



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Utilizing Carvalho's Framework for Media Discourse Analysis: A  
Critical Discourse Analysis of Print Media News Headlines**

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**ABSTRACT**

Analyzing mediated communication is a common practice among research students, with multiple frameworks used for such analyses. The current study aims to present the application of Carvalho's (2008) framework, focusing on textual and contextual analysis. The nature of the study is qualitative. Four headlines were selected from *Daily Jang* for analysis using a simple random sampling technique, covering political, economic, and entertainment categories. The key findings reveal that Carvalho's framework could be a valuable choice for analyzing journalistic content. In addition, the results show that text and context are interlinked in print media headlines, where content creators use specific designs and strategic language by making certain linguistic choices to achieve communication goals. This research could provide a significant roadmap for linguistic and journalism students who intend to pursue their research in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). They may gain insight into how text is analysed through the lens of Carvalho's framework.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Carvalho's Framework, Print Media News Headlines, Mediated Discourse

**Introduction**

News headlines are widely read content as people sometimes quickly go through the news events to find the content relevant to their interest. Print media news headlines consist of certain text type and style that keep the audience engaged and play a significant role to construct social realities and shape their mind. Agenda setters use media headlines to manipulate the public opinion. In this regard, CDA is considered a tool to analyse and explain hidden ideologies behind the communication.

The current study uses Carvalho's (2008) framework for the analysis of selected print media news headlines taken from Daily Jung an Urdu-language newspaper in Pakistan. The research primarily focuses on the text and its meaning in shaping public perception. The selected headlines were taken from the categories: political, economic, and entertainment. The study examines how journalists use language to attract the attention of the audience by employing discursive strategies, including framing, positioning, and ideological reinforcement in order to set a specific agenda.

The study follows a qualitative approach using simple random sampling. Four headlines were selected for an in-depth analysis. The research aims explore the interconnection of text and context in media discourse. It reveals how media disseminate power and share opinions of the public with the effective use of language. The study may be helpful for media students and guide them the application of Carvalho's (2008) framework step by step for the analysis of mediated communication. It may further media consumers develop critical thinking and understand how communication contains specific agenda.

## Literature Review

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is not only a theoretical framework but it also provides methodological framework to exam the language is used to construct power relations (Mullet, 2018). In the light of Foucault's (Mayr, 2008), CDA views language as a social practice that embeds in ideology. According to Anastassov (2018), CDA is used to analyse linguistic features such as lexical choices, syntactic patterns of language, discursive strategies to reveal what sort of ideologies media editors add in the text and context. According to Regmi (2017), CDA helps in understanding how media uses language to shape the minds and construct political realities. The core principals are followed in CDA to understand the interplay between language and ideology within social context. First, ideology examines how language is used to create power relations. Second, social context that links the text with its contextual background. Third, how elite uses language to create power relations. Headlines summarize the events, frame issues and use rhetorical devices to attract attention and shape interpretation (Hullman, & Diakopoulos, 2011)

Carvalho's frame provides the steps to analyze the textual and contextual aspects of the media discourse. It focuses on layout, actor representation, and ideological standpoints. It also further helps in examining contextual elements. This framework guides how to uncover ideological biases within the text. As compared to other models like Fairclough's three dimensional approach, it gives a detailed explanation of text and context but it may lack socio-cultural aspects of the discourse (Yang, 2023). According to Bouvier & Machin (2020), CDA helps to assess power relations in media discourse, i.e., how media influences the people living in a society. According to Hassan (2018), media discourse in Pakistan is used to shape the minds of people by using unique cultural, political and linguistic features within the discourse. Fatima, Nasir, Muhammad, Zafar, Fiaz & Shakoor, (2024) claim that the Urdu press in Pakistan works within a highly charges socio-political environment where the text is used to play with the sentiments of the people and set specific agenda. According to Shafi (2010), Urdu is a rich language in term of metaphorical expressions, idiomatic usage and honorifics therefore, headlines contain rich content to frame an issue and shape public perception. The current study aligns with CDA principles and examines how mediated communication helps the content creators achieve certain communication goals.

## Material and Methods

The research follows a qualitative approach, analyzing four headlines selected from *Daily Jang* using a simple random sampling technique. The headlines fall into political, economic, and entertainment categories, allowing for a diverse examination of media discourse. Carvalho's (2008) was used to analyse the selected data. The framework is explained below in detail.

### Textual analysis

- Layout and structural organization
- Objects
- Actors
- Language, grammar and rhetoric
- Discursive strategies
- Ideological standpoints

### Contextual analysis

- Comparative-synchronic analysis
- Historical-diachronic analysis

## **Layout and Structural Organization**

In Layout and Structural Organization, the researcher intends to investigate on which page a certain text has been published, i.e., the front-page text is considered the most important in the newspaper. Furthermore, the size or style of the text and the images which are framed with the text give the same importance in the news headlines and how these things may affect the perception of the audience. As van Dijk (1988), highlighted that in discourse analysis, headline should be examined carefully as it represents whole story. Even the lead of a news article, or a starting paragraph is also important as it convinces the audience to keep reading further information.

## **Objects**

Carvalho takes 'object' as 'theme or topic' of an event and most of the time, objects are quite obvious and give clear understanding about the story but sometimes they get ambiguous. The obvious 'objects' help the reader understand the meaning easily. For instance, in the case study of climate change, three kinds of obvious objects can be found, i) economics, ii) government, iii) nature. These domains can be part of internal discussion. Secondly, those objects can also be added which take direct or indirect impact of the main topic, i.e., climate change affects agriculture.

## **Actors**

Furthermore, the actors are discussed as part of objects. Actors can be both subject – they do something and, objects – they are being talked about (Hajer, 1995). In other words, in a topic, the objects discussed as center point can be called story themes. Understanding the aspect of actors helps to explore the overall meaning of the text. For instance, who has been framed in a particular way, and how the power has been presented with the help of language change (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). The analysis of actors is linked with the analysis of the discursive strategies used by these actors. In short, language users can implement power by using different objects in the language.

## **Language, Grammar, and Rhetoric**

The selection of vocabulary or word choices such as using verbs, adjectives and adverbs etc. also helps to create certain social realities and generate particular meanings. Furthermore, formal and informal discourse can be categorized with the help of Language, Grammar and Rhetoric. This domain is linked with semantics, pragmatics and syntax very closely as it all occurs in a discourse with a textual change (Flower, 1991). The study of text's grammar helps explore hidden ideologies such as presupposition. Active/passive structure highlights which objects are kept hidden for specific reasons while others are highlighted. Moreover, how language has been structured metaphorically in order to generate meanings with the help of other rhetorical figures and persuasive devices (van Dijk, 1988).

## **Discursive Strategies**

Journalists use discursive strategies, i.e., forms of manipulation to generate realities. By using discursive strategies, they achieve a certain effect or goal (van Dijk, 2006). Carvalho has used the term 'discursive intervention' for the same concept. Andreson (1997) says that the notion of discursive strategies helps us understand the link between 'source strategies' and 'media representation'. Some important discursive strategies which are usually used by the journalists in media discourse have been discussed by Carvalho (2008). For her, framing is a key element in the production of media discourse, i.e., some writers frame an event in a way that they skip or hide some facts or opinion by using linguistic choices or, they add something indirectly with the help of same strategies. The other strategies discussed by Carvalho are positioning and, as examples of more specific strategies, legitimation, and

politicization. Positioning is a discursive strategy in which a relationship of social actors is shown with others, i.e., how a discursive strategy takes impact of social actors in order to generate meanings (Hajer, 1995). Legitimation consists in justifying and sanctioning a certain action or power, on the basis of normative or other reasons (van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999). Politicization is political, i.e., some events contain political agendas behind them, and they can manipulate the audience accordingly. In short, one of the main tasks in Critical Discourse Analysis is to understand those discursive strategies which are used in media discourse to generate certain realities or power. 2.6 Ideological Standpoints In media discourse, certain ideologies are embedded which are directly or indirectly linked with social actors and political values. According to Carvalho, ideological standpoints cannot completely be revealed as we are not familiar with the hidden purpose of the text. We only have the possibility to guess with the help of analyzing the text. Fairclough (1995) has looked at these ideological standpoints at distinct levels such as implicit, assumptions or presuppositions in the text. Ideology is embedded somewhere in the text. Van Dijk claims that 'semantic structure of discourse' can also help reach the ideological opinions in the text. The researcher, utilizing this framework, actively seeks to uncover how power and ideology are constructed and maintained through media discourse.

### Contextual Analysis

In contextual analysis, the CDA analysts look beyond the text and extract the meanings by understanding the overall coverage of an event or issue in discourse. In contextual background, we deeply look into the historical and political background behind the language production, i.e., why and how the message was created or disseminated. Philo (2007) highlights the same thing that for an affective analysis, we are supposed to have synchronic analysis which means to create a link between the issue and the time when the issue was written. Moreover, it is seen whether the text was published on the same day when the issue happened, or it got published on the next day. Philo gives margin to the researchers that while doing analysis they can form their own image of reality that may hopefully be more accurate. The comparative-synchronic analysis involves examining how different media sources represent the same event within a similar timeframe, revealing potential biases and variations in framing. The historical-diachronic Analysis takes place at two levels. First, the researchers examine the course of social matters and their wider political, social and economic context (Wodak, 1999). At second level, it is important to have evaluation of media discourse and to produce a history of media constructions of a given social issue. That means, how the issue has been represented or reproduced over a period of time. For instance, the same issue is broadcasted or covered for a specific period of time and, the researchers are supposed to compare all those coverages historically for a deeper analysis."

### Results and Discussion

#### News Headline No. 1

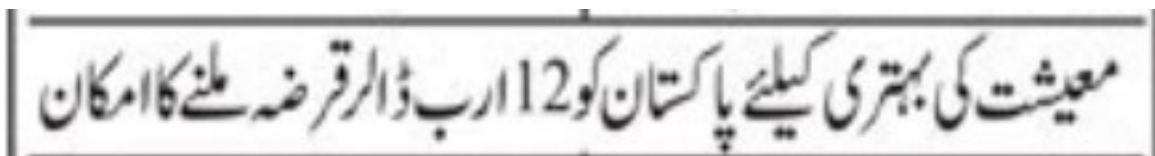


Fig. 1 Pakistan's Economy

معیشت کی بہتری کیلئے پاکستان کو 12 ارب ڈالر قرضہ ملنے کا امکان

Translation: Pakistan is likely to receive a \$12 billion loan for economic improvement.

The headline "Pakistan is likely to receive a \$12 billion loan for economic improvement" presents a significant financial development, which has been analysed through various critical discourse analysis (CDA) frameworks.

The headline appears on the front page of Daily Jang, indicating its importance. Since front-page news is often prioritized for major events, the placement suggests that the newspaper considers this financial development crucial. The headline is concise, with a limited number of words, and is presented in a simple black font without a stroke, ensuring readability. Unlike many financial news stories, this headline does not contain an accompanying image, which forces readers to focus entirely on the wording. The lack of visual representation may prevent the audience from associating the loan with any particular political figure or institution.

The theme of the headline (object) suggests that Pakistan is facing a severe economic crisis, necessitating external financial assistance. The choice of the word "imkaan" (probability) conveys uncertainty, implying that the loan has not yet been confirmed. This aligns with the discourse strategy of creating anticipation while maintaining a neutral stance. The headline portrays that the country is dependant on external aid that shows the it is financial crisis. The phrase 'for economic improvement' gives a hint that the country is developing which might be taken positive. Actors in news events play a vital role in framing narratives. 'Pakistan' has been shown as a recipient but the aid-giver is missing which is omission. This omission highlights how media editors may hide an actor and set an agenda. Adding America's name could have created a different meaning in terms of international relations and positive bond with the USA. The use of modal verb "likely" highlights the editor is not sure about the information, or it might be intentionally kept hidden so that people could engage themselves to reach the actual information. The future contains hope and expectation that give a positive gesture towards economic improvement. The headline uses multiple discursive strategies for example "taking loan as a good step towards progress". Historically looking at the context, there could be another discursive strategy, i.e., targeting government is loan-taker which is considered negative among political parties on which they criticize each other. By politicization, the news editor indirectly highlights the contradiction between the old and current stance of the government. The omission strategy ensures that the blame is not directly made in the given text.



Fig. 2 Bakhtawar's Wedding

بختاور کی شادی، کیا مریم اور فضل الرحمن شریک ہوں گے؟ مجھے دعوت نامہ نہیں ملا، سربراہ پی ڈی ایم، مریم مصروفیت کی وجہ سے نہیں جا سکیں گی، ترجمان

Translation: "Bakhtawar's wedding: Will Maryam and Fazlur Rehman attend?" "I did not receive an invitation," says the PDM chief. Maryam will not be able to attend due to her busy schedule, says the spokesperson.

The use of an interrogative style in the main headline serves to engage the audience, prompting them to seek answers in the sub-headline, which is presented in a smaller font. Notably, the newspaper headline does not include an accompanying image, relying instead on textual emphasis and structural organization to create impact.

The headline can be interpreted through two primary themes. Firstly, it connects to a celebrity aspect, as public interest in the personal lives of famous personalities is a common feature in mainstream media. Secondly, and more importantly, the event carries a political dimension due to Bakhtawar being the daughter of former President Asif Ali Zardari. The potential attendance of Maryam Nawaz and Fazlur Rehman at the wedding adds another layer of political intrigue, as both leaders are influential opposition figures. Given the evolving political alliance between PML-N and PPP, speculation surrounding their participation in such an event could fuel further political discourse. This suggests that the audience might be more invested in the political implications of the event rather than its social or personal aspects.

From an actor-analysis perspective, the primary headline includes the phrase "wedding of Bakhtawar," which serves as the central event around which political decisions are being made. The question, "Will Maryam and Fazlur Rehman attend?" places these two figures at the forefront of the discussion, framing them as key social actors. The sub-headline introduces the phrase "invitation has not been received by me," attributed to Fazlur Rehman, which subtly implies an act of exclusion. The passive structure diverts the attention from the actual action doer to the event itself. Additionally, Maryam and Fazal ur Rehman are the actors whose absence is framed by showing how lightly they take such events. The discourse shows a political link between multiple parties where one party is inviting the others to develop political bonds, other are refusing but not directly so that they could not damage their political relation with the party that has invited. The event is contextually interesting for the readers as all these parties sometimes become opposition and sometimes they develop strong bonds for personal benefits. From an ideological standpoint, the audience from Pakistan appreciates attending cultural events but when two opposite parties do so, it becomes the topic for discussion for the people and the political parties have to face criticism. Looking at the event historically, the mentioned parties have been criticizing each other and now it a solid reason not to attend the party by making an excuse.



Fig. 3 Gilani's Success

حکومت کو بڑا دھچکا، گیلانی کامیاب - حکمران اتحاد کے 16 ووٹ کم، حفیظ شیخ 5 ووٹوں سے ہارے، وزیر اعظم اعتماد کا ووٹ لیں گے

Translation: Major setback for the government: Gillani wins!  
The ruling coalition falls short by 16 votes; Hafeez Sheikh loses by 5 votes. The Prime Minister will seek a vote of confidence.

The news headline contains two columns: the right one focuses on a manipulative statement 'Major setback for the government' that highlights something bad has happened for the government and that is linked with the Yousaf's victory but the statement seems ambiguous as the reader may not reach to a certain conclusion. Whereas the left column provides further information that links the right column. This is a particular style in news headlines, i.e., putting extra columns, keeping the bits of information in pieces, using specific strokes and bold styles. With the combination of left column including factual information enhances overall clarity of the news event. The theme of the news is to create a tug of war

between two political parties where one is in government and the other in opposition. The headlines contains two actors: first the government that faces major setback and second the opposition that is celebrating its victory. In addition, the victory has been linked with an individual to show power. The editor uses specific linguistic choices to create an impact, for instance, 'a big jerk for the government' carries a strong connotation. The word 'big' increases the magnitude of the loss. The discursive strategies used in the headline show government as a weak party whereas the opposition having an edge. From an ideological standpoint, in spite of having a greater number votes in pocket, how could a ruling party PTI face a defeat as 16 members casted their votes against their own party. The way media has highlighted this event portrays that the ruling party is in a severe trouble. Looking at the historical context, politicians use a tactic to convince the voters from other parties to vote against their own party, and it has been happening.



Fig. 4 Covid and PSL

کورونا پی ایس ایل کو کھا گیا، غیر معینہ مدت کیلئے موخر

Translation: COVID-19 halts PSL, postponed indefinitely.

The print media news headline taken from the front page of Jang newspaper is presented in bold text with a normal size that remains consistent throughout the headline. The mainstream media headline focuses primarily on the Pakistan Super League (PSL), though COVID-19 is also highlighted. However, the main attention of the audience is directed toward the PSL rather than the pandemic. The phrase "delayed till an unknown date" refers explicitly to PSL, reinforcing its central importance in the headline. In terms of actors, COVID-19 is positioned as the subject, exerting influence, while PSL is the object that has been affected. The second part of the headline subtly uses PSL as an actor by mentioning its indefinite delay. The language used in the mainstream media headline is precise yet metaphorical, as seen in the phrase "COVID ate up PSL, delayed till the cows come home." The metaphor "COVID ate up" conveys a pragmatic meaning, implying that COVID-19 did not physically consume the PSL but disrupted its schedule in the same way it has affected human life medically and socially. The phrase "till the cows come home" is an idiomatic expression that signifies an uncertain or indefinite period, suggesting that no fixed date for the resumption of PSL has been decided. This phrase is common in English because cows do not have a precise schedule for returning home, much like how the PSL restart remains unpredictable.

The discursive strategies employed in the headline serve to create fear among readers, emphasizing the devastating impact of COVID-19. The phrase "COVID ate PSL up" evokes a strong emotional response, reinforcing the virus's widespread destructive influence. The use of "framing" as a strategy hides certain aspects of the news, leading to ambiguous interpretations. The absence of complete information creates a psychological impact, subtly persuading readers to acknowledge the overwhelming power of COVID-19. Additionally, the deliberate choice of the word "eat" gives the news a metaphorical dimension, as eating is generally associated with living beings rather than viruses. The editor likely selected this term for its familiarity and its ability to intensify the impact of the news event.

The ideological standpoint of the news event reflects the deep love for cricket among the people of Pakistan, who have long struggled to bring international matches back to the country. PSL was a significant opportunity to attract international players, but it was adversely affected by COVID-19. Managing a tournament during the pandemic was challenging, and just as people had started to relax after the second wave, the third wave disrupted PSL once again. Ensuring adherence to standard operating procedures (SOPs) on a large scale proved difficult. The news event leaves a dual psychological impact on readers: it reinforces the threat of the third wave of COVID-19 while also causing disappointment over the suspension of PSL.

From a historical and diachronic perspective, managing cricket tournaments during COVID-19 was always a complex task. Following the second wave, a sense of normalcy had started to return, allowing the PSL to resume, only for it to be halted again due to the third wave. The difficulty in maintaining SOPs on a large scale contributed to this suspension, underscoring the ongoing challenges posed by the pandemic. The news, therefore, encapsulates both the relentless impact of COVID-19 and the continued struggles of the sporting world in adapting to the pandemic's uncertainties.

### **Conclusion**

The study demonstrates that Carvalho's framework could be a valuable tool for analyzing mediated communication. The analysis of four headlines has revealed specific layout elements such as using double columns, strokes, black and grey color to make the content attractive. Each headline contains a specific agenda that is disseminated by using specific linguistic choices, i.e., adjectives such as 'big' with the word 'jerk' to show the intensity of the event. Discursive strategies such as portraying the government as a weak entity were also identified. Active and passive structures were found in the headlines to manipulate the function of the actors. The analysis has provided the contextual linkages with the text presented in the headlines. This research can be helpful for media and linguistics students who intend to use Carvalho's (2008) framework in their research.

### **Recommendation**

I recommend applying this model to other media genres, such as the language of advertisements. Such analyses will highlight how media plays a crucial role in shaping the minds of people. In addition, it will help consumers understand how to engage with the text they encounter in their daily lives. Overall, the study will not only assist CDA students in their analysis but also contribute to media literacy for the general public.



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