

MEDIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF DISTRICT RECONCILIATION COMMITTEE'S DECISIONS IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examines how authority, justice, and reconciliation are constructed through language in the written decisions of District Reconciliation Committee (DRC) in Adenzai, District Dir Lower, and Pakistan. The sample decisions fifty out of a total of one hundred decisions from the DRC were analyzed through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Speech Act Theory, leading to the study of the associated linguistic patterns and their roles in conflict resolution at the local level. The decisions were concerning arguments over real estate, monetary disputes, family matters, dowries, inheritance, and neighborhood troubles. The research brought out the presence of five main types of speech acts, namely: directives, commissives, declarations, assertives, and expressives. Directives and declarations were by far the most frequent, revealing the control of the elders. Meanwhile, the combination of categories, commissives, and expressives contributed to the process of reconciliation and the establishment of social harmony. CDA also indicated that formulaic expressions were used frequently, with references to mutual consent playing the most important role in legitimizing the decisions and emphasizing that the parties agreed willingly to the decision made. The findings imply that the decisions of the DRC function not only as legal verdicts but also as discourses intimately embedded in the community's culture. These discourses are still practiced, albeit silently, as they affirm the community's values and the nonviolent resolution of conflicts.

Keywords: District Reconciliation Committee, Critical Discourse Analysis, Speech Act Theory, linguistic strategies, mediation, Pakistan.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Conflict and conflict resolution in organisations have been a significant part of human societies from time immemorial. Communities from tribal councils to modern legal systems have developed various ways to resolve disputes, uphold social solidarity, and adjudicate justice. In present times, while state judicial institutions provide formal, structured avenues for dispute settlement, informal and community-based mechanisms have continued to play an important role, particularly in rural areas and culturally cohesive societies (Moore, 2014; Lederach, 1995). Such mechanisms tend to rely not only on legal framework but also on culturally dominant norms, communal authority, and standard language-based practices to mediate conflict.

One of those mechanisms in Pakistan is the District Reconciliation Committee, created under the Police Order of 2002. The DRC were established to lessen the load on the formal

courts and provide options for resolving disputes that are accessible, locally rooted, and grounded in alternative ways. Each committee usually includes venerated community elders (Masharan) who mediate disputes on lands, inheritance, loans, dowries, family quarrels, and neighbourhood conflicts. Their decision has legal status but is culture-bound, combining both elements of state law with traditional Jirga-style mediation. This mixed trait gives the DRC a particular position in Pakistan's justice system because they are semi-formal establishments that merge legal power with community power. The function of DRC in Pakistan must be comprehended from a wider legal and cultural point of view. DRC (Dispute Resolution Centers) offer a quicker, more culturally familiar, and community-backed solution to the formal courts, which are usually busy, expensive, and hard to reach in most rural areas. Their legitimization comes from the approval of state law and the social trust of the communities. The elders (masharan) have moral authority, and their collectively given opinions are very influential in the local circumstances.

Unlike the adversarial courtroom, where the focus is on evidence, argument, and legal precedent the DRC are not concerned with these areas. They facilitate conciliation, dialogue, and mutual agreement among the parties in disagreement. The result is not only the victory of the winner, who can claim the prize, but also the defeat of the loser, who is eternally never to be recognized. It seeks to heal and restore social relationships and balance to the community. Language, therefore, is the crux of this decision-making process regarding how justice, authority, and reconciliation are brought into being. DRC legitimise these speech acts and discursive patterns, along with specific formulaic expressions, to create neutralities and internalise socio-cultural values of harmony and respect.

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To examine the language and discourse used in DRC decisions by applying the key discursive and rhetorical strategies for conflict resolution and mediation in Adenzai, District Dir Lower.
2. To analyze how DRC discourse constructs social authority, legitimacy, and reconciliation through language.
3. To explore the cultural and institutional contexts that influence the linguistic practices of DRC decision-making.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How does District Reconciliation Committee in Adenzai use language to mediate and resolve conflicts?
2. What discursive strategies are employed in DRC decisions to construct authority, legitimacy, and reconciliation?
3. How do cultural and institutional factors shape the discourse of DRC decision-making?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research has proven that language functions as an instrument which influences how people resolve conflicts and conduct justice proceedings. The judicial system faces two major challenges when its access becomes too complicated or when it becomes completely overwhelmed thus requiring community-based mechanisms to handle these situations and their institutional language determines their authority. The District Reconciliation Committee (DRC) in Pakistan serves as a mechanism which uses cultural-based dialogue to resolve conflicts. The research on reconciliation and justice through CDA and Speech Act Theory has been conducted to analyze their discursive presentation (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2008; Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969).

The DRC use standardized statements to confirm their decisions as a common practice. People usually state " *باہمی رضامندی سے فیصلہ ہوا* " (The decision was made with mutual consent)" when they need to make choices. The combination of these features gives DRC a unique position within Pakistan's judicial institutions because they possess authority from both legal and community sources. The DRC's function in Pakistan represents a significant case study that combines legal and cultural aspects. The DRC function as the most suitable alternative to official courts because they provide fast and culturally sensitive community-backed dispute resolution services to rural areas where official courts remain inaccessible due to high costs and overcrowding. The DRC obtain their authority through legal backing from the government and the support of their community members. The elders (*masharan*) function as representatives of the entire community to present collective opinions which hold substantial influence in their local area (Ramzan et al., 2020; Ramzan & Khan, 2024 a,b).

The DRC operates differently from adversarial courtrooms because they focus on party reconciliation instead of evidence and legal precedents. The DRC does not follow this approach. The judges in this case make decisions while simultaneously working to build understanding and communication between all parties involved. The winning party receives their reward but the losing party faces permanent defeat and loses all recognition. The institutional discourse according to Van Dijk creates the illusion of consensus to hide power imbalances between parties. Pakistani scholars who studied *jirgas* and *panchayats* have demonstrated that traditional language patterns and repetitive customs function as discursive tools which strengthen elder authority (Ali, 2018; Khan, 2020). Research indicates that community-based justice discourse can perpetuate social inequalities and silence marginalized voices and hide oppositional views (Merry, 2006; Santos, 2019).

Research shows that language stands as the essential element for conflict resolution throughout all types of dispute resolution settings including courts and parliaments and community-based committees. The research contributes to existing knowledge by revealing how DRC's decisions in rural Pakistan achieve reconciliation through standardized expressions and directives and declarations and commissives and expressives. The research expands worldwide studies of legal and mediation discourse by showing how native language practices in this specific context maintain social peace while validating institutional control.

2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis which Fairclough (1995) established has undergone development through van Dijk (2008) to show that language functions as social practice which both displays and constructs power dynamics and organizational frameworks and cultural beliefs. The fundamental principle of CDA states that all discourse contains inherent bias because it operates within social environments to establish legitimacy for dominant groups and societal power structures (Khan et al., 2017; Ramzan et al., 2021). The three interconnected levels of CDA analysis include:

1. **Textual level** – decision texts undergo analysis to examine their vocabulary and grammatical structure and organizational patterns.
2. **Discursive practice** – The research examines how texts move from creation to distribution and interpretation.
3. **Social practice** – The discourse receives its context from power dynamics which exist between culture and institutions.

The DRC elders reached their decision through mutual agreement between both parties as stated in " *ڈی آر سی مشران نے فریقین کی باہمی رضا مندی سے فیصلہ کیا* " (The DRC elders decided with

the mutual consent of both parties). The rhetorical strategies embedded in these expressions function to show both the intentions behind fairness and agreement and to validate decisions through cultural norms that most people accept. The local judicial system benefits from CDA analysis which reveals power dynamics through linguistic patterns that support the DRC's position in the system.

2.2 Speech Act Theory

Speech Act Theory emerged from Austin's work (1962) which Searle (1969) expanded upon. Language functions beyond incident description because it enables people to execute actual actions. According to Austin three types of speech acts exist: locutionary acts represent the spoken words and illocutionary acts stem from speaker intentions which include commands and declarations and perlocutionary acts result in audience transformation. Searle established five categories of speech actions which include directives and commissives and declarations and assertives and expressives. The mediation process of DRC decisions heavily depends on speech acts as their fundamental component. Examples include:

- a) **Directives:** The parties receive directives through statements which order them to execute specific actions as shown in "فريق اول ایک ماہ کے اندر بقایا رقم ادا کرے گا" ("Party 1 shall pay the remaining amount within one month").
- b) **Declarations:** The declarations in this context refer to agreements about property transfers which modify legal or social positions.
- c) **Commissives:** The parties make promises through commissives which state that future conflicts will not occur.
- d) **Expressives:** Expressives serve as expressions of gratitude which appear during reconciliation to indicate the dispute resolution completion. The Speech Act Theory enables researchers to show how specific utterances function as performative tools which lead to agreement creation and social relation transformation and obligation enforcement during mediation.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research employed qualitative methods to study how authority and legitimacy and reconciliation appear in District Reconciliation Committee's written judgments from Adenzai District Dir Lower in Pakistan. The research uses critical discourse analysis together with Speech Act Theory to evaluate how DRC decisions are expressed through language. The research design uses qualitative methods because it seeks to uncover deep meanings and cultural elements and social practices which generate and use discourse. The quantitative research design depends on numerical data collection methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The research examines how the District Conciliation Committee (DCC) located in Adenzai District Dir Lower Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan handles its referral decisions. The DRC function as community-based semi-formal institutions which use elder authority together with mutual consent to resolve disputes. The research team retrieved fifty written decisions from official DRC records. The research included various types of disputes for evaluation. The disputes included conflicts about real estate properties and buildings together with financial disagreements and dowry payments and inheritance matters and personal disputes and neighborly arguments.

3.2 Sampling Technique

The DRC made their decisions through a purposeful sampling approach. The research method of purposive sampling works exclusively in qualitative studies because it selects cases which provide maximum relevant information for the research goals (Patton, 2015). The selection criteria were:

- The decisions were recorded between 2019 and 2024.
- The cases involved various types of disputes which included property issues and financial matters and family disputes and social conflicts.
- The decisions needed to be complete and signed and contain enough linguistic content for discourse analysis.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher obtained necessary authorization from local authorities to access DRC documentation. The researcher obtained DRC documents through physical visits to their office where they examined their archived records. The researcher obtained fifty written decisions through photocopied documents and verbatim transcriptions for analysis purposes. The researchers protected participant confidentiality through decision anonymization by removing all personal details and names from the documents. The researchers organized the collected documents by dispute type while following a chronological order.

3.4 Conceptual Framework

The research examines how language functions as a mediator in conflicts and how it establishes legitimacy while promoting reconciliation in DRC decisions. The research implements two essential linguistic and social theories which include Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Speech Act Theory to achieve its objectives. The two analytical frameworks present separate yet harmonious perspectives about how language structures and communicative actions affect the informal justice systems operating in Adenzai District Dir Lower Pakistan.



Fig 3.1: Conceptual Framework of CDA and Speech Act Theory

The researchers developed this conceptual framework through Fairclough's (1995) Critical Discourse Analysis model and Searle's (1969) Speech Act Theory framework which proved suitable for District Reconciliation Committee decision analysis.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The data were analyzed step by step according to the six steps proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Initially, DRC decisions of fifty cases were read multiple times enabling the reader to discover the judges' language patterns, political bias and cultural references. This multi-faceted reading brought out the local situation due to the signalling of the lexical items and expressions, by which dignity, might and consensus amongst the people was signified. During the next stage, codes were assigned to the most significant linguistic units from the previous stage. These were recurring phrases, formulaic sayings, and certain speech acts. The codes reflected the meaning of the social statement that conveyed an idea or act of communicate. In the third step, the initial codes are organized into broader categories, reflective of the ideas that emanated from the data. These include authority, consensus, justice, cultural values and reconciliation. The fourth step involved reviewing and refining themes that captured the patterns in the data and demarcating the themes from one another. The fifth step involved a careful definition and name giving of the theme, establishing its linguistic and cultural metrics. In "Authority," there was recognition of the elders' rights; in "Consensus," implicit community backing of choice was reached. Ultimately, the investigators made annotations and conclusions about the results by selecting statements from the DRC rulings that most closely illustrated the different topics. Critical Discourse Analysis was the approach under which legitimation strategies, cultural integrating, and reconciliation framing were studied. Meanwhile, Speech Act Theory provided the potential to identify and interpret directives, commissives, declarations, assertives, and expressives. The combined way of analysis provided a wholesome understanding of the double role of language as a communicative act and a technique of social regulation. Analysis by hand was intentionally chosen so that it remains closely involved with the detail of language and the cultural subtlety of the Urdu expressions that the automated analytical software perhaps could not have understood.

4.1 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fifty documented decisions by the District Reconciliation Committee (DRC) of Adenzai, District Dir Lower, are the qualitative source of the findings that are presently undergoing analysis in this section. Further analysis by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Speech Act Theory ensued for the purpose of investigating how the conflict resolution and mediation have discursively framed processes of enactment. Findings have been listed thematically and show just a few sampled excerpts from the data in the original Urdu, further duplicated in movement-meaning translations in English.

4.1.1 Speech Acts in the Decisions

Speech Act Theory analysis produced five primary categories which were identified in the study.

- **Directives:** The parties received most of their instructions through directives which required them to execute specific actions. The following example demonstrates this directive:

”فریق اول ایک ماہ کے اندر بقایا رقم ادا کرے گا“

("Party.1 shall repay the outstanding amount within one month.")

The DRC exercises its authority as an arbitrator through this directive to enforce compliance from the parties involved.

- **Commissives:** Besides the directives the parties made frequent use of commitments which function as promises. For example:

فریق دوم نے وعدہ کیا کہ وہ آئندہ جھگڑے سے اجتناب کرے گا۔

(“Party 2 promised that he would refrain from future disputes.”)

The disputing parties develop trust and accountability through these commissives.

- **Declarations:** The settlement process relied on declarations as its primary method to execute the agreement. For example:

ڈی آر سی مشران نے فیصلہ دیا کہ زمین فریق اول کے حوالے کی جائے۔

(“The DRC elders declared that the land be handed over to Party 1.”)

The use of language serves as the direct tool which establishes binding social and legal consequences.

- **Assertives:** The statements included acknowledgments and admissions which functioned as assertives. For example:

فریق اول نے قرض لینے کا اعتراف کیا۔

(“Party 1 admitted taking the loan.”)

The use of assertives strengthens evidence and helps determine facts in dispute resolution.

- **Expressives:** The final statements of arguments contained expressives which served to demonstrate reconciliation and gratitude. To give an instance:

“فریقین نے مشران کا شکریہ ادا کیا۔”

(“The parties thanked the elders.”)

The conflict resolution process ends with expressives which restore social peace between parties.

The elders used their language mainly for commanding and performing actions. The other participants used commissives and expressives to show their willingness to reconcile and follow the decisions.

4.1.2 Emergent Themes from the Discourse

Theme 1. Authority and Legitimacy of Elders :

The elders maintained their position as the highest authority through their continuous use of the slogan “ڈی آر سی مشران نے فیصلہ دیا” The repeated use of this phrase translated as “The DRC elders decided” established the seniors as the absolute decision-makers in every situation. Through this speech pattern the elders gained legitimacy while demonstrating their ability to remain impartial in their mediation role.

Theme 2: Consensus and Mutual Agreement

The parties involved in the decision-making process always stated “باہمی رضامندی سے ” فیصلہ ہوا

(“The decision was made with mutual consent”). The statement validated the ruling while creating a peaceful atmosphere because it presented the outcome as essential for both sides to accept.

Theme 3: Justice and Fairness

The two essential elements of justice and fairness stood as the most vital aspects which guided all communication processes.

" The following statement demonstrates this principle:

شرعی اصولوں کے مطابق زمین تقسیم کی جائے گی ("The land shall be divided according to Sharia principles.").

Through its references to religious and moral values the DRC established itself as a judicial body which delivered justice while protecting the rights of people during that period.

Theme 4: Cultural and Traditional Values

The decisions were carried out with the conventional philosophies of the Pashtun culture that supported community-based justice as opposed to the formal courts. The cultural factor of the mediation process was revealed by the use of words associated with the elders wisdom and the reconciliation tradition.

Theme 5: Social Harmony and Reconciliation

The promise of peace of the DRC and the intentions of ensuring no future disputes were constantly highlighted. For instance:

“فریقین نے وعدہ کیا کہ آئندہ صلح کے ساتھ معاملات طے کریں گے”
 (“The parties assured each other that they would decide matters in the future amicably.”)

This shows that the DRC has a larger place in the region of advancing peace and fraternity.

4.1.3 Patterns in Types of Disputes

Thematically based classification of conflicts revealed:

- Disputes consumed the most (about 40) portion of it; were concerning property and heredity.
- Approximately 30 percent were disputes on financial matters comprising of loans, rents and business disagreements.
- The litigation were approximately 20 percent about the problems related to family like dowry and dower.
- The least frequent were social disputes (10%), which were water, shared boundaries, and neighborhood disputes..

Based on the findings, authoritative speech acts (directives and declarations) inform the language of DRC decisions and such a strategy is discursively justified by a mutual consent knowledge strategy. This therefore illuminates on this issue. The DRC opined that justice is not punishment but a way to restore social peace and balance.

Linguistic Strategy	Category (CDA / Speech Act)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Mutual consent formula (e.g., “باہمی رضامندی سے” “فیصلہ ہوا”)	CDA – Legitimation strategy	38	76.0
Directives (e.g., payment instructions)	Speech Act – Directive	32	64.0
Declarations (e.g., property transfer)	Speech Act – Declaration	21	42.0
Expressives (e.g., thanking elders)	Speech Act – Expressive	18	36.0
Cultural references & proverbs	CDA – Cultural embedding	15	30.0
Reconciliation framing phrases	CDA – Consensus building	27	54.0

Table 1: Frequency of Linguistic Strategies in DRC Decisions (N = 50)

(Note) Percentages are based on the total number of DRC decisions analyzed (N = 50).

Type of Dispute	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Property and land issues	17	34.0
Loan and financial matters	10	20.0
Family and domestic issues	8	16.0
Dowry and inheritance	6	12.0
Neighborhood conflicts	5	10.0
Miscellaneous	4	8.0

Table 2: Types of Disputes Resolved by DRC in Adenzai (N = 50)

(Note. Percentages are based on the total number of cases reviewed (N = 50).

Speech Act Type	Example from Decisions	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Directives	“فریق اول ایک ماہ کے اندر بقایا ”رقم ادا کرے گا	32	64.0
Declarations	“زمین فریق اول کے حوالے کی جائے	21	42.0
Commissives	“آئندہ اس معاملے میں کوئی ”تنازعہ پیدا نہیں ہوگا	16	32.0
Assertives	Statements verifying facts during mediation	12	24.0
Expressives	“فریقین نے مشران کا شکریہ ادا کیا	18	36.0

Table 3: Distribution of Speech Act Types in DRC Decisions

Note. Speech acts were identified using Austin (1962) and Searle's (1969) classification.

CDA Theme	Description	Frequency
Legitimation through consent	Using mutual agreement language to justify decisions	38
Cultural embedding	Use of proverbs, religious or communal references	15
	Repeated use of the collective elder identity to assert decision-making power	33
Reconciliation framing	Discursive emphasis on harmony, peace, and restoration of relations	27

Table 4: Major Discursive Themes in DRC Decisions

(Note. CDA themes were identified through thematic coding based on Fairclough (1995).

Theme 1: Authority and Legitimacy of Elders

The other important linguistic structure is the repetition formula of:

ڈی آر سی مشران نے فیصلہ دیا

("The DRC elders decided"), linguistic position of the one in control. It was discovered that 42 percent of the decisions involved declarative speech acts which once changed into binding agreements by performative utterances as in the case of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). The cultural and social authority of the pronouncements by the elders of DRC resolutions is equal

to the words of the judges in the legal courts. Such decisions are taken through the acceptance and authority of the cultural customs, and not through the enforcement of the state law (Yousaf, 2021). This duality of consideration as such is given space to be able to capture the hybrid functionality of DRC mediation.

Theme 2: Consensus and Mutual Agreement

Keeping "The decision was mutually consented" in closure appeared in 76% of cases (Table 1), and, therefore, it turned into a disguised linguistic tactic and a significant co-construction of meaning process, which the majority of the facilitators supported. Conceptualization is created in the decision making process as explained by Van Dijk (2008), in which the consensus decision is then seen to be collective and voluntary. In addition, it was found that in 32 percent of the decisions (Table 3) the parties proceeded by the promises that were to bind them to future actions (Searle, 1969), e.g., the promises to comply or to keep peace. In real sense, Conley and O Barr (1990) discovered that agreement is more emphasized in mediation discourse as opposed to adversative argumentation. Concisely, any formulas of consensus have the legitimizing consequences as well as social enforcement due to the common future expectations of the community.

Theme 3: Justice and Fairness

The reference to religious and moral principles, such as for

"زمین شرعی اصولوں کے مطابق تقسیم کی جائے گی"

"The land shall be divided according to Sharia principles" laid down justice and fairness in the discussion. 76% of decisions according to a study, the most common strategies which the judges applied in their decision-making (4 out of 5) were legitimation strategies where the most common was the reference to the Sharia or cultural norms (cf. Table 1).

According to CDA, the discursive practices will always exist with the ruling ideologies (Fairclough, 2013). By this, the DRC appeals to common religious and moral values and ensures its decisions are perceived as unbiased and just. This follows Ali (2018), who believes that, as stipulated by the Sharia, mobilization is the effective means to raise the compliance rate with the informal justice systems. In comparison to the formal system of the law, DRC uses a culturally founded language.

Theme 4: Cultural and Traditional Values

According to van Dijk (2006), the decisions in it are 30 percent based on culture and sayings, demonstrating that the Pashtun origins are linguistically incorporated in the mediation practice. This supports the idea that discourse reinforces cultural ideology (Nawaz et al., 2021). The actions of gratitude and promise are consistent with Pashtunwali, the customary code that prioritizes community harmony, honor, and respect. The use of language to uphold informal forms of governance in Pakistan and Afghanistan is another similarity between jirga and shura practices (Wardak, 2020; Yousaf, 2021). Therefore, the DRC is more of a cultural organization that provides traditional standards than it is a place for mediation (Bhutto & Ramzan, 2021; Ramzan & Javaid, 2025).

Theme 5: Social Harmony and Reconciliation

The punitive aspect of the DRC decision is of lesser priority to the reconciliatory. Speech acts that convey feelings and commitments made (36% and 32%, respectively; Table 3) proved to be helpful in establishing the groundwork of the peace that explains the future orientation. As an illustration, "فریقین نے وعدہ کیا کہ آئندہ صلح کے ساتھ معاملات طے کریں گے" ("The parties promised that future issues will be resolved in a friendly manner") plays an important role in regards to the joint social responsibility.

The reconciliation as it is observed in (Lederach, 2003) is simply a matter of changing the type of relationship. Communal peace is enhanced when the formula of reconciliation is used because one party will not just yield to the other but rather builds and establishes a union out of mutual understanding (Fairclough, 2010). DRC discourse views resolution of disputes as joint peace building unlike adversarial court systems, which result in losers and winners.

The whole scenario as presented by the data suggests that the DRC's decisions were communicated in a neutral, just, and cooperative manner that was highly compatible with the cultures and focused on promoting peace. The use of cultural embedding and mutual consent as discursive and reinforcement tactics to the declaratory and commissive speech acts validates the DRC's declarations. Tables 1-4, which show the distribution of linguistic patterns across the many categories of disputes, explain why the DRC stands out for having a unique legal and cultural authority. The results show that language is a key mediating factor in traditional mediation, which is supported by the fields of peace studies and applied linguistics. The DRC model stresses the interaction of orthodox legal discourses and religious, cultural, and communal ideologies, but the discursive approaches are not limited to the DRC context (e.g., Abu-Nimer, 2020; Johnstone, 2018). This strengthens the DRC mediation's credibility both locally and academically.

5. CONCLUSION

The goal of the study was to determine the many ways that the District Reconciliation Committee's (DRC) activities in Adenzai, Dir Lower, discursively depict the mediation and conflict resolution processes. The power of elders, consensus and mutual agreement, justice and equity, cultural and traditional values, and social harmony and reconciliation are among the five theme issues that were identified through the application of the Speech Act Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis.

It was discovered that the DRC discourse mostly uses proclamations and commands to show that they exercise their authority; on the other hand, the process of peace building and harmony maintenance primarily depends on expressive and commissive acts. Instead of using oppositional judgment, the ideology of collaboration is indicated by the frequent demand to explain the basic concept of mutual consent. Furthermore, the DRC mediation is introduced to the socio-cultural frames through the use of cultural and religious references.

The DRC discourse emphasizes peacemaking and reconciliation rather than punishment, demonstrating that justice is linguistically built as a restorative rather than adversarial process. This contributes to the field of applied linguistics, discourse studies, and peacebuilding by highlighting the crucial role that language plays in creating community-based justice.

Overall, the analysis shows that the DRC is a linguistic and cultural institution that blends tradition, ideology, and authority to maintain social order and establishes justice through speech, not only an informal dispute settlement system.

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