

## **NEPAL'S DIPLOMACY THROUGH RHETORICS AT UNGA**

**Bimala Sharma, PhD<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

*The paper concentrates on investigating Nepal's Diplomacy through rhetorics. To do so the discourse of the diplomatic speeches presented by Nepal in UN general assembly are critically examined. A special category of communication known as the language of diplomacy is employed in all kind diplomatic endeavors. Diplomatic language is formal, accurate, disciplined, and is mindful of its use of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary to make it easier for people of all nationalities and cultures to communicate clearly and effectively. Euphemisms or indirect language is employed to communicate to avoid aggressive language which can be offensive. Respecting all cultures is must hence diplomatic language is culturally sensitive. Diplomatic discourse is fundamental device to cultivate global cooperation and resolve differences. The paper essences on primarily exploring the speeches of Nepal's Statespersons: Minister of Foreign Affairs Chuda Nath Sharma (1958), Prime Ministers BP Koirala (1960), Prime Minister Kirtinidhi Bist (1968) and Sailendra Kumar Upadhyay (1988) at UN General Assemblies respectively from the lenses of critical discourse analysis. Hence, it confines itself within the speeches (the selected primary texts), their rhetorical patterns, contents delivered through diplomatic language, their domestic ideology and power politics.*

**Keywords:** *communication, critical discourse analysis, diplomacy, foreign policy, negotiation, etc.*

### **Introduction**

In international relations and other diplomatic endeavors, a specialized type of communication known as the language of diplomacy is employed. It is distinguished by its formality, accuracy, and nuance, and it is made to make it easier for people of all nationalities and cultures to communicate

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bimala Sharma is the Associate Professor at Balmiki Campus, Nepal Sanskrit University.

clearly and effectively. Diplomatic language is often formal, disciplined, and mindful of its use of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. Diplomats frequently employ euphemisms or indirect language to communicate ideas without offending anybody in an effort to avoid using emotive or aggressive language. Language used in diplomacy is also culturally sensitive, taking into account the traditions of various nations and cultures. The language of diplomacy is a crucial instrument for fostering global collaboration and resolving disputes.

Diplomatic discourse is a type of text that is distinguished by the participation of actors. Furthermore, it primarily deals with the words and writings of professional politicians or diplomatic institutions such as the International Relations Committee of Parliament, the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Nepal's overseas missions, and the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA), as well as the diplomatic parties of any state at the local, national, or international levels. All kinds of texts and the discussion are viewed as the diplomatic activity that determines the path of persons who are a part of that diplomatic process in diplomatic discourse.

Discourse analysis is a vast topic and is concerned with how language is used in context. It works as a wide term with several definitions that integrate a full palette of meanings. Discourse analysis incorporates a variety of theoretical and methodological methods, including linguistics, anthropology, philosophy, psychology, and sociology (Gill, 2000, p. 175).

Critical discourse analysis is a method based on the integration of language studies and social philosophy. It looks at how social power is abused, as well as how text and language reflect, reproduce, and oppose dominance and inequality in social and political contexts. Norman Fairclough is the most well-known person in this field, having created a three-dimensional framework for researching speech (Fowler, 1997, p. 425). The goal of this paradigm is to incorporate three aspects into another language text analysis. In other words, it applies to discourse practice analysis—processes of text generation, dissemination, and consumption as well as discourse event analysis (Neumann, 2008, p. 67).

Halliday's systematic functional grammar is one of the most prominent linguistic theories associated with a critical discourse approach. Some linguists, such as, embrace it because systematic functional grammar plays an important role in critical interpretation of language expression

in many contexts (Almurashi, 2016, p. 76). In fact, the systematic functional linguistic (SFG) model was used as a tool for text analysis.

Diplomatic language is typically focused on the message rather than the method. Examining language usage in diplomacy, on the other hand, can lead to a greater understanding of how diplomacy works and why some diplomatic procedures are more effective than others (Wheeler, 2014, p. 56). The speeches delivered in the UNGA carry content and character of concerned states. They are focused on promoting national interests, bilateral as well as multilateral diplomatic priorities of the states (Oglesby, 2016, p. 247).

Statesmen can profit from understanding rhetoric's good and bad features. The words and deeds of national leaders and politicians set off global events. However, their language does not always carry straightforward messages to the concerned audience. So, this kind of language inherently possesses ambiguity and abstraction in senses. Statesmen must pay close attention to political speeches in order to learn about national leaders' and political figures' concerns, objectives, and goals. At the same time, statesmen ' work is heavily reliant on their ability to use language effectively - to persuade and convince. Statesmen must be aware of, and in command of, the power and impact of their words (Ku et al. 2022, p. 21).

In diplomacy, choosing the right words is of utmost importance. A very carefully balanced, restrained, moderate vocabulary has evolved over the centuries, ensuring a particular way of refined control over nuances in the meaning of words - both when agreeing with one's interlocutor but taking care not to give the impression of excessive enthusiasm and when rejecting their views, again with appropriate concern to avoid unwanted offence (Eiser, 1996).

Hence, the language of diplomacy must not be expressing direct meanings and addressing the issues right away; it has non-committal attributes regarding the approaches of issues put forward by the other parties. In this light, it obviously becomes frozen in nature and formal in feature. Then does it have to be deceptive? Not necessarily so. But to the large extent, it has to be deceptive in delivering the contents of the expressions. That said, it sounds to be indirectly made expression, or the statement put in 'not blatant' way.

This research paper discloses the forms of language and its rhetorical strategies in the speeches delivered by Nepali at the United Nations General

Assemblies in different times. The speeches by Nepali statespersons carry abundant information on Nepal's foreign policy priorities and tools of diplomacy at those historical junctures. The choice of words, patterns of rhetorical strategies and the inherent messages implanted within the textuality of the speeches collectively impact the strategic achievement on behalf of the nation.

Politicians are known to modify their speeches depending on the audience they are speaking to.

When the politician is in charge of the situation, their words and deeds may easily be consistent; nevertheless, the less power he has, the less their deeds will be consistent with their words. No politician has perfect control, therefore there will always be some discrepancy between words and deeds (Dahal, 2011, p. 41).

One may think of formalization and persuasion as two opposite endpoints of a continuum. Even if both types of political discourse are theoretically available to all politicians, choosing to utilize one over the other will not be a matter of chance (Oglesby, 2016, p. 245). Understanding the power dynamics present between the speaker and listener can help to explain the choice of speaking technique. The similarity between political speech and ritual, as well as the autonomy of speech in influencing speaker-audience relationships independent of the former (Chilton, 1990, p. 216) is also crucial. Thus, this paper substantiates on principally surveying the speeches of Nepal's Statespersons: Minister of Foreign Affairs Chuda Prasad Sharma (1958), Prime Ministers BP Koirala (1960), Prime Minister Kirtinidhi Bist (1968) and Sailendra Kumar Upadhyay (1988) at UN General Assemblies respectively from the lenses of critical discourse analysis. Thus, it restrains itself within the speeches (the selected primary texts), their rhetorical patterns, contents delivered through diplomatic language, their domestic ideology and power politics.

Despite, Nepal as one of the small states, have a wide range of viewpoints on the world stage, including their opinions on the consequences of a country's size and their attitudes toward UN diplomacy. While some small state ambassadors maintain that size is unimportant and that there is no connection between size and UN performance, others emphasize that size does have real-world repercussions. On the plus side, size can foster cooperation among nations with similar geographical conditions. Size has a negative impact on capacity and can reduce influence. However, some small state ambassadors contend that a state's effect is determined

more by the caliber of its mission and its representatives than by its size (Mahbubani, 2022, p. 137).

Nepal has many interactions through UN agencies like Human Rights, Climate Change, International Organization for Migration, Colombo Process, Engagements with UN Specialized Agencies and including many Inter-Governmental Bodies. Nepal acceded to the UN on December 14th, 1955. In 1956, H.E. Rishikesh Shah was chosen to serve as Nepal's first Permanent Representative to the UN. Eleven Permanent Representatives have held that position since his tenure ended in 1960. Since joining the UN, Nepal has consistently taken part in the annual General Assembly meetings. Nepali delegations to the UN General Assembly have occasionally been led by the Permanent Representative as well as ministerial and head of state-level representatives. The Nepali delegation to the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly, which was held essentially in 2020, was led by the Rt. Hon. K.P. Sharma Oli, Prime Minister of Nepal. The honor of serving as the commission's chairman during its investigation into the circumstances surrounding the unfortunate loss of Mr. Dag Hammarskjold, the then-Secretary-General, in an aircraft accident in Lusaka in 1961, fell to Nepal. This significant duty was given to Mr. Rishikesh Shaha, Permanent Representative and head of the Nepalese delegation to the 16th GA session (Koirala, 1991, p. 137).

Additionally, Nepal has participated actively in UN projects including development, human rights, and the upkeep of global peace and security. Nepal, among other countries, was a key player in the 2011 talks of the Istanbul Program of Action and made contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Voeten, 2013, p. 54). Nepal is the fourth-largest nation currently sending soldiers and police. Nepal participated in the UN Security Council as an elected non-permanent member in 1969–1970 and 1988–1989 For the year of 2018 to 2020, Nepal will serve as a representative on the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) (The United Nations in Nepal, n.d.).

Hence, the speeches of the Nepali statesmen presented at the UN general assembly throughout history till date can be seen through the diplomatic lenses in order to explore the content and characters of foreign policy priorities and contemporary global concerns. Speeches of the statesmen impact the moods and motifs of the national interests and foreign policy priorities of the state. The domestic affairs extend beyond the borders through tangible as well as intangible means and takes shape of the

foreign affairs.

### **Analysis of Diplomatic Speeches**

The leaders of the world address the global agenda along with their domestic affairs when they deliver their speeches across the global platforms (Wellman, 1992, p. 394). Their sentiments are carried through their choices of the words and content of the composition. Speech of Chuda Prasad Sharma, minister of foreign affairs (1956–1957), illustrates on Nepal through elegant composition. He describes Nepal as sandwiched between the two great landmasses of Asian civilizations, symbolizes the fusion of two very different spheres of thought and culture. (Bull, 1979, p. 115).

In the course of its lengthy history, Nepal has developed a pattern of national life and civilization that bears the imprint of its own genius. Ethnologically connected to the hardy stock of the north, but more easily accessible and receptive to the civilizing and cultural influences of the south. As a result of Nepal's achievement in assimilating influences to its national features while maintaining its own uniqueness and balance, its national culture is a synthesis of numerous influences from both the north and south as well as from other places (Mathias, 1980, p. 975). Additionally, Sharma outlines Nepal's foreign policy priorities and presenting to the world through UNGA for the first time in history, as presented in the UNGA in 1958 goes:

“...without pitting one neighbor against the other, Nepal is eager to contribute in its own modest manner to the upkeep of friendliness and goodwill between the two neighbors. All nations in the globe should have the warmest relations with Nepal...”

The speech vigorously sketches out what and were Nepal's national interests were and how they could be achieved. He begins with simple political phrases for salutation of the distinguished delegates of the world. Nepali representative Chuda Prasad Sharma applauds that Asia, Europe, Africa, America, and the other continents are not separate continents, but rather one continent where the trees and flowers bloom and fade, the earth is laden with grain and harvested, the rivers cheer and gladden the plain, and the sun, moon, and stars can be seen. There has never been an incident in Asia that did not have implications in Europe or America. This is what Nepali people and government have kept in mind. He asserts that they have urged us to be more valuable to our nation by

cooperating intelligently with the United Nations on a level beyond the petty bickering of politics and power blocs.

Likewise, B. P. Koirala in the UNGA, 1960, the first ever prime minister of Nepal who was elected by the popular vote after the installation of democracy in the country, led a team of delegates to the United Nation in 1960 (Chhetry, 2010). He proceeds through considerate words in order to convince the international community that Nepal was trading the course of democracy. He terms Nepal as one of the small uncommitted nations of the world during the Cold war. He emphasizes the strength of number of the member states and treats the people of the world as the peoples of the United Nations. He sees challenges of the states of the world in securing political independence, preserving sovereignty and security, and promoting international peace and co-operation. He states:

The primary objective of the foreign policy of every country is to secure its own political independence, sovereignty and security, and to promote international peace and co-operation. The foreign policy of Nepal is wholly inspired by the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations. We regard the United Nations not only as a bulwark of our independence and security, but also as the protector of our rights and freedom. We look upon the United Nations as an instrument for promoting peace and justice among nations. It is our firm conviction that an enduring peace and a stable world order can be achieved only on the basis of freedom and justice. To this end we wish to co-operate with other nations within the framework of this Organization.

He is well aware of not only the economic and military might of his country, but of its responsibility to the global community too. He cautiously chooses the varieties of the words and sentence structures catching the tempo of the semantic and symbiotic essence of the entire corpus. PM Koirala acknowledges in front of international leaders that the true answer to the world's issues, particularly the problem of global peace and prosperity, rests in strengthening and expanding the power of the United Nations. This authority will be increased and fortified as he progresses if the judgments of the United Nations are faithfully and loyally recognized by all Powers, large and small. In carrying out these judgments, we must remain faithful to the spirit of man, regardless of race, region, or nation. Nepal, he explains, would prefer the United Nations to evolve along these lines and will support measures that it believes will further these goals.

In 1968, Prime minister Kirti Nidhi Bista in UNGA, *New York* outlined the current global incidents during 1960s statements. The Vietnam War, Civil Rights Protests, assassinations of US Presidents John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and eventually the first moon landing brought an end to the turbulent 1960s. However, he concentrates on the world peace and unity. The United Nations Charter and system are much respected in Nepal, and nothing would make Nepal happier than to see them strengthened and made more universal. His delegation fervently hopes that nations like Germany, Korea, and Vietnam, who are split against their choice, would one day be free to live in peace and harmony without intervention from the outside world. The sooner these countries occupy their proper positions inside the UN, the better for the UN, for them, and for the rest of the world.

He admires the human excellence achieved till then. The incredible accomplishments of the American astronauts, remind that so perfectly that the super-Powers are on the verge of conquering space. The super-Powers have made enormous strides in both obtaining stronger means of destruction and acquiring greater means of advancement.

PM Bista discusses the major issues confronting the world today in a nutshell. Nepal adopts a strategy of non-alignment and peaceful coexistence in international affairs. He emphasizes Nepal's viewpoint and attitudes toward these difficulties, which are primarily influenced by these principles, which Nepal has accepted not for pragmatic reasons, but because they are an article of religion for Nepal. Similarly, he demonstrates Nepal's firm belief in the ideals and goals of the United Nations Charter. Nepal is adamant that the future of humanity can only be secured by the concentrated and undivided efforts of everyone in the United Nations. He urges fellow global leaders to join him in this goal and work together to make the United Nations an effective tool for international peace and prosperity.

Similarly, Sailendra Kumar Upadhyay in 1988, delivered his speech at the UNGA in New York. In his speech, Mr Upadhyay initiates with the brilliant sense of hope i.e., '...we meet today in an atmosphere of renewed hope...' through which he propels his motifs in front of the global leaders that Nepal, albeit relatively small in geography, economy and military, has proven to be one of the leading active global actors in every front. He offers the domestic affairs in acutely intellectual manner. His choices of words are tacit in meaning and expressive in messages. From welcoming foreign aids to catering the pious act of peace keeping



across the world, he demonstrates the urgency of the time through chronological patterns of historical development of world affairs. He was addressing the UNGA when Nepal was elected for Non-permanent Member of the UN Security Council for the second time. Constricted phrases, figurative sentences and merged paragraphs have expressed the entire gamut of what he actually intended to speak.

Upadhyay promises the world leaders of Nepal's unwavering support and cooperation for the sake of world peace and humanity. He advocates Nepal's continued participation in any concerted effort aimed at realizing the noble goals of the United Nations Organization, arguing that the UN is not only an accurate mirror of an ever-changing world, but also the most effective international agent for bringing about timely, peaceful, and meaningful change.

### **Conclusion**

The investigation of Nepal's Diplomacy through rhetorics discloses the fact that diplomatic language is essential for building and maintaining positive relationships between states. Diplomatic language helps to communicate ideas and positions in a way that is respectful and non-offensive, which can help to build trust and cooperation between nations.

Diplomatic language is also critical for resolving conflicts between states. By using non-inflammatory language, diplomats can help to de-escalate tensions and promote constructive dialogue, which can lead to peaceful resolutions of disputes. It's used by diplomats to represent the interests of their respective states in negotiations and other international forums. Using diplomatic language can help to ensure that the interests of the state are effectively communicated and protected.

It is an essential tool for promoting international cooperation on issues such as trade, security, and human rights. By using respectful and constructive language, diplomats can help to foster a spirit of cooperation and collaboration that is essential for addressing global challenges. It is crucial for promoting effective communication, building and maintaining relationships, and resolving conflicts between states. By using diplomatic language, diplomats can help to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the international community.

Without a doubt, language forms the fundamental framework of diplomacy. Depending on the resources allotted to diplomacy in their different countries, statesmen get varying degrees of training in the

local language and culture of the foreign country where they would be stationed. Politicians, in addition to career foreign service officials, do engage in international talks. Many members of the latter category could be lacking the knowledge or intercultural skills necessary to interact with other countries in a respectful way. However, there must be both some cultural sensitivity and conscious use of that sensitivity in order for there to be global discourse.

These formal exchanges between the parties have their roots in national and state customs. The idea behind a language of diplomacy, however, is that it shouldn't be culture-bound but rather an effort to overcome such frontiers to provide a generally neutral communication vehicle; a vehicle of interchange that transmits the message while appearing to be the least ego-damaging. When letters took weeks or even months to reach their recipients, this was just as important then as it is now. The need for polite, diplomatic language has not diminished as a result of how mass communication and transportation have altered diplomacy in modern times.

## References

- Almurashi, W.A. (2016). An introduction to Halliday's systemic functional linguistics. *Journal for the study of English Linguistics*, 4(1), (pp. 70-80).
- Bista, K. N. (1988). Nepal's statements at the UNGA, 1988. In *General Assembly - Twenty-third Session - Plenary Meetings*. <https://ask.un.org/faq/73531>
- Bull, H. (1979). The state's positive role in world affairs. *Daedalus*, (pp. 111-123).
- Chhetry, D. S. (2010). *Sovereignty, Bare Life and Resistance in BP Koirala 's Life and Philosophy* (Doctoral dissertation, Central Department of English Kritipur, Kathmandu, Nepal).
- Chilton, P. (1990). Politeness, politics and diplomacy. *Discourse & Society*, 1(2), (pp. 201-224).
- Dahal, D. R. (2011). The art of survival: Policy choices for Nepal. *Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 5, (pp. 31-48).
- Eiser, J. R. (1996). *State sovereignty as social construct* (No. 46).

Cambridge University Press.

- Fowler, R. (1997). Norman Fairclough, Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language London Longman, 1995 Pp XIII, 265. *Language in Society*, 26(3), (pp.421-425).
- Gill, R. (2000). Discourse analysis. *Qualitative researching with text, image and sound*, 1, (pp.172-190).
- Koirala, B. P. (1960). Nepal's statements at the UNGA, 1960. In *General Assembly - Fifteenth session - Plenary Meetings*. <https://ask.un.org/faq/73531>
- Koirala, N. (1991). Nepal in 1990: End of an Era. *Asian Survey*, 31(2), (pp.134-139).
- Ku, M., & Mitzen, J. (2022). The Dark Matter of World Politics: System Trust, Summits, and State Personhood. *International Organization*, (pp.1-31).
- Mahbubani, K. (2022). Multilateral diplomacy. In *The Asian 21st Century*, Springer, Singapore, (pp.131-245).
- Mathias, C. M. (1980). Ethnic groups and foreign policy. *Foreign Affairs*, 59, (pp. 975).
- Neumann, I. B. (2008). Discourse analysis. In *Qualitative methods in international relations*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, (pp. 61-77).
- Oglesby, D. M. (2016). Diplomatic language. *The SAGE handbook of diplomacy*, (pp. 242-254).
- Sharma, C. P. (1956). Nepal's statements at the UNGA, 1956. In *General Assembly-Eleventh Session-Plenary Meeting*. <https://ask.un.org/faq/73531>
- Upadhyay, S. K. (1988). Nepal's statements at the UNGA, 1988. In *General Assembly Forty-third Session Seventeenth Meeting*. <https://ask.un.org/faq/73531>
- Voeten, E. (2013). Data and analyses of voting in the United Nations: General Assembly. *Routledge handbook of international*

118 *Institute of Foreign Affairs, Nepal: Journal of Foreign Affairs, Vol. 3, No. 1, July 2023*  
*organization, (pp.54-66).*

Wellman, B., & Wellman, B. (1992). Domestic affairs and network relations. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 9*(3), (pp.385-409).

Wheeler, A. (2014). Cultural diplomacy, language planning, and the case of the University of Nairobi Confucius Institute. *Journal of Asian and African studies, 49*(1), (pp.49-63).

**Access this article online**

[www.ifa.gov.np/www.nepjol.info](http://www.ifa.gov.np/www.nepjol.info)

For reference: Sharma, B. (2023) Nepal's Diplomacy Through Rhetorics at Unga

Journal of Foreign Affairs (JoFA), Volume 3, Issue 1

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/jofa.v3i01.56571>