

Editorials of Pakistani English Print Media: Application of CDA

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Abstract

The analysis aims to identify and explain how ideology is constructed and presented through language used in two Pakistani newspapers, viz., the Nation and the Dawn. Emphasis is placed on the construction of ideology using framework of analyzing media discourse given by van Dijk (1998) thus revealing the close relationship between language and ideology. The findings indicate that lexical choices and sentence structure in written text play a fundamental role in propagation and perpetuation of implicit and dominant ideologies and that there are certain ideological differences that are yielded either tacitly or overtly in newspaper editorials. The article is divided into four sections. The first section includes the introduction of the newspaper editorial. The next two sections describe what critical discourse analysis is, framework of Van Dijk's media discourse model, brief history of the newspaper under investigation and an analysis of the data. The last section offers concluding remarks about the association between language and ideology.

Keywords: Ideology, Media discourse, Lexical choices, Editorials

1. Introduction

Language is the medium of communication and expression, if language does not exist. It is very difficult to convey our thoughts, feelings and emotions to others. The role of language in a society is much evident and vital because language, being a form of social practice, is a means by which power-relations in society are reproduced or contested (Janks, 1997). Languages live and flourish on account of their roles to perform in the society; otherwise, it becomes superfluous, language used in the newspaper editorials has many functions to perform, the main function is “the expression and persuasive communication of opinions” (van Dijk, 1996, p. 13). It also helps to construct the opinion of its reader by presenting its ideological stance on certain issues present in the society. Using critical discourse analysis, this study attempts to reveal hidden ideologies in newspaper editorials.

2. Newspaper Editorials

No one can deny the importance of newspaper editorials as they shape and build the ideology of their reader. Here, it is important to describe what we mean by ideology. It is defined as “the mental framework, [i.e.] the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery systems of representation” (Hall, 1996, p. 26)

Ideological representations usually “expressor signals the opinions, perspective, positions, interests or other properties of groups” (van Dijk, 1991b, p. 112). Because the basic function of editorials is “the expression and persuasive communication of opinions” (van Dijk, 1996, p. 13); they make up a relevant body of text for the examination of predominant ideological assumptions in a society (Van Dijk, 1992). Thus, the emphasis on the difference “between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’” will depend “on the political orientation of the newspapers” (p. 245).

Thus, system of representation of an idea and thought of the newspaper editorial is different from one another and this differentiates one newspaper from other.

‘The dominant ideologies are linked to the struggle of one group over another and emphasizes on group identification, in the selection of in-group members and out-group members (Van Dijk 1998). Moreover, ‘ideologies function as symbolic systems of thought to organize, maintain, and stabilize particular forms of power-relations (Hall, 1996; van Dijk, 1998a)

Editorials have special significance when analyzing the ideological role of news media because editorials are expressions of “the broader ideological stance of the newspaper owners and managers” (Henry & Tator, 2002, p. 93). Furthermore, it allows the newspaper to address its reader directly by commenting on the news (Reah, 2002). In essence, editorials have the potential to shape opinions, create realities and convey ideologies, because it is ‘by way of opinions that the relation between ideology and discourse can be understood, (van Dijk 1996b, p. 8).

Editorials are usually organized along three schematic categories. They define the situation and give a summary of the news event. They present an evaluation of the situation especially of actions and actors. They advance pragmatic conclusions in the form of expectations,

recommendations, advices, and warnings. (Van Dijk, 1992).

This research follows the guideline provided by critical discourse analysis especially by Van Dijk. Now it is important to describe critical discourse analysis and framework of media discourse provided by Van Dijk.

3. Critical Discourse Analysis

Language is a social act and it is ideologically driven. The term discourse refers to anything written and spoken, and critical view of written or spoken text is called Critical Discourse Analysis. Critical Discourse Analysis along with other related disciplines attempts to reveal hidden meanings, that is, the ideological loads of the discourse.

Henry and Tator (2002) consider critical discourse analysis as “a tool for deconstructing the ideologies of the mass media and other elite groups and for identifying and defining social, economic, and historical power-relations between dominant and subordinate groups” (p. 72).

CDA explores the hidden meaning in the text, as it is not easy for readers to get the real and actual meanings without the application of CDA “CDA investigates, and aims at illustrating, “relationships between the text and its social conditions, ideologies and power-relations” (Wodak, 1996: 20)

The language of newspaper editorials is also not simple and easy. Words used in these editorials express their ideology as the main function of newspaper to interpret the news by giving comments, on social and political issues and CDA helps to investigate the relation between language and ideology underlying.

‘Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) “is the uncovering of implicit ideologies in the texts. It unveils the underlying ideological prejudices and therefore the exercise of power in texts” (Widdoson, 2000).

Van Dijk Framework for Media Discourse

His research follows the guideline provided by Van Dijk (1998) as Van Dijk is most referred linguist in the field of media discourse; he started applying his media discourse theory in 1980s, focusing on minorities and ethnic groups.

What distinguishes Van Dijk (1988) framework for the analysis of news discourse is his call for a thorough analysis not only of the textual and structural level of media discourse but also for the analysis and explanations, at the production and "reception" or comprehension level (Boyd-Barrett, 1994).

By production of the reception process Van Dijk means journalistic and institutional practices of News making and the economic and social practices, which not only play important roles in the creation of media discourse but which can be explicitly related to the structures of Media discourse (Sheyholism, p.5). Van Dijk also views discourse analysis as ideological analysis, and it is the main tent of his framework; language gives the meaning and meaning can be analyzed by discourse analysis and this framework of ideology analysis helps to analyze the language of newspaper editorials and their underlying meanings, either political

or social. According to him 'ideologies are typically, though not exclusively, expressed and reproduced in discourse and communication, including non-verbal semiotic messages, such as pictures, photographs and movies'. (p. 17). We use his model given for ideological analysis in media studies to unravel ideologies present in newspaper editorials taken from van Dijk (1998b, pp. 61-63)

- a. Examining the context of the discourse: historical, political or social background of a conflict and its main participants
- b. Analyzing groups, power-relations and conflicts involved
- c. Identifying positive and negative opinions about Us versus Them
- d. Making explicit the presupposed and the implied
- e. Examining all formal structure: lexical choices and syntactic structure, in a way that helps to (de)emphasize polarized group opinions

Here we followed the above process firstly giving the background of newspaper whose ideologies are under investigation, then we compared the difference of their ideologies by checking their 'Us' versus 'Them' opinions and finally their formal structure, lexical or syntactical.

4. Introduction of the Newspapers under Investigation

In this section, we discuss about newspapers, their history, their ideological stances and their basic tenets. We selected two English newspaper of Pakistan and by comparing their editorials of three days (May 24, 2010, May 25, 2012 and May 27, 2012) and discussed their views of presenting the same thing with different lexical and syntactical choices and by applying CDA we are able to present their true ideologies.

4.1 Herald Group of Publications

The first newspaper, which we selected for research, is 'DAWN' newspaper published by Herald group of publications in Pakistan. The company was founded by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in 1941, its flagship publication, the daily Dawn, was first published in 1947 in already independent Pakistan. Dawn newspaper uses English language for its publication. Main tenets of dawn newspaper can be viewed as:

The Dawn publications are probably those who tried to interpret and follow more consistently the original vision of the man who is considered as founding father of the nation. Their main trademark, in fact, is a secular and tolerant approach to some of the most burning issues in Pakistani society. Because of this broadly perceived *super parts* approach, the group enjoys widespread respect as a credible, independent and neutral player. (Mezera and Sial, 2010, p 16)

4.2 Nawa-i-waqat Group of Publications

Established in 1940 by Hameed Nizami, one of the founding fathers of Pakistani journalism, Nawa-i-Waqat started its operations in Lahore. The first publication launched, was the

fortnightly journal *Nawa-i-Waqt*. In a few years, following independence, *Nawa-i-Waqt* came to represent the most conservative tendencies within Pakistani society, embracing the nationalist ideological discourse on which the country was being built. In an article that appeared in 1977, *Nawa-i-Waqt* was defined as the ‘self-appointed custodian of the ideology of Pakistan’, and, in the first five years of existence of the country, it ‘had hunted and pursued a remorseless campaign against all liberal trends and progressive forces in national life’. (Mezzera and Sial, 2010, p. 17)

The same broad definition of the group’s mandate can still be considered accurate today, as testified to by the various statements gathered in the authors’ interviews. Javed Siddique, editor of daily *Nawa-i-Waqt* Islamabad, refers in this regard to the policy, or editorial aims of his newspaper: first, to consolidate and promote the ideology of Pakistan, which is based on Islam and the ‘two nation’ theory; second, to promote the idea of Pakistan as an Islamic, democratic and welfare state; and third, to be sympathetic to Islamic states, including Palestine and Kashmir. The newspaper supports reconciliation with India, but ‘not at the cost of Kashmir’. It does not support the ‘so-called war against terrorism’, Pakistan supports it, ‘The [Taliban] militants do not regard *Nawa-i-Waqt* as a hostile newspaper’. (Mezera & Sial, 2010, p. 17)

Being an advocate of Pakistan, as an Islamic ideology, the group has been supportive of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), party in Pakistan and of right-wing political discourse from the very beginning. Gradually, it also comes under the influence of the Punjab establishment, yet it has been critical of military regimes in Pakistan. (Mezera & Sial, 2010, p.17)

5. Analysis of the Data

5.1 Sample # 1

The first article has been taken from the editorial of ‘The Nation’ published on May 24, 2012.

5.1.1 Background of the Article

Editorial is about the bloodshed that happened on 23rd may 2012 due to attack on Anti-Mahajir province rally by some unknown persons in Karachi. This rally was led by the leader of Awami Tehreek. Consequently, 11 people were killed and several injured.

Presentation of ideology on the above topic by ‘The Nation’ editorial:

“Though bloodletting has become a matter of routine for Karachi, thanks to the ruling coalition's misconceived greed in keeping their hold on power”

This kind of bloodshed is not new for Karachi as Karachi has rich history of such disasters but this time issue is completely new as according to editorial writer this kind of act has been started by federal government itself. The writer said ironically “thanks to the ruling coalition’s”. The federal government has already announced the division of Punjab province, and this disastrous event is the result of same event and the writer criticized the government for this stance, as the *Nawa-i-Waqt* group of publication is anti-government and PPP who is

ruling coalition right now in the country, that's why the writer started his article with direct criticism on government, rightly according to their ideology.

..... the leadership must beware that they would be sounding a death knell to the countries unity if they went ahead with further dividing it into more governing unit.

As in the introduction of this group of publication, it is mentioned that they are resolute to promote the ideology of Pakistan and if we critically examine the word 'beware', used by the editorial writer, under lexical choices, it is clear that if government keeps on dividing the country on the basis of language and ethnicity it will prove deadly and bring horrible results in the future. Therefore, the government should avoid these types of practices, which are not only harmful for Pakistan but also for its ideology.

Editorial of Dawn newspaper on the same issue of mohajir province controversy.

In the Dawn, the same issue appeared under the title of "Violence yet again". By applying CDA, we compare the presentation of this group with the previous one to reveal their different views on same issue, which shows their true ideology.

"a NEW and dangerous form of violence was seen in karachi on Tuesday ,when political rally was fired upon,leading to widespread act of arson....."

Although comment is on same topic as stated in 'the nation', but here, we see a complete change of presenting the same idea in its own way. If we observe their lexical choices and compare it with the previous one, it merely states the facts and provides information on the topic without offering any criticism as this newspaper group is known for its neutral background and is more credible in this sense.

.....and yet, given the fraught times we live in the police and rangers should have been extra vigilant.

Here writer of editorial is also giving suggestion by using the word 'should' but this suggestion is not given to government but to police and rangers whose duty is to protect people and writer is suggesting that they should be more active and vigilant so that this type of event might not happen again.

....Why could the police force not have been more alert?

Furthermore, in the same article writer is blaming the police force once again as this is their responsibility to maintain law and order situation in the country.

5.2 Sample # 2

The second article has also been taken from the editorial of 'The Nation' and the 'Dawn' published on May 27, 2012.

5.2.1 Background of the Issue

On 26th May, a bus was attacked by some unknown persons near Qazi Ahmad, Nawabshah. Seven people died in this unfortunate incident and this reaction seems to be a continuation of

previous attacks occurred at Gilgat and Mastaung earlier. The roots of these attacks go back into ethnic differences, as there is low level of tolerance in the country. The people who were killed belonged to Punjab, Khyber Pakthonkha and the killers belong to the group of people who are anti-Pakistani and want to split Pakistan.

5.2.2 Analysis of the Article

The article on the above-cited issue is labeled as ‘**More lawlessness**’ in the newspaper ‘The Nation’

The attack on a passenger bus on its way to Kohaat from Karachi that left 10 people dead and 25 injured others should wake up everyone responsible for maintaining the country’s security.

The article begins by providing information about the unfortunate incident and by using the word ‘should’ it gives a wakeup call to all those authorities who might have been responsible for this sad incident, the authorities responsible for mishap are either the government or security agencies or both. Giving wakeup call implies that they are already not attentive or vigilant that is why this happened. Further, the writer of article commented in this way,

... Like always, an inquiry has been initiated by the Federal Interior Minister, Mr Rehman Malik, which is the traditional practice that speaks volumes about the way his government approaches such serious incidents. The killers, as in previous cases, will remain at large.

Here the words ‘like always’ entail that such things also happened in the past and gained no importance and were left unnoticed. We can also infer that it has become a habit of stake-holders to speak a lot, but do nothing in real, and the same is expected from government this time, launching an inquiry becomes a traditional practice. This inquires keep on moving and killers remain free, as these proceedings are not taken seriously by the government, and in the result more lawlessness prevails in the country. These remarks are direct criticism on government as newspaper group is anti-government and leave no chance to criticize it.

5.2.3 DAWN Newspaper

The same issue is also addressed in the editorial of the Dawn and titled as ‘Bus Slaughter’. In the article, it runs,

From the violent strings over ‘Mohajir province’ to Friday’s bar-baric bus ambush, Sindhsfragile ethnic balance is being severely rocked.

This sentence is giving us the idea that recent attack on bus is the continuation of fragile ethnic situation in the Province, later in the same article writer keeps on providing us fact on the same issue, no personal remarks or no criticism is seen, merely stating the facts to make their news authentic.

Now see this sentence,

“Those who rule sindh _ the PPP and MQM _ must realize that if the situation degrades into ethnic conflict, they will be the biggest losers.”

In this sentence although writer is addressing ruling parties but there is no sign of criticism instead a realization for both partners that they must take the matter seriously otherwise it is a difficult situation for both parties to remain in the government and exercise their power.

5.3 Sample # 3

5.3.1 Background of the Article

This article has also been taken from the same editorial as cited above and it discusses another issue of Pakistan and India relationship, a neighbor but rival country.

5.3.2 Analysis of the Article

There is a negotiation between the two countries for visa liberation to their people but it seems failure because no obvious progress is observed at the moment and matter remains unresolved. In ‘the nation’ the article appear with the title of ‘**Pak-India ties**’

Talks between the two countries interior/home secretaries, prove futile as no sanction is granted to the people in visa regime, writer of the article declare Mr. Malik is responsible for this failure as stated in the article as,

Pakistan Interior Minister Rehman Malik attributed the failure to ink the agreement to the need to sort out certain important points at the political level ...

Writer used the words ‘attributed the failure’ that suggests that this failure is due to Mr Rehman Malik, who is not fully prepared for completion of visa liberation process.

Then, there are unsettled disputes haunting the bilateral ties and to cap them all is the core issue of Kashmir, a case of India’s betrayal of trust by renegeing on solemn commitments...

In the sentence above, the writer discussed that why these talks went futile, and narrated different contentious issue between the two countries, but as ‘The Nation’ holds a strong ideological stance on Kashmir issue, they leave no opportunity to advocate their ideology, as Kashmir is a bone of contention between the two countries and this issue is yet to be resolved to develop a trustful relation between the two countries, and The Nation considers India responsible for unsettling the issue.

The writer keeps on criticizing Indian government for its brutal attitude towards Kashmir and violation of human rights in the valley.

A recent report on human rights issued by the US State Department sharply criticized India for violation of human rights, violations in the Valley, pointing a finger at the Indian army for involvement in extra-judicial killings.

In this way Nawe-i-Waqat group of publication criticized India for its wrong doings in the

Kashmir valley .Their purpose of this is to show that without resolving such issue it is impossible to bring peace and normalization of the relations.

5.3.4 Dawn Group of Publications

The same article is discussed in the Dawn under the title ‘**Visa liberation**’

In the article, the writer merely presented the facts and remained neutral as it is the main tent of the Dawn started as,

The outcome of the talks between the Pakistan and Indian interior secretaries in Islamabad was disappointing as two sides had nothing positive to show.

Further the writer told us the history of relation between Pakistan and India and these countries were issuing liberal visa to their people but recently it stops due to some core issues like Mumbai attack.

The writer also consider Mr Malik responsible for delay in visa liberation but the tone is not criticizing as that on ‘the nation’

As for Mr Malik's suggestion, it has merely served to add to the delay.

Furthermore writer gives his opinion that its merely a dream to think of normal relations between the two countries because without the settlement of core issues like Siachin and Hafiz Saeed matter it's not possible to establish normal relations so these issues should be addressed and solved on priority basis otherwise these kind of table talks bear no fruit.

The presentation of thought is fairly neutral and unbiased and stress lay only on giving facts rather advocating a particular ideology.

6. Conclusion

The focus of this study is to investigate the ideological stance of two main Pakistan's English newspaper editorials, as newspaper editorials use to convey the ideology of their owner or groups. Our finding indicates that ‘The Nation’ or Nawa-i-Waqat group of publications is more conservative in presentation of thought, on the issues discussed above, this newspaper is more critical towards the PPP, who is also ruling the country Pakistan. By discussing three different issues, their ideology is clearly depicted that they strictly follow the ideology of Pakistan; that they are strict to two-nation theory and show their sympathies towards Kashmir and Palestine as they consider them suppressed entities. And we find the same ideology in the editorials discussed above, as it is palpable that these ideologies can be seen and observe only through critical eye as the writer plays with words to manipulate their ideas and these editorials play an important part to construct the opinion and ideology of their readers.

On the other hand, the ‘Dawn’ is neutral and liberal in its presentation of the facts and in its commenting on news. This group of newspaper does not have particular ideological stance to follow; their main purpose is to convey information in more objective way without being political biased or show any interest towards any particular group or person; so, it is more reliable and authentic in this sense.

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