Print Media Practices in the Representation of Political Discourse in Pakistan

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Abstract

Media discourse has been a major place for the discursive production of subjective realities. The present work is an attempt to find out how print media in Pakistan is constructing the political realities, and how power relations are maintained through which media power influences the political process. This study focuses on reporting practices of Pakistani English newspapers regarding the political speeches of prominent Pakistani political leaders. For this purpose reports from leading English newspapers namely, The News, Dawn, and The Express Tribune have been taken as representative texts for the coverage of the political speeches delivered by Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Imran Khan and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. Critical Discourse Analysis has been taken as a theory and method to study discursively the representation of political discourse in Pakistan. Therefore, some features of macro-structure and schematic structure like mitigation and intensification, overall organization of the texts, selection of quotations, beginning and ending of the media texts and placement of argumentation from van Dijk's Socio-cognitive Model of discourse analysis have been taken to analyze the print media reports. The present study explores a variety of discursive practices in the portrayal of the discourse of Pakistani politicians. Hence, those techniques employed by English print media in Pakistan influence political discourse that results in projecting and/or curtailing the image of the political figures. Consequently, the media discourse plays a critical role, in the overall political process, in shaping the public perception. Moreover, mainstream Pakistani English newspapers, at least those included in this study, construct and shape the political events according to their preferred agendas. As a result, they exercise their power to control and direct the minds of the readers.

Keywords: *Media discourse, political speeches, discursivity*

1. Introduction

Discourse presented in media has been a major source to produce discursivity in social as well as political spheres. On one hand, media text is enriched with private conversational idioms, slangs and more delicate cultural cues in language, and on the other, media discourse performs a critical role, with a legitimate authority, to convey information to the audience. It is established through various researches that media discourse

is not at all neutral and non-biased particularly against the representation it deals with (Fairclaugh, 1995). In contrast, media discourse portrays its own preconceptions towards establishing the relationship with subject and its audience (van Dijk, 1997).

Moreover, media discourse is branded to initiate the discourse on important national issues through selecting the statements, actions or achievements of major national political or social personalities and celebrities along with the phenomena in the surroundings discussing its pros and cons to the audience. Van Dijk (1997) is of the opinion that the launch, progression and sustenance of media discourse are most often touched with some embellishments, and it is maintained and determined by their own perspective and angle of the story. The present work is an attempt to find out how print media in Pakistan is constructing the political realities.

The present discussion is a way to answer the essential question about the structures of news discourse as opposed to all other varieties of discourses. Van Dijk (1997) is of the view that in English language, news story, as a term, leads the notion that news may be a particular kind of narrative. It is obvious that it differs from the rest of the stories in daily life or those narrated to children; therefore, different nature of news stories and how they are so, are important issues in general. However, stories about the political elite and their speeches acquire more importance because they generate a direct impact on the masses.

2. Media Discourse

Media discourse, with the dimension of its social representation, focuses upon the cognition of individuals in terms of long term memory that stores instinctively interpreted individual experiences in the form of mental models (van Dijk, 2007). Besides, there are more stable and permanent socially shared beliefs which are termed as social representations (Moscovici, 2001). Moreover, the socio-cultural knowledge shapes the essence of those beliefs, and allows us to meaningfully act, interact and communicate with other members of the same culture (van Dijk, 2009).

With another perspective, people are influenced and in response behave in accordance with that influence. It is perceived that if the attitude of people is influenced, there is no further need to reinforce them to act in accordance with these attitudes. For example, they will vote in favor of anti-terrorism policies, if they are influenced by terrorism. In van Dijk's view (2007) this kind of manipulation is also a discursive practice, and it influences cognitive as well as social dimensions. Therefore, it can be inferred that those strategies of discourse, which usually control socially shared beliefs, need intense attention. Van Dijk mentions generalization as one of these strategies. According to him, it generates an impact on the

mental models of the individuals leading to more generalized knowledge, attitudes, or ideologies.

2.1 Role of Media Power and Influence

The issues of media, regarding its role in the (re)production of powerful ideologies, hinges on a structure that generates concepts of influence and power (Bryant & Zillmann, 1986). The more power the media attains, the less freedom is attributed to the influenced audience. It is also vice versa as independence in utilizing media liberates the public, and media starts losing its control. This phenomenon is not a natural result of the logic and nature of power, rather, it is based on empirical inquiry about the manner through which media discourse influences mind, cognition and action in a particular situation.

It is now relevant to discuss media power in terms of the social power which is normally assumed by groups and institutions. Putting aside the coercive nature of power either of military and police on institutional level, or raping women and molesting children on individual level, social power, by and large, is identified as the control of actions along with control over access to resources by a dominant group or even individual. It means that control of action generally indicates decrease of freedom. By applying this notion to media, it can be inferred that the freedom of the media should be considered as power of the media (O'Keeffe, 2006).

Moreover, action can be defined in many ways and different factors are involved in this process. If intentions, reasons, objectives and goals may be taken as some parts in the overall definition of action, then, control of action means control of mind. This is the key factor in persuasive social power in general, and in media power in particular (van Dijk, 1988). On this ground van Dijk feels the need to understand cognitive processes and representations. In addition to this, cognitive approach presents insight into the structures, formation and strategies of cognition. Due to this very reason, it offers a foundation for an innovative understanding of the power of media in terms of persuasion (Reah, 2002).

Media biasness has been one of the most probed areas among researchers due to the very fact that newspaper data is judged through the news value paradigm. In this context, van Dijk (2007) is of the view that the biasness expected to be involved is stable across the newspaper sources, and that news value representing a stable professional worth is established. Some other scholars emphasize the influence of individuals on news selection. According to this perspective, media has individualized sensitivity concerning what constitutes news. Every newspaper has its own specific public with a particular mindset, and therefore, events are reported and covered according to it. Likewise, many participants in a gathering are

reported to be at a demonstration according to the police version, even though they are organizers. This representation is supposed to vary in keeping with the political orientation of that newspaper.

Researchers dealing with media discourse argue that the newspapers of a country reflect the political system wherein they are embedded, and, as a result, they give attention to specific institutions, personalities and their political action. In this context it is said further, as an example that American television concentrates on the activities of The White House with the angle of presenting the presidential system as better, as compared to the weak US political parties. On the other hand, Italian news focuses on political parties and their representation showing a strong party system as compared to an unstable and weak central government. This culturally colored media approach towards news predicts that coverage of events varies across newspapers with the factor that every newspaper has different public and different priority towards political systems.

How media influences political perception is evident through a number of studies that identify the power and influence of media to control public outlook in general, and political perceptions in particular (O'Halloran, 2010). Primarily, media decides subjects to cover for the presentation. In other words, it demonstrates power to set the public agenda according to its own priorities. At the next step, media elevates some issues of its interests over others. Moreover, media, specifically, influences constituents' successive evaluations of politicians and modifies the judgment criteria of politicians (Krosnick & Kinder, 1990). Nevertheless, the control of agenda setting and elevation are not the only powers media assumes since presentation issues and the linguistic choices are other issues of serious concern.

The media's choice of frame in different situations and for different personalities can influence the public for a creation of subjective realities (Carpentier, Servaes & Lie, 2003). It is also noteworthy that the opportunity for media to frame issues takes place from the media's skill to pick and choose from the narrative given by the politicians and pressure groups.

Subjectivity, particularly in media discourse, is mainly due to the ideological assumptions, and they provide a space for the unequal power relations. In this context, Althusser (1982) is of the view that they are the ideological apparatus of the bourgeois states, and their objective is to produce political consensus, political mobilization, and its legitimacy. It is argued that knowledge seeking is an act through which a subject positions himself/herself in the social environment to learn with the help of so many social networks.

On the other hand, linguistic analysis of the newspaper seems, very often, skeptical. The linguists at times try to control or structure a subtle manipulation to distort reality. In this context, White (1997) claimed that media persons restrict subjective interpersonal features in hard news reports, and they, through objective language, purport to be neutral and unbiased, particularly where formal language affords the appearance of neutrality. White further adds that impersonal register of this kind is but a rhetorical stratagem to aid the obfuscation of a reporter's subjectivity.

3. Statement of the Problem and Purpose

Pakistani English newspapers give a prominent space to the Pakistani political leaders' speeches, and in this way, leaders rely on media to influence the public perception. On the contrary, it is generally observed that the newspapers influence the Pakistani political structure utilizing their hidden power and reproduce a favored perspective. This study focuses on the practices of Pakistani English newspapers in organizing the reports regarding the political speeches of prominent Pakistani political leaders to identify how discursivity is produced to influence the masses.

4. Methodology

According to theorists, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) aims to investigate social inequality, how it is expressed and signaled, and how it is constituted and legitimized through discourse. Therefore, the concept of power in media discourse is the most relevant and dominant concern in CDA. This is why, CDA has been taken as a theory and method, both, for the present study.

One of the strengths of CDA is that it can be adapted to suit research aims. Therefore, any CDA framework preferably can be modified to get better and accurate results of the research (Fairclough, 1995). Therefore, for the analysis of the speech reports presented in English newspapers of Pakistan, some features from van Dijk's Socio-cognitive Model have been used in this study.

Van Dijk (1988) has shown a significant transition from analyzing text to discourse analysis. He analyses news text in terms of the structures of news, and considers the embedded social practices by creating a distinction in the structures of news discourse: macro and micro. Macro-structure, being the main area of the analysis of thematic structure, is of prime importance in the sense that the theme of a whole text can be identified (Fairclough, 1995).

Van Dijk's concepts of macro-structure and schematic structure are seen to produce texts, and the interpretation of these texts involves in identifying the underlying holistic structures that are intrinsic to the mental models, and reporters apply them in interpreting events.

Political speeches are delivered keeping the political situations in view, and the impact of their beginning and ending is carefully prepared to enhance or reinforce the impact on the listeners. In this context, discursivity in the interaction is essential to be identified to meet the objectives of this research.

With regard to the political speeches, it becomes more sensitive if they are written for specific events; every point is delivered carefully keeping in view the different perspectives; their depiction in the newspapers can influence content of the speech to create a particular version of reality. Therefore, overall organization of the text is the matter of concern in this study. The next element is how certain arguments are presented and what kind of impression is generated from them, and to what extent they are away from the intentions of the speaker. Moreover, certain points or issues can be mitigated by changing the place and squeezing the space in the text. Van Dijk's text schemata is concerned with the above mentioned issues.

To understand the role of Pakistani print media in the construction of specified version of political reality, the speech coverage reports of three Pakistani English newspapers have been selected: *The News, Dawn* and *The Express Tribune*. This selection is based on their circulation that determines their popularity and credibility in Pakistan. Three speeches, one delivered by Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif as a prime minister of Pakistan, and the second by Imran Khan as a prominent opposition leader of Pakistan, and the third by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Chairman Pakistan People's Party, have been selected. The reason behind this selection is that they chair the leading political parties in Pakistan and acquire the most powerful positions politically. All of them have been given prominent space on the front pages in national newspapers during 2014. All of the speeches are taken as representative texts as it is an established practice in CDA, which gives liberty to the researcher in the text selection.

5. Data Analysis, Findings and Discussion

5.1 Text A

First speech selected for the analysis was delivered by Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif to the UN on September 24, 2014. The analysis of the news reports is as under:

i.   The interactional control in *The News* has been maintained by starting with the issue of Kashmir and relations with India in 360 words whereas the speaker discussed it in the middle of the speech using only 200 words. The reason for additional words is the quotations and personal comments on statements. For example:

'Nawaz Sharif said Pakistan was ready to work with India for the resolution of this problem through negotiations. "Our support and advocacy of the right to self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir is our historic commitment and a duty as a party to the Kashmir dispute," he said.'

The beginning constructs an impression that, perhaps, this whole speech is about Kashmir. The report ends with the speaker's commitment to the UN in assisting the entire "lofty" goal to make the planet Earth a better place, as is in the actual expression. But the report has represented it in a more emphatic way as certain quotations are also presented to put weight in the arguments. The report has been organized by starting with Kashmir issue spreading it to almost one third of the report, moving on to the Afghanistan issue, drug trafficking, resolve against terrorism and peace keeping efforts at international level, a resolve to keep nuclear program safe and secure, and then the acknowledgement of the UN plans and efforts to keep this planet a safe place.

ii.   *Dawn* starts the report with the issue of Kashmir and relations with India in around 580 words. The reason for the use of additional words is that this report has mentioned many related issues as an elaboration that the speaker has not discussed in his speech. The newspaper has added those pieces of information intentionally at the cost of omission of many things that the speaker has actually voiced. One such example is as under:

"Indian officials had warned Pakistan earlier this week that raising the Kashmir dispute at the UN General Assembly could further harm bilateral ties as New Delhi was against internationalizing this issue. India, they argued, preferred bilateral talks on this and other issues concerning Pakistan."

The report ends with a statement that the speaker has discussed many important issues without mentioning a single one. The sentence is: "The prime minister covered a number of key issues in his speech but avoided the emergence of the Islamic State militant group in Syria and Iraq." To mention that the speaker has not discussed "the emergence of the Islamic State militant group in Syria and Iraq" is meaningful when the first part of the sentence is using a generalizing technique to avoid mentioning the issues the speaker covered in his speech. It has shaped the report move towards the particular issue.

The report is organized by starting with the issue of Kashmir and Pak-India relations spreading it to almost three fourth of the report, then the rest of the report is about the Afghanistan issue. It seems that the whole speech is about Kashmir and Afghanistan.

iii.   The beginning of the report published in *The Express Tribune* starts with the issue of Kashmir and relations with India in around 280 words. The beginning connects his speech with the speaker's previous efforts, not from his present speech, on Kashmir issue by using mainstream ideological repertoire. This addition has been made at the cost of omitting a lot of the speech content.

The context has been set to present the quotation in the report, and this technique makes the issue stronger than the actual wording. Therefore, it starts with a powerful opening through which the issue of Kashmir is highlighted in the report. The report ends with the issue of new permanent seats in the UN Security Council which is quite relevant to say at the right forum; however, this report has mentioned it at the end. The arguments related with the new seats, articulated in the speech, have not been presented despite the fact that it is also related with the "peaceful neighboring in South Asia."

The report is organized by starting with the issue of Kashmir and Pak-India relations spreading it to almost one third of the report, and then the rest of the report is about the Afghanistan issue, anti-terrorism efforts and sacrifices, international issues like Gaza and Palestine, the emergence of new militant groups in the middle east, extremism, nuclear control, a peaceful world, and new seats in the UN Security Council.

5.1.1 Discursivity in Reports
Though the speech of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif is of around 1960 words, the reports in *The News, Dawn* and *The Express Tribune* are around1300, 870 and 970 words respectively. On Kashmir issue (around 200 words in actual speech), *The News*, *Dawn* and *The Express Tribune* used 360, 580 and 280 words respectively.

There is discursivity in the interaction of the text along with the examples of mitigation and intensification in all the reports. Beginning of all the reports of the speech paves a way to construct a patriotic and committed impression of the speaker and the selection of arguments contributes to this impression. All the reports seem to have intensified the issue of Kashmir in the report. There are so many direct quotations in these reports, and they have been used to highlight the issue of Kashmir in particular and others in general. This style of presenting the quotes provides a prominent space to the speaker portraying a strong, patriotic and powerful leader since emotional parts of the speech have been selected for quotes and arguments. However, in some cases, the placement of arguments and the selection of the quotes do not reflect the main stream ideas and angles of the speech.

5.2 Text B

The second speech selected for the analysis was delivered by Imran Khan in Islamabad, D-Chawk, on 30th of November, 2014. The analysis of the news reports is as under:

I.   *The News* starts the report with the main announcement of the speech with a comment over it placing the main demand in the conditional clause and its reaction in the independent clause:

'Spelling out his Plan C, PTI Chairman Imran Khan on Sunday threatened to bring all of Pakistan to a grinding halt on December 16 if rigging in the 2013 election was not probed within four to six weeks under the Supreme Court.'

This beginning of the reporting of the speech paves a way to construct a powerful reactionary impression of the speaker. The report ends by including comments of other speakers by providing the same image. The report ends by quoting other speakers in the report, but the image portrayed in the beginning continues till the end through selection as well as placement of the arguments.

The report is organized by starting with "shut-down," then rigging election and looting the wealth, again shut-down of the whole country, reasons of the sit-in and judicial commission, again shut-sown, argument against *Mulana Fuzalur Rehman*, then, electoral system and conditions of hospitals and corruption in country, and at the end views of other PTI leaders who spoke in the occasion earlier than Imran Khan.

II.   With reference to the interactional control, the report published in *Dawn* starts with the main portion or announcement of the speech with a comment over it. The beginning has been constructed by placing the argument in a phrase, a "threat" in principal clause and then main "demands" in the conditional clause:

'Challenging the government to return to the negotiating table, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf chief Imran Khan threatened to "shut down the country" if his demands were not met.'

This beginning shows a powerful, reactionary but justified impression of the speaker. The report ends with the inclusion of comments of the participants of the rally by providing the same great image of the speaker: "Sumiya, who had brought her two daughters to attend the rally, said she believed Mr. Khan was the only leader who could change the country for the better." The selection of the arguments and their placement also gives the same image.

The report is organized by starting with "shut-down" then reasons of "Plan C" and insistence on the judicial commission, schedule of the shut-down, flexibility in demand, electoral rigging and its responsibility, and the other half of the report is about the gathering and supporters.

III.   The report published in *The Express Tribune* is also a direct reporting of the speech starting with the main announcement of the speech with a comment over it. It seems a powerful opening by placing compliment in a phrase, then a threat in the principal clause and demands, in a justified way, in the conditional clause: accepted.

The impression that the speaker is a popular leader has been maintained through various linguistic techniques including the selection of the arguments in the course of the text. The report ends with a popular argument of wastage of public money.

The report is organized by mentioning the arguments of "shut-down," its schedule, colorful and cheerful activities in the rally, again the schedule of plan-C, logic and previous development regarding the demand, details of electoral rigging and its responsibility, poor performance and priorities of the government, health conditions in the country, refutation of derogatory remarks, PPP and PML-N partnership, and lastly, misuse of the public money. This organization is supporting to create a justified environment in favor of the speaker.

5.2.1 Discursivity in Reports

Imran Khan's speech of thirty nine minutes duration, was reported in *The News, Dawn* and *The Express Tribune* in around 950, 720 and 870 words respectively. It means that the report in *Dawn* is shorter than that of *The News* and *The Express Tribune*. Moreover, all the three reports include a picture with a caption on the front page with the exception that *The News* has given the image of the speaker only, and the other two newspapers gave an image of the huge audience.

The beginning in all the reports starts with a direct reporting selecting the main portion or announcement of the speech with a comment over it. *The News* gives an annoyed and aggressive impression of the speaker in the beginning whereas *Dawn* and *The Express Tribune* construct a strong and rightful impression of the speaker.

The above mentioned conflicting image with a significant diversity continues in the selection of the arguments and choice of quotes in the sense that some reports have stressed conflicting issues showing an aggressive and violent image with an inflexible attitude in the content and some others have projected the emotional, rightful and promising angles of the contents of the speech.

5.3 Text C

      The last speech selected for the analysis was delivered by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari at Garhi Khuda Bukhsh, Larkana, on 4th of April, 2014. The analysis of the news reports is as under:

I.   The interactional control in *The News* has been established by taking up a metaphoric statement, the speaker used as a rhetorical device. The reference is made to the process of talks between the government and the Taliban in the very beginning of the speech, and the speaker's view is presented with full metaphoric force quite evident in the lexical choices. It provides a clue to how this report is taking the whole content of the speech, though this was also one of the main concerns of the speaker:

      'Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday said sighted persons were asking the blind to lead them in the name of talks, adding that his party would not bow down to savages and tolerate their dictatorship.'

      The report begins with the popular issue of terrorism, taken up in the middle, and the speaker's doubts about links between Punjab government and the terrorists are expressed.

      The end of this report is significantly important in the sense that this report is adding its comments with terms like "observed with reverence and respect," "Thousands . . . paid tributes," and "legendary leader."

      The report is organized by stating the speaker's statements against the talk process of the government with the Taliban; the link of terrorists is sought in the government's corridors. The report is comprised of the speaker's criticism on the government and its policies. However, link between both the issues is maintained by elaborating the speaker's views about Bhutto's philosophy and an ideology (see appendix).

      This report has used direct quotes as arguments to put more weight in the content, and at some places, it employs general terms, for example: "the nation had reached a point of history", "nation has buried a man" where the term *nation* has been used to create subjective reality. The selection of arguments seems a favor to the speaker

      'Lamenting the privatization policy, Bilawal said the nation's house was being auctioned without taking it into confidence. "If the government cannot run the country, does this mean we should sell it?" he asked.'

      The participial phrase in the beginning has set a specific perspective provided by this report and not the contents presented later.

II.   *Dawn* has chosen the essence of the speech to start with. The reference has been made to the process of talks between the government and the Taliban, and the speaker's view is presented in a quote making the beginning powerful: 'PPP Patron-in-Chief Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has

criticized the government's dialogue policy and said "terrorists are not Muslims".'

The beginning is a combination of direct and indirect reporting of the speech and the same tone is maintained in the next two paragraphs. The report has given, in the above mentioned example, a generalized statement in the initial clause and it has used a quotation in the other, which has validated the earlier statement. The issue of "terrorism" is again taken up in the middle of the report and the speaker's doubts against links between the Punjab government and the terrorists are expressed.

The report ends with mentioning the names of the other leaders who spoke that day, but before that the main points of Asif Ali Zardari's speech have been presented and the selected contents give the democratic and the diplomatic view about the speaker in the report.

The report is organized by stating strong statements of the speaker against the government talk process with the Taliban. Further it has selected the speaker's criticism on the government and the need to follow Bhutto's vision of Pakistan.

This report has used many direct quotes as arguments to put more weight in the content, for example: 'Referring to the criticism of Sindh festival, he said that if "we have to fight this mindset".' However, only on a few places this report has made implicit information explicit by using generalization technique.

III.   The interactional control in the report published in *The Express Tribune* has been established by taking up the speaker's anti-government statement. The term "*peace initiative"* is a reference made to the process of talks between the government and the Taliban in the very beginning of the report.

It is, therefore, established that the beginning of the reporting of the speech starts with an issue continued in the next paragraphs. The report ends with the mentioning of Zardari's worries about the present condition, and a link has been established by: 'Echoing Bilawal's statements, he said, "Martyrs never die! Long live Bhutto!"'The report collects the speaker's views against the government talk process with the Taliban and criticism on Taliban. Overall the report is divided into three parts. The other two are divided by heading:

- "Drought-hit Thar is intolerable"
- "Zardari worried about present conditions"

Dialogue process and Taliban, being the first issue, is linked up with the PPP's founder Z.A. Bhutto and his vision; the report also mentions the speaker's mother as a challenge for Taliban. The second part of this report

puts responsibility on the "former chief minister, Arbab Gulam Rahim." The arguments related "personalization" and the "gift of $1.5 billion" are also included in this part. The third focuses Zardari's concern over the problems of Muslim world.

This report has used direct quotes as arguments to add more weight to the content, for example:

'The Muslim world was faced with difficulties we stood with them, but we did not put ourselves in danger. "Today we need to make all efforts to save Pakistan and bring an end to prevailing sectarianism in the country," he said.'

The arguments in this report have been placed to give favor to the speaker or the report takes a position placing the arguments, and reporting seems a reason to favor the content at the start of many paragraphs.

5.3.1 Discursivity in Reports

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari spoke around thirty nine minutes, but has been reported in *The News, Dawn* and *The Express Tribune* in around 700, 780 and 550 words respectively. Moreover, all the reports have included a picture, with caption, of the speaker on the front page. The report of *The News* shows a picture of the speaker, in which he is shown addressing the audience along with a picture of Z.A. Bhutto in the background representing a particular ideology, which was further enhanced by adding party slogans in the reports.

The beginning in the reports of *Dawn* and *The Express Tribune* is a combination of direct and indirect reporting. The report in *The News* starts with a direct reporting maintaining it in the next paragraph using different terms and metaphors. This issue of "terrorism" is again taken up in the middle of the speech. All three reports seem to construct a strong political impression of the speaker. Moreover, the arguments in these reports seem to be placed to give favor to the speaker, as such arguments or reporting seems a reason to favor the content. Moreover, the placement of the arguments and the selection of quotations from the speeches of the speakers, provide a strong clue on how the image is conveyed through discursive practices and how the truth is constructed.

5.4 Prominent Features of Media Reports

The common practices of all the reports regarding the control, interactional control, are quite significant in the sense that the placement and the sequence of arguments are not the same in most of the cases. The order of the speech is not followed in reporting of the speeches. This format suits to generate the headline different from the others. In this regard, the finishing and the ending of the report seem important and discursivity is

identified in this regard. As far as the linguistic angle is concerned, some reports do not start with the direct reporting which means that a specific angle has been set before the reporting starts.

The most striking fact identified during the analysis is that intensification is produced by giving priority to the argument and on many occasions arguments have been repeated in the next paragraph of the report. However, the element of repetition is not a very common device. To produce this impact, the element of placing direct quotes is very prominent.

Arguments, in case with the issue of mitigation, have been put in the later paragraphs on a few occasions but the most striking element is that such points in some cases, have not been included in the report at all. It is an overwhelming impression during the analysis that omission of the points from the speeches is a very common practice. Perhaps it is one of the main factors that many linguistic devices are not employed in presenting the unfavorable arguments in the portrayal of the political speeches.

The reports used far less words than the words or the points delivered by the speakers on certain issues. But interestingly, on the national issues, this is quite opposite as the reported words are more than in the actual speech. For example, the PM used around 200 words on Kashmir in the UN speech, but all the newspapers used far more words. It means that the behavior of all the newspapers is the same on national and ideological issues, and they employ certain discourse strategies to enhance the national impact in their reporting.

6. Conclusion

This study has revealed some significant tendencies and patterns in the media discourse related to political speeches in the context of Pakistan. For instance, the order of the contents of speeches is normally not followed in the reporting of the speeches, and this practice of the newspapers provides a substantial space to produce discursivity in the process of meaning making through media discourse in Pakistani newspapers. Moreover, exclusion, beside inclusion, is a very significant feature of the Pakistani newspapers' reporting style. Exclusion of contents, according to the choice and priority of each newspaper, is very common practice.

Furthermore, quotations are used as a strong tool in changing or creating perception in political reports as more emphasis can be placed through quotations on the point the speaker has given least attention to. Moreover, the number of quotes in a report impacts on the overall impression of the speaker. As the number increases, the impression of the speaker's contents gets stronger.

In short, in the light of above arguments, the present study confirms that media discourse employs a variety of discursive practices in the portrayal of discourse of Pakistani politicians. These techniques shape the political discourse, which results in projecting and/or curtailing the image of the political figures. Consequently, the media discourse actively participates in the overall political process. On the other hand, mainstream Pakistani English newspapers, at least those included in this study construct and shape the political events according to their preferred agendas. As a result, they exercise their power to control and direct the minds of the readers.

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Appendix

1.   Links for the Reports on Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's Speech
   a.   https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/640702-world-community-bound-to-resolve-kashmir-issue-pm
   b.   https://www.dawn.com/news/1134604/pm-reiterates-stance-on-kashmir-in-un-speech
   c.   https://epaper.tribune.com.pk/DisplayDetails.aspx?ENI_ID=11201412280001&EN_ID=11201412280001&EMID=11201412280001

2.   Links for the Reports on Imran Khan's Speech
   a.   https://www.dawn.com/news/1148040/imran-threatens-nationwide-shutdown
   b.   https://tribune.com.pk/story/799978/islamabad-rally-pti-unveils-plan-c/
   c.   https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/641973-entire-country-to-be-shut-down-on-dec-16-imran

3.   Links for the Reports on Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's Speech
   a.   https://www.dawn.com/news/1097872
   b.   http://bhuttolegacyfoundation.com/bhutto/blind-being-followed-in-the-name-of-talks-bilawal/
   c.   http://bhuttolegacyfoundation.com/bhutto/blind-being-followed-in-the-name-of-talks-bilawal/

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