

**Balochistan Journal of Linguistics**

**ISSN-No. 2312-5454**

**(Volume 09)**

**2021**



**Department of English Language & Linguistics,  
Faculty of Languages and Literature,  
Lasbela University (LUAWMS) Uthal, Balochistan,  
Pakistan**

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Balochistan Journal of Linguistics is a journal published annually by the Department of English Language and Linguistics, Lasbela University, Uthal, Balochistan. It accepts papers for consideration on any aspect of theoretical and applied linguistics. The authors are requested to send their papers according to the following guidelines.

**I. All manuscripts in English should follow the following format:**

The first page should contain title; author(s)'s name(s), affiliation, E-mail address; and abstract of 150-350 words, followed by three to five key words, main text, acknowledgment, endnotes, and references in subsequent pages. Key words should be given in italics.

**II. Manuscripts in English should use the following style for headings and subheadings:**

- 1.
- 1.1
- 1.1.1
- 1.1.2
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- 2

The main heading should be written bold in font size 14. All other headings should be written bold in font size 12. DONOT underline any headings at all.

**III. Tables, figures, and maps should have headings and be numbered consecutively and should be clearly presented. Notes and sources should be placed under each table and figure. Photo will be treated as figures.**

**Format**

Use Letter size paper with Times New Roman writing style font size 12 for the main text with line spacing 1.5 and 10 for the abstract with 1.15 line spacing. Left margin should be 3.5 but all other margins should be 2.5 mm. Tables and figures should not be split on two pages.

**Other requirements**

Give one paragraph introduction of all authors in five to seven sentences (for each author) describing their educational background and research achievements in a separate file. But do not use hyperlinks.

**Plagiarism**

Authors should submit similarity index along with the manuscripts of the papers. They are also required to submit an affidavit declaring that the material in the paper is their own and it has not already been published. Quotes should be properly acknowledged.

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- 1) Use APA style of referencing.

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# Dehumanization of Trans-Queers on Media: A Visual Analysis

Asma Iqbal<sup>1</sup>, Farah Iqbal<sup>2</sup>, Mohammad Naveed Arshad<sup>3</sup>

## Abstract

*The present article aims to analyze the visuals of transgenders by Pakistani media. The most popular movie, BOL was selected for visual analysis. All the events were discussed briefly that how trans-genders were dehumanized in Pakistan by the media. The media always portrays the existing culture of the society. Kress and Leeuwen's modal were used to analyze the visuals because it is a strong tool to analyze the images. Gaze vector and salience have been used to study the visuals of trans-genders. Moreover, the present study reveals that trans-genders were badly dehumanized, and they are not able to establish themselves financially because of society. People abuse them, use them, and never allowed them to be respectful members of society. The researcher also suggests some techniques for the positive portrayal of trans-genders by media based on Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) model. The media should stop presenting them negatively and the trans-genders must be able to get their basic rights of living as a supreme court of Pakistan also allow them. The media should teach people, to show some respect and let them live and enjoy their lives.*

**Keywords:** Transgenders, Gaze, Vector, Salience, Dehumanization, Visuals.

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## 1. Introduction

Who am I? The very basic question asked by educated people just to enjoy the answer or to feel trans-queers ashamed. This is a cruel reality that trans-queers are facing problems every day based on their gender-specific (categorized as no-gender) issues and the behavior of the educated community towards them, the way people treated and insulted the trans-queers by asking such questions in public gatherings, on squares, or anywhere. These are not generalized statements, (like who you are? Look she is a man, etc.) but the real experiences of the trans-queers in Pakistani culture based on interviews taken in the media (print and electronic) domain. The same is the case with media representation like Zahid Ahmed in Zahy Naseeb, or the movie Bol. Furthermore, the relevance of quality (the way they are presented) and quantity (number of trans-queers on media with the reference of their total population) both are considered a major issue in the representation of trans-queers in media (Jackson McLaren, 2020). And if we look at the big screen, cinema, the societal behavior can also be observed in the movie Bol where the family hides the identity of trans-queer from society. The true picture of the society has been presented in the movie and also raised some questions at the end. The fictional character of trans-queers or trans-genders is opposite against their real-life experiences in multiple dramas (conflict between researches {Media portray them positively} and their daily life experiences).

There is a strong relationship between the things which the media represents is culture. According to Jackson McLaren (2020), there are four multiple ways through which this strong relationship can be studied. The very first way to study that relationship is to select multiple characters having different stories for their audience. The second aspect is to study the cultural impact on it. The interpretations are based on Pakistani culture. It also permits the viewers to study or to check what's going on in society. Thirdly, the way people are communicating in society and how they challenge the cultural mainstream. Lastly, the nature of portrayals can be counterbalanced by presenting the different portrayals of a similar gathering.

Prejudice has been created against trans-queers by using different kinds of media, especially in past (Jessica N. Jobe, 2013). There is still an impact of the criminal act against trans-queers in our minds. People are not aware of the feelings and moods of trans queers. Medical specialists are not interested to help them in overcoming their issues.

They always face social stereotypes like (He is a woman, she is a man,), etc. This is not a story of the eastern world, but still same is the case with the western world (Jackson Taylor McLaren, 2018) and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, few human rights organizations are working for the rights of trans queers all over the world (Jessica N.Job, 2013). Trans-queers are facing social abuse and they have grown up with the concept that it's their fault (gender issue) and they are supposed to hide it from others (like in the movie BOL) if they want to spend a normal life. Like the sister murdered her trans-gender sibling because people abused her sexually and the father just wants that trans-gender to be a son. He sent him out for a job and people harassed him sexually. At the end of the movie when the sister was hanged, she died by leaving behind a question mark on the society we are living in that why parents give them birth if they are not able to take care of their kids if they are not physically fit. The present study analyzed the different ways of presenting trans-queers in media. Instead of analyzing their quantity (How much they are presented), We have analyzed the way how they are portrayed and what kind of discourse has been emerging in the mind of the viewers just because of that portrayal.

### **1.1 Historical perspective**

The media representation of trans-queer is analyzed in this study but the reason why media represent them in this way is a big question. How societal behavior involves in it. Aroosa Kanwal (2020) in her research, describes the historical perspective of trans-queers with special reference to Pakistani culture and how they are respected and considered a spiritual being in the subcontinent. In the mid-evil ages, trans-queers were respected too and specially awarded some political positions (Ayalon, 1999; Pamment, 2010; Reddy, 2005). Britain after establishing its roots in the subcontinent changed this concept. They were considered criminals, according to the criminal tribe act of 1871. After that, trans-queers started facing social abuse and shaming. They took their positions and with time the only task which trans-queers can perform was just as dancers and beggars. They were considered spiritual beings having some divine powers. Kanwal (2020) studied two dramas and how these two Pakistani serials try to break the stereotypical role of trans-genders in Pakistani society.

Faris A. Khan (2009) also compiled a study in which he discussed the activists and non-activist role of trans-queers regarding their social stability. He took the sample from Karachi and studied how they fight for their rights. According to this study, trans-queers desired limited incorporation from the state and sought their conditions and terms. Activists trans-queers also started to work on their legal rights. Over time the population

of trans-queers was increasing. Erin Kilbride (2015) in his research claimed that there are almost 80,000 to three lac trans-genders in Pakistan. In 2009, the supreme court of Pakistan said that the trans-genders of Pakistan must get equal opportunities for living and jobs like other genders. Trans-genders always face social abuse, even from the literate community of Pakistan. For the last few decades, multiple dramas in the media, and few people are trying to establish a positive discourse regarding trans-genders. In 2018, another act (Trans-gender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018) is passed by the Supreme court in which trans-genders are allowed to get passports, licenses, and jobs.

The law has been passed that human beings should not be dehumanized by anyone, based on their body, color, race, poverty, or by any climate issue (Paulus Kaufmann, 2011). The same is the case with trans-genders. The act has been passed through which they can get their rights in maximum countries. As in Pakistan, the law is there by which they can get the facilities like normal human beings. Based on the theory of dehumanization by Herbert Kelman's (1973) is that humanness has two features: "identity" (i.e., a perception of the person "as an individual, independent and distinguishable from others, capable of making choices") and "community" (i.e., a perception of the person as "part of an interconnected network of individuals who care for each other"). When a target's agency and embeddedness in a community are denied, they no longer elicit compassion or other moral responses and may suffer violence). Kteily, Hodson, Bruneau (2016) describes dehumanization as prejudice and aggression present in society. In all societies and cultures, there is always a group of people who are facing dehumanizing acts performed by other communities or social groups. People are dehumanized based on their gender, color, social status, etc. These dehumanizing acts disturb the balance of society and raise aggression among the dehumanized people. People become more violent to get their rights if they are dehumanized for a longer time.

Similarly, according to Butler (2004) if someone lost their identity as a human or is considered sub-human in any society then no one can stop the social injustice and victimization of those sub-human beings. Trans-genders had lost those features which declare them human just because of the reason that people consider them others. This concept of others (in-equality in a society based on gender issues) insults them and took their basic rights. If any group of people considers as others in any society then that group faced injustice in all the aspects of their life. People don't consider them humans and there are very few opportunities for them to get their social status, job, etc. there is a strong

injustice in every aspect of their life.

The present study analyzed the visuals taken from the movie BOL where the societal attitude is also shown. Moreover, the study also investigates images of trans-genders' roles presented in the movie BOL. The movie has been selected based on its popularity and the role of trans-genders presented in it. Multiple short events happened in this movie and visuals from every event (related to the trans-queers) have been selected for the visual analysis and the background has also been explained by the researcher. The present study majorly filled the gap of visual analysis of trans-queers and focus on gaze, vector, and salience. How these concepts are generated and what they conveyed to the layman community about trans-queers. The present study aims to highlight the importance of visuals and will also suggest some ways to show positivity if there is not.

### **1.2 Gaze, Vector, and Salience**

A vector is a line that leads your eye from one element to another. A vector may be a visible line or an invisible one. It can be created by such things as against, pointing fingers, or extended arms. They may be objects or parts of objects (such as arms, legs, a pole, the side of a house) or invisible lines such as the direction of gaze from a represented person's eyes to another person or object. Gaze refers to where the figure in the image is looking. Salience refers to (focal points)- The element/s in an image that stands out and attracts the viewer's attention, it refers to the feature in a composition that most grabs your attention.

Semantic vector space (SVS) has been studied by many researchers. Jean-François Chartier (2018) compiled an article in which he explores the SVS for computational semiotics. He studied this phenomenon and checked what type of semiotic studies or analyses can be done under this. He majorly focused on three types of semiotic analysis that is modeling, componential, and paradigmatic analysis. He concluded that SVS provides a strong framework under which we can analyze different data set by the reference of semiotics.

With the reference of the semiotics and gaze another study has been compiled where discourse is also involved by Tan Hai Ly and Chae Kwan Jung (2015) in which they analyze the images of two advertisements and especially talked about the gaze and vector. The vector is formed when the image is looking towards the audience. The participant and the viewer are connected at an imaginary level and the relationship is formed based on the gesture (if present) and facial expressions of the participants. He also presented

some features to study the gestures and facial expressions and the relationship between the viewer and participant, which are as follows: Smile: Asks viewers to enter a relation of social affinity, Cold stare: Asks the viewer to relate to the participant as an inferior, Seductive pout: Asks the viewer to desire the participant, Looking up leading: Asks viewer for pity, Finger pointed at a viewer: Grabs the viewer's attention, invite the viewer to come closer, Defensive gesture: Asks viewer to stay away.

Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen (2015) composed an article in which they discussed the grammar of color and different colors are used for communication in different cultures. Behind the grammar of color, culture plays a vital role. They discussed color as a semiotic resource that performs multi-functionality. Modulation, differentiation, purity, saturation, hue, and value are considered the features of grammar and color and also known as distinctive features according to Jakobson and Halley's theory. The traditional sense of different color usage in advertisements was also discussed and analyzed in this article.

Toke Riis Ebbesen (2017) studied salience, in which he claimed that the functional aspect of semiotics has been ignored till now. In his article, he mentioned few theorists (Prieto, 1972; Buysens, 1970; Bonta 1979,1980; Guldberg,1992) who also said that people mostly work on material objects, designs, and other such things and forgot to assume the behavior and communication process among the human beings. He described that in the digital world, everything can be interpreted as a sign instead of material objects and even a spoken or a written language can also be interpreted as a sign. He focused to differentiate different modes of human language that how human beings are communicating either their mode is inter-action, symbolic, or indicative. He also focused on the understanding of signs and claimed that nothing can be understood specially presented on media if the viewers are not familiar with the sign system. He also exemplifies the things and highlighted the importance of signs that how signs are important to know the hidden ideologies and meanings behind the communication, materials, and other things.

*Anna I. Corwin's (2017)* research has been compiled to study the semiotic structures of gender-queer. Their communication has been analyzed semiotically that how they communicate and what signs they use in their communication. The research also explains those features which change with time. The research also highlights the maintenance of a binary gender system in the daily routine life of gender-queer. Thai scholar also studied

the images of trans-genders which were published in print media. The author claimed that such kind of images of homosexual people or gender-queer is used as a discursive device just to raise consciousness in Thai society. In this research, only three cases were covered which are on 'hype' at that time. Three types of gender *im*-balancement were discussed in this article, homosexual, transgender, and gender-queers. All three cases were analyzed with the *social-political context* of Thai society. The researcher *relates* them with the cultural critique or Thai *Orientalism* and how Thai media *hides* high profile trans-genders and homosexuals.

In the present study, I am also investigating the images of trans-genders/ gender queers semiotically. How are they presented by the media? The researcher analyzed the gaze, Vector, and how have colors/fonts and headings have been used to create salience within each of the images. All the visuals collected from Pakistani Movie Bol have been analyzed in the sociocultural such as Pakistani culture: dress coats, make-ups, slogans, etc. In multiple TV dramas and society, trans-queers are begging or dancing in the streets just to earn money. The general concept in society, about the trans-queers, is still the same that they have some divine powers. So, the majority of the people still respect them and give them money when they dance at events and begging in front of them. The researcher will also suggest some techniques by following them their social image can be improved in-front of the layman community.

Transgender individuals occupy a wide range of locations within the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality. Due to the variety of transgender identities and the continued convolution of their locations on various continuums, transgender bodies on screen have been subjected to a variety of representations. Isolating various transgender narratives within the corpus of popular cinema reveals trends in trans body representations. Tracing the history of trans bodies in film from early instances of onscreen cross-dressing to the unforeseen popularity, the struggle for compassionate and realistic portrayals of transgender characters has not been without setbacks. Even though their presence threatens ruling ideology, mainstream popular cinema has recently and reluctantly conceded a small number of realistic portrayals of transgender characters. Although the history of transgender representations has been fraught with trivialization and demonization, popular cinema appears to be making room for realistic transgender characters. Therefore, the present study aims at analyzing presently, what media is conveying through visuals and this issue has been

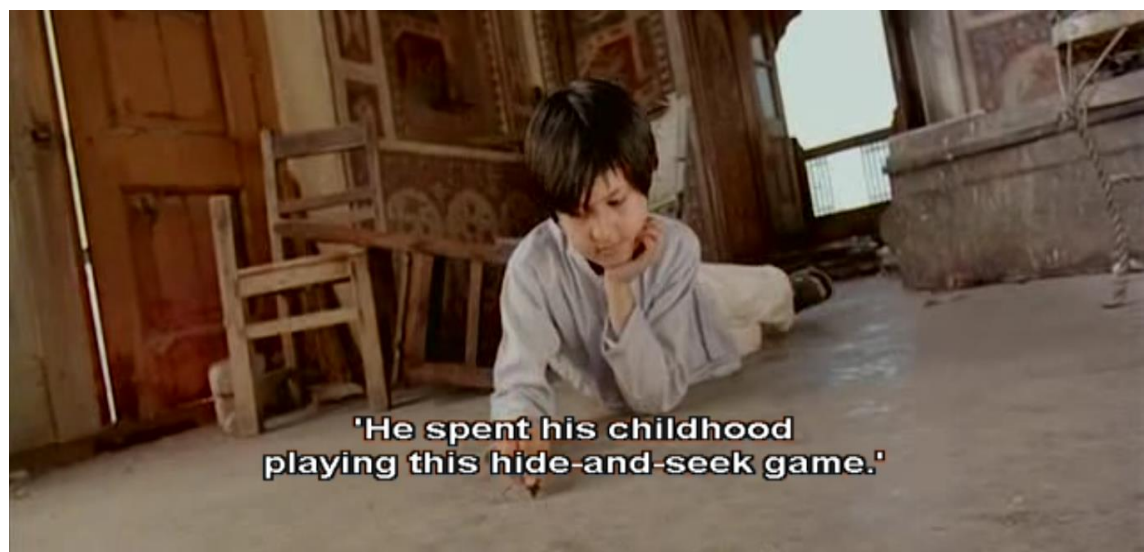


highlighted in the movie Bol which was broadly presented on the cinema screen and received many awards. Besides, the hidden tactics used in visuals representation and what effect they left on society have also been investigated. What certain visuals of trans-genders have been portrayed in the movie? How trans-genders are dehumanized via visuals in media? What strategies can be adopted to present positive visuals of trans queers in media?

## **2. Analysis and Discussion**

When the identity of any human being is legitimized either physical social or psychological that class lost their human features because of this violence or discrimination Herbert Kelman (1973) and it becomes a social practice over time and people don't want to add them in any human class. Trans-genders in Asia were struggling hard to get their basic rights and many activist movements were formed. The Supreme court of Pakistan also established the rule of their rights but still, they are not able to get it socially. Media always establish their roots in the ground realities. The way people treat trans-genders in their normal life, the same culture is presented on TV channels. As far as visuals are concerned then they are just spreading the negativity and showed them as others who don't have any right to live or spent their life like normal human beings as other genders do.





### ***Image 1, 2 and 3***

Kress and Leeuwen (2006) described three functions to understand the images. In image one under ideational meta-function, the action and reaction are created between a trans-queer and with other objects. The Hubble-bubble is in the hand of the participant and behind him multiple objects are present. The link between the objects and the trans-queer creates the first vector in this image. The trans-queer is seeing towards someone else and it creates the second vector in the image.

As far as the gaze is concerned than the trans-queer is looking towards the participant which means that there is an offer in this image. The angle of the trans-queer in this image is oblique which shows the detachment with the viewers. The angle of the camera is high which shows that the power relationship is there. The gaze of the trans-queer is upward which also establishes the power relationship. In image no. 3 the action and reaction are

created between the trans-queer and the pencil. Other objects also add meaning to it. The trans-queer is looking towards the floor where he is trying to paint something. It also creates the 1<sup>st</sup> vector in the image. In image three, the gaze of the trans-queer is towards the floor instead of viewers which shows offer according to Kress and Leeuwen (2006). The angle in this image is oblique which also shows the detachment of the trans-queer



with viewers.



**Image 4,5 and 6**

In image 4 the action and reaction are established between the trans-queer and the male. Instead of showing the face in this visual, the stronger vector is created between the cheek and the hands of the male. This vector also creates some negativity in this visual Jessica N.Jobe (2013). The gaze of the participant is towards his works and the gaze of his teacher is towards him. The trans-queer seems unaware of this harassment in this image. The participant is looking towards his works which again shows the offer. The angle in image four is oblique which shows little involvement with the viewers. Both the participants are involved very little with the viewers. The trans-queer is involved in his work and the chin of the teacher also shows a tilt angle which means that both the participants are not involved with the viewers. The teacher is harassing the trans-queer but this harassment seems like a familiar phenomenon (Jackson Taylor McLaren, 2018). The level of the trans-queer is lower in this image which also creates salience and shows real representative participants. In both images 5 and 6, the action and the reaction are created between the trans-queer and with objects. In image no. five other objects are the floor while in image no. 6 another object is his flying paper. The gaze in both the images was created towards those objects. In both the images, the participant is looking towards something else which again conveys the feeling of the offer. According to Kress and Leeuwen (2006), if the participant's gaze is somewhere else instead of having it towards the audience, it means that the offer is shown in this image. In both, images, the angle of the participant is oblique which shows the detachment of the participant from the viewers.





**Image 7, 8 and 9**

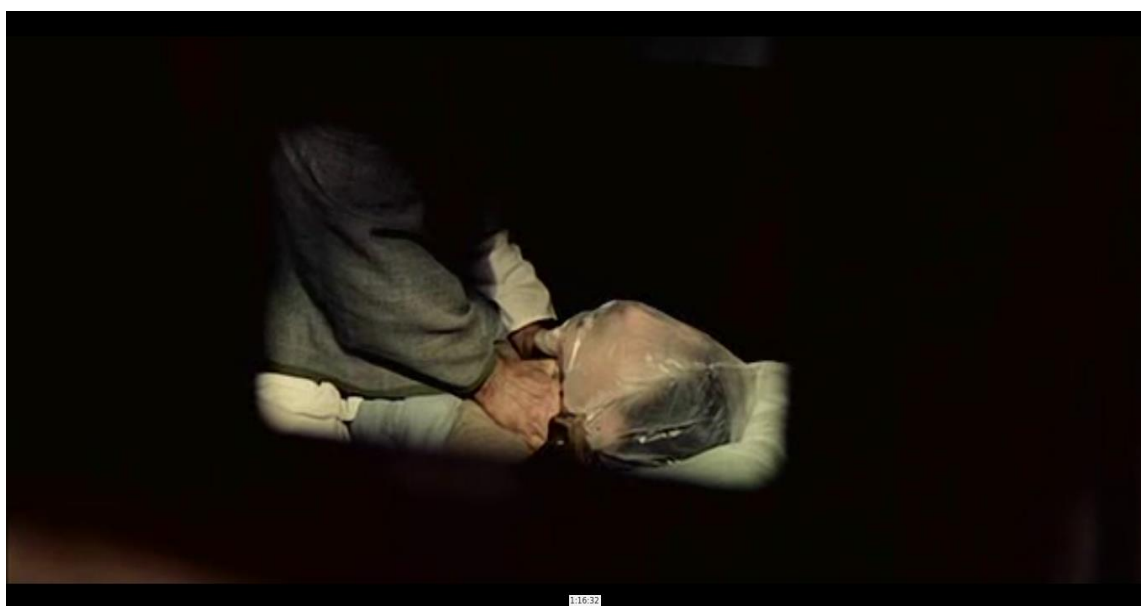
In this image, the action and reaction are performed between the trans-queer and the lady which is presented as her sister in this movie. The vector is created between these two characters. The gaze is again considered as an offer because the participants are not looking towards the viewers.

In image no. 8 the action and reaction are shown between the same character. The trans-queers is seeing himself in the mirror. The 1st vector is created between the trans-queer and the mirror where he is seeing himself. The second vector is created between the trans-queer and the reflection of the trans-queer. In this image, the trans-queer is again looking towards his reflection. Which refers offer to the audience. In this image front angle of the trans-queer is represented which shows the strong involvement of the viewers. The medium angle is represented which shows the equal power relationship. In

image nine The action and reaction are created between the trans-queer and two colleagues. The first vector is created between the trans-queer and the person who is standing in front of him. Another vector is created with the person who is standing behind him and put some color on his face. The gaze is created within the participants. The gaze towards the audience shows the offer. The angle is a tilt in the image.



*Image 10 and 11*



Action and reaction are created between the trans-queer himself and his imagination as his eyes are closed in this image. Or he is trying to escape himself from the situation where he is stuck. The vector is created between the trans-queer and his imagination. The gaze in this image is not directed towards the viewers which shows offer according to the modal of Kress and Leeuwen (2006). Action and reaction are performed between the trans-queer and his father (only hands are visible). The second vector is created between the trans-queer and his effort to save himself via using his hands. The gaze is created

between the trans-queer and the plastic bag which is on his face. The angle is oblique in images which shows the detachment of the participants towards their viewers. The camera angle shows the high power relationship between the two participants.

The salience is created in these images as the size of the trans-queer is quite large which creates the greater salience. The tonal contrast and foregrounded representation of the trans-queer also show the greater salience in these images. The trans-queer is present on the right side of the image which shows that something new is shown there. As on the right side of the images, there is always a problem or the solution to the problem. Trans-queer is shown as a problem in these images (Jackson Taylor McLaren, 2018). The upper top is presented in these images where trans-queer is represented which also shows idealization, which is something beyond reality. Based on the Kress and Leeuwen (2006) modal Both these visuals create more negativity Mintz, L. (2011). instead of positivity about the trans-queers. As the face is not there so the viewers take the left side of the image as a normal image and don't take it as a problem or something negative (Jessica N.Job, 2013).

In maximum images, a strong relationship is avoided. Multiple images in this study show normal human beings as a problem for the trans-queer Mintz (2011) and later on, males harassed trans-queer more than others in the movie. It also portrays negativity Jessica N.Job (2013) that people already knew that and media strengthen that point of view that trans-gender must be killed and they don't have any right to live a normal life Jackson McLaren: (2018). These images also show the real representative participants.

In all the images, it has been seen clearly that trans-genders are dehumanized Paulus Kaufmann (2011). As in image 1 when trans-gender is standing in Hakeem's shop. He insulted him badly. The same is the case in other images where other people are there along with the trans-gender they harass him. Trans-gender was feeling safe when he is with his sisters only or he is lonely. Based on the three-dimensional model of Kress and Leeuwen (2006) all the images of the trans-gender presented in this movie convey or portray negativity. The camera angles and the way or the place where they are presented within the images add meaning to the negative portrayal of the trans-queers.

Visuals are portraying negativity Reddy (2005). The visuals which I have discussed and elaborated are portraying more negativity instead of positivity about trans-genders. Visuals can be improved or portrayed in a better way if the camera angle

foregroundedness, gaze, side of the image, and top of the image is improved. According to Kress and Leeuwen (2006) modal of visual analysis also describes how positivity can be portrayed via images or how things must be presented to show some positivity.

The visual analysis of this movie reveals that trans-genders are dehumanized in Pakistani culture. They are not even able to get their basic rights like education. They cant make themselves financially stable at any stage of their life. As shown in the images when trans-gender was trying to stable himself financially his colleagues harassed him and used him. All the movements, dramas, and talk shows who are trying to stabilize a positive discourse about trans-genders in society somehow import negativity via visuals about trans-genders.

### **Conclusion:**

Based on the above analysis it is clear that media is portraying negativity in the society about trans-genders. The visual analysis of the movie Bol reveals the dual nature of the media. The media is representing the negative image of the trans-genders. The verbal utterances may leave a positive impact but as far as the visuals are concerned than they are just portraying the negative side of it. Trans-genders were badly dehumanized in visual representation.

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Citation for this paper:

Iqbal, A., Iqbal, F., & Arshad, M. N. (2021). Dehumanization of trans-queers on media: A visual analysis. *Balochistan Journal of Linguistics*, 09, 95–111.