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RESEARCH PAPER

Negative Projection: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Women's Portrayal in Pakistani News Channel

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this research is to highlight the news discourse about women's depiction in Pakistani broadcast news. Women are still depicted in traditional roles in broadcast media. The research is qualitative in nature. Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model of CDA was applied to effectively evaluate how women are portrayed in the news Representation of women in Pakistan was analyzed by collecting news items from the official news channel "Geo News". Sampled news items were analyzed by identifying the lexical and grammatical choices, interpreting in the local context of Pakistani society, and then lastly checking the ideological position. The results show that women are portrayed as weak, lacking freedom of movement, and subjugated because of the patriarchal culture in society. This study highlights the pessimistic aspects, the future researchers can explore the bright side of women's discourse by focusing on the achievements, rights, and honor gained by modern Pakistani women.

Keywords: Broadcast News, CDA, Social Ideology, Women Representation

Introduction

It has been an important issue to establish the images of women in the mass media discourse. There's a lot of studies conducted throughout the 1970s analyzed the representation of women in media and found that women are depicted in roles of subordination while on the other hand men are often depicted in authoritative roles. These studies have also identified that men are more likely to get set into the roles of the public sector while women description is more likely to be set in the roles of household activities and taking care of the family and children. (Watkins and Emerson 2000, Mendes, and Carter 2008). Moreover, it was discovered that with time, the representation of women in media also changes and their depiction is greatly depending on each specific country that how they depict women in media.

But still, there is a clear change or development observed at first women were portrayed in the only domestic sphere like holding the kitchen, taking care of the family and children, and home cleaning in media but now time changed, and media also foreground the independent career of women to earn money and become independent women.

Gallagher (2001) has observed that media depiction of women depends on the social, political, and cultural context of a particular society. Furthermore, it also depends on the discourse of the country. How women are portrayed in media is the result of their ideologies (social, cultural, and economic). Pakistan is an Islamic country where there are certain roles defined by the society to perform by both females and males. So, the analysis of women's descriptions and images in Pakistan media discourse is an interesting topic to study gender, the connection between them, and most importantly their connection to cultural practices in the context of Pakistan's society.

There is no change in the news discourse regarding women. As most of the news items are related to women's rape, abuse, and killing. Which restricts women to take part in the development of the country and the freedom of living on their own will. Most of the news discourse associated women with disempowerment. Still 5% of the news items associate women with empowerment. Male news sources are preferred more over female news sources. There is no change as males have outnumbered females in sources.

Literature Review

Throughout history, the representation of women in the media has always been put down. It is identified that the content which is used for the depictions of women in media violates the status of women in the community. They are often misrepresented, and their representation is always related to men (Tuchman, 1979). Because only negative content chooses to show women's images in media. The content related to women's depiction in the media influences the minds of the common community. Positive content about women is always excluded. Media has the power of constructing gender identities. They rule society and influence their minds. It's important to observe and question media, which is considered a medium of information, about the marginalization of women. As the media discourse is a conception. It's related to how reality is portrayed in the media from print to broadcast media like newspapers, radio, and television. (Anne O' Keeffe, 2006). It is that exposure to media affects us and changes our perception of the world. Our opinions are also altered by the impact of media. (McCarthy, 2013).

Misrepresentation in the media is not a mere issue. In Pakistan, women are misrepresented in the news channels which needs to be highlighted and questioned. Media influences the minds of common people and misrepresentation of women can alter their mindsets about women. National news channels don't construct the real image of women. They show only one aspect or one side. So, this study is very important as it will investigate the broadcasting news channels regarding women's representation and highlights the results news about women is not just transmitted, it is created strategically. The current study will investigate the news discourse concerning women.

The study aims to portray women's depiction in broadcasting national news channels and how media is constructing gender identities. In the Pakistani context, very few studies are being conducted regarding women's representation in news bulletins through the lens of discourse analysis. It's an effort to make people realize that women are misrepresented in the news headlines. The thematic discourse analysis of women's descriptions in news will highlight the themes which are related to dis-empowerment.

Theoretical Framework

In the view of Graham (2005), "Discourse analysis is a flexible term about what we are talking about greatly depending on the epistemological framework which is being drawn upon." It is focused more on the production of knowledge and meaning.

Throughout the history of discourse analysis, the term "discourse" tends to apply assumptions not only about the nature of the language but also about language research. Discourse is considered an umbrella for an account of different approaches to the study of language in different disciplines from the beginning of the 1960s. Many linguists working in many intellectual traditions have begun to come on two related ideas about discourse:

1. The idea tells us that texts and conversations are shaped, just like sentences which are shaped by grammar that there is a fix of repeating patterns of structure.

2. This idea tells us that the structures of the language are shaped by its function 8n its parts, (Eisenhart and Johnstone2008, p. 9).

This results in the development of two main paradigms – functionalist and formalist or constructive in which each paradigm has different theoretical and methodological concerns as their focus. The functionalist definition of discourse tells us that language is a system through which functions are recognized and it features discourse as language in use. The functionalist approach tells us that language is active and discourse analysis is what we people do with language. How we play with the language.

Current research adopts this definition of discourse considering that language is used to mean and do something and that the doing and meaning' are associated with the context of their usage. The focus of my research in this analysis is to check on what language communicates and how when it is used in a particular context. The functionalist approach to discourse to language is based on two general assumptions:

a) Language has functions that are external to the linguistic system.

b) Those external functions may affect the internal organization of the linguistic system.

 In this paradigm, linguistic systems and language forms are seen as being stated by the functions which they serve. The most frequent ones are critical discourse analysis (CDA)and conversational discourse analysis. These are the approaches that reject how discourse is assumed by formalist and structuralist linguistic theories such as rhetorical and semiotic theories. In many of the formalist and structuralist approaches of discourse, it is considered as a particular unit of language above the sentences or the clauses as there is a diversity of structural approaches, yet structural analyses mainly focus on the way different units of function are related to each other. They include the definition of the structural properties of units of language and language patterns. In structuralist and formalist approaches to discourse, language is analyzed independently without references to its functions, and it is parted from contexts where it is used. Approaching the description of women in Pakistan's broadcast media through discourse analysis connects the macro analysis of media news items.

Macrostructure analysis is concerned with the higher level of description of the text. It can be the analysis of larger texts such as paragraphs, sections, or even full chapters of discourse. It is a very useful tool for analyzing the organization of complete texts and how their parts as a whole bear some claim or claims (Van Dijk 1988). Van Dijk (1988) argues that macrostructures are created into a sequence of propositions by applying macro rules. He says: These macro rules are the rules of semantic mapping or transformations which associate lower-level propositions with higher-level macro positions. It means that topic sentence gist or themes are created from the meanings of a text using summarizing macro rules. These rules result in the upshot, gist, most important information, and theme or topic sentences for every flow of propositions of a text or news. for example, if we take a paragraph, we will apply macro rules on these macro structures by summarization that paragraph. By reading we will get an idea of what is important and should be the topic or theme. Like what is the main idea conveyed in the paragraph These macro rules reduce information. This operation takes place in different ways like deletion, selection, generalization, or reconstruction of the text. They reduce the complex or detailed meaning of a text into a simpler form that we can understand easily, with more general, and abstract (higher level) meaning. The result of using this strategy is a hierarchical macrostructure which at each level consists of a sequence of (macro) propositions Headlines, titles, leads, summaries, and topical sentences are good examples of macro propositions. Themes, topics, and the gist of texts are used in global structures of discourse as they deal with larger fragments of text or about the whole of the text. In other words, when we are talking about concepts such as the topic, theme, or gist of a text, then it means we are dealing with macro propositions that form the gist of the larger text derived from the application of macro rules.

The macro-level discourse analysis is applied at a global social level and assumes how the sentences of a text are connected. It represents the global discourse gist or theme of a stretch of a text and its arrangement. We have included Van Dijk's (1988) model of discourse analysis in our discourse analysis of women's representation as it seems to be influential and will help in studying textual characteristics of Pakistan's media texts about gender and their connection to the context of Pakistani society.

Material and Methods

Data Collection

Pakistan's most popular news channel was chosen because of its higher TRPs which is Geo News. This is renowned, viewed, and has repeatedly been identified as the most important source of information about women's depiction in Pakistan and the most influential because of the highest TRPs. To make the analytic task manageable, the focus was on women-related news items, and as the news headlines are streamed every hour they can't be taken as a sample that is why only 9 pm news headlines streamed on the internet had taken and saved through the months of September 2020.

It is important to note that in discourse analysis the sample size is not an important issue because the interest is in language use, and how its features reflect the sociocultural context of Pakistani society.

Thematic discourse analysis of women

The thematic structures of Pakistan's broadcast news tell us what a new event is about. They tell us the main idea of the whole event in the headlines. These main ideas are extracted from the global content of an event, after reading the main headlines of the news viewers get the crux of the information to understand what it's about. These macro-structures help to broadcast several headlines on time.

Data Analysis: Major Themes

Theme of women's achievements

پہلی ڈومیسٹک میچ ریفری ثمن ذوالفقار کا ایک اور اعزاز
پی سی بی کے ڈومیسٹک سیزن کے ریفری پینل میں شامل

ہاکی اولمپئن سلمان اکبر کی بیٹی بھی گول کیپر بن گئ
فضا سلمان بالینڈ کے کلب کے انٹر چودہ میں شامل

Analysis of the data reveals that Pakistan's popular TV news channel "Geo news "broadcasted only two new items highlighting the themes of women's achievement in the whole month of September 2020 in the above table shown. Only two news items are having the theme of women's development which revealed that no importance is given to women's achievements and their jobs by Pakistan's National news channel. They don't encourage them. Themes related to women's development and achievement are given no value. Successful stories of women empowerment are not featured in the news items. Women's participation has not been promoted and encouraged in any field in the news except these two news items in the whole month.

News about women's participation in the development of the country appears to be positive but is featured in a few news headlines. This type of news coverage lets the negotiation of women's stereotypical roles of taking care of family and children. Women are also able to be a source of family income.

Theme of women's cruelty

کوئٹہ میں گھریلو ملازمہ نے تین سالہ بچے کو قتل کر دیا

ملازمہ گھر میں چوری اور بچے کے قتل کے بعد فرار

National Tv in their news coverage also associated women with evil and violence. The case of a housemaid is a good example in which a housemaid was associated with evil, and violence has been taken from news coverage during our study period. The development of this violent case was followed by Geo news during the period of our study. A housemaid with her companion killed a three-year-old child after robbing gold jewelry and branded clothes in Quetta. She gave tablets to the child, but he started crying. To keep the children's lips sealed, she strangled them to death.

After that, she dipped the child in the water of the washing machine and escaped. At first, she killed the child on 12th September 2020 and confessed on 29th September. This type of news coverage against housemaids also affects the viewers greatly to not trust housemaids. They should keep their houses clean on their own. This type of theme which links women with violence represents the image of women on broadcast news negatively. This news discourse has a greater impact on our mindsets that people start assuming that lower-class women are evil as they make a perception about them. They started to consider them robbers and homicides as they don't have enough money or sources to fulfill their dreams so these women stats doing evil doings to do so. It is the fact that all people are not evil. Some honest women do their jobs honestly, but people lose their trust in them. They are looked upon through the eyes of doubt. Media never depicts evil women from the higher class most of the time.

Themes of Violence and Rape

During our study, it was analyzed that violence against women such as rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence, and honor killing is a frequent theme in Pakistani news discourse. In both cases, women are represented as victims.

Rape

گوجرانوالہ میں سوتیلے باپ کی بیٹی سے مبینہ زیادتی

خافط آباد میں خاتون سے اجتماعی زیادتی کے بعد ملزمان فرار

لاہور میں موٹر وے پر خاتون سے اجتماعی زیادتی

قائم خانی قانونی میں معذور خاتون سے اجتماعی زیادتی

لاہور میں شوہر کی موجودگی میں خاتون سے اجتماعی زیادتی کا ایک اور واقعہ

گوجرانوالہ میں اے ایس آئی کی لڑکی سے مبینہ زیادتی

کراچی کلنٹن میں لڑکی کا اغواء اور گینگ ریپ

کراچی سرجانی میں بیوہ خاتون سے مبینہ زیادتی

It was identified that almost eight cases in which women were sexually assaulted. Out of eight, five cases were related to gang rape. one rape case went viral on the internet and that was the Lahore motorway case. The motorway gang rape case had just shaken the whole nation. The men raped the woman in front of her children. Later the comments by the CCPO officer who criticized the victim for going out late at night on her led to massive criticism and protests. The special court in Lahore convicted both rapists of gang rape, terrorism, and robbery. 50% of the news coverage was associated with motorway cases every day from 9 to 30th of September rather than any other rape case

These rape cases happened in one month. These all are related to women's rape. There were even a lot of cases observed in the news of children. Women are victimized in Pakistan. The representation of women victims in news restricts their development in economic social, political, or any other field. Media news coverage about women's rape greatly affects the mindsets of people. This type of coverage data is done after the day. This restricts the women from achieving their goals outside of the four walls of the house. Also, people lose their trust in others including relatives. News media uses negative discourse to portray women on television news.

Honor Killing

خوشاب میں رخصتی سے انکار پر لڑکی اور ماں کاقتل

چھ شادیاں کرنے والی خاتون کاقاتل سگا بھائی نکلا

It is observed still women are killed in the name of honor. In the news media, two cases were depicted in the news headlines. All the news items show the image of women only as victims. In the first example, the girl was *nikkahfied* with a 22-year-old boy, but she was not happy and didn't want to go with him on the day of departure. She wants to get a divorce. The boy killed the girl and her mother in the name of honor.

While in the second example, the brother killed his sister in the name of honor. He said that they were insulted by the people because her sister had five marriages one after one. She gave divorced the first and is now married to the sixth. People do backbite that her sister had six marriages. So, he killed her sister and buried her in the room of their own house. Both news events were used to show the negative picture of women in broadcast media. These are used to promote honor killing. These are used to bind the women to not take decisions of their own life. These are used in news discourse to prevail that women should be bound in one marriage even if they are abused.

Theme of Sexual Harassment

مری میں خاتون کو براساں کرنے پر پانچ نوجوان گرفتار
سنتھیارچی نے پی پی رہنما وہ پر براساں کا الزام
سندھ کی خاتون انسپکٹر کا افسران پر براساں کرنے کا الزام

In the above cases of sexual harassment in the first example, a woman was harassed by five young men. Police acted against them and arrested them. Through all these news discourses it is shown that women are victimized. They are the bearers. In the third example, a woman inspector was harassed in their field by officers. As they wanted, she left her job. This type of news coverage impacts the viewers greatly. This will restrict the girls to not being part of the field of police. People would hesitate and make a perception that girls should not become Police officers because of these types of acts. It would restrict the development of women in the field of police. The police officers are considered the safeguard of the country and give punishment to those who harass the girls. But if they became the harasser what should be expected from others? The women police inspector was asking for help through a video clip. Women are always shown seeking help. This type of pessimistic news coverage is delivered to viewers to make them bond. Instead of depicting news discourse about women's achievements, pessimistic news items came on screen about women.

Theme of suicide

خاتون دو سالہ بچے سمیت کنویں میں کود گئی
لاہور میں ایک اور بے بس لڑکی نے خودکشی کر لی

There were two cases observed in the new coverage which were mainly concerned with suicide. Not a single item of news was observed throughout the study which associates make with suicide. There is always seen women attempting suicide.

In the first example, the only information given about this suicide case was that which is mentioned in the above table. The newsmakers didn't consider it important to tell why she did this act and what was the reason who pushes her to do suicide with the child. In the news headlines, the newsreaders add only information about an event that they consider important. it was considered unimportant and of less value to tell why women do this. This type of depiction shows a negative image of women. As Pakistan is an Islamic state and suicide is forbidden in Islam. So, when women are linked with suicide, they are negatively portrayed on the news programs. Never a man is displayed in the news discourse committed suicide. Nobody wants to attempt suicide. Most of the time suicide cases which are presented in the news discourse come from lower class society who are living in poverty, having no sauces for living came to that point to do suicide.

The second example was related to a young girl who was harassed and reported a case against him in FIA. But no action was taken against them by the FIA. The harasser with his friends were blackmailing her. FIA didn't support her. She was helpless and had no way except suicide. This is how women are treated. This news discourse about women's depiction is always pessimistic. They are depicted in the news as victims. News programs did not depict any news item about their empowerment. Women are only depicted in news discourse as helpless creatures.

Theme of Murder

خافط آباد میں شوہر نے جھگڑے پر بیوی کو جلا دیا
صحافی وساماجی کارکن شاہینہ شاہین کو قتل کر دیا گیا

In the news discourse during the month of September, there were two cases observed concerning directly to murder. In both cases, women are represented as victims. The first example is related to the murder of a woman nothing was told about the murder which is why he murdered the wife and if he murdered, did anyone from his relatives reports the police? What were the reactions after this happened? who did permission to do this act of violence to burn a woman? News items just read out by the newscaster. They didn't show a solution. This news item was purposely added to the bulletin to display a collection of headlines. The reason behind this was only to gain TRPs. This affects the viewers greatly as people would never get a lesson not to do this kind of evil act. Others will remain strict towards their wives if the action is not taken.

The second case is of a women activist and journalist in Pakistan who was murdered. There was no development seen in this case throughout the study of news headlines in the month of September 2020. The police are still investigating but have not recognized the murderer of Shaheena Shaheen. Her family was protesting outside for justice. The husband of Shaheena was missing yet the police investigation team did not find him. On the everyday news bulletins, it is repeatedly displayed that the murderer of Shaheena is still not recognized by the police. Police are not investigating seriously and attentional. As the police don't act sincerely therefore there is a high rate of crime towards women in Pakistan. There are a lot of criminals walking freely because no action is taken by the Government. Both women were killed but their murderers are free from prison. If it goes on lenient, women would be killed on small matters. Women-related cases are considered less important in Pakistan and are not taken into consideration.

The nature of the thematic structure of news events is abstract. As they show the themes of news events in the headlines instead of whole events or happenings. For that purpose, irrelevant information is excluded and only the relevant information is included in

each theme. The news schemata just act like input, out of which creatives strategically extract the major themes.

During the study. a motorway rape case which was happened on 9 September 2020 and was used by opposition parties as a source to criticize Government that they are responsible. A lot of opposition members gave statements showing sympathy towards women victims. By giving an impressive speech, they tried to polish their images in front of citizens. They didn't feel the pain of others, instead, they thought about themselves.

The order of themes of events in news headlines of broadcasting channels is decided by relevance. Most recent information comes first. Selection of the news by the creative which must be broadcast is usually determined by the scale of importance to gain TRPs. News about women is broadcasted on national news channels only if it has value otherwise not.

News bulletins start with a news item that is considered of high importance out of all selected news items by creatives. if women-related issues and concerns are much more important than other news items then women-related topics come first on the national tv news channel. It's all about TRPs.

It is analyzed that women were found less as compared to men on news coverage. Women sources were counted less as compared to men in all categories. The reason behind this was identified that organizations of news channels rely most on men sources as compared to female sources. They rely particularly on male sources who are in authority like in courts, police, Govt officials to emphasize the factually based nature of events. Although there are females who are in authority or secure positions but still not assumed as important as males' authority. Female sources are not considered important and reliable. Less female sources are observed in the study rather than equivalent. News organization tends to show the opinions and points of view of males as authoritative. They consider them logical and appropriate. Women 's opinions are considered unreliable. The news events regarding women's topics seem logically selected. female sources are considered credible only if the female is an active member holding decision-making authority or in a certain position.

News channels mostly emphasized topics related to rape, domestic violence, and honor killing for the representation of women in news. In other words, women were presented in news as victims. Only two news events were detected throughout the month in which women were positively placed. Women's sources are only given importance if the females are found on holding authority.

Conclusion

Macroanalysis was conducted to analyze the nature of women's depiction and women's status in national news. It was found that in the news, female sources are not considered credible and are fewer in numbers as compared to men. News organizations give importance to males' opinions and points of view on an event.

It can be said that news about women's social, political, and economic achievements, etc. are not given importance to broadcast as the main news headline. While the negative representation of women in news is broadly broadcasted. News about domestic violence against women and negative portrayal are frequent themes in the news discourse of Pakistan. In Pakistan's news discourse, women's empowerment is not highlighted while disempowerment is greatly highlighted. It was found that only two news events were directly carrying the theme of women's development. While on the other hand, domestic violence like rape, honor killing, and sexual harassment were frequent themes in the news headlines. These were used for the negative portrayal of women as victims.

The data also revealed that few cases related to women were covered by acting seriously while most of the cases were found pending arrest of the criminals and give punishment. The motorway rape case, which was greatly highlighted in the news, and which leads to massive protests in different cities for justice took almost a month to find the key rapist. News about rape, violence, and harassment are recurrent topics related to women's portrayal in news coverage. Topics related to women's development are not highlighted in the news. Negative topics have much importance in news related to women. These negative news concerning women have a serious impact on the thoughts of people. News has the power to change or mold people's perceptions regarding women. These negative topics would change the thought process of people who associate women with the development and progress of the country in all fields.

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