



Protest Discourses in July Revolution: An Analysis Using Hymes' SPEAKING Grid

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Article Info	Abstract
<i>Article History</i> Date of Submission 29-01-2026 Date of Acceptance 06-05-2026 Date of Publication 15-06-2026	This study examines the protest discourses of the 2024 July revolution in Bangladesh through an interactional sociolinguistic lens. Adopting qualitative method this study aims to explain the discourse focusing on the ways in which Generation Z articulated political dissent through slogans during the 2024 movement. A total of 40 slogans are selected from three key sources: street protest, graffiti and social media. Dell Hymes' SPEAKING grid within an interactional sociolinguistic framework is used as an analytical framework to explore how contextual factors such as setting, participants, ends and norms etc. shape the meaning and function of protest discourses. The findings reveal that the SPEAKING model provides a nuanced understanding of how Gen Z utilized linguistic diversity and contextual adaptability to transform slogans into powerful tools of political resistance. It demonstrates that these slogans functioned as strategic interactional acts that effectively shaped collective identity and redefined the discourse of the movement.
<i>Keywords</i> Protest discourse, SPEAKING grid, Interactional sociolinguistics, Gen Z, Slogan	

Introduction

The political movement of 2024 in Bangladesh is also known as the July revolution. This movement began as a student-led movement against

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a controversial quota system in government jobs. The movement intensified because of police and political violence, ultimately leading to the eventual resignation of the existing government figures. July revolution was highly influenced by Gen Zs, who were born roughly between 1997-2012. During the movement, Gen Zs created and chanted different slogans that encapsulated their demands for meritocracy, equality, and justice. These slogans acted as weapons and highlighted the protesters' grievances. This study examines the protest discourses of the July revolution by using Dell Hymes' SPEAKING grid within an interactional sociolinguistic framework. Hymes' SPEAKING grid helps to analyze the contextual aspects of these slogans' usage in political discourse. Through an analysis of slogans drawn from street protests, social media, and graffiti, this study aims to demonstrate how interactional factors shape the meaning and function of protest discourses.

Statement of the Problem

While the July revolution has been extensively discussed from political and sociological perspectives, the specific linguistic strategies used by Generation Z to articulate dissent remain under-analyzed. Traditional linguistic frameworks often fail to capture the dynamic, context-sensitive, and multi-modal nature of these slogans. There is a lack of research on how these slogans functioned as complex interactional acts within different domains. This study addresses this problem by using Hymes' SPEAKING grid to investigate how contextual factors shaped the meaning and function of protest discourses during the movement.

Objectives of the Research

This study primarily seeks to analyze the protest discourse of the July revolution from an interactional sociolinguistic perspective. It aims to explore how various contextual factors, such as setting, participants, ends, and norms, systematically shape the meaning and function of

protest slogans. Furthermore, the research investigates the specific interactional roles these slogans play across diverse protest domains, including street demonstrations, social media platforms, and graffiti, to understand their impact on the movement's overall communicative landscape.

Literature Review

With a focus on youth discourse and interactional sociolinguistics, this review first examines important studies on political slogans and then it identifies existing gaps and establishes the analytical lens through which the protest discourses of the July revolution are analyzed.

Slogans are powerful tools of identity, persuasion, and collective action. Whether in electoral campaigns or social movements, slogans capture the spirit of a time and inspire people to act. Batool, Ilyas and Fareed (2025) critically analyzed the role of protest chants during the 2024 ouster of Prime Minister of Bangladesh, using Halliday's Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as an analytical framework within the larger context of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Their findings, which included sociopolitical tensions, unity, and resistance against power, highlighted the effectiveness of slogans as a mobilization tool. Amran, Hasan and Wasantha (2025) conducted a study to examine the power of social media in driving political change in Bangladesh. It helps to understand the social medias impact, slogan style, and how language is used as a communicative act, which are very relevant to this slogan on exploring Gen Z's slogan of 2024 movement. Zahan and Khan (2025) carried out an investigation on the Gen Z's leadership strategy in 2024's Student movement in the July revolution in Bangladesh. The study explored the Gen Z leadership pattern and strategic factors in an unusual especially emergent findings that Adaptive and Resilient Leadership (ARL) is the key to realization of Gen Z strategy with the direct contribution of Decentralized and Collective Leadership (DCML) as well as use of Hashtag and Viral Campaign (UHVC). Islam's (2025) study examined the political thought and engagement of Gen Z in

Bangladesh, with a particular focus on how this youngest cohort of voters perceives political issues, engages in political discourse and envisions the future of the nation. The research investigated the shift in political thought among younger generations and how their perspectives contrast with those of previous generations in Bangladesh. An analysis has been done by Hushen (2024) in which he examines the organizing and mobilizing power of Facebook as a social media in turning the quota reform movement 2024 in Bangladesh from a student-led protest into revolution.

Existing works have primarily focused on the linguistic features of protest slogans, the emergence of youth leadership, and the role of social media in shaping protest language. However, despite this growing body of work, protest discourse has rarely been examined as a holistic communicative event embedded within its sociocultural context. More importantly, the application of ethnographic discourse frameworks—particularly Dell Hymes’ (1974) SPEAKING grid—is notably absent in existing analyses of Bangladesh’s protest movements. Therefore, there exists a clear need for a systematic discourse analysis of the July revolution using Hymes’ SPEAKING grid.

Research Rational

In Bangladesh, the July revolution was a momentous occasion where Generation Z became the dominant voice for change and opposition. Slogans developed into a potent instrument for expressing demands for justice, solidarity, rage, and hope. Despite the importance of these slogans, their linguistic, pragmatic, and semiotic aspects have received little scholarly attention. There is a big knowledge vacuum about how these slogans work as a social and symbolic act in this setting because most studies that are now available tend to concentrate solely on the political or historical aspects of the movement or Gen Z’s linguistic style. Less attention has been given to the interactional and contextual dimensions. This study aims to close this gap by offering a discourse analysis of the 2024 protest discourse.

Research Questions

Primary Research Question

How does protest discourses in July revolution function as a communicative event?

Secondary Research Questions

1. How do contextual factors (setting, participants, and norms) shape protest discourse in July revolution?
2. What communicative purposes and meanings are constructed through protest discourse during the movement?
3. How does the use of language, tone, and symbolic resources reflect identity, resistance, and power relations within the movement?

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the framework of interactional sociolinguistics. Interactional sociolinguistics (IS), pioneered by John J. Gumperz during the late 1970s and early 1980s, provides a crucial analytical framework for understanding how language functions within social interactions. Discourse analysis is a part of interactional sociolinguistics. Dell Hymes' (1964) *Ethnography of Communication* offers a foundational approach to discourse analysis that goes beyond linguistic structure and considers language as a socially and culturally embedded activity. Hymes proposed the term "Ethnography of Communication" to describe a new approach to understand language in use. In doing this, Hymes aimed to move away from considering speech as an abstract model and toward investigating the diversity of speech as it is encountered in ethnographic fieldwork. To help investigators of communications frame their investigation of speech acts and events, Hymes offers the mnemonic device of the SPEAKING grid as a heuristic in 1974. The eight components of the SPEAKING mnemonic are: Setting, Participants, Ends, Act sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genre.

The SPEAKING grid is particularly significant for this study because it moves beyond a literal textual analysis of slogans. It enables the researcher to investigate how the physical and digital ‘Settings’ of the 2024 movement, the diverse ‘Participants’, and the varied ‘Keys’ collectively constructed the meaning of the protest discourses. By employing this grid, the study can categorize slogans not merely as isolated messages, but as situated interactional acts that responded to and shaped the socio-political context of the revolution.

Research Methodology

Approach

Qualitative approach is used to investigate slogan interpretations, cultural context, and suggested meanings. This study’s qualitative component is crucial since it examines how July revolution’s slogans are interpreted socially, meaning making, and language use.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach using both primary and secondary data to analyze protest discourse. Primary data was collected through ten in-depth interviews and two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) involving a total of twenty participants, aiming to uncover the linguistic and performative dimensions of slogans. To ensure a holistic understanding, direct observations were conducted to witness the circulation of slogans in natural settings, while secondary data was gathered from social media archives, news reports, and academic literature.

Sampling

The study employs purposive sampling to ensure selected participants and slogans provide meaningful insights into the 2024 protest discourses. Participants were selected based on several key criteria: they were directly involved in or witnessed the July revolution and

actively created, interpreted, or shared slogans either in physical protest spaces or across social media platforms. The selection also ensured diverse representation in terms of background, gender, and political stance, focusing on those who could articulately reflect on the linguistic and semiotic meanings of the slogans. A total of 20 participants took part in the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs).

40 slogans were selected—comprising 15 from street protests, 15 from graffiti, and 10 from social media. Selection criteria were rooted in their relevance to the movement and their potential for multiple sociolinguistic interpretations. Priority was given to slogans showing high interactional use and linguistic richness, often characterized by irony, satire, or cultural metaphors. By including slogans with significant frequency and popularity, the study ensures that the data reflects the most influential communicative acts that shaped the public discourse of the revolution.

Analytical Framework

This study employs Dell Hymes' SPEAKING grid as the analytical framework to examine protest slogans as interactional communicative events. Each selected slogan is analyzed in terms of the eight SPEAKING components—setting, participants, ends, act sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms, and genre—to capture the contextual and interactional features of protest discourse across street protests, social media, and graffiti.

Findings and Discussion

The SPEAKING grid, a framework of Ethnography of Communication, treats each slogan as a speech event rather than just a linguistic expression. Using Hymes' eight components, this study analyzes how slogans functioned as powerful performative acts during the July revolution's protest discourses.

S (Setting and Scene)

As the 2024 movement evolved into a national-level uprising, the slogans of this movement transcended regional boundaries and were used almost every district of Bangladesh. The setting of the slogans encompassed both physical and digital spaces. Slogans were prominently encountered in protest rallies, graffiti walls, banners, posters, public squares, university campuses, city streets and social media reflecting the multidimensional nature of contemporary protest communication. The coexistence of digital activism and physical gatherings highlights how spatial boundaries blurred during the July revolution.

P (Participants)

The participants of the 2024 slogans were not static. A significant variation is observed in the communicative trajectory of the slogans, as they functioned as multi-directional interactional acts. Eight primary directions of slogans are revealed and these are:

First, slogans like “কোটা না মেধা? মেধা মেধা।” were used by student protesters to address the government, demanding a merit-based recruitment system. Second, the interaction between protesters and state authority was marked by poignant cries such as “হামার ব্যাটাক মারলু ক্যানে?”. In this case, the protesting masses used regional dialects to demand accountability for state-led violence. The third direction involved a direct attack on the Prime Minister through slogans like “চশমাওয়ালা বুঝুজান, বাংলা ছাইড়া ভারত যান।” which signaled personalized political defiance. Fourth, protesters addressed the ruling party student wing and the leadership simultaneously with rhythmic chants like “১,২,৩,৪ খুনি খুনি হাসিনা গদি ছাড়, ১,২,৩,৪ ছাত্রলীগ রাস্তা ছাড়।” demanding they vacate both the streets and the seat of power. Conversely, the ruling party student wing used counter-slogans like “জনে জনে খবর দে, এক দফার কবর দে।” to address the protesters and suppress their ultimate demand for resignation. Sixth, slogans such as “ছাত্রভাইয়েরা ভয় নাই, রাজপথ ছাড়ি নাই।” showcased a horizontal interaction where protesters (including

the public) addressed fellow student protesters to provide courage and emotional support. The seventh direction was aimed at the international community through digital calls like “#SaveBangladeshiStudents” to seek global pressure against state repression. Finally, slogans like “পানি লাগবে পানি?” served as internal communication among protesters. Originally used by a student martyred while distributing water, this phrase was adopted by protesters to address and inspire one another.

The analysis of forty selected slogans clearly demonstrates a constant change in both the addresser and the addressee based on the evolving political climate. Protesters strategically shifted their targets between the government, ruling party student wing, the international community, and even themselves for internal solidarity. This fluidity in participatory roles highlights that slogans were not just repetitive chants, but versatile interactional tools throughout the movement.

E (Ends)

In Hymes’ SPEAKING grid, the “End” refers to the outcome and goal of a communicative act. In the context of the July revolution in Bangladesh, as the movement progressed through different phases, the ends of the slogans evolved significantly. At the initial stage, the end of the slogans was to demand quota reformation within the government’s recruitment system. Slogans at this point carried a rational and civic tone, appealing to justice and constitutional rights. Such as, “সংবিধানের মূলকথা সুযোগের সমতা, মুক্তিযুদ্ধের মূলকথা সুযোগের সমতা।” As violence escalated, the end shifted from a policy-based demand (Quota Reformation) to seek justice for the victims, while still maintaining the earlier call for quota reformation. At this time, protesters’ communicative purpose expanded to include demands for justice for the victims of state violence, solidarity among citizens and condemnation of authority abuse. Such as, “আবুসাদিদের/৭১ এর/৫২ এর বাংলায়, বৈষম্যের ঠাই নাই।” In the final stage slogans symbolized collective frustration, loss of trust in authority, and a demand for leadership change. Such as, “#StepDownHasina”. So, the end dimension in this movement illustrates a dynamic communicative evolution.

A (Act Sequences)

In the context of the July revolution, the act sequence of the slogans reveals a clear narrative evolution that reflects the emotional and historical trajectory of the movement itself.

Phase-1: According to Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (2024), on 5 June 2024, High Court reestablished the freedom fighter quota that reserves 30% of the civil service posts for the children and grandchildren of freedom fighters, leading to student protest. On 6 June, 6 universities performed peaceful protests against the quota system. Then the protests claimed down because of the ‘Eid ul Adha’ celebrations and soon it started from 1 July 2024. From July 1-14, the movement was quota reformation-based. From 2-6 July 2024, students demand reinstatement of the 2018 circular that abolish the quota system. On 7 July, protesters blocked Dhaka demanding quota reformation and the Prime Minister termed the protest as irrational. On 8 July, the protest became more intensified, and 10 July Appellate Division halts the reinstatement of the quota system. The High Court stated the government’s authority to modify the quota system on 11 July which intensified the protest more, as the government figures were continuously denying their authority to modify the quota system. As a result, protesters blocked Shahbag on 12 July. On 13 July 2024, State Minister stated judicial consideration prevents forming a commission on quota reform. The movement shifted its direction from quota reformation to political, justice-oriented on 14 July 2024, when the Prime Minister during a press conference referred to students protesting the quota reform movement as the children of Rajakars. Until 14 July, the movement was for quota reformation. This phase was a reformative discourse. In this phase, by using slogans, the protesters sought to pressure the government into listening and responding, not to overthrow it.

Phase-2: After Prime Minister’s statement regarding freedom fighter and Razakar issue, students organized a midnight demonstration at the Dhaka university campus area. The attacks against the demonstrators

began soon after the ruling party's general secretary said on Monday that the ruling party student wing was ready to give a fitting reply to quota protesters for their arrogant behavior. The student wing's violent assault on Dhaka University campus, involving firearms and sticks, triggered the movement's second phase. Demanding justice and quota reform, the slogans shifted towards expressing collective anger and grief. The movement reached a turning point on 16 July when clashes between students and law enforcement resulted in six fatalities. Abu Sayed, a student of Begum Rokeya University was shot and killed in front of his campus by police (BSS, 2024). This news became viral on social media and pushed the people to stand and raise their voices against the government. This incident made the movement a national level movement. The police brutality, government's continuous inactions intensified the movement more. Internet shutdown happened to stop the protests. Until 31 July, the protesters continued their protests to ensure equality, justice, and democracy. According to Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (2024), on 31 July 2024, protesters staged a 'March for Justice' where lawyers and university teachers support them. On 21 July 2024 the Appellate Division reduced quotas from 56% to 7%, but protests continues. Because at this phase the movement didn't constrain within quota reformation. This phase was justice-seeking discourse. The tone, structure and sequence of communicative acts through slogan changed dramatically in response to the unfolding violence and state repression.

Phase-3: As documented by BSS (2024), On 2 August 2024, mass protests continued. Hundreds of protesters were killed, thousands of protesters were injured and arrested by police and political violence. Protesters called for Prime Minister's resignation. On 3 August, Prime Minister proposed peaceful talks with the protesters. Protesters rejected this offer and gathered at the central Shahid Minar area with protest marches from different parts of Dhaka. Protesters announced a single demand for the resignation of Prime Minister and her cabinet and called for a comprehensive non-cooperation movement from 4 August. On 4 August, Prime Minister criticized the protesters

saying that those who engage in sabotage and destruction are no longer students but terrorists. Long March to Dhaka was announced on 5 August by one of the coordinators of the July movement, Asif Mahmud. On this day, Prime Minister resigned and fled the country to India for her own safety and with this the third phase of the movement ended. The discourse of this phase was of political accountability and leadership change. This phase represents the final and most politically radical transformation of the July movement. At this stage, speech itself became a political act.

Phase-1	Phase-2	Phase-3
কোটা না মেধা? মেধা, মেধা। (Quota or merit? Merit, merit.)	তুমি কে? আমি কে? রাজাকার, রাজাকার। কে বলেছে? কে বলেছে? স্বৈরাচার, স্বৈরাচার। (Who are you? Who am I? Rajakar, rajakar. Who said it? Who said it? Dictator, dictator.)	চশমাওয়ালা বুবুজান, বাংলা ছাইড়া ভারত যান। (The bespectacled granny, Leave Bengal and go to India.)
Action, action Direct action.	আমার ভাই মরলো কেন? প্রশাসন জবাব চাই। আমার বোন মরলো কেন? প্রশাসন জবাব চাই। (Why did my brother die? We demand answers from the administration. Why did my sister die? We demand answers from the administration.)	১,২,৩,৪ খুনি হাসিনা গদি ছাড়, ১,২,৩,৪ ছাত্রলীগ রাস্তা ছাড়। (1,2,3,4) Murderer Hasina leave the throne, 1,2,3,4 The Student League leave the street.)
দফা এক, দাবি এক Quota not come back. (One point, one demand Quota not come back.)	ছাত্র ভাইয়েরা ভয় নাই, রাজপথ ছাড়ি নাই। (Student brothers don't fear, We haven't left the streets.)	জনে জনে খবর দে এক দফার কবর দে। (Spread the news to everyone Bury the one-point demand.)

Phase-1	Phase-2	Phase-3
সংবিধানের মূলকথা সুযোগের সমতা, মুক্তিযুদ্ধের মূলকথা সুযোগের সমতা। (The essence of the constitution Equal Opportunity, The essence of the liberation war Equal opportunity.)	হামার ব্যাটাক মারলু ক্যানে? (Why did you kill my son?)	৩৬শে জুলাই (36th of July)
কোটা প্রথা নিপাত যাক, মেধারীরা মুক্তি পাক। (Abolish the quota system, Let the meritorious be free.)	আবুসাদিদের/৭১ এর/৫২-এর বাংলায়, বৈষম্যের ঠাই নাই। (In Abu Sayed's/ 1970's/ 1952's Bengal, there is no place for discrimination.)	She has made us flee faster.
লেগেছেরে লেগেছে রক্তে আগুন লেগেছে, জেগেছেরে জেগেছে ছাত্রসমাজ জেগেছে। (Ignited, ignited Fire has caught in the blood, Awakened, awakened The student community has awakened.)	আবু সাঈদ, মুগ্ধ শেষ হয়নি যুদ্ধ। (Abu Sayed, Mugdho the war is not over yet.)	Time to reform our motherland.
#QuotaReformMovement	বুকের ভেতর অনেক বাড়, বক পেতেছি গুলি কর। (There is a storm within my chest I have borne my chest, shoot me.)	মুক্তি অথবা মৃত্যু (Freedom or death)

Phase-1	Phase-2	Phase-3
	শুনো, ধর্ম আর দেশ মিলাইতে যায়ে না। পরে ফুলের নাম কী দিবা ফাতেমাচুড়া? (Listen, don't try to mix religion and the nation. Later, what name will you give the flower Fatemachura?)	গর্দানের সাথে তলোয়ারের কোনো সংলাপ হয় না। (No conversation between the sword and the neck.)
	মেধাশহিদ (Martyr of merit)	যুদ্ধ হবে আরেকবার দেশ হবে জনতার। (The battle will be fought once more The country will belong to the people.)
	নাটক কম করো পিও (Stop the drama, dear.)	লংমার্চ টু ঢাকা (Long March to Dhaka)
	মুক্তিবাহিনী -Gen Z (Freedom fighter-Gen Z)	ঢাকা আসছে জনতা ছাড়তে হবে ক্ষমতা (The people are coming to Dhaka power must be relinquished.)
	একটা মানুষ মারতে কয়টা গুলি লাগে স্যার? (How many bullets does it take to kill one person, Sir?)	সংলাপ শুরুতে করতে হয়, লাশ পড়ার পর করতে হয় পদত্যাগ। (Dialogue should be done at the beginning, After death, only resignation remains)
	তিন চাকায় বিপ্লব (Three-wheeled revolution)	#StepDownHasina

Phase-1	Phase-2	Phase-3
	চেয়ে দেখ এই চোখের আগুন, এই ফাগুনেই হবো দ্বিগুণ (Look into these fiery eyes, This Spring we shall rise twice as strong.)	
	পানি লাগবে পানি? (Do you need water, water?)	
	লাখো শহিদের রঙে কেনা দেশটা কারোর বাপের না (Bought with the blood of millions of martyrs This country belongs to no one's father.)	
	বল বীর চির উন্নত মম শির! (Say, o brave one, My head is forever held high!)	
	#SaveBangladeshiStudents	
	#JulyMassacre	
	#RedForJustice	

Table 1: Slogan List According to Different Phases

So, the act sequence progression:

Phase	Goal	Speech Act
Reformation	Quota reform	Assertive/directive
Justice-seeking	Justice for victims	Commissive/expressive/ directive
Political accountability	Leadership change and resignation	Directive/declarative

Table 2: Act Sequence Progression

K (Key)

‘K’ of SPEAKING grid refers to the tone and manner in which something is said or written. In the context of the July revolution,

key captures the changing emotional tone and communicative attitude across different stages of the movement. At the initial stage, the tone of the slogans was distinctly calm, respectful, and reform oriented. The key of this stage was logical rather than emotional, and language was framed around policy correction, not political conflict. The key of the second stage reveals a profound transformation in the communicative spirit of the movement. It shifted from the rational voice of reformation to the emotional voice of justice. The emotional tone (key) of this stage was a complex combination of anger and moral outrage at brutality and injustice, empathy, grief and mourning for protesters who were arrested, injured and killed because of police and political violence and resilience in the face of fear. The tone of this phase was no longer polite or calm. From a research perspective, the key of the third stage represents the politicization of collective grief into collective resistance. This was the most intensified phase when the linguistic and emotional tone (key) became disrespectful, confrontational, and revolutionary. Widespread violence, mass injuries, and hundreds of deaths and continuous suppression transformed the movement from a moral outcry into a political uprising.

I (Instrumentalities)

The movement strategically utilized oral, written, and digital channels. Collective slogan shouting during street protests mass assemblies, and rallies provided oral momentum, while graffiti, banners, and leaflets projected demands visually. Additionally, social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube acted as powerful digital amplifiers.

The language choice was carefully adapted for maximum effect. Most of the slogans were created in Bengali because it is universally understood in Bangladesh. Some slogans were written in English. Such as, “Action action, Direct action.” The English form used in slogans were very simple and mostly people understood those slogans from contexts. Code-mixing also can be observed in slogans. Such as, “দফা এক, দাবি এক” Quota not come back.” Some English words or phrases

were strategically used in the slogans to maintain rhythm, engage the international community or appeal to media. Use of dialects also made the slogans more connected to the people. “হামার ব্যাটাক মারলু ক্যানে?” is an example of this type. Poetic and historical references were used in slogans, which were tough for many people to interpret. Such as, “চেয়ে দেখ এই চোখের আগুন, এই ফাগুনেই হবো দ্বিগুন” “তুমি কে? আমি কে? রাজাকার, রাজাকার। কে বলেছে? কে বলেছে? স্বৈরাচার, স্বৈরাচার।” and “বুকের ভেতর অনেক বাড়, বুক পেতেছি গুলি কর।” etc. But overall, the slogans were mostly intelligible.

N (Norms)

During the movement, norms controlled how protesters communicated with one another, with the public and with authority. They defined how emotions should be expressed and what behavior was acceptable during protest. At the initial stage of the movement during the quota reformation, slogans strictly followed political restraints and respectful language norms. As the movement evolved overtime and anger and grief reached their peak, protesters began to use slang, harsh expressions and sharp languages, which would be socially or politically unacceptable during normal circumstances. However, during the movement, this was interpreted empathetically, not negatively. Here, the right to express pain and rage overrode the older norms of politeness. The movement’s overall slogans still emphasized justice and truth, avoiding unnecessary vulgarity and disrespect. Slogans also followed the norm of inclusivity and representation. Norms against destructive motivation were also maintained. The guiding principle followed here was to express anger through words, not through destruction.”

G (Genre)

In the July revolution, the dominant genre of communication was the slogan. Slogans functioned as a powerful genre of protest discourse. As a genre, slogans are not designed for dialogue but for collective performance. The slogan genre can be seen as a performative act of

identity and stance-taking. This genre combines linguistic economy with symbolic power, allowing language to function as both protest and identity.

The application of Hymes' SPEAKING model to the 2024 protest slogans reveals them as a complex, evolving communicative event rather than isolated chants. The analysis shows a clear shift from reformative goals (quota reform) to radical political demands (leadership change) in response to state repression. Key findings indicate that these slogans operated across physical and digital spaces, using diverse linguistic forms—including regional dialects, English, and code-mixing—to address multiple audiences. The interaction was notably multi-directional, targeting the government, international communities, and ruling party student wing, while also building internal solidarity among protesters. The tone and norms of using slogans were also changed over time as the discourse was continuously changing. The dominant communicative genre was the slogan. Ultimately, the study finds that the slogan functioned as a powerful performative act that constructed a new sociopolitical identity during the movement.

Recommendations

This research demonstrates that applying Hymes' model to the analysis of a movement's slogans can effectively reveal the discursive nature of the movement itself. Future research should apply this framework to diverse sociopolitical contexts and digital platforms to further assess its adaptability in shaping and amplifying protest communication. Given the interplay of multilingual practices, subsequent studies should investigate the sociocultural implications of code-mixing and regional dialects. Additionally, employing longitudinal and interdisciplinary approaches—integrating sociolinguistics with media and political studies—would provide a more nuanced understanding of slogans as performative instruments for collective identity, resistance, and sociopolitical transformation.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the sociolinguistic dimension of slogans produced by protesters during the July revolution. It analyzed the slogans under protest discourses through Hymes' model and examined the contextual components of the slogan production. The findings showed that the slogans were not random linguistic artifacts but highly structured and socially meaningful communicative acts. The movement provides a powerful example of how protest slogans can construct identities, produce meanings, and shape social and political realities. This study provides a methodological model that future scholars can apply to examine protest discourses in different contexts.

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