



From Utterance to Intention: Mapping Illocutionary Force and Implicature in the Discursive Landscape of the July Revolution

Smrity Akter²

Abstract

The 2024 political movement in Bangladesh, or the July Revolution, marks a significant phase of organized public resistance. It was highly influenced by Gen Zs who employed slogans as powerful linguistic tools of resistance. This study, titled ‘From Utterance to Intention: Mapping Illocutionary Force and Implicature in the Discursive Landscape of the July Revolution’ examines 15 slogans collected through purposive sampling. It explores how slogans function as acts of resistance across sources by analyzing their speech acts and implicature. Each slogan is examined using J. L. Austin’s tripartite framework of locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. This helps to capture not only what is said, but what is intended. Additionally, the slogans are also categorized into directives, expressives, declaratives, commissives and representatives according to Searle’s classification of speech act. Implicature is analyzed using Grice’s four conversational maxims. This analysis helps to uncover implied meanings and strategic violations employed in resistance discourse. The study finds that Gen Z slogans function primarily as directive and expressive acts of resistance. Through strategic use of implicature, slogans convey powerful political meanings despite linguistic brevity, relying on ambiguity, metaphor and shared contextual

²MA in Linguistics. Department of Linguistics, University of Dhaka (smrity-2019514927@ling.du.ac.bd)



knowledge. Overall, Gen Z's pragmatic creativity transforms slogans into effective tools of resistance.

Keywords: Speech Act, Implicature, Solgan, July Revolution, Bangladesh

Introduction

Political slogans function as condensed yet powerful linguistic forms within protest discourse. Collected ideologies, demands and identities etc. are articulated through slogans. Slogans often carry layered meanings that extend beyond their literal wording. Their interpretation relies heavily on contexts. Shared experiences, historical moments and the immediate conditions of their production and reception make them a rich site for pragmatic analysis. The political movement of 2024 in Bangladesh offers a compelling context to examine these dynamics. Originating in student-led protests against a controversial quota system in public sector recruitment, the movement quickly evolved into a broader expression of public dissent amid escalating political tensions. Slogans emerged as central communicative tools during this movement. The meanings conveyed through these slogans were deeply embedded in the sociopolitical contexts which require shared understanding among participants for their full interpretation. This present study adopts a pragmatic perspective to explore how meaning is constructed and communicated through slogans.

Literature Review

This review examines important studies on political slogans and identifies existing gaps. Whether in electoral campaigns or social movements, slogans capture the spirit of a time and inspire people to act. Batool, Ilyas & 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. Amran, Hasan & Wasantha (2025) conducted a study to examine the power of social media in driving political change in Bangladesh. It also showed how the Social Media Networking (SMN) platform impact changing the Gen Z mindset and how the social media tools have been used by the celebrity to mobilize the mass protest to remove the government, significant role of social media in mobilizing all parties together and shaping the public opinion in one path to remove the ruling party from power on August 5th, 2024. Zahan & 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. 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. 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. To understand the pragmatic analysis of slogans, several existing works are reviewed. The slogans of student politicians in a Ghanaian Public University were analyzed by Emmanuel Appiah Gyasi in 2023. The study focused on exploring a pragmatic study of some political slogans used by student politicians at the University of Education, Winneba by using the framework of the speech act theory, (Austin, 1962; Kreidler, 2006; Searle, 1969) as its theoretical foundation. A pragma-semiotic study of Iraqi election propaganda photos (2021) was conducted by Mahammed, Hashoosh and Ghezzezy (2022). The study investigated the pragmatic and semiotic aspects that are implemented in the Iraqi parliamentary election propaganda in 2021. An analysis of the speech acts in advertisement slogans was done by Adiniu & Uchenna (2023). The research explained that advertisement slogans perform some acts. It emphasized as well that the adequate understanding



of the speech acts and intentions of the copywriters is insightful and rewarding and that the meaning abstracted from the acts controls the responses of the consumers. By observing the existing works so far, it is evident that there has been a noticeable lack of research on the political slogans of 2024 from a pragmatic viewpoint. When slogans are examined through the lens of sociolinguistics, it becomes essential to incorporate pragmatic analysis to interpret their meanings within specific contexts.

Methodological Considerations

Approach

Here qualitative approach is used to describe the Gen Z slogans of the 2024 movement in Bangladesh. The qualitative component aids in investigating slogan interpretations, cultural context, and suggested meanings.

Methods

The following methods are employed in this study:

- ▶ In-depth interviews
- ▶ Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)
- ▶ Observation

In-depth Interview: Participants from Generation Z, including students, activists, and social media users, are interviewed in a semi-structured manner. The objective is to Identify the societal settings, experiences, motivations, and individual interpretations that underlie the adoption of slogans.

Focus Group Discussion: FGDs are employed to capture the collective and interactional dimensions of slogans used by Gen Z participants in the 2024 movement in Bangladesh. Unlike in-depth interviews, which emphasize individual interpretations, FGDs allow participants to



contest, negotiate, and co-construct meanings of slogans in real-time, by emphasizing collective interpretations. 2 FGDs are conducted; each FGD brings together 5 participants.

Observation: Observation is a crucial method in this study. Both online observation (TikTok videos, Facebook posts, Twitter hashtags) and offline observation (demonstrations, banners, graffiti, rallies) are conducted. This makes it easier to track how slogans flow between places and how their meanings change depending on the audience and media.

Sampling

Purposive sampling is the most logical choice for this study. Purposive sampling is justified because this research requires selecting specific slogans and participants that are meaningful, relevant, and informative for sociolinguistic interpretation, rather than random data that may dilute the analysis.

Sampling Criteria:

- Must belong to Gen Z (born between 1997-2012)
- Directly involved in or witnessed the 2024 movement.
- Created, interpreted, used, or shared slogans (offline or online).
- Able to reflect the meaning, content, and use of slogans.
- Represent diversity in background, gender, or political stance.
- Willing to participate in FGDs, interviews, or surveys.

Sample Size: In this study, all Gen Z individuals in Bangladesh who used, created, circulated or interpreted slogans associated with 2024 movement are population. 50 participants are selected by purposive sampling, so the sample size is 50.

***Slogan Selection Criteria***

- Relevance to the 2024 movement.
- Used by Gen Z participants
- Interactional use
- Linguistic and semiotic richness
- Frequency and popularity
- Potential for multiple interpretations.

Total Slogans: 15 slogans that were popular among Gen Z participants in Bangladesh's 2024 movement are used in the study. This number is chosen to ensure manageable yet diverse data. 5 slogans are collected from street protests, 5 slogans are collected from graffiti, and 5 slogans are collected from social media. This study focuses exclusively on the oral and textual forms of slogans-produced during the 2024 movement in Bangladesh, without analyzing their multimodal or visual accompaniment.

Data Type

Both primary and secondary data are used in this study for the analysis of slogans.

Primary Data: Primary data is the first-hand data collected directly from the field, participants, and contexts related to the 2024 movement. Sources of primary data are:

- Interview: Interviews help to uncover hidden meaning, contextual details and intentions behind slogans.
- FGDs: Group discussions reflect how meanings shift in interaction, how slogans are interpreted collectively, and how speech acts emerge in real-time.



- Slogans: The slogans themselves are the core primary materials.

Secondary Data: Secondary data refers to already existing scholarly works, records and archives that provide context, background, and verification of primary data.

Sources of secondary data are:

- Social media analysis reports or archives: Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, Instagram post and hashtags that have been archived by digital platforms, research institutes, or NGOs.
- News reports and media coverage: Electronic, print and online news reporting of the 2024 movement in Bangladesh that documents the slogans, social reactions and their spread.
- Academic literature: Published theses, articles and books on sociolinguistics, semiotics, political discourse and youth activism in Bangladesh or globally.

Analytical Framework

Pragmatic tools help to understand real-world language use, beyond its grammatical form or literal meaning. Two pragmatic theory speech act and implicature will be applied to analyze the meaning of slogans in this study. The focus of pragmatic analysis is on how slogans carry out actions and convey meanings that go beyond their literal interpretations.

Speech Act Analysis: J.L. Austin's three speech act components—locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act—are used to explain slogans. Searle's classification of illocutionary acts is used to examine the slogans. It investigates the social actions (Declarative, Representative/Assertive, Directive, Expressive, or Commissive) that slogans carry out.



Implicature Analysis: Implicature analysis facilitates the investigation of the transmission and interpretation of implicit meanings. This approach reveals the hidden, implicit, and context-dependent meanings of slogans based on the theory of implicature.

Findings and Discussions

কোটা না মেধা, মেধা মেধা

(Quota or merit?

Merit, merit.)

During the 2024 student movement in Bangladesh, the primary demand was to reform the quota system in government recruitment. The slogan “Quota or merit? Merit, merit”, served not just as a linguistic expression but as a political act. It reflects students’ demand for fairness and equality of opportunity.

Speech Act Analysis

Locutionary Act: At the surface level, the slogan presents a question-answer format. The first part, “Quota or merit?” frames a binary choice which suggests what is preferable in recruitment quota or merit. The response “merit, merit” represents a straightforward selection of merit as the only acceptable option.

Illocutionary Act: Beyond its literal meaning, this slogan suggests that protesters actively urging the authorities to abolish the quota system and to ensure equality and fairness in government recruitment. By repeated emphasis on ‘merit’, the protesters performed an act, pushing policymakers toward systematic change. According to Searle’s (1975) classification of illocutionary act, this slogan primarily falls under the category of directive. Directives are those



kinds of speech act that speakers use to get someone else to do something. They express what the speaker wants. The underlying illocutionary force of the slogan “Quota or merit? Merit, merit”, is not informational but demanding.

Perlocutionary Act: The intended effect of the slogan was to exert pressure on decision-makers by presenting meritocracy as the only fair option. The perlocutionary outcome was thus political pressuring the state of act.

Implicature

This slogan deliberately violates the maxim of quantity among H.P. Grice’s four maxims (maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation and maxim of manner). According to the maxim of quantity, speakers should make their contribution as informative as required and should not give more or less information than is needed. In this slogan, the expected answer to the question “Quota or merit?” would simply be “merit”. Instead, the protesters responded with “merit, merit”. The repetition provides more information than necessary for a literal answer. By flouting this maxim, the implicature raised here is;

Implicature: The repetition emphasizes urgency and absolute rejection of the quota system and signals that meritocracy is the only legitimate principal.



সংবিধানের মূলকথা

সুযোগের সমতা,

মুক্তিযুদ্ধের মূলকথা

সুযোগের সমতা।

(The essence of the constitution

Equal opportunity,

The essence of the liberation war

Equal opportunity.)

The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh aims to ensure all citizens have a meaningful chance to participate in national life. According to Article-19 (Equality of opportunity),

- 1) The state shall endeavor to ensure equality of opportunity to all citizens.
- 2) The state shall adopt effective measures to remove social and economic inequality between man and man and to ensure the equitable distribution of wealth among citizens and of opportunities in order to attain a uniform level of economic development throughout the Republic.
- 3) The state shall endeavor to ensure equality of opportunity and participation of women in all spheres of national life.

According to Article-29 (Equality of opportunity in public employment);

- There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in respect of employment or office in the service of the Republic.
- No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of, any employment or office in the service of the Republic.



- Nothing in this article shall prevent the state from-
 - ▶ making special provision in favor of any backward section of citizens for the purpose of securing their adequate representation in the service of the Republic;
 - ▶ Giving effect to any law which makes provision for reserving appointments relating to any religious or denominational institution to persons of that religion or denomination.
 - ▶ Reserving for members of one sex any class of employment or office on the ground that it is considered by its nature to be unsuited to members of the opposite sex.

The lines “সংবিধানের মূল কথা, সূনাগরিকের সমতা।” reflects these principles by reminding that the fundamental duty of the state is to create a fair system where all citizens get the same chance in government recruitment and socioeconomic life and protesters here imply that quota provisions which disproportionately privilege certain groups undermine these constitutional promises. The reintroduction of a 56% quota doesn’t align with the true spirit of Article-19 and 29, because it creates inequality, rather than ensuring fairness. Bangladesh's liberation war (1971) was a fight for self-determination against the systematic discrimination and oppressive inequality imposed by West Pakistan on the ethnically Bengali population of East Pakistan. By saying “মুক্তিযুদ্ধের মূল কথা, সূনাগরিকের সমতা।” protesters reclaimed the founding narrative of Bangladesh as a struggle for equality and fairness.

Speech Act Analysis

Locutionary Act: The surface form of the slogan suggests both the constitution and the liberation war share the same value-equal opportunity.

Illocutionary Act: The intended force behind the slogan is representative/assertive. It performed as an assertive act by claiming that equal opportunity is the fundamental right according to the constitutional and historical truth. This slogan acted as a reminder for the authorities to uphold this principle through merit-based recruitment.



Perlocutionary Act: It inspired the protesters, legitimizes their cause using constitutional and historical grounds and reminds policymakers for their constitutional duty to guarantee equality as enshrined in Article-19 and 29 by quota reformation.

Implicature

Flouting the maxim of quantity can be observed in this slogan. Maxim of Quantity: Mentioning “equal opportunity” would be sufficient to convey the intended meaning. But the slogan repeats “equal opportunity” twice to emphasize moral weight, flouting the maxim of quantity. The parallel structure “সংবিধানের মূল কথা ... মুক্তিযুদ্ধের মূল কথা...” seemed redundant or stylistically excessive. The resulting implicature is, Implicature: This slogan implies solemnity and urgency, suggesting that equal opportunity is the most fundamental value of Bangladesh and so quota system should be abolished to ensure equality.

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.)

This slogan has a deep historical and political background in Bangladesh. The slogan emerged during the 2024 student-led quota reform protest in Bangladesh. This slogan became the main rallying cry of the movement and played a significant role in the July movement. On 14 July 2024, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during a press conference was asked a question by Prabhash Amin,



head of the ATN news, regarding the protests questioning and stating,

“If two equally qualified candidates stand before me-one the child of a freedom fighter and one the child of a Rajakar- I would prefer to give the job to the child of the freedom fighter.”

In response, Prime Minister quoted, “Why is so much anger against freedom fighters? If the grandchildren of freedom fighters don’t get quota benefits, will those then go to the grandchildren of the Rajakars? That’s my question to the countrymen... That means that the children-grandchildren of freedom fighters are not talented, but the children of Rajakar are talented, right?” The statement sparked anger and resentment among students who were advocating quota reformation. Students felt insulted, discriminated against, and stigmatized. As a result, they created and chanted this slogan as a bold and emotional response to the Prime Minister’s statement. The slogan was created as a direct response to this statement combining contemporary critique (dictatorship), historical memory (Rajakars or traitors) and a challenge to authority (identity questioning). Rajakar is a Persian term meaning volunteers. It was a gendarmerie and paramilitary force in East Pakistan organized by General Tikka Khan in 1971-to help the Pakistan armed forces to crush pro-independence supporters in the East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, during 1971 Bangladesh liberation war. Rajakars were central to the way the military of Pakistan conducted its operations in 1971. However, Rajakar is a pejorative term, often equated to traitor. During the primership of Sheikh Hasina, the term Rajakar was predominantly used by the Awami League to describe individual who supported Pakistan. The meaning of Rajakar evolved into a highly derogatory term: Rajakar- Government servant, official employee (pre-1971)- Collaborator with Pakistani army, traitor (1971 liberation war)- Traitor, betrayer of the country/people (post-1971). In the 2024 movement, when Prime Minister gave the statement in press conference regarding freedom fighter and Rajakar issue, the students pushed back, accusing her to trying to portray all critics and opponents as Rajakar. This statement was interpreted by students as indirect accusation, implying that those without freedom fighter lineage were



descendants of Rajakars (traitors). However, during the premiership of Sheikh Hasina, Rajakar term was predominantly used by the Awami League and its supporters as a synonym for traitor. Anyone who demands his rights or questions about the government's misconduct is labeled as a Rajakar. The same scenario can be observed in 2024. But this movement gave a new dimension to the meaning of Rajakar. The term gained a new pragmatic meaning- it became a symbol of how authority misuses national history to silence dissent. In the slogan, protesters called Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina a dictator. She is a Bangladeshi politician who has served as the 10th Prime Minister of Bangladesh from June 1996 to July 2001 and again from January 2009 to until August 2024. At the time of her resignation- on 5th August 2024, she was the world's longest-serving female head of government. Students of anti-quota movement accused her as authoritarian, a dictator even, committing serious human rights violence and holding onto the power through anti-democratic practices, including oppressing the freedom of speech.

So, the slogan “তুমি কে? আমি কে? রাজাকার, রাজাকার। কে বলেছে? কে বলেছে? স্বৈরাচার, স্বৈরাচার।” became popularized for multiple reasons in 2024 movement. Misusing of one of the hateful words of Bangladesh Rajakar term, directly pointing the Prime Minister as dictator, this slogan undoubtedly a bold one.

Speech Act Analysis

Locutionary Act: At the locutionary level, the students are verbally expressing their anger at being unjustly called Rajakar by using this slogan. Also, they reversed the accusation by calling the Prime Minister as dictator in return.

Illocutionary Act: The intended meaning of this slogan goes beyond the words. Through this slogan, the protesters performed several illocutionary acts:



Expressive: This slogan expressed humiliation, outrage, and moral resistance to the government's statement.

Assertive: Protesters asserted innocence and denied being Rajakar.

Declarative: Protesters symbolically reversed the accusation. They declared the real oppressor or dictator is the one in power, nor the protesters.

Perlocutionary Act: The slogan produced strong emotional and social effects among students, the public and government. It functioned as a moral indictment- turning the accusation back toward the ruling power, branding it as “dictatorial”. Also, it created courage, unity, and shared resistance among protesters. This slogan created sympathy for the students, as people recognize the injustice of labeling Rajakar. It influenced the public opinion highly and mobilized the protest.

Implicature

This slogan creates implicature by flouting maxim of quantity and maxim of quality, quantity and manner to convey deeper political and emotional messages beyond the literal words. Maxim of Quality: By sarcastically, students called themselves Rajakar, though they do not mean they are traitors/Rajakar. They ironically used the term to reject it. Maxim of Quantity: This slogan gives less information than is needed. It flouts the maxim of quantity by repeating the words “Rajakar” twice and “dictator” twice, while using one term was sufficient and can convey the same meaning. Though structurally redundant, this slogan provides less information. Without shared knowledge and contextual information, the listener can't understand the actual meaning of this slogan by its literal meaning.



Maxim of Manner: This slogan is ambiguous. It was hard for many people to understand why students called themselves Rajakar. Many people didn't understand its ironic meaning and criticized students for creating and chanting such slogans.

Implicature: By calling themselves Rajakar, students pointed out how authority misuses national history to silence dissent and expressed extreme anger by directly pointing out the Prime Minister as dictator.

ছাত্র ভাইয়েরা ভয় নাই,

রাজপথ ছাড়ি নাই।

(Student Brother don't fear,

We have not left the streets.)

This slogan emerged during the violent phase of the 2024 movement, when the violence of police and student league was intensified against university students demanding quota reform and justice. Rickshaw pullers around the university campus were the originators of this slogan. Later when common people spontaneously joined the protest, this slogan became a moral assurance from the common people to the protesting students.

Speech Act Analysis

Locutionary Act: At the locutionary level, the speaker (mainly rickshaw pullers or general citizens) addressed the students as “brother”, which shows a strong sense of empathy and emotional attachment. “Don't fear” literally functions as an assurance intended to comfort students who were under threat. “রাজপথ ছাড়ি নাই।” literally conveyed they are still actively supporting the protest, reflecting their continued moral and physical presence in the movement.

Illocutionary Act: At the illocutionary level it carried multiple intended forces. This slogan acted as expressive, directive, and commissive acts.



Commissive act: This slogan performed a commissive act. It's a promise or commitment to support the students, assuring them that the people remain with them physically or ideologically.

Expressive Act: This slogan was used to express moral support, affection, and empathy toward the students by addressing them as brothers.

Directive Act: This slogan acted as a directive. It is a motivational command, urging students to stay strong in the face of violence.

Perlocutionary Act: This slogan produced emotional and social effects on its audiences-especially the students and the wider public. This slogan evoked emotional strength and reassurance among students. It reduced fear and inspired students to continue the movement.

Implicature

“ছাত্র ভাইয়েরা, ভয় নাই, রাজপথ ছাড়ি নাই।”- this slogan can be explained by Grice's conversational maxims. It violated the maxim of quantity and maxim of manner.

Maxim of Quantity: The slogan uses minimal words. It gave no detailed explanation or context, regarding who attacked, why students should not fear or what the next step is. Yet, the listeners automatically understood the broader situation as they were part of the movement.

Maxim of Manner: The slogan uses metaphors, which may create conceptual ambiguity. What does “leaving the streets” mean? Literally leaving the road or metaphorically “street” suggests “the movement”. As diverse audiences were part of this movement, this slogan may create ambiguity strategically, expanding its meaning and inclusivity.

Implicature: Even in the face of fear and repression, the collective determination of the people endures their protest spirit remains alive and inseparable from the student's struggle.



আবু সাঈদ, মুগ্ধ

শেষ হয় নি যুদ্ধ।

(Abu Sayed, Mugdho The war is not over yet.)

This slogan emerged when the protest of 2024 had reached an extreme intensity, and incidents of police violence, illegal arresting, deaths and martyrdom were prominent. Abu Sayed and Mugdho both were martyred students' of 2024 political movement of Bangladesh. By including their names in the slogan, the protesters recognize their sacrifice, honor their memory and inspire others to participate in the movement.

Speech Act Analysis

Locutionary Act: This slogan literally communicates two pieces of information. Firstly, it helps to recall Abu Sayed and Mugdho, who were students martyred during the 2024 movement. Secondly, it states that the war has not ended, suggesting that the protest continues.

Illocutionary Act: This slogan can be understood as a commissive speech act. By stating “the war is not over yet”, protesters were vowing or promising that the struggle against discrimination, injustice and state violence will continue until justice is achieved.

Perlocutionary Act: The perlocutionary act of this slogan was to strengthen public awareness, increase and mobilize continued participation and maintain pressure on the government and authorities.

Implicature

Conversational maxim (maxim of quantity) is violated in this slogan.

Maxim of Quantity: The slogan doesn't provide details about the nature of the 'war' and does not provide enough information about 'Abu Sayed' and 'Mugdho' which can create barriers to understand the meaning of this slogan for anyone who don't know the actual context of the 2024 movement or who don't know who they are and how they are connected to the 2024 movement.



Implicature: The martyr's (Abu Sayed, Mugdho) sacrifice strengthens the 2024 movement, and the struggle for equality and justice continues.

৩৬শে জুলাই

(36th of July)

This slogan is symbolic, rather than literal. The 2024 movement was marked as a massive protest against inequality, injustice, and authoritarian governance. At the final stage of this movement, protesters demanded the resignation of the Prime Minister and her cabinet. The state responded with continued political violence, which persisted until 5th August 2024. On 5th August 2024, the Prime Minister resigned from ruling power. To symbolize this extended period of oppression, protesters declared “36th of July”, combining 31 days of July with the five additional days of August. Protesters used this phrasing to represent the extension of political violence beyond July into the five days of August, marking continuous period of struggle and repression.

Speech Act Analysis

Locutionary Act: Literally “36th of July” is nonsensical as July has only 31 days. This phrase refers to continued political violence, spanning all of July and the first five days of August.

Illocutionary Act: The illocutionary act of this slogan was its performative function of symbolic declaration and remembrance. By declaring a fictional date (36th of July), the protesters marked the continuity of state violence which emphasize that repression extended through July and into the first five days of August. So, the illocutionary force of this slogan was declarative, transforming the fictional date into a symbol for collective memory.

Perlocutionary Act: This slogan taught and warned the authority that movement's resolve can't be erased by force. By using this slogan, protesters were reminded of their collective strength.

**Implicature**

This slogan conveys implied meaning by violation of four maxims: quality, quantity, relation, and manner. Maxim of Quantity: This slogan doesn't provide enough information. Why this fictional date (36th of July) is made, who used this date and what meaning is conveyed through this date, all this information is absent in this slogan and highly contextual knowledge is required to understand the meaning of this slogan. Maxim of Quality: This slogan is literally false as July has only 31 days. Maxim of Relation: On the surface, the date seems irrelevant or nonsensical. Also, its connectivity with 2024 movement is hard to identify literally.

Maxim of Manner: The metaphorical, symbolic date is very unconventional. It is very hard for many people to understand the actual meaning and reason for creating this slogan. Infact, people with contextual knowledge often may find it difficult to understand the intended meaning of this slogan.

Implicature: This slogan represents the extension of state violence beyond July into the first 5 days of August, marking a continuous period of struggle and repression.

শুনো, ধর্ম আর দেশ মিলাইতে যাও না
পরে ফুলের নাম কী দিবা ফাতেমাচূড়া?
(Listen, don't try to mix religion and the nation.)

Later, what name will you give the flower Fatemachura?)

According to the respondents of this study, "Fatemachura" is substituted at the place of "Krishnachura". "Krishnachura" symbolizes Hinduism, as Krishna is a central deity in the Hindu faith and Fatemachura symbolizes Islam, as Fatema (Fatimah) is a prominent figure in Islamic tradition. By using these two flowers, this slogan metaphorically represents the two largest



religious communities in Bangladesh: Muslim (majority population) and Hindu (second largest religious community). Historically, clashes between these two religious communities in Bangladesh have occurred because of political manipulation. This slogan warned against using religion as a political tool to change the direction of the movement and could divide the protesters or the nation. It emphasized that national interest and protest unity must remain above religious differences.

Speech Act Analysis

Locutionary Act: On the surface, this slogan warned against mixing religion and nation. Metaphorical flower names are used to represent religious communities.

Illocutionary Act: The slogans served as a directive speech act. Using this slogan speaker urged protesters to maintain unity and vigilance. According to this slogan, during the 2024 movement, national interests and unity must remain high above the religious differences.

Perlocutionary Act: This slogan helped to create awareness of potential religious manipulation among protesters and reinforce solidarity. Also, it signaled the political actors that attempts to exploit religion will fail and be recognized.

Implicature

Implicature is raised by violation of the following maxims:

Maxim of Quantity: This slogan doesn't specify how the audience inferred the warning, to whom the question was asked and who might divide or how. Lack of information is presented by flouting the maxim of quantity.

Maxim of Manner: This slogan is figurative, and the information provided is unclear. It can be difficult for many people to recognize the actual meaning of this slogan, encouraging reflection and careful interpretation.



Impicature: Religious identities should not be weaponized politically; national interest and movement's unity take precedence over sectarian divisions.

নাটক কম করো পিও

(Stop the drama, dear)

This line originally went viral on Facebook as a sarcastic remark by a child toward his girlfriend and became widely circulated as a meme. During the 2024 movement in Bangladesh, protesters repurposed this line as a slogan to satirically comment on the Prime Minister's public displays of emotion. On 29 July 2024, a cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina declared that nationwide mourning would be observed on 30 July 2024, to honor those killed during the quota reform movement. On 30 July, Prime Minister cried over national instability and publicly highlighted her personal sacrifices, including family loss. Protesters used this meme-slogan to mock what they perceived as theatrical behavior, signaling disbelief and criticism of her public mourning.

Speech Act Analysis

Locutionary Act: Literally, this slogan asks someone to stop drama. The speaker uttered this line to indicate disapproval of theatrical behavior.

Illocutionary Act: It functioned multiple illocutionary acts.

Directive: The slogan indirectly instructed the Prime Minister to stop her drama and exaggeration. Instead, she should ensure justice, equality, and accountability.

Expressive: This slogan conveyed mockery and criticism. It suggested that the public perceives her emotional displays as political theater rather than genuine concern.



Perlocutionary Act: It undermined credibility and moral authority by publicly ridiculing emotional gestures. Authorities understood that no excuses or drama then stop the movement; instead justice must be ensured.

Implicature

The slogan violates the maxim of quality and the maxim of quantity.

Maxim of Quality: Exaggeration and sarcasm are used in this slogan, signaling figurative rather than literal truth. Here, protesters called the Prime Minister ‘dear’, though they don’t mean it literally.

Maxim of Quantity: This slogan doesn’t provide the required information to understand the overall situation. It doesn’t explain why the behavior is considered dramatic, who is the “dear” here. So, it flouts the maximum quantity.

Implicature: The Prime Minister’s public displays were performative theatrics, and protesters used humor to criticize her actions, highlighting political dissatisfaction.

মুক্তিবাহিনী – Gen Z

(Freedom fighter-Gen Z)

This slogan was used during the 2024 political movement in Bangladesh. This slogan directly equates the Gen Z protesters of the 2024 movement with the freedom fighter of 1971’s liberation war. It suggests that the youth are the new liberators who will reclaim equality, justice, and freedom.

Speech Act Analysis

Locutionary Act: Literally, by identifying themselves as “muktibahini”, Gen Z protesters claim moral legitimacy and continuity with Bangladesh's liberation ideals.

Illocutionary Act: For this slogan, the illocutionary force was assertive or representative.



Assertive/representative: This slogan indicated similarities between freedom fighters and Gen Z protesters. It claimed that the youth protesters of 2024 movement embody the same patriotism, courage and spirit of resistance that characterized Bangladesh's liberation struggle.

Perlocutionary Act: It inspired national pride and unity and strengthened collective determination, showing the youth are ready to fight for democracy and justice.

Implicature

Maxim of quantity and maxim of quality are violated in this slogan.

Maxim of Quantity: This slogan is very brief and symbolic. It doesn't specify the actual context whether it is suggesting comparison or showing similarities between these two, how Gen Z and freedom fighters are related. Audiences must have historical knowledge to understand the intended meaning of this slogan. Maxim of Quality: Gen Zs and freedom fighters are not the same. The fighter of 1971 fought for the independence of Bangladesh, while 2024's movement was done for the reformation only.

Implicature: Gen Z has inherited the spirit of 1971- they are the new freedom fighters who will liberate the nation once again from oppression, corruption and injustice.

পানি লাগবে পানি? (Do you need water, water?)

This slogan was created as a heart-wrenching cry during the 2024 movement in Bangladesh, remembering the tragic death of Mir Mahfuzur Rahman Mugdho. Mugdho was a freelancer, student, and a devoted activist of the quota reform movement. He was shot dead by police while he was distributing water to fellow protesters amid intense heat and chaos. The slogan “Do you need water, water?” became a collective expression of mourning.



Speech Act Analysis

Locutionary Act: Literally, this is just a question-asking someone if he/she wants water or not.

Illocutionary Act: This slogan functioned as an expressive illocutionary act.

Expressive Act: In this slogan, the protesters were not merely requesting water, rather they were expressing sorrow and accusation through the same words that Mugdho said before his death. It functioned as a collective cry of loss. Also, this slogan expressed anger against the brutality of the regime.

Perlocutionary Act: As a perlocutionary act, this slogan worked to affect the listeners emotionally. This emotional impact helped to increase public support. This intensified the movements more and created more pressure on the authorities.

Implicature

This slogan flouts the maxims of relation and quantity to convey the implied meanings.

Maxim of Relation: The slogan appears irrelevant to politics on the surface. It's a simple question asking someone if he/she wants water or not.

Maxim of Quantity: Less information is provided than the needed information. If more information were added to this slogan, listeners can understand this without contextual knowledge. However, contextual information is needed to understand this slogan.

Implicature: This slogan expresses mourning and accusation, simultaneously turning sorrow into resistance.

লংমার্চ টু ঢাকা

(Long March to Dhaka)

Coordinators of the 2024 political movement announced Long March to Dhaka on 6 August 2024. They called on protesters and civilians nationwide to march toward the capital of Bangladesh (Dhaka) and participate in civil disobedience. Asif Mahmud, coordinator of the anti-discrimination



student's movement, announced that the date of long march to Dhaka had been rescheduled to 5 August, instead of 6 August. Coordinators encouraged everyone to march toward the Ganabhaban and Prime Minister's office. Same day, at around 3:00 p.m., Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled to India.

Speech Act Analysis

Locutionary Act: Literally, this slogan is a call for a journey to the capital Dhaka. 'Long March' refers to a lengthy journey on foot and 'Dhaka' is the capital of Bangladesh, the political center and a seat of government.

Illocutionary Act: This slogan functioned as a directive illocutionary act. It urged action, motivating people to participate in the march and resist the government.

Perlocutionary Act: The perlocutionary act is the consequence of the slogan has on those who hear it. After hearing this slogan, people were motivated to physically march toward the Dhaka and strengthened a sense of unity among protesters. It created strong psychological pressure and fear among the authorities and as a result, the Prime Minister resigned from her power and fled to India.

Implicature

Implied meaning is conveyed violating the maxims of quantity and manner.

Maxim of Quantity: This slogan is short and provides very little information about context. It leaves out details of timing (when the long march to Dhaka is announced), outcome (what is the expected outcome or goal) and how it is relevant to 2024 movement etc. Audiences understood the meaning by shared knowledge and context.

Maxim of Manner: This slogan is in English, and the term "long march" is tough for many people to understand. As people from all over the country participated in this movement, slogans should



be created in a way that everyone can understand the intended meaning. But long march to Dhaka is tough enough to interpret by many people of Bangladesh and so it violates the maxim of manner. Implicature: Citizens must unite in Dhaka to defy authoritarian power and participate in a collective struggle to bring political change.

সংলাপ শুরুতে করতে হয়,

লাশ পড়ার পর করতে হয় পদত্যাগ।

(Dialogue should be done at the beginning,

After death only resignation remains.)

This slogan emerged on 3 August 2024, when Prime Minister invited coordinators to Ganabhaban for dialogue or conversation and her goal of the invitation was to stop the protest through negotiations. But the coordinators, including protesters from all over the country, rejected the offer, citing police violence, brutality and deaths of many protesters.

Speech Act Analysis

Locutionary Act: According to the literal meaning, this slogan suggests that dialogue should happen at the beginning, before happening a violence or death. But after deaths occur, negotiation is no longer relevant; the government must step down.

Illocutionary Act: This slogan functioned both declarative and directive illocutionary functions.

Declarative: This slogan declared a truth about political responsibility. This slogan declared that violence had escalated the situation, making negotiation irrelevant and frames resignation as a justified response.

Directive: This slogan indirectly commanded the government to resign, because negotiation is no longer viable.



Perlocutionary Act: It pressurized the government to resign, signaling the dialogue offers are meaningless now.

Implicature

This slogan violates the maxim of quantity.

Maxim of Quantity: The slogan is short and contrastive. It provides less information than what is needed to describe the situation. It leaves out all details about how many died, who killed, who refused dialogue or why.

Implicature: Early dialogue could have saved lives; now, the only political and moral action left is resignation.

#StepDownHasina

This slogan emerged during the final stage of the 2024 movement in Bangladesh. At this time, earlier demands (including reform, dialogue or justice) had condensed into one ultimate demand, and that is the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Hashtag slogans were widely used during the movement to gain both national and international attention. This slogan appeared widely on social media, symbolizing a unified call for regime change.

Speech Act Analysis

Locutionary Act: The literal meaning of the hashtag is very clear:

“Sheikh Hasina must resign.”

It's not metaphorical, rather protesters straightforwardly convey the protester's demand.

Illocutionary Act: This slogan functioned as a directive illocutionary act. It was a command directed at Sheikh Hasina and her government, expressing zero tolerance for further delay or dialogue and only immediate resignation is acceptable.



Perlocutionary Act: This hashtag created political pressure on authorities and signals that the Prime Minister's authority has collapsed morally. This slogan also helped to gain international awareness and visibility, which created more pressure on government figures.

Implicature

Using Grice's maxims, the slogan's power lies in its intentional violation of conversational norms-quantity maxim.

Maxim of Quantity: Too little information is provided in this slogan. It doesn't explain why the Prime Minister should step down.

Implicature: The government has lost all moral and political legitimacy, and only resignation can restore justice and democracy.

#JulyMassacre

The hashtag #JulyMassacre emerged as a powerful digital symbol following the violent state-led crackdown during the 2024 movement in Bangladesh. Between July 16 and August 5, 2024, hundreds of protesters (mostly students) were killed and thousands of protesters that injured or disappeared in clashes with ruling party affiliates, military and police. According to the United Nations Commissions on Human Rights, the massacre resulted in 650 deaths from 16 July to 11 August 2024. In an interview, M Sakhawat Hossain, Home Affairs Adviser, indicated that the actual death toll may be close to 1000. The slogan #JulyMassacre was first used on social media to expose state violence and to document the brutality. Later, it became a collective name for this tragic chapter in Bangladesh's political history.

Speech Act Analysis

Locutionary Act: The literal meaning of "July massacre" refers to the mass killing of protesters that occurred in July. It highlights the violence of police and political parties of July 2024.



Illocutionary Act: This slogan performed a directive illocutionary act. It implicitly called for justice and international investigation. It requested the global community, UN, and human rights organizations to recognize the massacre and hold perpetrators accountable.

Perlocutionary Act: It attracted international condemnation and intervention. It also pressurized the government by demanding justice and accused the government of being responsible for the massacre.

Implicature

This slogan used minimal words, lacking required information to explain the actual situation or context. But it doesn't provide necessary information regarding who is responsible for this massacre, what steps should be taken and what the actual situation is. So, this slogan flouts the maxim of quantity.

Implicature: The government is responsible for the killing of protesters, and this tragedy must be remembered and condemned as a crime against humanity.

#RedForJustice

On 30 July 2024, during the height of the Bangladesh quota reform and anti-authoritarian movement, the government declared a national mourning day to honor those killed in state violence. People rejected this official gesture, seeing it as hypocrisy, since protesters think that the same government was responsible for the deaths. In response, people across the country and abroad changed their social media profile picture to red and used the hashtag #RedForJustice-turning red, indicating the color of blood of July martyrs.

Speech Act Analysis

Locutionary Act: Literally, this slogan means that protesters used red to stand for justice.



Illocutionary Act: This slogan functioned as an expressive illocutionary act. It was expressive because its main function was to convey the speaker's emotions and moral stance. It also expressed the protester's rejection of false mourning. This slogan expressed anger and deep sorrow against state brutality. The color of red symbolizes blood and sacrifice, while "justice" conveys the collective demand for accountability.

Perlocutionary Act: This slogan encouraged people to change their profile picture to show collective support. It rejected the state's mourning announcement as hypocritical, which created pressure on authorities, and they understood that protesters are now uncontrollable. It motivated external actors to speak against depression.

Implicature

This slogan suggested an implied meaning by flouting the maxims of quantity and manner.

Maxim of Quantity: Very minimal words are used in this slogan with a strong symbolic meaning.

According to its literal meaning, red is used for justice. But why red is used, what does it mean, why justice is not ensured, what steps need to be taken to ensure justice etc. required information are absent here, violating the maxim of quantity.

Maxim of Manner: Information is not provided in a straightforward way. Understanding the figurative meaning of "red" may be difficult for many people.

Implicature: People's red protest represents the mourning and moral fight for justice.

Both the speech act functions and implicature patterns reflect how Gen Z protesters use language as an interactive and performative tool for social meaning-making. Gen Z's slogans are not simply linguistic artifacts but social actions, expressing shared stances, constructing relationships, and negotiating power. The linguistic creativity and pragmatic strategies employed by Gen Z articulate



both identity and resistance, Showcasing how language functions as a vehicle of generational voice and collective agency in 2024 youth-led movement.

Conclusion and Implications

This study demonstrates that protest slogans function as complex pragmatic units in which meaning is both performed and implied. Through the interaction of illocutionary force and implicature, slogans do not merely convey messages but enact resistance, mobilize participants, and encode context-dependent meanings. Their interpretation relies heavily on shared socio-political knowledge, highlighting the inherently contextual nature of meaning in protest discourse. These findings reinforce the analytical value of slogans within pragmatics and Critical Discourse Studies, while also illustrating the continued relevance of speech act theory and Gricean implicature in examining real-world political language. More broadly, the study shows how explicit and implicit meanings work together as strategic resources in contexts of power and resistance, opening pathways for further research into political discourse and meaning-making practices.



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