediately connects with the audience’s shared understanding of how Indian media has historically dramatized events. The speaker assumes that the audience is aware of the ongoing conflict and the media propaganda from both sides.

2. Text World – The Mental Representation Created by Language

A text world is built by the reader or listener using the information given in the discourse. It is the imaginary, mental space shaped by linguistic features such as time, space, participants, emotions, and actions.

Example A:

Indian media is creating ‘dream stories’ that amuse us. (TOKhi Videos, 2025).

This constructs a text world where Indian media becomes a storyteller of fiction rather than a source of fact. The metaphor “dream stories” builds an imaginary world where reality is blurred. This evokes the image of a fantasy-like India, disconnected from truth. In the audience’s mind, this world represents deception, entertainment, and mockery, a clear contrast with Pakistan’s supposed honesty and restraint.

Example B:

When Pakistan chooses to respond, it won’t go unnoticed. The world will see it, hear it, and the echo will be heard loud. (92 News HD, 2025).

This creates a text world of power and impact. The speaker (Pakistan's military) becomes a central actor capable of making global changes. The future action is dramatized through powerful imagery ("echo will be heard loud"), creating suspense and warning. This world positions Pakistan as strategic and strong, while India is portrayed as reckless and provoking.

Example C:

We will never bow down to Indian hegemony. (92 News HD, 2025).

This constructs a text world of resistance. The verb phrase "never bow down" adds a strong moral stance and creates a scenario in which Pakistan stands firm against domination. In this world, DG ISPR is the voice of patriotism and heroism. It portrays a national identity rooted in defiance and pride.

3. Sub-Worlds – Shifts Within the Text World

Sub-worlds are temporary shifts within a text world, often caused by hypothetical situations, comparisons, or modal verbs like could, would, might, etc.

Example D:

The truth is that India is not the US and Pakistan is not Afghanistan. India is not Israel and Pakistan is not Palestine. (ThePenPK, 2025)

This is a comparative sub-world, where DG ISPR invites the audience to imagine parallel realities. By comparing the Indo-Pak relationship to other global conflicts (US-Afghanistan, Israel-Palestine), the speaker is creating sub-worlds that are not actual, but they help clarify what Pakistan is not, weak, colonized, and submissive.

This comparison strengthens Pakistan's self-image and warns against false analogies. These sub-worlds carry deep emotional and political weight, provoking national pride and justifying military strength.

Cognitive Impact

DG ISPR's statements trigger emotional and mental engagement by using:

Deictic expressions: "we," "you," "us," creating in-group/out-group identity.

Metaphors and sarcasm: "stop living in Bollywood," "dream stories", inviting ridicule toward the Indian media.

Repetition and intensity: "Pakistan will never be deterred. It can never be coerced." It reinforces determination.

These linguistic choices enrich the text world, energize discourse participants, and establish sub-worlds that highlight irony, resistance, and threat.

Conclusion

This study applied Text World Theory (Werth, 1999; Gavins, 2007) to analyze selected press statements by DG ISPR, Lt. Gen. Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, during the 2025 Pak-India conflict. By exploring the discourse world, text world, and sub-worlds, the study revealed how language constructs powerful mental representations that reinforce national identity, resistance, and ideological authority. The DG ISPR's emotionally charged expressions such as "What a shame?", "dream stories", and "echo will be heard loud" functioned not merely as political rhetoric but as cognitive tools to engage the audience's imagination, emotions, and shared national consciousness.

The findings show that military discourse is more than a reaction to conflict, it is a structured and strategic use of language that constructs alternate realities, asserts sovereignty, and shapes public perception. Through metaphors, sarcasm, repetition, and deictic expressions, DG ISPR's speech crafted text worlds that positioned Pakistan as a rational, dignified, and strong state while portraying the opposing side as dramatized, deceptive, or hegemonic.

Thus, this study concludes that Text World Theory offers a valuable framework for analyzing contemporary military communication. It not only helps uncover the surface meanings but also illuminates the underlying cognitive and ideological work that language performs during times of national crisis.

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