

**CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE:
A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS
OF AUNG SAN SUU KYI'S INTERVIEW
ON THE ROHINGYA CRISIS**

THESIS

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**ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LETTERS
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM MALANG
2018**

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2018

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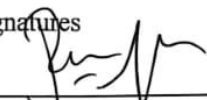


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STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

I state that this thesis, entitled "*Constructing Identity in Political Discourse: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Aung San Suu Kyi's Interview on The Rohingya Crisis*" is truly my original work to accomplish the requirement for the degree of Sarjana Sastra (S.S) at the English Language and Letters Department, Faculty of Humanities, State Islamic University of Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. It does not incorporate any materials previously written or published by another person, except those indicated in quotations and bibliography. As a result, I am the only person responsible for the thesis if there are any objections or claims from others.

Malang, June 27th, 2018



Firmia Lailatul Syakina

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MOTTO

“Once you make a decision, put your trust in Allah”

(Surah Ali Imran, 3:159)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to:

My kindest daddy, Firmansyah

My best mommy, Suminarni

My loveliest brother and sister,

Arga Rai Suminta Rachmansyah

Bachtiar Burhansyah

Dio Ridlo Al-Imansyah

Kareniansyah Revalina Rachma

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All praises to Allah, Lord of the Universe, who has given me inspiration, guidance, and blessings to finish this thesis entitled “*Constructing Identity in Political Discourse: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Aung San Suu Kyi’s Interview on The Rohingya Crisis*”. Peace and salutation be upon the greatest prophet and messenger, Muhammad SAW, who has taught the greatest lecture of Islam as rahmatan lil 'alamin.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my parents for their unwavering support and prayers. Special thanks to my Advisor, Dr. Meinarni Susilowati, for her invaluable guidance in my research, which has greatly impacted me both academically and personally. I also appreciate my supervisor and my friends in the English Letters Department for their support throughout my journey. The life lessons from everyone around me have shaped me into a stronger person. Any remaining errors in this study are my sole responsibility, and I welcome corrections and criticism.

ABSTRACT

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Every human being has a personal identity, which is explicitly related to oneself as an individual, but at the same time, one has a series of group identities. Therefore, as postmodernists have stated, identity is far more complex and negotiated at the individual level. I proposed to examine how the identity reflected in Aung San Suu Kyi's interview utterances represents her political ideology regarding the Rohingya conflict. This study aims to analyze Aung San Suu Kyi's identity as reflected in her interview on the Rohingya crisis.

I gained the data from the Aung San Suu Kyi video interview with Asian News International. I used Omoniyi's (2006) theory of sociolinguistics and identity to identify Aung San Suu Kyi's identity. Moreover, this study applied Omoniyi's (2010) hierarchical conceptual framework of identities to count and establish the numerical order of several identities foregrounded in the interview. As Norton (2010) notes, the qualitative method employed in this study is often used in identity research.

From this study, I revealed that Aung San Suu Kyi represents Myanmar to the world as a nation with a stance to solve its problems, especially the Rohingya crisis. Although she cannot guarantee when this problem will be resolved, she remains optimistic about resolving the issue of the Rakhine people. She is very confident that the system that has been created in Myanmar can reduce crime, which can worsen the atmosphere between Myanmar and the Rakhine people.

Further, this writer expects the next researcher to conduct studies on Aung San Suu Kyi and the Rohingya crisis in the same field of language and identity, and their relation to other aspects of personal life beyond political ideology, for instance, cultural background, national identity, or gender identity. A comparative study may be conducted using other languages and subjects to broaden the research.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the study's background, delineates the problem statements and their objectives, and discusses the scope and limitations. It also highlights the study's significance and describes the research methods employed, including the steps for data collection and analysis. Additionally, key terms are provided to enhance readers' understanding of the research. This chapter provides the background of the study, the statements of the problems with their objectives, the scope and limitations, the significance of the study, the research method, including the steps of data collection and data analysis, and several key terms to help readers understand this study.

1.1 Background of Study

Every human being has a personal identity, which is explicitly related to oneself as an individual, but at the same time, one has a series of group identities. One belongs simultaneously to various social groupings, including familial groups, gender groups, age groups, occupational groups, groups relating to one's geographical origin, social class, educational background, cultural background, and, of course, to one's linguistic community. Membership of these various groups is not mutually exclusive, meaning one can and does belong to several groups at a time.

Identity is a socially and historically constructed concept. Identity emerges through interactions with family, peers, organizations, institutions, media, and other connections in everyday life. As experts define identity in different ways, Ha (2008) argues that the West and the East conceive of identity differently. Western scholars' perception of identity is considered "hybrid and multiple" (p. 64), which means that identity emerges due to the combination of

different types of identity. Hybrid identities represent historical transformations, or identities can change over time. In another way, eastern scholars regard it as a sense of belonging, which means identity is the way of being, an individual self-concept. (Ha, 2008)

Identity is the way we view ourselves and how others view us, and it is inevitably tied to the social contexts from which it arises. It is constructed through a mix of social practices that involve individuals in their daily lives (McAdams, 1985). Norton (2000) describes identity as "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p. 5).

Identity also means the way of life. Kidd (2002) stated that identity is the characteristics of thinking, reflecting, and self-perception held by people in society (p.24). Kidd identified three forms of identity. The first is individual identity, referring to the unique sense of personhood each person has in their own right. The second one is a social identity that represents a collective sense of belonging to a group and a shared sense of commonality with other group members. The last concerns cultural identity, which involves a sense of belonging to a distinct ethnic, cultural, or subcultural group.

A person's identity is multiple, as Sford and Prusak (2005) proposed, with individuals having multiple identities defined by the narratives or stories they tell themselves. They outlined three narrative-defined identities: (1) person identity as told by the person themselves, (2) person identity as told to another person, and (3) person identity told by a third party to a third party. Sford and Prusak (2005, p.18) identified two subsets of identity and narrative: actual identity, consisting of stories about the actual state of affairs, and designated identity, consisting of narratives presenting a state of affairs which, for one reason or another, is expected to be the case, if not now then in the future.

Identity is flexible. Because a person can change their identity in one context, they will present a different identity in each situation. Blommaert (2005) argues that who we are depends on context, occasion, and purpose. As Omoniyi (2000) states in his theory 'Hierarchization of Identity', an identification context may comprise actions with one or more performance moments. Thus, each situation is potentially characterized by multiple positioning acts in which a cluster of identities is invoked and read, but each varies in salience. The most salient identity option in any one moment of performance within a given interactional context is foregrounded through talk and located at the top of a hierarchy of identities.

In summary, from the writer's and scholars' viewpoints, identity is a significant construction in people's way of life, and it is interrelated with language use as an identity marker. Someone might change identity either on the same or different occasions. Thus, these changing and applicable identities will be investigated in this research, as the two identity definitions are relevant to the topic discussed in this paper.

Moreover, this study focuses on sociolinguistics and identity theory, which examines how someone shows their identity through language during a conversation. Paltridge (2006) states that how people display their identities is reflected in how they use language and how they interact with one another. It is constantly constructed and reconstructed as people interact with each other.

I chose Aung San Suu Kyi as the subject because I want to know the identity of the Myanmar State Counselor, when there are so many controversies in this state because of the Rohingya conflict. Rohingya are described as the world's most persecuted people, and 1.1 million Rohingya people live in Myanmar. They live predominantly in Rakhine, where they have co-existed uneasily alongside Buddhists for decades. Rohingya people say they are descendants of Muslims, perhaps Persian and Arab traders, who came to Myanmar generations

ago. In Myanmar, the Rohingya are reviled as illegal immigrants, and they suffer from systematic discrimination. It is interesting to analyze Aung San Suu Kyi's policies for this conflict through her diplomatic language. Moreover, she is a woman State Counsellor who stands out as an individual, whether or not her language reflects gender bias in her political identity.

Previously, some research investigated discourse and identity. The first research by Heilman (1998) examined identity based on social class, influenced by the mass media. Another study by Harman (2005) examined the shaping of worker identities in a large public organization. Third, Wohlwend's (2009) research examined children's identity through Disney princess play. Next, Meinarni Susilowati's (2010) research investigated the teacher identity representation in classroom interactions and identity of students in EFL classes (2012). In the previous research conducted by Nia (2012), the study explored the central political discourse shaping Iranian identity and foreign policy behavior since the Islamic Revolution.

Building on the previous study, this study also focuses on sociolinguistics and identity theory, concerned with personal identity. The different aspects of this study and the previous studies above emphasize the professional or authority aspect of individual identity in Aung San Suu Kyi, as a leader and public figure, in becoming Myanmar's State Counsellor in a social context.

From this study, I identified Aung San Suu Kyi's identity and its representation of her political ideology using Tope Omoniyi's theory of 'Hierarchization of Identity'. (2016, p. 22). Based on Tope Omoniyi's theory, these moments can be approached methodologically in the following ways. First, counting and setting out the numerical order in which several identities are foregrounded in the course of action, similar to event structure as espoused by Bell (1991). Determine the identity in sections of spoken or written text. All the identities encoded are co-

present throughout the situation, but the sections illustrate where particular identities are foregrounded. Some texts may suggest more than one identity - a function of different interpretive cultures. Such situations may produce a cluster of identities. In our discussion, we attempt to explain them, such as a performer's deliberate attempt to create a complex or ambiguous self. Second, dividing action upon a timescale on which identities are then mapped with markings to indicate where a particular identity is first foregrounded and where it is displaced or backgrounded to give prominence to another. Again, there could be a cluster of identities to a period on the scale. Third, shown by shading, when two identities occupy the exact moment. Select a different color or pattern for each identity invoked and shade the time slots as appropriate.

Omoniyi posits that identity is fundamentally fluid, dynamic, and multi-layered, rather than static or monolithic. An individual possesses co-existing facets of identity, but specific social contexts—termed as "moments of identification"—demand that a particular layer of identity be elevated to the apex of the hierarchy. In contrast, other layers are temporarily suppressed or backgrounded to satisfy communicative and institutional demands.

The data for this study were obtained from a video interview conducted on 20th September 2017 between the Asian News International interviewer and the interviewee. The interview provides the combination of features that the subject produces in spoken language, allowing listeners to recognize a sample of speech as belonging to a particular talker and preventing others from reproducing his or her speech patterns precisely. These fundamentals can be seen as marking the subject as unique individuals. In addition, this personal identity is social because the constant variability in language use may be characteristic of a social group

1.2 Research Question

How is Aung San Suu Kyi's identity reflected in the utterances of the interview for representing her political stance on the Rohingya conflict?

1.3 Objective of the Study

This research aimed to understand deeply how Aung San Suu Kyi projects her identity through her utterances in an interview about the Rohingya Crisis.

1.4 Significance of The Study

Considering some gaps found in this study and in previous studies, this study analyzed the identity of Aung San Suu Kyi based on her interview with an Asian News International interviewer about the Rohingya Crisis. Theoretically, this study is expected to develop a theory of language and identity, with a primary focus on political identity. This study explored the political identity of a political leader through an interview, using the utterances in responses to the host's questions. From the utterances, we can identify her identity and her political ideology.

In practice, the contribution is commonly in sociolinguistics, particularly in the study of language and identity. This study contributes to the identity that emerges from linguistic variables, such as utterances, in an interview dialogue. People may recognize a person's identity from particular utterances during an interview or interaction, which contain linguistic and social variables. Furthermore, by investigating identity in an interview, readers or subsequent researchers will certainly examine identity in other forms of social interaction, such as speech, movie dialogue, and media such as magazine articles, newspapers, or fiction.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The writer focuses on how Aung San Suu Kyi projects her identity in a video interview with Asian News International on 20th September 2017 in India about the Rohingya Crisis. The data are obtained from the video scripts documenting her response to her policy on the Rohingya crisis.

1.6 Research Design

I used a qualitative research design for this study. This study is categorized as qualitative because it analyzes Aung San Suu Kyi's utterances from an interview video to examine identity from a sociolinguistic perspective. It is accomplished by describing and understanding language use, which is clarified as Aung San Suu Kyi's identity. It is qualitative because the data does not involve statistical analysis. I used descriptive qualitative data rather than numerical data. The analysis is also described qualitatively.

Moreover, like the qualitative writer, constructivists assert that reality is subjective, arising from the individual perspectives of participants in this study and thus multiple or varied. Tentative or valid conclusions are then constructed from the findings of this study.

1.7 Research Subject

In conducting this study, I attempted to identify utterances from a video interview with Asian News International on 20th September 2017. I chose Aung San Suu Kyi as the object because I wanted to know the identity of the Myanmar State Counselor, when there are so many controversies surrounding this state, due to the Rohingya conflict. From this study, I identified Aung San Suu Kyi's political ideology and the reasons for her policy towards the Rohingya conflict.

1.8 Data Source

The data source for this study is Aung San Suu Kyi's video interview on the Rohingya Crisis with Asian News International. The data was taken from a YouTube link downloader <https://youtu.be/q4O3AreGcYk>. The link to the data provides a trusted source of Aung San Suu Kyi's utterances that help project her identity. The data of this study were the utterances produced by Aung San Suu Kyi. English is used in this video. I chose this video because it contains linguistic features, such as utterances, that signify particular identities of nation, culture, social class, and ideology.

1.9 Research Instrument

The research instrument for this study is the writer herself, who collects and analyzes the research. I watched the video and marked the utterances that signify identity.

1.10 Data Collection and Analysis

To get data and specific findings, I have done several steps. The first step was to gather soft data by downloading a video titled "Aung San Suu Kyi on Rohingya Crisis - Full Interview" (<https://youtu.be/q4O3AreGcYk>). Next, I watched the video to understand the content, then wrote the script. Finally, I analyzed the identity reflected in Aung San Suu Kyi's utterances, which represented her political ideology in the interview. Data gathered from the video interview were analyzed using a numbering system (1, 2, 3, and so forth). It was based on the sequence of appearances. The first step was writing the video script. This step was considered part of the data analysis process, as it allowed me to gain insights into the data.

After the script was well organized, the data were sifted through using the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data from the script's written-up field notes. The writer transcribed Aung San Suu Kyi's conversation in her interview video, which revealed her identity and the way it represented her political ideology.

The second is data display; I organized the information to support the conclusion. In this step, I analyzed Aung San Suu Kyi's utterances to identify her identity based on context. Then, the writer analyzed the data using the conceptual framing of the hierarchy of identities. First, the writer counted and arranged the numerical order, foregrounding several identities in the interview; second, the writer classified identities into several categories in the context. Lastly, the writer defines the identity for each category.

1.11 Definitions of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, I have already defined the terms I used in this research.

1. **Identity representation:** Aung San Suu Kyi's identity from her utterances that project her political ideology. Aung San Suu Kyi's way of speaking reveals her identity through language and her performance in interactions. Her identity symbolizes her characteristics.
2. **Political stance:** Aung San Suu Kyi's views and attitude on politics as the State Counsellor of Myanmar.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides both findings and discussions. The data collected in this research are presented in the findings section. The discussion describes the interrelatedness between the findings of this study and the theoretical framework.

3.1 Findings

The use of language relates to the context of the discussion. Context will influence someone's choice of language. Likewise, through language, someone can project and reflect their identity. This study discusses Aung San Suu Kyi's identity through the utterances from an interview about the Rohingya Crisis in Republic World, 2017. It shows her identity as a human rights activist, Nobel Prize winner, and the current State Counselor of Myanmar.

Therefore, this research focused on analyzing Aung San Suu Kyi's utterances to represent her identity and political ideology. The researcher used 12 excerpts that matched their contexts. The data were coded (1, 2, 3) and placed on each line of a paragraph to make analysis easier, since each utterance might indicate an important aspect of Aung San Suu Kyi's identity. The data analysis was based on the sequence of appearances in the data source.

Excerpt 1

In excerpt 1, the interviewer asked Aung San Suu Kyi what she felt about her political journey in Myanmar several years earlier, and the following interview ensued. First, the interviewer said they felt honored and privileged to interview the Myanmar State Councilor for ANI (Asian News International). The interviewer then describes Aung San Suu Kyi's journey in life as having been converted to one, and that she has mainly been outside the Government up to this point in time. Aung San Suu Kyi has been a champion of democracy,

fighting for human rights and civil liberties. In the last year, she has been facing the same issues across half of the European part of the Government, regarding civil liberties and democracy. The interviewer asked about Aung San Suu Kyi's career prospects. Has it been comfortable or difficult for her? Then she answered:

“Oh, it has been very challenging (1), we always thought that it would be because as you know democracy is not exactly a perfect one because we are working within the framework of a constitution which is not democratic (2) and we always knew it would be a challenge, so challenging but not a surprise (3).”

In excerpt 1, from many stages of her political carrier, as the interviewer mention to Aung San Suu Kyi “*you have been a champion of democracy you fought for human rights you fought for civilian liberties now in the last year and a half of some European part of the government and you are facing the same issues of civil liberties democracy*” means that she projected as an activist who has been fought for humanitarian issues.

She answered, “***Oh, it has been very challenging***” This utterance indicated that Aung San Suu Kyi was already facing numerous challenges in her political life. Then she explained, “***...democracy is not exactly a perfect one because we are working with the framework of a constitution which is not democratic...***”. This utterance indicated that she works in a country that still uses a non-democratic constitutional system. In this case, Aung San Suu Kyi is the state counselor of Myanmar, which has a constitutional framework for federalism, divided into a series of regions, States, 'self-administered' areas, and Union territories. She added, “***so challenging but not a surprise,***” this utterance expresses her uniqueness, that she already understands the condition of her state and the consequences that she overcomes during her political career.

Excerpt 2

In excerpt 2, the interviewer asked Aung San Suu Kyi about her approach to overcoming such issues in the Rohingya/Rakhine and the kinds of issues she has been dealing with. The interviewer stated that the issues had been in the news for the last three weeks. The interviewer wants Aung San Suu Kyi to give her own responses and to describe the issue: whether it is a humanitarian, socio-economic, or something else.

Then she answered:

“It is humanitarian issues which have arisen out of long-term socio-economic problems (4) because the problems of the and political of course in the Rakhine State go back to the 19th century and periodically trouble has broken out there between the Muslim community and the Rakhine community and we have inherited this very complex problem(5)and we have to deal with it(6) and we have to resolve it(7)so obviously it is not something that we can do overnight and it is not something that we can find simple answers to, because building a trust and harmony between two communities that have in many parts of that region is hostile to one another it has not done easily(8) but I say in many parts of the region because there are places in Rakhine where Muslims and Rakhine live in a harmonious way and we want to see why that is possible in some places rather and not in others. (9)

In excerpt 2, Aung San Suu Kyi described the Rohingya crisis from her perspective. ***“It is humanitarian issues which have arisen out of long-term socio-economic problems”*** This utterance indicated that Aung San Suu Kyi assumed the Rohingya Crisis is a societal issue between the Muslims and the Rakhine community in the Rohingya. It is related to her background as an activist in humanitarianism. ***“We have inherited this very complex problem, and we have to deal with it, and we have to resolve it”*** This utterance indicated that Aung San Suu Kyi sees the Rohingya Crisis as an obligation to be solved as if it were a complicated case.

Then she is of ***“it is not something that we can find simple answers to, because building a trust and harmony between two communities that have in many parts of that region is hostile to one another it has not done easily”*** indicated that she is still trying to solve the Rohingya crisis and according to her, one of the ways to make this done is to create peace and

entrustment between Buddhist Rakhine and Moslem Rohingya, which is in this case these two communities are still inhospitable.

Excerpt 3

In excerpt 3, the interviewer discussed the cleanup operation in the Rakhine area, which drew significant criticism. The interviewer asked Aung San Suu Kyi to clarify her statement about Muslim communities in the Rohingya. The interviewer claims that Aung San Suu Kyi used different statements between her speeches in the interviewer's state (India) and Aung San Suu Kyi's State (Myanmar). The interviewer asked why she used Muslim communities to describe ethnic communities in Rakhine instead of the Rohingya people, as she had stated before in Myanmar. Then Aung San Suu Kyi answered.

*“Yes, Becker says been a lot of control say over about the term used to describe the Muslims of Rakhine and they are those who want to call themselves Rohingya, or who want to refer to their the Muslim there as Rohingya, and Rakhine themselves will not use any term except Bengali meaning to say that they're not ethnic of Rakhine and **I think that instead of using this emotive terms this terms have become emotive and highly charged it's better just to say Muslim which is a description that nobody can deny we are talking about the Muslim community in the Rakhine State (10) and other terms may be applied to that community but I do not see any point in using terms with that simply will inflame passions further. (11)**”*

In excerpt 3, the utterance *“**I think that instead of using this emotive term, this terms have become emotive and highly charged, it is better just to say Muslim which is a description that nobody can deny we are talking about the Muslim community in the Rakhine State**”* indicated that Aung San Suu Kyi is loath to mention the Muslims communities in Rakhine using any term as Rohingya. She assumed that this term might cause a sensitive response to particular people, who are the Muslims of Rakhine, and they are those who want to call themselves Rohingya, and Rakhine people who do not want to use any term except Bengali, meaning to say that Muslim people in Rakhine State are not ethnic Rakhine. Therefore, Aung

San Suu Kyi called the Muslims community in Rakhine by saying "Muslims" as their true identity, which anybody can disclaim to avoid the tension in the Rakhine state.

Excerpt 4

In excerpt 4, the interviewer said that people who have completed seen gateman in Myanmar would take its course, and Aung San Suu Kyi will apply the log strictly against anti-social elements to people indulging in violence, such as Rakhine and the Rohingya Salvation Army. Therefore, the interviewer asked whether she had taken any steps in this activity. Then Aung San Suu Kyi answered.

“We have taken action against those who have been found to have broken the law (12) and by the way I think I admitted to answer the first part of your question just now about the clearance operations I think that is what they referring to the clearance operations after armed conflicts that excessive force was used (13), and many people were injured or had to flee or even lost their lives as a result of this clearance operations, we are investigating all these allegation, but you as in India as a common law country you will know that we need the kind of evidence, that will stand up in court before we condemn anybody for a particular act (14), and we have taken people to court if it has been found that they have broken the law (15), all they have overstepped their conduct when they are terribly carrying out their responsibilities, because we have a very strong code of conduct that has been distributed to all our secret security forces and they have been instructed to follow them very closely. (16)”

In excerpt 4, the utterance ***“We have taken action against those who have been found to have broken the law”*** indicates that Aung San Suu Kyi has already attempted to punish people who have broken the law and committed assaults in Rakhine. Then she added, ***“I think I admitted to answering the first part of your question just now about the clearance operations; I think that is what they were referring to the clearance operations after armed conflicts that excessive force was used”*** This utterance explained Aung San Suu Kyi's clarification regarding the clearance operations that the interviewer had asked her about. According to her, this clearance operation is an armed conflict that uses extreme violence, which has injured and killed many people in Rakhine.

She also continued with the statement, "*...but you as in India as a common law country you will know that we need the kind of evidence that will stand up in court before we condemn anybody for a particular act...*" This indirectly revealed her commitment to carefully analyze evidence from many sources before adjudging anyone for a specified action that contravenes the rule of law. After that, she said, "*we have a very strong code of conduct that has been distributed to all our secret security forces, and they have been instructed to follow them very closely*" In this statement, she affirmed her optimism about extinguishing violence in Rakhine through a code of conduct that serves as a directive to all security forces to prevent conflicts.

Excerpt 5

In excerpt 5, the interviewer heard that Aung San Suu Kyi's statement about Myanmar would be ready to take back their population, or close to over half a million people across South Asia. The interviewer asked Aung San Suu Kyi about the Government's verification standards to regulate the population in Rakhine. These verification standards are interrelated, with Myanmar and Bangladesh agreeing to negotiate the Rohingya crisis. Then Aung San Suu Kyi answered.

"I think I do not know what the verification standards are the expression to use, we have had similar repatriations in the past (17), I have the first time that these criteria were established was back in 1993 a criterion on which both Bangladesh and Myanmar agreed, and it is in line with these criteria that we will receive back those who have been displaced from Rakhine(18), but of course, we are not certain of the exact numbers we are ready to start at any time(19)."

The interviewer then asked again about whether the verification standards had been started or not, so Aung San Suu Kyi answered:

"We are ready to start at any time (20)."

In excerpt 5, the utterance "*I think I do not know what the verification standards are the expression to use, we have had similar repatriations in the past*" indicated that Aung San Suu Kyi refused to use 'Verification standards' as a term to describe Myanmar's regulation in

taking back the Rakhine state population, over half a million people across South Asia. She prefers it to be called a repatriation program, which both Bangladesh and Myanmar have agreed on. She continued, "*we will receive back those who have been displaced from Rakhine,*" indirectly indicating that she committed to receiving refugees back to Rakhine state. However, she added, "*we are not certain of the exact numbers we are ready to start at any time,*" which means that she reluctantly gives the specific amount of how many people and when the program will start. She also promises that she is ready to start the program whenever it is, with the statement "*We are ready to start at any time.*"

Excerpt 6

In excerpt 6, the interviewer asked Aung San Suu Kyi about the Advisory Commission headed by Mr. Kofi Annan. The Advisory Commission on Rakhine State was founded in September 2016 as a neutral and impartial body. The Commission was mandated to address the severe and persistent challenges facing Rakhine State, particularly its low socio-economic development, the threats posed by inter-communal tensions, issues of citizenship and freedom of movement, infringements of human rights, and the lack of communal participation and representation. The Government's establishment of the Advisory Commission in 2016 reflected the urgent need to open a new path towards sustainable peace, one that can end the cycle of violence, poverty, and radicalization. The interviewer asked whether she agreed with the committee. Then Aung San Suu Kyi answered:

"We did agree to it, we invited him (21), we invited dr. Kofi Annan to head a commission that we were we believe would help us find out what the fundamental problems in the Rakhine were and how to address those problems, and he has as we know, his Commission has completed its work, and he has already submitted his report.

In excerpt 6, Aung San Suu Kyi's utterance, "*We did agree to it we invited him,*" indicated that she approved the committee headed by Mr. Kofi Annan.

Excerpt 7

In excerpt 7, the interviewer asked Aung San Suu Kyi's reaction to ARSA (Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army) and their relation with Pakistan, such as ISIS and Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Agency, which affect the expatriate people in Rakhine State. The public space and the media space are dominated by the concerns of organizations like ARSA (Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army), which have some influence on the displaced population or Rohingya people in Rakhine, and that, in turn, ARSA also receives some kind of patronage of help from Pakistan or terrorist groups based in Pakistan, as well as the ISIS and the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence Agency. The interviewer asked Aung San Suu Kyi about her response, whether she agrees with that view, and whether any steps are being taken to counter it. Then Aung San Suu Kyi answered:

"Well, counterterrorism is something that we have to take very seriously, and I have to confess that our country has not had very much experience concerning counterterrorism (22), but of course, in India, you have had a lot of experience, and you know that it is a very delicate matter because counterterrorism must be carried out in such a way, that the innocent are not affected, whatever we do we should have we must try to avoid all collateral damage, and all or in any action that would hurt innocent civilians. It is very difficult to counterterrorism because terrorism by its nature means that some of its members are embedded in the ordinary population, and how we distinguish one from the other is very important (23). We do not want to hurt those who are innocent, but at the same time, we have to make sure that terrorists are not allowed to carry on with the activities (24)."

In excerpt 7, Aung San Suu Kyi confesses her opinion about counterterrorism, as in her utterance, *"Well, counterterrorism is something that we have to take very seriously, and I have to confess that our country has not had very much experience concerning counterterrorism"* This statement indicated that she does not have any experience in counterterrorism. She continued, *"It is very difficult to counterterrorism because terrorism by its nature means that some of their members are embedded in the ordinary population, and how we distinguish the one from the other is very important"* this statement indicates that

Aung San Suu Kyi defines terrorism as a serious crime because it is difficult to accuse a terrorist in a community population.

Therefore, she said, "***We don't want to hurt those who are innocent, but at the same time we have to make sure that terrorists are not allowed to carry on with the activities***" from this utterance, we can assume that she has a strong commitment to ensure that she will not be wrong in determining the perpetrators of terrorism.

Excerpt 8

In excerpt 8, the interviewer is sure that, as a Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Aung San Suu Kyi would feel sympathetic toward Myanmar, especially Rakhine state, where many people are facing humanitarian issues. The interviewer asked Aung San Suu Kyi about her perception of the Rohingya crisis, regardless of the political compulsion that might cause her to hesitate to reveal her true feelings about the Rohingya crisis. Then Aung San Suu Kyi answered:

"No, my true feelings are very simple. I want peace and harmony in the Rakhine, and it is not their responsibility; it is not it is all the let's put it the other way around, it is a responsibility of every Government to maintain a position of integrity and fairness. We have to be fair to all communities; we have always maintained that we do not condemn either of the communities (25). We condemn actions that are against the rule of law, that are against the needs the humanitarian needs of all people(26), but we have never condemned communities as such, we have condemned the ARSA (Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army) because we have not declared it officially as a terrorist organization(27), and we condemn all terrorism (28)

In excerpt 8, Aung San Suu Kyi admitted that she does not discriminate between the two communities, which are, in this case, Muslims and Hindus people in Rakhine, as in her utterance, "***we have always maintained this that we do not condemn either of the communities.***" However, her utterance, "***We condemn actions that are against the rule of law, that are against the needs the humanitarian needs of all people,***" indicated that she would punish all actions that break the law and violate human rights.

Then she clarifies the reason behind the extrusion of ARSA (Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army) in Myanmar, as in her utterance, "*we have condemned the ARSA (Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army) because we have not declared it officially as a terrorist organization*" After that, she emphasizes again that she will blast all terrorism, as in her utterance "*we condemn all terrorism.*"

Excerpt 9

In excerpt 9, the Dalai Lama has been a Buddhist in a majority nation. The interviewer said that this month, the Dalai Lama has also expressed concern about what is happening in Rakhine. The Dalai Lama's use of the Buddha's words might have helped those in distress, including Muslims. The interviewer asked about Aung San Suu Kyi's response to the Dalai Lama's statement concerning the phenomena in Rakhine. Then Aung San Suu Kyi answered:

*"Well we're trying doing our best treatment to help all those in distress within the borders of our country, **but making no distinction between Muslims or Hindus in Rakhine (29)**, you know, of course, it's a small Hindu community in Rakhine who were also caught up in the conflict and some of whom were killed."*

In excerpt 9, Aung Sang Suu Kyi said, "*but making no distinction between Muslims or Hindus in Rakhine*" this utterance indicated that she indirectly promised not to discriminate between the Muslim and Hindu communities in Rakhine and to provide equal assistance to both communities.

Excerpt 10

In excerpt 10, the interviewer asked about Aung San Suu Kyi's opinion on the exact solution to the Rohingya Crisis. The solution to the Rohingya crisis lies in socio-economic development and infrastructure development. The interviewer asked whether Aung San Suu Kyi agrees with that view. Then she answered:

“There has to be part of the solution it's not the whole solution, it's not as simple as all that, but certainly social-economic development is a very important part of the solution (30).”

The interviewer then moved on to the next question: Aung San Suu Kyi's opinion on the most amicable solution to end the distress affecting over half a million people in Myanmar.

Therefore, Aung San Suu Kyi answered:

“Well, the most amicable solution would be to promote love and compassion throughout the communities (31), but of course, it may be the most amicable, it may be the most desirable, but it's not necessarily the easiest one to achieve (32). You must know that it's the most difficult thing in the world to make people who are hostile to each other learn to be to open their hearts and to do accept the differences, and make the differences a strength and a bond between them (32). So, while the most amicable and most desirable solution is to create harmony and understanding it's. It's not something that we can create overnight; we have to take charm over this (33).”

In excerpt 10, Aung San Suu Kyi argued that the most amicable solution to the Rohingya crisis is to foster love and sympathy between the Muslim and Buddhist communities in Rakhine, as in her statement, *“Well, the most amicable solution would be to promote love and compassion throughout the communities.”* However, her utterance *“but it is not necessarily the easiest one to achieve”* indicated that she is also struggling with any difficulties in achieving this goal. In the end, she added, *“We have to take charm over this,”* from this utterance, we can see that Aung San Suu Kyi will make an effort to encourage people in Rakhine to respect one another.

Excerpt 11

In excerpt 11, the interviewer asked Aung San Suu Kyi to estimate how long it would take to address the Rohingya crisis. Does this process take a long time or a short time? Then

Aung San Suu Kyi answered:

“No, I don't think we can say this, but I think we have to work at it. No, it's not a matter of how long it's going to take, but when you're going to do it and how you're going to go about it (34), for example concerning humanitarian aid which is very important in a situation like this. We started two days after the attacks on the outpost on the 25th of August on the 27th, our Minister for resettlement early furs was already

in the Rakhine going around the communities that had been affected. The ones that were accessible and doing their best not just to give him a litter and eat in material terms but also to allay the fears and concerns of the peoples in those communities. So we have to work at it all the time and immediately. I think it's a matter of doing everything that you can do from day to day instead of trying to forecast how many days it's going to take. (35)"

In excerpt 11, the utterance “*No, I do not think we can say this, but I think we have to work at it*” indicated that Aung San Suu Kyi obliges to resolve the Rohingya Crisis as soon as possible, as she requires to do it right on the target of what is needed as in her statement “*No, it is not a matter of how long it is going to take, but when you are going to do it and how you are going to go about it.*” She reaffirmed her notion by the utterance, “*I think it is a matter of doing everything that you can do from day to day instead of trying to forecast how many days it is going to take,*” which means that she will be more focused on what kind of aid can be provided and what solutions to reduce the tension that happened in Rohingya crisis, rather than how long she was going to takes to solve the crisis.

Excerpt 12

In excerpt 12, the interviewer asked Aung San Suu Kyi about her opinion on her visit to India to meet the State Counsellor to cope with relations between Myanmar and India. Then she answered

“I always say that the major takeaway from any exchange of visits between countries is a strengthening of understanding and mutual respect (36). I think that on that basis we can build up the kind of relationship that can overcome the inevitable difficulties that any two countries will have to overcome, especially when they're neighbors. (37)”

In excerpt 12, Aung Sang Suu Kyi expresses her opinion through her utterance, “*I always say that the major takeaway from any exchange of visits between countries a strengthening of understanding and mutual respect*” this utterance indicated that Aung San Suu Kyi respects the fellowship between two countries which in this case Myanmar and India to bring solution towards Rohingya Crisis, as in her utterance “*I think that on that basis we can build up the*

kind of relationship that can overcome the inevitable difficulties at any two countries will have to overcome especially when they are neighbors." Moreover, from this utterance, we can conclude that Aung San Suu Kyi will intensify the relationship between Myanmar and India to diminish the problem of the Rohingya.

3.2 Discussion

Based on the findings above, the researcher found that an individual need to construct language use and choose utterances to project an identity. Language is a good identity marker in a given moment within an interaction, which can foreground alternative identities, as Aung San Suu Kyi did during the interview about the Rohingya crisis.

Aung San Suu Kyi constructed her language to create a perspective of herself and how others saw her. Aung San Suu Kyi projected her identity as Myanmar's State Counsellor through her answers to the interviewer's questions. Aung San Suu Kyi also emphasized her utterances to make the interviewer understand what he had done for the Rohingya crisis. The identity was reflected in her utterances directly and indirectly. Aung San Suu Kyi also emphasized her utterances to make the interviewer understand what he had done for her country as the State Counsellor of Myanmar.

A critical linguistic feature observed in Aung San Suu Kyi's utterances is the strategic shifting between the first-person singular pronoun "I" and the first-person plural pronoun "We". A fascinating aspect of Aung San Suu Kyi's communication style is her thoughtful use of the pronouns "I" and "We." This choice plays a crucial role in shaping her identity. When addressing complex political issues, like the contentious clearance operations or constitutional challenges, she often embraces the inclusive "We." For instance, she states, "*We are working within the framework of a constitution...*" and "*We have inherited this very complex problem...*" This strategic use of "We" allows her to connect with the collective spirit of the Myanmar government, diffusing personal responsibility in the process.

On the other hand, she adopts the personal "I" to clearly express her moral vision and acknowledge the state's challenges. Phrases like *"I want peace and harmony..."* and *"I have to confess that our country has not had much experience..."* reveal her heartfelt commitment to the nation. This dynamic shifting between pronouns highlights her adaptability, seamlessly transitioning between being a relatable individual and a representative of the state, tailored to the context and the sensitivities of the conversation. It's a masterclass in communication, reflecting not just her identity but her genuine engagement with Myanmar's complex realities.

Aung San Suu Kyi could project her identity differently depending on the question she was asked. Omoniyi (2006) stated that identity was considered fluid and that individuals can change from one identity category to another by varying their acts in response to demands and needs within particular moments of identification.

Based on the findings above, the researcher classified some of the utterances that represented her identity as the State Counsellor of Myanmar from the way she expressed them. When she explained her policy towards the Rohingya crisis, the researcher divided them into five kinds of utterances:

The first was seen from her opinion about her political career in Myanmar. This could be seen as in data (1) she said, *"Oh, it has been very challenging,"* and from her facial movement she answers it with It is also seen in data (3) she said *"so challenging but not a surprise."*

This pronominal choice serves as a primary discursive tool for identity negotiation under political pressure. In Data (1) and (3), when reflecting on the challenges of her political journey, she initially acknowledges the situation personally, but immediately switches to the institutional "We" when discussing the non-democratic constitutional framework. By shifting to the collective "We," she successfully diffuses personal accountability, embedding her identity within the larger apparatus of the Myanmar government. Conversely, she utilizes the personal "I" only when expressing individual moral aspirations or acknowledging state

limitations. This demonstrates the high fluidity of her identity, allowing her to move seamlessly between a vulnerable individual and an authoritative state actor depending on the rhetorical risk of the interviewer's questions.

The second was seen from how she talked about her opinion and her effort to resolve the Rohingya crisis. From her statement, it could be seen that she is struggling to solve this crisis, as in data (5) she said, "***we have inherited this very complex problem,***" and in data (6), *she said, "we have to deal with it"*, also in data (7) as she said, "***we have to resolve it.***" About what is her primary concern in resolving the Rohingya crisis as in her utterances in data (8), "***it is not something that we can find simple answers to, because building a trust and harmony between two communities that have in many parts of that region is hostile to one another it has not done easily***" this utterance explained that she is proposing to build a trust between two communities in Rohingya. "*Well, we are trying doing our best treatment to help all those in distress within the borders of our country, but make no distinction between Muslims or Hindus in Rakhine (29); it is not as simple as all that, but certainly social-economic development is a very important part of the solution. (30)*

Well, the most amicable solution would be to promote love and compassion throughout the communities (31)

the most difficult thing in the world to make people who are hostile to each other learn to be to open their hearts, and to do accept the differences, and make the differences a strength and a bond between them (32)

The identity construction within this framework is shaped not only by clear policy statements but also by thoughtful word choices and deliberate omissions. An intriguing example is her choice to avoid using the term "Rohingya," opting instead for "Muslim community" or "Muslims in Rakhine." This renaming, viewed through a critical discourse lens, represents a strategic political approach. By reframing a highly sensitive ethnic identity into a

broader religious category, Aung San Suu Kyi was skillfully navigating the complex global discussions surrounding ethnicity and citizenship rights in Myanmar. This linguistic choice positions her as a pragmatic and neutral mediator, showcasing my dedication to regional stability while gracefully sidestepping the intricate nature of identity politics. While this might come at the cost of acknowledging the self-identification of a marginalized group, it illustrates a strategic balance between political realities and community sensitivities. Overall, Aung San Suu Kyi approach encourages reflection on the broader implications of language and identity in shaping societal narratives.

The third was seen from the way she diminished human crime in the Rohingya.

We have taken action against those who have been found to have broken the law (12)

We have taken people to court if it has been found that they have broken the law (15)

We have a very strong code of conduct that has been distributed to all our secret security forces, and they have been instructed to follow them very closely. (16)

We have always maintained that we do not condemn either of the communities (25)

We condemn actions that are against the rule of law, that are against the needs the humanitarian needs of all people (26)

When faced with allegations of human rights violations and excessive military force, Aung San Suu Kyi adopts a legal perspective to defend her administration. Rather than using emotional or humanitarian arguments, she emphasizes the need for “evidence that will stand up in court” and insists on a defined “code of conduct” for security forces. This legal framework allows her to manage a humanitarian crisis through the lens of domestic law, shifting her identity from a human rights advocate to a state leader focused on constitutional integrity and national sovereignty. This complex shift underscores her commitment to stability and the importance of legality and accountability in governance.

The fourth, from the way she does counterterrorism

Well, counterterrorism is something that we have to take very seriously, and I have to confess that our country has not had very much experience concerning counterterrorism (22),

It is very difficult to counterterrorism because terrorism by its nature means that some of its members are embedded in the ordinary population, and how we distinguish the one from the other is very important (23)

We do not want to hurt those who are innocent, but at the same time, we have to make sure that terrorists are not allowed to carry on with the activities (24). We have condemned the ARSA (Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army) because we have not declared it officially as a terrorist organization (27)

We condemn all terrorism (28)

In addressing counterterrorism, Aung San Suu Kyi skillfully crafts an identity that balances the pressing demands of military action with a commitment to humanitarian principles. In Data (22), her candid admission that Myanmar "*has not had very much experience concerning counterterrorism*" serves as a deliberate strategic maneuver. By recognizing this institutional shortcoming, she effectively manages international expectations for her government's immediate ability to confront militant groups like ARSA.

Moreover, her thorough examination in Data (23) and (24) of the challenges in distinguishing terrorists from civilians allows her to redefine the narrative around military operations. Instead of portraying the military response as purely aggressive, she highlights the themes of caution, safeguarding innocent lives, and minimizing "collateral damage." This approach not only positions her as a leader with a profound sense of moral responsibility but also as a reluctant enforcer of security measures. Through this nuanced portrayal, she strives to align her role as State Counsellor with her long-standing reputation as a champion for human rights on the global stage.

The last classification was seen from how she explained when she could finish the Rohingya crisis.

No, I do not think we can say this, but I think we have to work at it. No, it is not a matter of how long it is going to take, but when you are going to do it and how you are going to go about it (34)

I think it is a matter of doing everything that you can do from day to day instead of forecasting how many days it will take. (35)

In the final analysis of the timeline for addressing the Rohingya crisis, Aung San Suu Kyi effectively establishes a pragmatic, action-driven identity by rejecting strict timelines. In Data (34) and (35), when pressed for a forecast, she deftly shifts the conversation from "how long" to "how" and "when" the government will take action. This avoidance of providing a specific deadline serves as a protective measure against international scrutiny. By framing the crisis as a dynamic, "day-to-day" operational challenge rather than a fixed project, she safeguards her administration from future claims of policy failure or delayed action. Her explicit mention of the swift deployment of humanitarian aid just two days after the August 25 attacks is a strategic move designed to showcase prompt and effective governance. Consequently, this rhetorical approach successfully portrays her as a practical, proactive leader who emphasizes immediate institutional responses over uncertain political promises.

Based on Omoniyi's theory, 'Hierarchy of identity', the data from interviews reveal three conflicting layers of Suu Kyi's identity; the humanitarian activist/democracy icon, the pragmatic political mediator, and the legalistic state actor (State Counsellor). Initially, when her historical role as a civil liberties champion is discussed, she prioritizes her humanitarian identity, marked by her use of "I" and reflective language. This changes as the conversation shifts to contentious issues like military actions and accusations of ethnic cleansing. In this

context, her activist persona becomes a liability, prompting her to elevate her role as a State Actor.

This shift is expressed through two strategies: pronominal shifting and lexical neutralization. Suu Kyi moves from "I" to "We" (e.g., "We are working within the framework..."), diffusing personal accountability. Her avoidance of the term "Rohingya," opting for "Muslim community," serves as a strategy to navigate geopolitical tensions while focusing on regional stability over international humanitarian concerns.

As the discussion concludes, her identity shifts again to portray a practical governance approach, rejecting rigid deadlines and framing the conflict as a "day-to-day" challenge. This adaptability in her identity hierarchy—from a transparent activist to a defensive bureaucrat—supports Omoniyi's notion that politicians dynamically negotiate their identities in response to situational demands. Her language choices illustrate that identity in political discourse is an ongoing process rather than a fixed characteristic.

Showing a specific identity means projecting someone different from others. Based on the findings above, the researcher also found that Aung San Suu Kyi primarily sought to present her identity as the State Counsellor of Myanmar, which differed from that of other leaders. It can be seen from some excerpts. Based on Goffman's (1979) conversations, it may be used to renegotiate how or whom one is perceived to be from moment to moment, as we find with politicians in media interviews. They continuously shift between the personal self and the public selves. 'We as a government, 'As a nation, we ...', and 'In my opinion,' etc. The context and the participant also influence identity. It was proven when Aung San Suu Kyi constructed her language during the interview. The context of this conversation is an exclusive interview about the Rohingya crisis, and the participants are not only two people but also intended for public consumption. Therefore, in this interview, Aung San Suu Kyi constructs her language

use and can reflect who she is and how others will recognize her as the State Counsellor of Myanmar.

As noted, personal identity as a State Counsellor is evident in Aung San Suu Kyi's responses to the interviewer's question. She tried to give confident answers to create a specific identity. Constructing language use in a conversation is also part of showing a specific identity that others recognize.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter presents the study's concluding remarks and suggestions. The researcher summarizes the study and provides recommendations for future research based on the findings.

4.1 Conclusion

Based on the analysis, the researcher concludes that Aung San Suu Kyi strategically shapes and negotiates her fluid identity through her linguistic choices during the interview about the Rohingya crisis. Her statements do not merely convey political information; they actively project her role as the State Counsellor of Myanmar, highlighting her responsibility for governance. This construction of identity is heavily influenced by contextual factors, as different lines of questioning prompt her to shift between a personal, moral perspective and a rigid, legalistic view as a state actor. Moreover, through calculated rhetorical strategies—such as shifting pronominal markers ("I" vs. "We") and the strategic use of political euphemisms—she frames the Rohingya crisis not as a direct failure of governance, but as a deeply rooted, long-term socio-economic and institutional challenge that necessitates pragmatic daily execution rather than speculative timelines.

4.2 Suggestion

This study suggests several avenues for further investigation. Different qualitative methodologies could explore this topic, including case studies, ethnography, and narrative methods. Follow-up research from this study could examine in depth the identity of Aung San Suu Kyi and her relation to other aspects of her life as an individual.

In addition, further research could investigate effective practices to address the Rohingya Crisis in their educational activities. In conjunction with this, further research could examine the discursive strategies used in the Rohingya crisis on social media. Further, the research could delve more deeply into different media to better understand Aung San Suu Kyi's identity, such as her direct speeches at special occasions.

Future research could also pursue a comparative analysis of interviews using the same interview questions. One part of the comparative analysis would be in English, while the other would be in Myanmar's native language. This study could be accomplished with assistance from scholars and translators competent in both languages. This study would inform the analysis and ensure accuracy and fidelity of the translations, providing added sources to increase triangulation. This comparative analysis could highlight difficulties in research with second language learners and reveal differences between the second language and the native language.

Future studies could also examine whether reported changes in behavior, beliefs, and attitudes are driven by other prominent public figures or politicians worldwide. They could investigate the identities of those public figures through other media, such as artwork, movies, songs, and books.

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Q

We are honored and privileged to have this interview for ANI (Asian News International) and Myanmar State Councilor. Your journey in life has been has you know converted one has majorly been outside the government up to this point of time and you've been a champion of democracy you fought for human rights, you fought for civilian liberties, now in the last year and a half of some European part of the government and you're facing the same issues of civil liberties democracy so how does this transition mean, has it been comfortable difficult?

A

Oh it's been very challenging, we always thought that it would be because as you know democracy is not exactly a perfect one because we're working within the framework of a constitution which is not totally democratic and we always knew it would be a challenge, so challenging but not a surprise

Q

Ma'am, I will go directly to the issue of what happened in Rakhine State if you don't mind. It has been news for the last three weeks and you are facing a challenge. Well you've been giving your responses to that so in your own words can you actually describe how you are dealing with the issue, is it a humanitarian issue, is it a socio-economic issue or is it something else?

A

Its humanitarian issues which have arisen out of long-term socio-economic problems because the problems of the and political of course in the Rakhine State go back to the 19th century and periodically trouble has broken out there between the Muslim community and the Rakhine community and we have inherited this very complex problem and we have to deal with it and we have to resolve it so obviously it's not something that we can do overnight and it's not something that we can find simple answers to, because building a trust and harmony between two communities that have in many parts of that region in hostile to one another it's not done easily but I say in many parts of the region because there are places in Rakhine where Muslims and Rakhine live in a harmonious way and we want to see why that is possible in some places rather and not in others

Q

There have been a lot of criticism about what my government is referred to as a cleanup operation in the Rakhine area and you have actually said that they are ethnic communities and there are Muslim communities by not a Muslim communities that are having problems you do not use the word as I've seen in this in my state, here that you have not used the word Rohingya at all in these statements that you have issued in your State of the Union address yesterday also you refer to them as minority Muslims or ethnic. Is there any clear reason about this?

A

Yes Becker says been a lot of control say over the with regard to the term used to describe the Muslims of Rakhine and they are those who want to call themselves Rohingya or who want to refer to their the Muslims there as Rohingya and there Rakhine themselves will not use any term except Bengali meaning to say that they're not really ethnic of Rakhine and I think that instead of using this emotive terms this terms have become emotive and highly charged it's

better just to say Muslim which is a description that nobody can deny we are talking about the Muslim community in the Rakhine State and other terms may be applied to that community but I do not see any point in using terms with that simply will inflame passions further

Q

We have completed seen that clearly said in yesterday's gateman that the law will take its course and that you will apply the log strictly against anti-social elements and people who are indulging in violence, such as Rakhine the Rohingya Salvation Army, What are the kind, has that a step in activity that are you taking?

A

We have taken action against those who have been found to have broken the law and by the way I think I admitted to answer the first part of your question just now about the clearance operations I think that is what they referring to the clearance operations after armed conflicts that excessive force was used and many people were injured or had to flee or even lost their lives as a result of this clearance operations we are investigating all these allegations but you as in India as a common law country you will know that we need the kind of evidence that will stand up in court before we condemn anybody for a particular act and we have taken people to court if it has been found that they have broken the law all they have overstepped their conduct when they are terribly carrying out their responsibilities because we have a very strong code of conduct that has been distributed to all our secret security forces and they have been instructed to follow them very closely

Q

Ma'am, have you said that Myanmar is ready to take back this place's population or close to over half a million people across South Asia provided they meet the verification standards of the Government?

A

I think I don't know what the verification standards is the expression to use we have had similar repatriations in the past I have the first time that these criteria were established was back in 1993 a criteria on which both Bangladesh and Myanmar agreed and it's in line with this criteria that we will receive back those who have been displaced from Rakhine but of course we are not certain of the exact numbers we are ready to start at any time

Q

Has the verification standards started?

A

We are ready to start at any time

Q

Do you agree to a committee that is headed by Mr. Kofi Annan?

A

We didn't agree to it. We actually invited him we invited dr. Kofi Annan to head a commission that we were we believe would help us to find out what the fundamental problems in the Rakhine were and how to address those problems and he has as you know his commission has completed its work and he has already submitted his report

Q

The other concerns that is dominating the public space or the media space that organizations like ARSA (Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army) have some kind of an influence on this displaced population and that in turn this also is being receiving some kind of patronage or help from Pakistan or terrorist groups based in Pakistan and as well as the ISIS and the Pakistanis Inter-Services Intelligence Agency, do you agree with that view or are there any steps being taken to counter it, how do you like to respond to that?

A

Well counterterrorism is something that we have to take very seriously and I have to confess that our country has not had very much experience with regard to counterterrorism but of course in India you've had a lot of experience and you know that it is a very delicate matter because counterterrorism must be carried out in such a way that the innocent are not affected whatever we do we should have we must try to avoid all collateral damage and all or in any action that would hurt innocent civilians it is very difficult counter terrorism because terrorism by its nature means that some of their members are embedded in the ordinary population in and how we distinguish the one from the other is very important we don't want to hurt those who are innocent but at the same time we have to make sure that terrorists are not allowed to carry on with the activities

Q

Are you talking to Islamabad in Unity in this issue in particular?

A

Well, we have not had any discussions with Islamabad on this

Q

Ma'am, as Nobel Peace Prize Winner, I'm sure that you would be feeling sympathetic in this place in terms of many people, and it could be any motivation way you're concerns, how would you let there is also a little bit of criticism regarding that you might be according to the reports that you might be under some kind of political compulsion not to actually voice what your true feelings are is that a correct statement to make?

A

No, my true feelings are very very simple I want peace and harmony in the Rakhine and it is not their responsibility it is not it's not it is all the let's put it the other way around it's a responsibility of every government to maintain a position of integrity and fairness we have to be fair to all communities we have always maintained this that we do not condemn either of the communities we condemn actions that are against a rule of law that are against the needs the humanitarian needs of all peoples but we have never condemned communities as such we have condemned the ARSA (Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army) because we have not declared it officially as a terrorist organization and we condemn all terrorism

Q

The Dalai Lama has being a Buddhist majority nation but this month the Dalai Lama has also expressed his concern about what's happening nowadays in the Rakhine yes actually use the word that the Buddha might have helped those in distress, Moslem distress, how do you response to that kind of statement?

A

Well we're trying doing our best treat to help all those in distress within the borders of our country but making no distinction between Muslims or Hindus in Rakhine you know of course it's a small Hindu community in Rakhine who were also caught up in the conflict and some of whom were killed

Q

They said that the solution is socio economic development or infrastructure building, do you agree with that view?

A

There has to be part of the solution it's not the whole solution it's not as simple as all that but certainly social economic development is a very important part of the solution

Q

Going forward ma'am, what do you think is the most amicable solution for ending this distress over a half million people?

A

Well the most amicable solution would be to promote love and compassion throughout the communities but of course it may be the most amicable it may be the most desirable but it's not necessarily the easiest one to achieve you must know that it's the most difficult thing in the world to make people who are hostile to each other learn to be to open their hearts and to do accept the differences and make the differences a strength a bond between them so while the most amicable and most desirable solution is to create harmony and understanding it's it's not something that we can create overnight we have to take charm over this

Q

When you fix the times, can you say it takes slow terms or long terms, can you probably say approximately?

A

No I don't think we can say this but I think we have to work at it now it's not a matter of how long it's going to take but when you're going to do it and how you're going to go about it for example with regard to humanitarian aid which is very important in a situation like this we started two days after the attacks on the outpost on the 25th of August on the 27th our Minister for resettlement early furs was already in the Rakhine going around the communities that had been affected the ones that were accessible and doing his best not just to give him a litter and eat in material terms but also to allay the fears and concerns of the peoples in those communities so we have to work at it all the time and immediately I think it's a matter of doing everything that you can do from day to day instead of trying to forecast how many days it's going to take

Q

UN and the diplomatic committee here by a larger welcome to your address yesterday to the nation and they said there's a welcome statement that they've seen they see light at the end of what is right now possibly a doctor at the moment, how do you response to this?

A

Well it's nice that this year that way but I'm also a little intrigued because what I said yesterday was really not that different from what our government has been saying again and again we've been issuing various statements on the situation and what I said yesterday doesn't differ very much from what has been said before maybe I put it a little bit more emphatically because I just wanted to get a message across but it's the same message

Q

I see and ma'am lastly you have been coping with relations between Myanmar and India. You had a reason to visit our Prime Minister. Would you be kind enough to say what you think of the major taking office on that visit?

A

I always say that the major takeaway from any exchange of visits between countries is a strengthening of understanding and mutual respect. I think that on that basis we can build up the kind of relationship that can overcome the inevitable difficulties any two countries will have to overcome especially when they're neighbors.

Q

Thank you so much ma'am, it's an honor and a pleasure to meet you

A

Thank you