

**RESEARCH PAPER****Language, Media, and Ideology: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Pakistani News Bulletin on the Change of Command of COAS (2022)****¹Shehla Sohail* ²Dr. Pir Suhail Ahmed Sarhandi and ³Alia Ali Bhutto**

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***Corresponding Author:** sarhandi@aror.edu.pk**ABSTRACT**

Television is a permeating medium that can instill false consciousness in its audience. The current study looks at the ideological constructs in the headlines of Pakistani news channels and on Twitter and how they affect the readers. This study has explained the ideological constructions by applying Fairclough's paradigm for critical discourse analysis (CDA) to the news headlines in electronic media and Twitter regarding the appointment of the Chief of Army Staff (2022) and contrasting three different Pakistani news channels. The effect of news headlines and tweets regarding the change in command of the COAS on viewers has been evaluated using a qualitative method, coupled with some intertextual and sociocultural analyses. Examining the news headlines reveals that Pakistani news headlines are imbued with various ideologies and power interactions. The current study is intended to aid in the promotion of media literacy among Pakistani viewers and media authorities.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Headlines, Ideology, Media, News Bulletin, Tweet**Introduction**

It is a well-known fact that in modern society, people rely on a variety of information sources, including print and electronic media, to keep themselves informed about world events, particularly when it comes to issues of national and international politics, security, and occurrences like war. As a result, vibrant mass media are required to enlighten the public about political and social changes throughout the world. Literature on mass media, however, demonstrates that media impacts public perception by upholding its own entrenched interests.

In print media, a language is a means of expression and communication that is employed to shape readers' opinions and to denote an ideological position on social topics involving conflicts. Thus, when it is employed knowingly and on purpose, language is regarded as a strong tool. It can be used in a variety of ways to sway and sway messages. As a result, the press is regarded as the most important linguistic medium for conveying ideas (Fowler, 2013). Media messages are used as a tool to encourage social change, which is also seen from a variety of perspectives (Fairclough, 1988). In light of this, van Dijk (2000) asserted that media text is a type of media discourse that significantly influences how the public thinks.

The textual, conversational, and other forms of speech are not perceived as natural and impartial, but rather as a type of power struggle (Eriyanto, 2001). Language is always used to exercise power. The examples may include male dominance over females, the king's control over his subjects, the legislative branch's influence over the executive.

Ideology is a conceptual framework made up of ideas, categories, languages, and descriptive representational schemes, (Hall, 1996). Ideology also represents the interests, viewpoints, and other characteristics of various organizations (Van Dijk, 1998). The media emphasizes the body of the media message, which is used to examine fundamental ideological conventions of society because the purpose of the media is to communicate and express persuasive viewpoints (Van Dijk, 1992).

The mass media is influenced by various social, political, economic, and cultural values and systems, and vice versa. According to Fairclough (1995), a number of entities with political, cultural, and economic clout dominate the media sector. According to Fairclough (2006), media discourse should be viewed as having intricate and contradictory ideological constructions that are not necessarily stable but instead vary in their production. An experimental study paradigm called critical discourse analysis (CDA) looks at "ideological manipulations, power relations, and hegemony." (Rahimi & Sahragard, 2007). CDA further examined ideologies followed by a thorough examination of discourses, styles, themes, and slants (positive, negative, and neutral) constructed by the mainstream media in the country. Further, this study would be academically supportive towards extending the literature on language, ideology, and CDA in the context of a change of command of the Pakistan Army (appointment of a new chief of Army staff).

A vibrant democracy needs free media to thrive. It facilitates the gathering of data that would otherwise be challenging. Free media also frequently acts as a vigilant watchdog for the populace of any nation. It is generally acknowledged that there is a connection between mass media and ideology because of their ability to sway the public opinion. By spreading "false consciousness" among the viewers, certain media organizations serve the self-interest of a particular "specialized class" of society.

It is acknowledged that the media in Pakistan is the fourth pillar of the state, following the legislative, the executive branch, and the judiciary. The Constitution of Pakistan, as a legal foundation for Pakistani media, forbids anything that is offensive to morality, Islam, or Pakistan's security, further strengthens the right to access information. Many changes are currently occurring in Pakistan's political and social landscapes. As a result, Pakistan is dealing with a variety of domestic problems and difficulties that contribute to social intolerance and political instability. Likewise, various groups in society frequently accuse Pakistani media of influencing the public's perceptions. The current study examines the involved ideological constructs in the headlines of Pakistani news bulletins in order to achieve this goal.

The news coverage of the change of command in the Pakistan army by different news channels provides the context behind this research. The current study aims to investigate the power dynamics, roles, and identities that are disseminated through specific ideologies in the headlines of Pakistani news channels. Additionally, the study seeks to determine how susceptible listeners are to the linguistic style of news headlines and how these headlines frame the world.

Literature Review

The impact of media on the modern world is undeniable because discourse is so important in establishing people's beliefs. Public opinions and beliefs are always molded by media institutions (Herman & Chomsky, 2002). In every society, media has infinite importance. Richardson (2007) explains that the role of journalism is to 'Enable citizens better understand their lives and their position(s) in the world' (p.17). Media has the ability to determine how beliefs are presented to audiences and perpetuated. As Fairclough (2003) explains further, 'When the voice of another is incorporated into a text, there are always choices about how to 'frame' it, how to contextualize it in terms of other parts of the text' (pp. 17-18). Daily newspapers published in the same country always speak in diverse

voices, addressing a variety of imagined audiences defined by geography, socioeconomic groups, political perspectives, and other considerations.

Language is considered a powerful instrument when it is used consciously and purposefully. It can be utilized in alternative ways to manipulate and influence messages. Therefore, the press as a linguistic medium is considered the most significant for disseminating ideas (Fowler, 2013). According to Eriyanto (2001), language in all its forms—textual, conversational, and otherwise—is perceived as a kind of power struggle rather than as something normal and impartial. Language is always used to exert power; this is shown in the dominance of men over women, the king's influence over the populace, the legislative branch's authority over the executive branch, and so forth.

According to Carter and Steiner (2004), mass media companies control public messaging and news through print and electronic media outlets. As a result, they decide what information is crucial, establish agendas, choose which broadcast formats to use, and decide who gets to be included or excluded from major channels. This gives them influence over all forms of media messaging. Thus, it may be concluded that some news is purposefully included or excluded from Pakistani media. Some examples of this include the censoring of press conferences held by elected members of the national assembly, the permitting of public comment to the media, and the decision of what to censor during live broadcasts.

Discourse, according to Fairclough and Wodak (1997), is socially conditioned as well as socially constitutive. Fairclough claims that while people's actions have an effect on the social structures and conflicts around them, they are ignorant of the webs of power relationships, social structures, and the nature of social practices. According to Tolson (1991), informational content of media outputs can occasionally be influenced by ideologies. This ideologically motivated information is intended to perpetuate and fortify the oppressive and exploitative social connections. Furthermore, the audience views the "information" in the media as a component of their "common sense" knowledge and allows ideological constructions in the media to become naturalized. Fairclough (1995) argues that as the media can be influenced by different social institutions, it can never be said to represent a "reality" but just "representations of reality." Fairclough emphasizes the value of media analysis and makes the case for the study that tracks how audiences respond to media texts. Analyzing the preexisting ideologies in texts is not as significant as how audiences "read" various works. Although ideology isn't often stated clearly in media discourses, it's always a good idea to find out what kind of ideological work has potentially been done in a given medium. Furthermore, people frequently perceive a hazy relationship between language use and power, which leaves them open to manipulation or easy exploitation.

The role of media according to political and ideological differences started with the principle of semantic choices in the content, which carry an ideological stance. Language, written or oral, is expressed from a specific ideological stance which has several ways of expressing the same concept, and they are neither random nor unintentional alternatives. These differences in a text carry ideological difference, which depict the difference in representation (Fowler 1991). Consequently, (Ahmadian & Farahani, 2014) focused on the power of language, which articulates and influences public opinion. Their study examined editorials of two newspapers i.e., the Tehran Times and The Los Angeles Times. Their research explored the ideological differences constructed by the editor of both newspapers during the coverage of Iran's nuclear program. Moreover, both authors used van Dijk model of negative representation of others and positive representation of own self. Results reveal that both newspapers covered the same event differently.

Fairclough (1995) makes the case in his book *Media Discourse* that the media expresses its dominance by setting an agenda for its audience. There is no denying that media has the ability to influence people's views, attitudes, values, and social interactions.

He goes on to say that the media has "signifying power," which is mostly demonstrated by the way language is used and news events are framed. Consequently, the justification for choosing CDA to look into the ideological construction of Pakistani news headlines is clear since CDA offers an interdisciplinary framework for analyzing news articles into their more general categories.

The current study gains its insights from the framework of CDA proposed by Fairclough (1989; 1992; & 1993). The analysis of text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice are all included in CDA of media texts. According to Fairclough, text analysis entails a more thorough examination of linguistic structures. He divides text analysis into four categories: text structure, lexicon, grammar, and coherence. In addition, he makes the case that three additional concepts—which are regarded as formal aspects of texts—should be examined as they add more to the study of discourse practice. These ideas deal with the coherence, intertextuality, and force of utterances in the text. Sociocultural analysis, which is the third level of analysis, can be accomplished by looking at the power dynamics that exist in every given culture. The people in that particular society are engaged in a hegemonic conflict, which is further elaborated through analysis of power relations. Furthermore, unbalanced power dynamics will perpetuate, reorganize, or subvert the dominant hegemonies (Fairclough, 2006).

Material and Methods

The current study is qualitative since it employs Critical Discourse Analysis as a method, and textual interpretation and argumentation are the mainstays of qualitative research. The deductive technique and CDA are applied to secondary data analysis in this study. In order to address research issues, the primary goal of the researchers is to understand and critically evaluate the discourse gleaned from the media. Discourse analysis is a theory and approach that can be used to analyze data, according to Jorgensen and Phillips (2002).

The goal of the current study is to ascertain the influence of news headlines on viewers by examining the ideological foundations of Pakistani media. Qualitative analyses are done for this reason. Following Fairclough's framework, which primarily focuses on textual analysis, qualitative analysis is conducted by taking into account the factors of lexical choices, cohesiveness, style, bias, and rhetoric in the news headlines, particularly in the tweets of Pakistani news networks.

The version of CDA (Fairclough 1989, 1992a, 1993) offers an analytical framework for qualitative analysis that consists of three levels of analysis that are further connected to three complementary discourse dimensions: text analysis, processing analysis, and social analysis. Nonetheless, the focus of this study is on sociocultural analysis, selected intertextual analysis, and text linguistic analysis. Categorization, textual interpretations, and non-numerical analysis are all included in the qualitative data analysis. In contrast to quantitative data analysis, it involves the systematic examination of textual data to derive informed conclusions (Masonry, 2002).

The sample for the present study was purposively selected. The selected sample is subjected to 'relevance sampling' based on the perceived contribution to answering the research questions (Krippendorff, 2018).

Four separate Pakistani news networks, GEO News, ARY News, BOL, and PTV News, provide information for the 9 p.m. news bulletin. The 9 p.m. news bulletin was chosen because most families can sit down together at this time after finishing their daily chores to watching to the day's long and thorough news report. Moreover, multiple tweets from powerful people were also chosen to provide intensive understandings to the research

objectives. For analysis, each news headline is used as a single unit. Lexical choice, cohesiveness, style, prejudice, and rhetoric are other factors that aid in CDA data analysis.

Results and Discussion

Pakistan's relationship with its army has been extremely convoluted, especially considering the ongoing disagreements between the Pakistani government, the military, and former prime minister Imran Khan. The selection of General Qamar Javed Bajwa's successor will be difficult given his retirement as Chief of Army Staff on November 29, 2022. And, in light of the current financial and environmental crises.

The decision was made after weeks of intense speculation and reported infighting among political parties to choose the potential candidate for the most powerful office in the country. "The process had been completed in accordance with the law and Constitution," Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif told reporters in Islamabad after Sharif made the announcement.

The Head of the armed forces is arguably the most influential person in Pakistan, with the military has ruled the country for about half of its 75-year history since independence from Britain and having extensive powers even under civilian administrations.

As a result, the aforementioned news stations' headlines are examined in terms of vocabulary, cohesiveness, style (politeness, pathos, yelling, images, sensationalism, and excessive exclamations), bias (selection, omission, placement, tone, and word choice), and rhetoric (alliteration, puns, exploring endings, allusions, metaphors).

The manipulative character of lexical items in news bulletin headlines is the subject of the first driving question. It has been noted that media outlets frequently use language to sway their audience. The use of figurative language aims to sway viewers' views. They choose terms that are biased against specific individuals, politicians, and global events. The majority of the time, manipulation involves the planning of news events. By prioritizing emotions above logic, they further manipulate the viewer's perception.

On 25 November 2022, the government appointed Lieutenant General Asim Munir as the new Chief of Army Staff (COAS). Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb announced on Twitter, saying the premier had chosen while exercising his constitutional powers.

"Using his constitutional powers, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has decided to appoint Lt Gen Sahir Shamshad Mirza as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Lt Gen Syed Asim Munir as the Chief of the Army Staff," Maryam announced on Twitter.

The lexical item, which are used in the above tweet of Maryam Aurangzaib, are clearly stating the powers which is exercised by government in the selection of COAS. There are two main points which are to be noticed, firstly, government has the sole authority selecting the COAS and, secondly, COAS has the support of government as well.

As there are the hierarchical positions of government of Pakistan are possessed by two rivalry parties, prime minister by PML-N and president by PTI, so, the consent of president was also important in the selection of COAS. The core reason behind the mutual agreement was to portray that COAS is UNBIASED personality. President of Pakistan Arif Alvi showed his assent as followed:

“The president promoted Lieutenant General Syed Asim Munir HI(M) to the rank of General with immediate effect and appointed him as Chief of Army Staff with effect from 29th November 2022,” official statement added.

The government's decision to make the statement prior to the president's approval seemed to be an intentional attempt to anticipate any presidential action that may stall the process.

Instead of signing the summary, the president flew on a special flight to see Imran Khan, the leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), in Lahore. Rumors that the president might not sign the summary right immediately caused the nation to briefly fear the possibility of another catastrophe.

All those rumors, however, were unfounded because the president swiftly approved both of the nominations by signing the summary. Soon after the president gave his blessing, the recently appointed generals made separate calls to Alvi. Later, the prime minister was also visited by the recently appointed army chief and the CJCS. In a statement, the PTI congratulated the two four-star commanders and offered their best wishes. For a few weeks, the public conversation was dominated by rumors surrounding the selection of the next army chief, with everyone attempting to guess who would succeed Gen. Bajwa. After this, almost all the news channels started positive news reporting on the appointment of the new army chief. Besides parallel structuring, lexemes are intentionally selected to show off that the chief of army staff is not an ordinary person but a powerful person in the country.

Tweets and the news headlines revolve around the below-mentioned text:

Lt-Gen Munir commanded troops in the Force Command Northern Areas as a brigadier under Gen Bajwa, who was then Commander X Corps. He was appointed DG of the Military Intelligence in early 2017 and then ISI Director General in October 2018. Eight months later, Lt-Gen Munir was posted Gujranwala Corps Commander. He was moved to the GHQ as Quartermaster General two years later. Lt-Gen Munir is the recipient of the Sword of Honour from the 17th course of the Officers Training School in Mangla. Also, he is the recipient of the Hilal-i-Imtiaz. He is a ‘Hafiz-e-Quran’ who memorised the Quran while posting in Saudi Arabia as Lt Colonel.

Multi narratives are construct in the above tweet supporting the selection of chief of army staff of Pakistan 2022. Three dominant narratives are personal, professional, and political narratives which are constructed by the selective lexemes. Talking about the personal narrative, the lexical HAFIZ and SAYED are indicating that not only he belongs to noble family but himself is pious person because he memorized Quran by heart. The agenda behind these two words is to win the religious trust of people that the COAS is a good human. The second narrative, professional narrative, elaborates his accomplished milestones in his entire span of serving Pak army. The Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Pakistan's top spy agency, was led by Gen. Asim before he was appointed as the country's second army chief. Gen. Asim, who is from the garrison city of Rawalpindi, has a wide range of military expertise. He was Gujranwala's corps commander. He served from October 2018 to June 2019 as the DG ISI as well. In addition, he was the DG of Military Intelligence (MI).

As for as, the third and the most important political narratives is concerned, the above tweets are elaborating his political unbiases as he has achieved the confidence of rivalry parties. Since the administration has indicated that seniority will be the primary consideration for selecting the next army chief, General Asim is the most likely contender. As a someone who has worked or known General Asim, people characterize him as a ‘Straight Talker’. Political and journalistic coverage, however, seem to be biased due to the deliberate word choice.

The second driving topic investigates the headline presentation of news stories and how style contributes to the ideological meanings that are constructed. This is why the categories of politeness, pathos, yelling, photographs, sensationalism, excessive exclamations, lyrical exuberance, and music are used to study the style. It has been observed that the majority of the chosen news stations use songs, music, animations, sensationalism, and pathos to influence how the audience interprets the meanings intended by the channel.

"I am certain that his (Munir's) appointment will prove positive for the army and the country," outgoing chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa said at a handover ceremony at the army's General Headquarters in the garrison city of Rawalpindi.



Figure 1. Showing the alertness about COAS appointment

Patriotic music is heard playing in the background as ARY News reports on the nomination of the next chief of army staff. In addition, Imran Khan's declaration is included in news reports, which is a definite sign that he is still in power. The message is clearly driven by this image that without PTI the COAS can't be appointed. The leadership of PTI plays a vital role in the sensitive process. ARY is supporting channel of PTI that is why Imran Khan's statement is part of news bulletin.



Figure 2. People's response about COAS 2022 appointment.

The above figure is a vivid picture of the influence of media over the minds of people. This depicts that something important is going on in the country as all the TV channels are covering the same event. Media is propagating the power of the chief of army staff in the whole country. Moreover, no media cover the news of the appointment of any military personnel in any country around the world.



Figure 3. A breaking news constructing the political narrative.

Due to the stake state of Pakistan's politics, the above breaking news aims at creating the sensation among the viewers. After the appointment of new COAS, not only the state will hold a stable situation, but he will bring the prosperity. The ideology of prosperous is closely associated with the new chief of army staff. The whole country is made to imagine a positive image of Pakistan.

The third main study question examines the relationships and identities that are established for individuals engaged in a narrative, as well as how the world is portrayed and framed in the news headlines of the chosen news channels. It is discovered that news networks have given their audience a false impression of the globe. Their interpretation of the news events reveals their bias toward particular individuals, political parties, and other global events. Additionally, they create different personas for the same individuals and events in their news reports, which exposes their bias and partiality toward the subjects of a story. In this particular headline, GEO News is seen propagating its agenda of aligning itself with the government and against the opposition leader, Imran Khan, by vilifying him. "Fuel tension" is a loaded phrase that means creating political instability in the country as well as drag state institutions in the political discourse to gain political advantages.

"Pakistan Ex-PM's Comments Over Appointment of Army Chief Fuel Tensions".

"General Asim Munir's first priority is to restore the relationship of respect and love between the nation and the military leadership," Asad Umar, PTI senior leader.

Lt-Gen Syed Asim Munir took command of new army chief of Pakistan Army. (Dunya News)

The political stance of the channel or news outlet, the target audience, and the larger political and social context of the nation can all have an impact on the ideological meaning that is constructed in the headlines of Pakistani news bulletins and tweets of Pakistani news channels. News channels may use certain language or framing techniques to construct a particular ideological meaning. For example, they may use emotive language to create a sense of fear or urgency or use loaded words or phrases that have a specific connotation or association. They may selectively choose which information to include or exclude to present a particular narrative or perspective.

Additionally, Pakistani news channels may be influenced by the government or certain powerful figures and may present a more favorable or biased portrayal of those in power. They may also present a certain ideological perspective in order to appeal to a particular audience or demographic. To obtain a more realistic view of the events being reported on, it's vital to critically assess the language and framing employed in Pakistani news headlines and tweets, keeping in mind these potential biases.

The army chief's appointment continued to dominate the national discourse for several weeks as people kept guessing who would succeed Gen Bajwa. The defense ministry had sent a summary with six names to the Prime Minister's Office on Tuesday night 23-11-22. Gen Asim Munir and Gen Sahir Shamshad Mirza were the first and second on the seniority list, respectively. Therefore, both key slots went to the most-senior generals after Gen Bajwa.

Gen Asim was considered as a frontrunner as the government indicated that the principle of seniority would take precedence this time in the appointment of a new chief. Those who know Gen Asim or worked with him are of the view that he is a "straight talker". The then Defense Minister said the process of the army chief's appointment had "caused unrest" in the country, but the matter was now "settled". "I believe that all the people, especially politicians, should bring their behaviors under the ambit of the law and Constitution."

Discussion

Following an analysis of the key research question—namely, the ideological constructions in Pakistani news bulletin headlines and tweets—the driving research questions' findings are reviewed. We can conclude that Pakistani news channels' tweets and headlines are less likely to be ideologically neutral. Pakistani news stations propagate different ideas in order to forward their own agendas and present an alternative world to their audience. By using various tactics, a unique universe is created for the audience. The most common tactics used by Pakistani media include changing the lexicon, introducing new styles, and giving the same events and characters new identities. Most people agree that the path to reality lies through news headlines and tweets. On the other hand, it is possible to counter that they are nothing more than "mirrors" of reality that are purposefully written and constructed in a way that supports ideological constructs. Furthermore, they have a big influence on how people see things. As a result, news channels are crucial in establishing the story.

The military leadership in all the societies of underdeveloped, developed, and backwards regions has always been considered as most assertive, pivotal and major institution in comparison of other institutions of state because armed forces of respective country try their best possible efforts to indulge into defining, formulating and executing different policies either related with internal or external issues of state. Many underdeveloped countries believe on the notion that military leadership in the state has always kept itself away from identified roles & functions that they were assumed to perform. Apparently, being considered as assertive institution, military leadership plays tremendous role in challenging policies of civilian leadership in order to minimize and refuse their supremacy that may be resulted to weaken the ties of democracy (William, 2001).

Conclusion

The news media plays a significant role in Pakistani society, which is quite dynamic. The respondents' primary concerns about Pakistani news headlines include the presentation style of the news, excessive commercialization, lack of professionalism, unethical and biased coverage, and a lack of self-regulation, as was previously stated. Consequently, it becomes imperative that Pakistani media organizations hold themselves accountable by implementing the internal legal frameworks that are now in place. As the fourth pillar of the state, the media in Pakistan has the power to defuse tensions and intolerance that exist in many spheres of society. It is the societal duty of Pakistan's media authority to play a constructive role in promoting social harmony and stability in the nation. Thus, by exercising self-regulation over their respective media networks, it is envisaged that Pakistan's media authorities will endeavor to promote tolerance, harmony, peace, and stability in the country.

Recommendations

Any communication event, according to Fairclough (1995), is subject to a CDA, which examines the interplay between three dimensions: text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice. To determine if the same approach applies in that instance as well, a far more thorough examination of news channels is necessary. To obtain thorough results, such analysis should also be explained in terms of the three aspects of text analysis, processing analysis, and social analysis.

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