Political Ideology and Media Discourses: A CDA of Pakistani Newspapers’ Post Titles

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Abstract

Print media discourses are one of the best sites for ideological investments. Newspaper headlines tell the story in the fewest possible words. The present research examines critically the headlines of DAWN and JUNG newspapers. The time span for data collection ranges from 1st April to 30th April. The present study implies Fairclough (2003) model of critical discourse analysis (CDA). The levels of analysis include representation, lexicalization, backgrounding, foregrounding and use of metaphor the study finds that English and Urdu newspapers are polarized and headlines are coined keeping in view the target audience. Moreover, the research contexts that print media discourses represent a desired version of socially constructed reality.

Keywords

Headlines, CDA, Print media, representation, ideology, politics.

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Introduction

Print media discourses mirror social reality prevailing in a particular context. This genre is divided into some sub-genres such as headlines, editorials, articles, advertisements etc. Headlines are significant part of newspaper. They summarize the story in fewest numbers of words. Furthermore they fascinate the bookworms to the story. The most significant issues of the day are headlines. A reader can browse the captions and have a sketch of the news of the day and handful idea of its relative effect and significance. (Reah 2001) Linguistic words are more useful in titles than grammatical words which may cause vagueness in few cases. Also they fulfill three functions. Firstly, they give a quick summary of the main news, secondly, they persuade the interest and thirdly, they frequently provide an early pointer in its content and style. These are mandatory parts to illustrate the news in a way in which the newspaper attracts its readers.

Thus, newspapers are a beginning of practicing power and headlines as the mode of creating ideologies Sheyholislami (2001) opines that themes and topics are realized in headlines and lead paragraph. Dijk (1998) says that headlines portray the harmony of discourse and a basis of information which is easily learned by the reader. He asserts that the readers having their own beliefs and ideas generally “adopt these subjective media definitions of what is important information about an event” (p.248)

Significance of Headlines

Post titles are the most significant type of text. They signify as the brief advertisement of the work. Headline is the “Text” pointing the nature of article below it. Its aim is to rapidly and briefly draw an interest to the story.

The most valuable news on the first page usually occupy bigger headline if the story is of vital importance. Language is not anymore seen as just revealing out fact, but as primary to creating reality (Taiwo 2004) Abstado (1980,p.49) argues that “headlines encapsulate not only the content but the orientation and the perspective” Headlines are especially reliable source of information about the area of cultural references and artistic references. This is because titles can “stand independently”. They explain the story in minimum possible words fulfilling the policy of telling and selling the newspapers.

Types of Headlines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of Newspapers</th>
<th>Plain headlines</th>
<th>Headlines with Pointers</th>
<th>Question Headlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani English (DAWN)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani Urdu (JUNG)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Methodology:

The present research draws upon the theories of Fairclough (1989), van Dijk (2004) and Wodak (2001) for seeking insight into methodological framework. According to Hardit (1981), “the press as technological invention or as political medium plays a very significant role in the definition of reality for individual as well as a nation, it supplies
identification and formulates the public opinion”. Newspapers use different discursive moves in order to present as well as manipulate the information.

Fairclough, (1989) opines: Critical language study analyses the social interactions in a way which focuses upon their linguistic elements and which sets out to show up their generally hidden determinants in the system of social relationships, as well as hidden effects they may have upon that system.

To understand the link between language, ideology and power Fairclough emphasizes the relationship between text and language, genre and order of discourse, society and culture: “A range of properties of texts is regarded as potential ideological including features of vocabulary and metaphors, grammar, prepositions and implicature, politeness, conventions, speech exchange, systems, genric structures and style. (Fairclough 1995, p.2)

Van Dijk, (2004) being a key figure in critical discourse analysis holds that ideologies are the socially shared belief systems of the groups and are social and cognitive. He identifies two levels for analysis: macro level being more abstract deals with power relations between groups and institutions, such as power as control, control of text and talk, context control, mind control, dominance and inequality, access and discourse control whereas micro level deals with the power relations between social actors of a group. Fairclough(1989) emphasis the social aspects. He maintains that “language use is always simultaneously constitutive of (i) social identities, (ii) social relations and (iii) systems of knowledge and beliefs”. Fairclough (1995,p134) Wodak’s (1989) approach is a discourse historical perspective on CDA which lays emphasis on the setting and context, the content of the utterance and the minute description of the text at every linguistic level. Fairclough and Wodak’s analytical framework aims at highlighting how print media discourses employ different ideological moves to represent same event differently keeping in mind the target readership.

The data for the present study has been collected from Urdu and English newspapers. For the present study 1 local English newspaper and 1 local Urdu newspaper are selected. The rationale behind collecting data from Urdu and English newspapers for the present study is to analyze how political scenario has been represented by different newspapers having different ideological basis and how this event is co-related with the past events. The researcher have analyzed the data by employing triangular model. Van Dijk, being one of the key figures in CDA, describes text as a tip of iceberg and thus assigns a text analyst the responsibility of deconstructing the hidden message. The triangular model consists of the following analytical categories taken from Dijk, Fairclough and Wodak’s model. The devised model includes the mentioned categories of Dijk’s (2004) model except consensus and it only includes historical perspectives of CDA from Wodak’s (2001) model. Whereas Fairclough (1998) regards discourse as a form of social practice. He believes that any discursive practice can be perceived in its to historical traditions. This historical legacy in turn can reproduce, transform or reshape the discursive practices which can be understood in their real and true sense in relation to their historical tradition. The present research draws upon the devised model of CDA at Macro,Meso and Micro levels of discourse.

1. Actor description
2. Categorization
3. Consensus
4. Evidentially
5. Implication
6. Lexicalization
7. National de glorification
8. Polarization
9. Pre-supposition
10. Victimization
11. Number game

Furthermore, Van Dijk’s (1997) approach is based on four categories action, context, power and ideology. Fairclough’s approach to CDA has the social analysis as the key feature, hence, the researcher in order to analyze socio-political context employ his model, which works on micro, meso and macro levels which are as under;

1. Text analysis
2. Discourse practice analysis
3. Analysis of discursive events
4. Co-relation with historical perspectives

CDA examines the link between ideology and discourse. It shows the biasedness of a text in a particular context. CDA is a method of discourse analysis to reveal the hidden ideas behind text. It reflects implicit and explicit ideologies. CDA is sometimes wrongly taken as a method of discourse analysis but it is generally agreed that an explicit method in social sciences, humanities and discourse studies, supremacy and power abuse. Hence, CDA not only limits its analysis to the particular structures of text or talk rather systematically relates them to the structures of socio-political context.

**Analysis and Discussion**

One of the major aims of drawing upon CDA here, is to find out efficiently the different themes embedded in the newspaper headlines about social issues. There is no monolithic approach to CDA therefore, this paper attempts to investigate “language” in a general way based on Fairclough’s (2003) assumption that “Language is an incredible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life. So the researcher has always to take into account the language” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 2) the present research focuses the following news sources:

1. Pakistani newspaper_________ 2
   • Urdu newspaper_________(1)
   • English newspaper__________(1)

In the collected data the headlines have been categorized as plain headlines, speech as headlines and headlines with pointers.

**Plain Headlines**

The headlines with simple statements which describe the event in simple way are called plain headlines. Such type of headlines in the present data are =18

**Headlines with Pointers:**

Such type of headlines in the present data are =12

Usually, this type of headlines are written to make the reader aware about the comments. It has two parts

1. Given information
2. A comment
Data from 1\textsuperscript{st} April 2022 to 30\textsuperscript{th} April 2022 was collected.

**Plain Headlines**

**Three Chinese teachers killed in Varsity bombing. (27-4-2022)**

In the English newspaper (DAWN) the words killed and bombing have been used. The word ‘killed’ means assassinated, Murdered, slew, destroyed, slaughtered, exterminated, annihilated, massacred, executed, eradicated. On the other hand the word ‘Bombing’ means attacking, firing on, barraging, flooding, shelling, blitzing, inundating, shooting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Headline Comparison</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No of newspapers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Newspaper (DAWN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu Newspaper (JANG)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Vocabulary Used**

According to Fairclough (2000) no use of language is ideology free. Writer developed a vocabulary to fulfill headlines need by using short, attention getting and effective words. Headlines writers' needs to write fact based story in an eye capturing and attention getting way. Lexical words are more important than grammatical words.

**I. Headlines with Pointers**

These types of headlines make the readers aware of the comments made in the headlines.

**Pakistani English newspaper ‘Dawn’ used headlines with pointers.**

➢ **PTI to move SC seeking review of order on no-trust vote. (10-4-22)**

It defines the term as to go ahead in search of something or someone. Here, it implies that PTI has decided to plead its case to Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan to seek justice. According to the context the Pakistani Political party claims that it has been thrown away from the government and now it needs justice from the supreme court of Pakistan. The no-trust movement is unlawful and hence, that can be treated likewise, the use of abbreviation in headlines is in continuation with the feature of the language used in
headlines. Here, the use of abbreviation has been made twice ‘PTI’, ‘SC’. The word ‘seeking’ means ask (for), desire, plead (for), quest, request, speak (for), sue (for).

‘seeking’ as defined by Merriam Webster (1828) to go in search of. It implies that something is requested.

II. Headlines with Pointers

These types of headlines make the readers aware of the comments being made. There are two parts of the headlines.

Given information

A comment

Pakistani English newspaper ‘Dawn’ used headlines with pointers.

➢ Punjab government swings into action to crush revolt by deputy speaker (7-4-22)

In Pakistani English newspaper word ‘revolt’ is used. The word ‘revolt’ means disgust, gross out, put off, repel, repulse, sicken, turn off.

‘revolt’ as defined by Merriam Webster (1828) to renounce allegiance or subjection (as to a government)

In same headline of Pakistani English newspaper word ‘crush’ is used. The word ‘crush’ means ‘put down’ ‘repress’ ‘slap down’ ‘suppress’ and ‘quell’.

‘crush’ as defined by Merriam Webster (1828) to squeeze or force by pressure so as to alter or destroy structure.

Linguistic Analysis

The linguistic analysis of the selected headlines illustrates that the dominant theme which emerged as ‘revolt’ and ‘crush’ of social action through analyzing metaphors and styles. Hegemony of social action is highlighted. Linguistic feature shows different ideologies of a newspaper.

The headline which appeared on (10-4-22) in DAWN is as under

‘PTI to move SC seeking review of order on no-trust vote.

It illustrates that PTI has become active enough to challenge the voting process to defend itself. For this purpose, PTI is ready to go to any length. Here, the use of expression ‘no-trust’ is highly ideological and it implies that an evil thing or foreign interference has been done against the PTI Government. Which was being run smoothly by Imran. At the same time the use of expression ‘seeking review of order’ highlights that PTI government is active enough to take stand for itself. The use of the verbs ‘seeking’ and ‘move’ illustrates that PTI government is doing its best to give hard times to Shehbaz’s government. In this regard they are knocking every door to put down the Shehbaz government.

Another linguistic move which has been made through the headline under analysis is ‘to move SC’ it explains that PTI government is wise enough and knows how to overcome this defeat like situation legally by exercising the powers of SC. In this way the act of face saving and overcoming the defeat/pressure has been made simultaneously.

Whereas, the headline which appeared on the same day in the selected Urdu newspaper is as under;

لمحة لمحة صورتحال تبدیل رات گئے عدالتین کہل گئے قیدیوں کی گاڑی بھی طلب ائیر پورٹس پر بانی الٰہ
It reads that situation is changing every single moment and PTI government is under severe pressure as PMLN got the power and they are back in government. At this moment Imran government is in shackle and right now they just have to follow the court orders. As it is given below

Raat gaye adaaltain khul gae.

Courts were opened at 12 am.

If both the headlines are compared it is obvious from the headline which appeared in English newspaper that no-trust/mistrust like situation was there against the SC. Shehbaz government and it was forced to use discursive and coercive means of power to put an end through re-consideration of the order by SC.

Whereas, the same event has represented differently showing that the situation is getting changed in every second and this act of having prisoners van outside PM house has been represented SC negatively by the social media.

This is how the concept of same event with different representation through media has been flailed up. Same event finds different representation in different media groups to serve their ideological purposes.

Print Media Discourses reflect social reality prevailing in a certain context. It also highlights socio-political scenario of a particular society. Similarly, the headlines which appeared in the selected English newspaper reveal the same ideology and the headlines are as under;

“Suggesting Ex-CJP as caretaker attempt to influence SC ”

“CJP peeved by denunciation of verdicts in rallies (19-4-22)”

“LHC wants governor to ensure CM takes oath today (28-4-22)”

The headlines picked from the data about the role of ‘SC’ of Pakistan regarding the prevailing uncertainty in political domain of Pakistan. It is obvious from the headline appeared on (6-4-22) that a particular political party is trying to manage the scenario by involving Ex-CJP. The underlying ideology might be to seek some kind of sympathy from the judges of SC. If caretaker government is led by some Ex-CJP, it might prove beneficial for a particular political party in the upcoming election. Therefore, the possible implicature of headline under analysis is to influence the upcoming election through judiciary as has been desired by the ideological group controlling media discourses.

Similarly, the headline published on (19-4-22) in the selected English newspaper illustrates that CJP seems annoyed because of the reaction from a particular party. It seems that verdicts of ‘SC’ has not been followed in true letter and spirit by a particular political party. The underlying message being conveyed through the headline under analysis is that SC is a noble institute of Pakistan and its decisions must be obeyed in true letter and spirit instead of criticizing them in public rallies to increase vote bank the implied meanings of the headline is that this act of denunciation of ‘SC’ verdict has bitterly annoyed CJP of Pakistan. Therefore, the headline under analysis implicitly convey the message that the prestige of ‘SC’ must be taken care of at any cost.

Similarly, the headline which appeared in the selected English newspaper on (28-4-22) illustrates that lawlessness on the part of politicians should come to an end and the orders of Lahore High Court ‘LHC’ must be obeyed regarding the oath taking of CM in Punjab. The violation of rules has resulted in creating uncertainty in the country and especially in Punjab province therefore, the LHC issued orders to the governor that he should take oath from Chief Minister ‘CM’ to put an end to the prevailing uncertain situation in the Punjab
province. The headlines which have appeared in the selected English newspaper selected for the present study highlight that judiciary in Pakistan is very much serious and concerned about the present political scenario in the country. Therefore it is doing its best to control the situation without the violation of law. Hence, we find the positive representation of judiciary through the discourses of selected newspaper’s headlines.

Different media groups follow different ideological stance which suits their interest best. Therefore, it is rightly said that print media discourses act as distorting prism to represent the desired version of reality. Similarly, the headlines related to judiciary in the selected Urdu newspaper illustrate that judiciary is very much vigilant and keeping an eye on socio-political scenario of Pakistan. At present, it is doing its best to manage the political scenario in a smooth manner. At the same time judiciary in Pakistan is doing its best that no lawlessness should be imposed by any political party in the country. It is very carefully examining the petitions registered in the different courts of Pakistan by political parties. So, that no political party should seek undue advantage from the circumstances. The headline which appeared in Urdu newspaper on (9-4-22) is as under

دو دن میں دوسرا تاریخی عدالتی فیصلہ اظہار رائے کے منافی پیکا اور انتہائی کالعدم

It illustrates that different courts of Pakistan are more than vigilant because of the uncertainty and upheaval in political domain of Pakistan. Judiciary is doing its best to decide the cases filed by political parties on merit. It is working against the clock to decide the cases on merit to restore normality in Pakistan.

It implies that judiciary is at its toes and doing its best to decide the cases on merit without being influenced by any political pressure. The analysis of headlines selected from English and Urdu newspapers about the role of judiciary highlights that lower and higher courts are disposing of the cases on merit and are rejecting any ordinance against the law. It reveals that through the discourses of English and Urdu headlines judiciary in Pakistan has been represented positively.

**The headline which appeared on (7-4-22) in DAWN is as under:**

Punjab government swings into action to crush revolt by a deputy speaker. It illustrates that Punjab government has become active enough to defend itself. For this purpose they are ready to go to any extent. Here the use of expression ‘crush revolt’ is highly ideological and it implies that an evil thing has been done against the Punjab government which was being run smoothly by opposition. At the same time the use of expression ‘swing into action’ highlights that Punjab government is too active to defend itself. The use of verb ‘swing’ illustrates that the Punjab government is doing its best to crush the revolt initiated by opposition. In this regard it is swinging everywhere to find its allies and to get rid of the revolt against it. Another linguistic move which has been made through the headline under analysis is ‘by deputy speaker’ it illustrates that the Punjab government is wise enough and knows how to overcome this revolt like situation legally by exercising the powers of deputy speaker in this way an act of face saving and overcoming the revolt has been made simultaneously. Whereas, the headline which appeared on the same day in the selected Urdu newspaper is as under;

بظاہر کامیاب ہوتی تحریک عدم اعتماد ختم کی گئی سپیکر رولنگ میں صرف الزامات:سپریم کورٹ

It reads that no confidence move which was initiated by the opposition of Punjab assembly could not bring the desired results and it ended uselessly moreover according to the supreme court of Pakistan this no confidence move ‘was nothing more than a blame game.’ Here, those who put forward this no confidence move have been represented negatively as is mentioned in the following phrase;
‘Ruling main sirf ilzamat’
‘Ruling is no more than a blame game against Punjab government’

If both the headlines are compared it is obvious from the headline which appeared in English newspaper that a revolt like situation was there against the government and it was forced to use discursive and coercive means of power to put an end through deputy speaker.

Whereas, the same event has been represented differently showing that the timely action taken by the speaker saved Punjab government and this act of no confidence move has been represented negatively by quoting SC of Pakistan. This is how the concept of same event with different representations through media discourses has been place up. Therefore, Dijk’s (2006) argument seem justified when he says that Print media discourses are highly ideological and served the purpose of those who control them.

➢ The headline which appeared on (15-4-22) in DAWN is as under;
➢ “Military refutes Imran’s foreign plot narrative”.

It illustrates that Military is active enough to respond back to Imran’s stance about the downfall of his government. Through electronic media and print media Military spokesperson has explained its stance. Here, the use of expression ‘refutes’ is highly ideological and it implies that no interference has been done to put down Imran government but his own wrong decisions are one of the causes of the downfall of his government. The use of expression ‘foreign plot narrative’ is ideological which shows that Imran has stance about the decline of his government that some foreign interference has been done and it was being plotted at international level including USA and India to put down his government in order to weaken the better image and position of Pakistan. It also implies that is vigilant on different fronts. On one hand, it is fully alert to defend the boarders of the country and on the other equally having vigilant eye on the international affairs related to Pakistan. It is fully aware whether, someone is plotting against internal or external affairs of Pakistan. The use of the verb ‘refute’ reflect the degree of certainty on the part of Pak-Army that nothing has been done externally.

Whereas, military spokesperson’s press conference to clarify Imran’s statement suggests that Pakistan Army is not under pressure of any foreign powers and they are free and independent to take and make decisions for the betterment of Pakistan. On the other hand it was a move to give message to the whole world that Pakistan army is ‘neutral’ and is performing its duty with loyalty and also it has no connection in the downfall of Imran’s government.

The headline which appeared on (27-4-22) in DAWN is as under:
➢ ‘Three Chinese teachers killed in varsity bombing’.

It illustrates that security threats are there inside the Pakistan and minorities are on target of these bombers because they want to give a message to the whole world that due to upset in government situation inside the country is not peaceful as it was before the upset in political scenario of Pakistan. Attack on “Chinese teachers” is a hidden propaganda to make hole in the relationship between China and Pakistan. As both countries claim that their friendship is higher than Himalayas. Implicit meaning of this particular incident is to tell the whole world that Pakistan is unsafe for foreigners living in Pakistan and as well as minorities living in Pakistan. Through media the soft image of Pakistan is being destroyed. This also effected the economy of Pakistan.
Moreover, it supports the western stance that Pakistan is not a safe place for the foreigners. This could be an attempt to damage the image of Pakistan before international community. It is because the former PM Mr. Imran Khan attempted to improve the image of Pakistan and his effort in this regard remained successful. The attack on Chinese teachers might be a plotting against international or external affairs of Pakistan.

Table 2. Thematic Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Newspaper</th>
<th>Political Headlines</th>
<th>Judicial Headlines</th>
<th>Media Headlines</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion:

The analysis of the data reveals the headlines of English and Urdu newspapers are coined in accordance with the ideological stance of the controlling ideological group. (behind the newspaper) keeping in view headlines are designed the target readership and how to exploit their mindset by using persuasive linguistic moves. The data collected from the present study from English newspaper (DAWN) and Urdu newspaper (JUNG) for the time span of one month comprises political, judicial, religious, military based and Terror based themes varies in English and Urdu newspapers. The selected Urdu newspaper (JUNG) is more inclined in focusing political themes related to the prevailing socio-political scenario in the country. The ideological bent towards representing judiciary related issues is equal in both newspapers. Similarly, the frequency of representing Military related issues through headlines is more in English newspaper. Whereas, its frequency is zero in Urdu newspaper. One of the reasons could be that the owners of Urdu newspaper and its target readership still believe that Pakistan Army is a neutral institute and has nothing to do with politics. Similarly, the representation of religious affairs through headlines is zero. In both the newspapers it implies that during the mentioned time span perhaps no significance religious issue surfaced and all attention was towards political issues. Same is the case with the news items related to the Terror based headlines in Urdu newspaper, no such headline was there for the mention period of time. Whereas, only one headline was there related to the representation of terror based incidents. Hence, the research contents
that print media discourses are polarized. Whatever appears through the discourses of headlines is filtered before and is highly ideological.

References:


