

Hiding ‘Their’ Positives and ‘Our’ Negatives: An Analysis of English Print Media’s Coverage of 2014 Islamabad Sit-ins

Abdul Rafay Khan, Zubair Iqbal & Aziz Ullah Khan

Abstract

Media is considered as one of the most powerful pillars of a modern state. Having more control over public discourse, it has more powers of making public opinion. A critical study of media discourse urges a need of exposing underlying ideologies instead of relying on the surface analysis of textual and linguistic features. One of the basic assumptions of such studies remains that power relations are discursive and discourse structures not only index social structures but social structures are also constructed, maintained, and challenged by discourse structures. In this regard, media may either enact the discourse of powerful or challenge it. All over the world, the media discourse structures are determined by its relationship with other groups. Instead of being factual, it constructs discourse according to a group policy. Pakistan is no exception in this regard. Although the concept of a free media is not very old here, yet it has assumed unimaginable powers in a very brief history of its freedom. In recent years, the country has seen some stronger and louder voices of political and social change than ever before. The August 2014 Azadi and Inqilab Marches and sit-ins of PTI and PAT were significant movements which influenced a palpable change in politics of the state. Owing to importance of these movements, it becomes very important to study how they were portrayed by the elite media of the country. This research planned to study the underlying ideological discourse structures which worked behind the coloring of the marches in a desired certain way. It applied the ideological square model of Van Dijk with particular focus on polarization in discourse. The data, i.e. the top stories of the front pages, was collected from the selected editions of the four major English newspapers-Dawn, The News, The Nation, and Daily Times. A critical examination of the data rendered that the media supported status-quo and enacted the discourse of the government instead of resisting and challenging the existing political and social narrative.

Key Words: Critical Discourse Studies, Ideological Discourse Structures, Polarization in Discourse, Ideological Square

1. Introduction

Media plays a vital role in determining, enacting, maintaining, or challenging power relations in modern societies. In the ever ongoing war between the protagonists of status-quo and advocates of change, it has assumed self-determined role to function as the key arbitrator in settling disputes. With the power to color a picture and represent anything in line with its own policy, this center of power can represent devils as angel and angels as devils. The success of mass movements depends upon how media’s discourse constructs them for common people. The mass media in Pakistan acquired new dimensions, redefined its role, and started functioning as a powerful center of the state as soon as it was enfranchised by Pervaiz Musharaf. Now reporting certain political and social events of momentous importance, it appears to function on the principle: ‘Absolute freedom gives absolute power, and absolute power is unstoppable’. Its role in shaking the most unflinching and unyielding centers of power can be studied by the researchers of discourse, mass media, and the social and political movements. After this newly assumed duty of redefining power structures, all the institutions which have a stake in the game of power cannot ignore its strength.

In recent years, Pakistan’s political system has undergone a conspicuous change. The voices of change in system have got more momentous; however, it would be quite early to determine whether they got more maturity even. The 2014 Anti government long marches and sit-ins of

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI: the political party led by cricketer turned politician Imran Khan) and Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT: the party led by the religious cleric Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri) were movements of grave political repercussions. Determined to take revenge of the alleged rigging in 2013 general elections and killings of 14 workers of PAT at Minhaj trust in Model Town, Lahore, PTI and PAT under the leadership of Imran Khan and Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri planned the Azadi and Inqilab Marches respectively. They had a plan to march towards the capital and remain in a sit-in until they remove the then PM Nawaz Sharif from power. During the coverage of these events, different media groups appeared to assume the role of supporters of either of the sides: the government or the opposition. The discourse on media was of crucial importance for mobilizing or demobilizing the public of the county. So, media was one of the key arbitrators of the whole event.

Adopting a more problem oriented instead of discipline and method oriented approach as compared to other critical approaches, Critical Discourse Studies and their scholars are more socio-politically committed to social equality and justice. They are particularly interested in (re) production of power abuse and resistance against it. They conclude that some forms of dominant text and talk are illegitimate or unjust as they snatch basic social and human rights. (Van Dijk, 2015, p.63)

Under Critical Discourse Study paradigm, this research aimed to study the long march discourse of four major English newspapers of Pakistan-Dawn, The News, The Nation, and Daily Times. The focus of the study was to highlight the underlying ideological discourse structures by applying Van Dijk's (2015) ideological square model which sought to highlight emphasis on positive self-description and negative other description and mitigating negative self-description and positive other-description causing a polarization in discourse. The research strived to find answer to the following research questions:

- i. How did media utilize ideological square model to construct a polarized discourse in its coverage of the long marches- Azadi and Inqilab?
- ii. How did the media's discourse function to enact, maintain, or challenge power relations in the society?

2. Literature Review

In late 70's a group of four linguists rendered a new framework for discourse analysis focusing particularly on media discourse. They named their framework as Critical Linguistics (Fowler, Hodge, Kress, & Trew, 1979). In their opinion, discourse carries both linguistic and ideological processes, and ideological meanings depend on linguistic choices (Trew, 1979). They saw a deep relationship between linguistic structures and social structures. Discourse is inseparable from social meaning (Kress & Hodge, 1979).

Further studies in critical linguistics led the scholars to view language in relation to social factors. Language was no more considered a mere a tool of communication, rather a two way relationship between language and society established. Bakhtin (1981) and Bell (1997) observed that language constituted social reality while at the same time social factors constituted language. Roger *et al.* (2005) observed that language indexes, expresses and challenges social relations. Therefore, according to Ives (2004) our notion that we are free in our choice of language is a misleading even though it is not predominantly imposed by government, or state institutions. (Shojaei et. al, 2013, p. 859)

Exploring the relationship between language and media has been one of the major concerns of Critical discourse studies. Popp (2006, as cited in Shojaei et.al, 2013, p.859) viewed that "media's language is an institutionalized meaning of framing reality". The works of critical

linguists removed the possibility of neutrality and impartiality of media. The works of Trew (1979) and Fowler (1979) studied how different linguistic choices e.g. syntactic structures through different techniques like 'passivization' and nominalization might blur the bad actions, and the agent of the action was relieved from the responsibility of such actions.

Bloor and Bloor (2007) argued that 'much social practice in a complex modern society is institutionalized' (p.5). If we analyze the working of highly structured organizations which hold power and control our way of thinking, we will come to know that language is an inevitable part of this practice. Before this Fowler (1991) claimed that some texts play their role in molding attitudes and ideas within a particular society.

According to Van Dijk (2015) Critical discourse studies give paramount importance to those groups and organizations which have a special access to public discourse. Having more power on discourse, these groups control public opinion and make the common people believe in the way the former want the latter to believe. An example of such domination is mass media. A particular media group covers an event according to its relationship with different stakeholder involved in that event like- government, political parties, and other social groups. So, the structure of news is determined by the social relations between these groups.

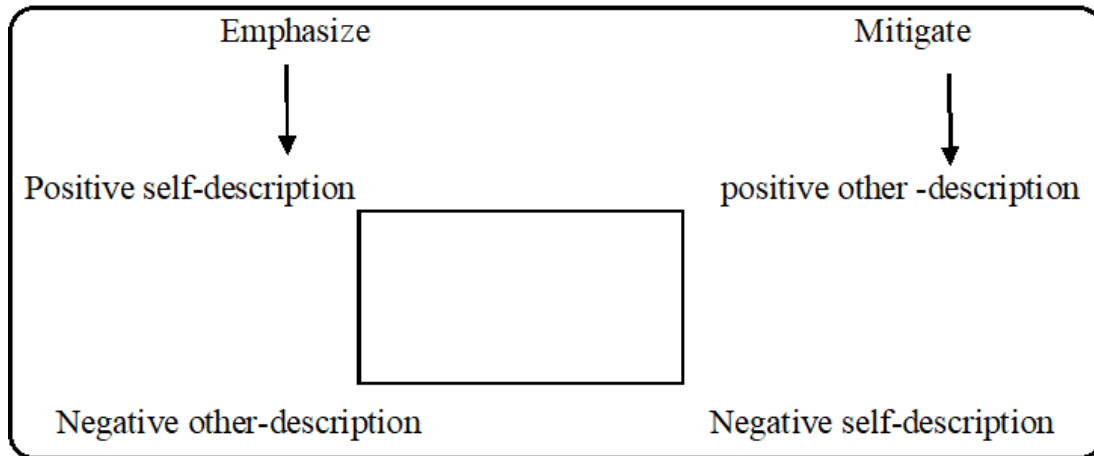
In the context of Pakistan, different studies have been conducted on media's discourse under Critical Discourse Studies framework. With particular focus on English print media's role in fabricating political reality during the 2014 Anti government sit-ins of PTI and PAT, Khan & Nawaz (2015) studied the role of metaphors in creating the picture of different stakeholders of the event. They concluded that the media utilized the metaphors to caricature the marching leaders i.e. Imran Khan and Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri as weak creatures in front of a powerful government, and such use of literary figures helped in supporting the stance of the government and status- quo. Khan et al. (2016) studied how English print media utilized 'passivization' as a technique for hiding the agency of severe actions and reliving a particular party from the burden of any bad action in the coverage of 2014 Islamabad '*sit-ins*'. Their study rendered that the English print media hid the severe actions of the government more than they hid the severe actions of the opposition parties. In a recent study, Khan & Khan (2018) highlighted how the sit-in activity was caricatured by cartoons of English print media as a funny activity.

The studies conducted on English print media's coverage of the 2014 anti government sit-ins were restricted in their scope as they focused on the role of a particular aspect of discourse e.g. use of metaphors, use of 'passivization', or use of political cartoons in creating a desired picture in the mind of the reader. Their results might lack a claim of authenticity if they were not confirmed by a study conducted under a larger discourse perspective. To fill this gap, the current study aimed to broaden the scope of analysis by taking into account a larger aspect of discourse i.e. the absence of significant macrostructures from the overall news discourse. This broadening of scope was expected to yield more authentic and specific results in comparison to the previous studies.

3. Methodology

This is a qualitative study which seeks to highlight the ideological discourse structures which are identified by Van Dijk (2015) in his discussion of the discourse structures that particularly take part in (re)production of power abuse. According to his model, power and power abuse are determined by the relationship between different groups, and discourse is based on certain ideologies. Therefore, the primary concern should be exposing those discourse structures which underlie the ideologies of the dominant or more powerful groups. From a list of ideological discourse structures, this research focuses on polarization techniques which are based on positive

self- descriptions and negative other descriptions. These structures may be demonstrated through a concept of ideological square which summed up in *figure 1*.



The data is collected from the three editions, i.e. August 14, 15, and 16, of Pakistan’s mainstream English newspapers: Dawn, The News, The Nation, and Daily Times. In the selection of data, primary importance is given to the headlines and the lead stories as these sections of newspapers influence the public opinion more strongly. The data is then analyzed to expose ideological discourse structures on the model of ideological square. Unlike most of the researches which lay stress on what is highlighted in discourse, this study primarily focuses on the structures that are mitigated to hide the negative aspects of one group and positive aspects of the other group to support a particular group in line with the ideology of a the media group.

This research also integrates Van Dijk’s (1988) framework of semantic macrostructures in his ideological square model (Van Dijk, 2015) for a comprehensive analysis of ideological discourse structures. The former framework distinguishes between macrostructures and superstructures in a news item. Macrostructures are the thematic structures or the global topics that represent the content of a text and refer to the overall meaning of the text. The meaning of discourse is not restricted by the meaning of isolated lexical items and syntactic structure; rather it consists of more global meanings such as themes or topics. These thematic structures (macrostructures) represent the overall gist or semantic content of the discourse and tell us what the discourse is about; these structures may be presented in the form of propositions which are complete sentences or clauses. The thematic structures are hierarchically organized in the form of superstructures (headline, lead, super-lead, etc) which arrange different interrelated news items (macrostructures) on the basis of their news value, immediacy or any other motive like bias of the language user. Integrating the macrostructure framework (Van Dijk, 1988) with ideological square framework (Van Dijk, 2015), this study focuses on which macrostructures are kept absent from the superstructures of the discourse to obtain the ideological square according to the policy of a particular media group which led to the support of a particular stakeholder involved in the August 2014 long march/sit-ins of Pakistan, and how such polarization in discourse helped in maintaining or redefining power relations.

4. Analysis & Discussion

In English print media’s coverage of the long march/sit-in events we found some very important macrostructures (thematic structures) missing from top positions of the newspaper discourse. The reason behind this absence was not the poor news value, but that the mentioning of those thematic structures might not produce the intended effect. The presence of those macrostructures

might go in favor of a group which the newspaper did not intend to support. The whole story about the long march can be summed up as following.

After May 2013 general elections, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) charged the winning party Pakistan Muslim League N (PML-N) with allegations of rigging in the elections. The government of PML-N gave deaf ears to the voice of the allegations. After All efforts of getting justice which went in vain, PTI chief decided to march on capital in order to snatch the justice forcefully. Meanwhile Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri, an old friend of Imran Khan, appeared on the scene. A very unfortunate incident occurred at Minhaj Trust which is the religious/educational headquarter of Dr. Qadri's mission. Approximately 14 followers were ruthlessly killed by the Punjab police. The video footages of the tragic scene revealed that police kept on beating people even when they were being taken to the first aid treatment by the rescue 1122 teams. Gullu Butt was breaking and destroying the front and side screens of the cars fearlessly even when the police was present there. Soon after the incident Dr. Qadri joined hands with the politicians who wanted to remove the Nawaz Government at the spur of the moment. These politicians were Sheikh Rasheed of Rawalpindi and the 'Chaudharies' of Gujrat.

Before analyzing the discourse of English newspapers on long marches according to ideological square model, the possible macrostructures of news may be divided into two groups. Group A consisted of those macrostructures which are against the government, and if hided would certainly harm the cause of the movement and if highlighted would undoubtedly harm the legitimacy of the government to remain in power anymore. On the other hand, group B macrostructures consisted of the weak points of the marching parties. If these macrostructures were mitigated by media, it would benefit the opposition parties, and if highlighted, they would certainly go in the favor of the government.

Group A:

- Rigging in May 2013 general elections.
- Ruthless killing of PAT followers in June 2014 tragedy of Minhaj Trust
- Gullu Butt and Pomi Butt assailing PAT and PTI workers respectively
- Unlawful detention of the PTI and PAT followers by the government
- Government's act of depriving the protesters of their democratic right of protest by putting containers in their way

Group B:

- The prevailing fear of political instability caused by the two marches
- Protesters' plan to paralyze whole system of government
- The undemocratic behavior of the protesters

The following sub-sections 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 present analyses of the data collected from the four newspapers: Dawn, The News, The Nation and Daily Times respectively.

4.1 Dawn

August 14, 2014

This edition of Dawn gives a very little space to the macrostructures mentioned in group A. This was the day when PTI and PAT were departing for the capital. The electronic media had dedicated most of its space and time to the leadership of protesting/marching parties. One night before the departure of marches Imran Khan and Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri occupied TV screens for most of the time. On the night of August 13, Dr. Qadri made a long speech which should have been given coverage in the newspapers of August 14, but Dawn did not spare a lot of space for PAT's 'Inqilab' march. In their speeches Imran Khan and Dr. Qadri repeatedly mentioned the atrocities of the government enlisted in '*group A*' macrostructures, but Dawn quoted very little

extracts from their speeches. On the front page, only one column, which appeared on extreme right, was dedicated for the coverage of long march.

August 15, 2014

The headline position of this edition was dedicated to a statement of the Prime Minister who said, “A decade of peace must for progress”. The top position given to PM’s statement urging for peace means that the newspaper also favored peace, and it accepted the idea that long marches were a threat to the peace of the country. The statement of the PM had no particular significance with regard to his policy to tackle the existing political situation in the country. Prime Ministers give such statements, so it did not contain something unusual. The top position given to this statement, when the country was facing most crucial situation of political turmoil, carried ideological meaning.

In spite of the above mentioned fact, the Dawn gave two separate positions to the coverage of marches. Therefore, it was important to analyze the two news stories which covered the long march event. A close reading of the news stories revealed that the ‘group A’ macrostructure remained almost absent from these news items. Instead of telling people the agenda of the marches, which was repeatedly told by their leadership, the Dawn portrayed it as a festive event. This is evident from this extract taken from the lead story of August 15, 2014 edition:

“The march turned out to be a festive occasion for PTI workers as they danced to the tune of party songs in front of a truck carrying their leaders, including Imran Khan.

The youths sported caps carrying the colors of their party’s flag, headbands and wristbands. Woman also sported colorful dresses. They chanted slogans against the government.”

Such depiction of ‘Azadi March’ created an image in the mind of the readers that this march lacked a serious agenda behind it. It showed all the participant of the march as jubilant and joyful. This portrayal of the long march camouflaged the agenda of the march and mitigated the group ‘A’ macrostructures.

August 16, 2014

This edition of the newspaper emphasized on ‘Group B’ macrostructures as the headline story read ‘**Marches keep capital on tenterhooks**’. These words were critical of the march adventure as the act of keeping capital city on tenterhooks could never be appreciated. On the other hand the search for the ‘Group A’ macrostructures in the headline and lead stories again went in vain. The top story and lead gave coverage to the Azadi and Inqilab march events but they were presented in a way as if they were responsible for spreading chaos. A lead story covering ‘Inqilab’ march of PAT was headlined in these words: ‘PAT sit-in marred by confusion’.

This sense of confusion and perplexity did not allow the newspaper to highlight the issues which provoked the protesters to go out for a long march. The agenda behind the marches remained in background of the discourse of the newspaper. The leaders were continually putting forth their rationale for the marches, but the newspaper was still confused to give any proper space to those issues. It was more conscious about the facts like: the dressing of march participants, their late arrival in the capital, the confusion lying amongst the march followers etc. The mitigation of the ‘Group A’ macrostructures and depiction of a chaotic situation were the factors which could only serve to demobilize the people.

4.2 The News

August 14, 2014

The headline of The News of August 14 read: **‘No unconstitutional march, Sit-in, orders LHC’**. This structuring of discourse carried ideological meaning as it twisted the discourse and blurred the facts about the real verdict of honorable Lahore High Court which did not say that the sit-ins/marches were unconstitutional; rather the court restrained the two parties from launching their marches in an unconstitutional way. This fact was conspicuous in the words of Justice Muhammad Khalid Mehmood while making the decision, He said, “The respondent No 4 and 5 (PTI and PAT) are restrained meanwhile from launching the Azadi March and the Revolution march or holding Dharnas in Islamabad, in any unconstitutional way, keeping in view the sanctity of the Independence day and the current chaotic and uncertain situation prevailing in the country.” These remarks of the head of the bench did not mark the two marches as unconstitutional. This maneuvering of facts was an open instance of angularity in the coverage of the events. The choice of LHC’s decision as the headline of the newspaper and presenting it in a maneuvered way signified that the newspaper clearly supported the government. Moreover, the newspaper did not give proper space to the statements of the two leaders-Imran Khan and Dr. Qadri.

‘Group A’ macrostructures remained away from this edition of The News. Following were the Lead story headings on the front page of the August 14, 2014 edition.

‘Double March’ if issues not resolved forthwith: Siraj

PTI allowed to march on Capital

Imran exposes his real agenda by demanding technocrats govt: Mashhood

The selection of thematic structures for headline and lead stories clearly revealed that the newspaper mitigated statements which went in favor of PTI and PAT, and twisted discourse in favor of the government.

August 15, 2014

The headline of this edition consists of the statement of the Prime Minister. It says, **“Country can’t afford negative politics, subversions: PM”**. The headline position allotted to the Prime Minister is in continuity with the policy of the newspaper which has been discussed in the analysis of the previous edition. The News gave relatively preferred position to Azadi March of PTI while it spared a little extreme right side column to the Inqilab March of PAT. It mentions Group A macrostructures in its coverage of Azadi March. Unlike other newspapers’ editions of the same day, The News quotes those extracts from the speech of Imran Khan which expressed the rationale of the long march. Following is the lead story which covered the Azadi March.

PTI’s Azadi March leaves for Capital

“Imran persists with his demand for resignation of Nawaz ECP officials, warns Gullu Butts of arrest; Punjab govt agrees on security covers for marches, not hindering them; more PTI activists held across Punjab.”

The lead contains three macrostructures from *Group A*: Resignation of Nawaz ECP officials, arrest of Gullu Butts, and detention of PTI activists across Punjab. Gullu Butt Macrostructure/Frame remained a significant absence from almost all the mainstream English newspapers of 15th August. Only The News gave proper space to the speech and opinion of PTI chief Imran Khan. However, it did not give the same coverage to Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri. The rolling out of PAT’s cavalcade was marginalized on right column, and the statements and speeches of their leaders could not find a good position in the edition.

August 16, 2014

The headline of this edition was the statement of Supreme Court of Pakistan which said: **“Violation of Constitution is treason: SC”** It was an abstract statement which generalized that

in principle the violation of constitution, done by whosoever, was a treason. It confused the real target of this statement. Although in details we found that SC passed these orders for the government, but the above mentioned statement might confuse the situation. It might imply that Supreme Court was urging both sides not to violate constitution. The generalization of a targeted statement mitigated its effect of targeting the government.

The top stories which appeared on the front page of this edition were following:

PML-N, PTI activists clash in Gujranwala

CM takes notice of stone-pelting incident

Imran to give up Nawaz resignation demand

Political stability must for uplift, Erdogan tells Pakistan

LHC issues detailed order on Plea against PTI, PAT marches

Even a surface level analysis of these lead headings revealed that The News selected macrostructures to emphasize the positive-description of the government. From top to bottom, the paper presented attack on PTI workers as a clash; appreciated CM for taking notice of the tragic stone-pelting incident; suggested Imran to give up Nawaz resignation demand; and highlighted the statement of Tayyab Erdogan, Turkish President, in which he urged for a need to maintain political stability in Pakistan. All the macrostructures structured in this sequence seemed to urge the long marchers that there was no need for such adventure. Moreover, PAT's Inqilab March failed to secure ample space in print.

4.3 The Nation

August 14, 2014

The headline of this edition of The Nation read: **Govt allows Azadi March to enter Islamabad.** The positive side of government is again highlighted by the newspaper. The government was generous enough to allow Azadi and Inqilab march to enter Islamabad. In reality, there was a lot of activity on the part of the government to hinder the long marches. The whole such activity could be summed up in container macrostructure included in Group A. The absence of those themes and presence of positive aspect of the government blurred the real happening of the march activity and polarized the discourse in favor of the government.

This edition of the Nation also misrepresented the LHC's decision about the marches. The headline story contained a sub story which told about the decision of the LHC. The sub heading said: **'LHC Bars PTI from staging 'unconstitutional' protest.** The News committed the same mistake in presenting this news. The Nation reported the comment of the Court as if Court was suggesting that the march was unconstitutional. Contrary to that Court had restrained the two parties from staging their marches in an unconstitutional way. The discourse structure used by The News and The Nation misrepresented the fact, hence the facts were ideologically maneuvered in the favor of the government.

August 15, 2014

Unlike the previous day's coverage of *The Nation*, this edition gave coverage to both the marches in one headline which dominated the whole above half of the front page. A lengthy discussion followed the headline which mentioned the details of the setting off of marches. A peculiar aspect of this coverage was that unlike Dawn and The Nation, this coverage treated both the marches equally. However, the overall impression of headline discourse showed that the newspaper was not in favor of the marches. A clear example of this discursive practice was the absence of killing/ murder (of PAT's followers) macrostructure from the speech of PAT chief Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri. In reality Dr. Qadri stressed on the killing of his followers and demanded the filling of a F.I.R against the government, but the coverage of Dr. Qadri's speech on the Nation

mitigated this most crucial macrostructure. The Nation mentioned some very minor issues from the speeches of Dr. Qadri, and hid the most important cause of the 'Inqilab march'. The following extract from the detail of the headline makes this fact conspicuous.

“One of his main complaints is that violence against his supporters by police is not being properly investigated. About 2,000 of his supporters have been arrested, police say.” (The Nation, August 15, 2014)

This extract witnesses a very significant absence. The main complaint of Dr. Qadri was not the ongoing violence of police against his followers, but the cruel killing of tens of his followers at Minhaj Trust, Model Town. Here for a motivation of public in favor of the 'Inqilab March' Dr. Qadri needed an exact mentioning of his speeches which The Nation did not provide to him. So, the Group A macrostructures were not highlighted in the August 15, 2014. This sidelining or absence of such macrostructures molded the discourse in the favor of the government.

August 16, 2014

The second paragraph of the headline story of this edition of The Nation read:

“Khan and preacher Tahir-ul-Qadri say the May 2013 general election that brought Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to power in a landslide victory was rigged, and are demanding he resign and hold new polls.”

Dr. Qadri said something more than this. He mentioned the rigging in 2013 general elections, but it was not his major allegation. His allegation was ruthless killing of his followers by the Punjab police and Gullu Butt. The absence of the real allegation of Dr. Qadri was again significant. The above mentioned extract exhibited a very ridiculous ignorance from the facts. Did it happen because of ignorance or because of intention? No one knew but it was a big blunder on the part of a mainstream English newspaper. Dr. Qadri never demanded new polls during his inqilab March adventure. What he demanded was a revolution which would ensure bread, home and fundamental human rights for every human being living in the country. This easygoing way adopted by the reporter might not be taken as an act done in ignorance as he was constructing top position discourse of a prestigious newspaper.

4.4 Daily Times

August 14, 2014

The headline position in this edition of Daily Times was allotted to the statement of the interior minister Nisar Ali Khan as a spokesperson of the government. The headline said:

Long march only after all legal requirements are fulfilled: govt

Nisar says govt will implement LHC verdict in letter and spirit. Tells Imran to seek clearance for protest rally from every district government *en route* to Islamabad

On the very day when long Marches were leaving to achieve their aim, the top position given to the statement of Interior minister implied that the newspaper did not give a lot of heed to the agenda and program of the protesters. Had it been in the favor of their agenda, it would have given the headline position to the statements/speeches of Imran Khan and Dr. Qadri. Instead of highlighting the demands and allegations put forth by the leaders, the newspaper gave importance to a statement which was a matter of routine for an Interior Minister. This statement showed that government was very fair in abiding by the decisions of the Law Courts; therefore, it would implement LHC's verdict in letter and spirit. He also urged Imran Khan to seek clearance from the district governments to make his long march legal. So far as the news value was concerned, this statement might not have deserved the same position if the newspaper had given the due prestige to the march leadership.

This headline served to sideline the agenda of long marches. Group A macrostructure remained absent from the front page coverage of Daily Times. Following were a few top stories which appeared on the front page of Daily Times' edition of August 14, 2014.

Govt strategy on long march wrapped in ambiguity

Altaf appeals Qadri not to enter 'red zone'

MQM chief asks PAT leader and his followers to make their 'march' peaceful

Both the leads did not mention anything about the rationale of the long marches. The only place which PAT and its leadership was able to earn in this edition of Daily Times was the statement of Altaf (MQM chief) wherein he urged PAT leader and his followers to remain peaceful during their march and not to enter the 'red zone'. It meant that the newspaper did not give proper coverage to the allegations and demands of the PAT and their leadership. The absence of Group A macrostructures showed that like the other elements of English Print media, Daily Times did not report the speeches of the leaders which mentioned the cause of protesters; rather it alleviated the zeal of the protesters which was inculcated in them by their leadership.

August 15, 2014

The front page of this edition was completely dominated by the Azadi and the Inqilab march. A half page headline, with pictures, appeared on the page. The headline was followed by a long report which told the happenings of the previous day. In the leading paragraph of the story the newspaper could not help giving its own verdict on the situation. Following was the first paragraph of the headline story.

“Tens of thousands of anti-government protesters under the banner of “Azadi March” and “Inqilab March” began moving to the capital Islamabad on Thursday, raising fears for political stability and political rule in the country.” (The Daily Times, August 15, 2014)

The newspaper gave its opinion that long March would be a threat to the current political stability in the country. This extract was analyzed in the analysis of the choice of macrostructures. However, it remained the fact that newspaper gave a very little credit to the long marches. A search for Group A macrostructures on the front page coverage of this edition of Daily Times went useless. We find a mentioning of a few of Group A macrostructures, but they appear in the last paragraphs of the lead stories. The important macrostructures which justified the cause of the two marches remained away from the headline position. The newspaper printed two separate stories on the front page which reported what the two leaders said.

Will return from Islamabad in triumph: Imran

PTI chief reiterated demands for resignation of PM and ECP

Qadri spells out 10-point pro-poor reforms agenda

PAT chief says his 'Inqilab' will end poverty. Poor to get cheaper electricity.

The analysis of two above mentioned leads showed that the newspapers kept the real agenda of the marches in background. This was done by highlighting the issues of lesser importance. For instance the part of Imran's statement highlighted by the newspaper was not the most important thing which he said. He uttered some more important issued in his statements/speeches which found no place in the news story. This marginalization of the facts lessened the effect of his statements in the mind of the reader. It is a principle of media discourse that most important macrostructures secure a place in the headings. If less important macrostructures were given top position and more important were sidelined, it could only be taken as ideological structuring of discourse.

Similarly, the perpetual demands of Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri of filing an F.I.R and an impartial probe into the matter of the killings remained absent from the headline as well as lead coverage of the

‘Inqilab’ march. The 10-point poor agenda of Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri could do a little to motivate his followers and the masses of the country. Every now and then politicians put forth such ideas. So it was not something unusual in the case of Dr. Qadri. The demand which provided a justification to his act of advancement on capital with his followers was, however, found absent from the top position coverage of the edition.

August 16, 2014

The front page of this edition contained two important news items. The headline told the decision of the honorable Supreme Court of Pakistan in which it ordered all the state functionaries to act within the limits of constitution. However, Daily Times imparted this news in most peculiar way as its headline said: ‘**SC intervenes to rescue ‘democracy’**’. This statement was very implicative. It evoked an image in the mind of the reader that democracy was in danger due to the advancement of the long marchers on the capital. SC had to intervene because of the prevailing threat to democracy. This statement implicated that the sitting government was an ideal of democracy incarnated. A threat to it would be a threat to democracy, and by virtue of long march advancement it was not government but an ideal of democracy was under threat.

Rallies reach ‘ground Zero’.

March parties likely to present their demands during public meetings today.

This news story got the second top most position which told the arrival of Marches at ground zero, Islamabad. The headline of the story used the word ‘Rallies’ instead of ‘marches’. Rally is usually associated with the gathering of a comparably very small number of people as compared to a long march. The big gatherings, however, were not termed as rallies. This lexical choice suggested that the two parties remained unsuccessful in motivating a lot of people for joining their protest. The sub heading eclipsed a much known fact and needed more concentration of a critical researcher of discourse. The marching parties had been presenting their demands for last few months. It could be said here that Dr. Qadri still had to give the details of his 10- point agenda, yet the demands were crystal clear. There was no confusion about the demands of the protesters at that stage of the long march event. So the absence of some very well known demands from a very important front page story on a very crucial day of march movement mitigated the cause of marches.

Another very important fact was witnessed in this news story. It imparted the news of the attack on PTI march by the PML-N activists. The news story conveyed the incident in the following words:

“Earlier in the day, the situation took an ugly turn when PTI rally and Imran’s container itself came under by PML-N workers in Gujranwala, in which some people were injured. Police sprung into action very late as usual prompting the PTI to call it connivance between the police and government. PTI chief Imran Khan termed it a pre-planned attack, claiming he was himself attacked three times during the day. Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif later on ordered arrest of the alleged mastermind and brother of local PML-N MPA, Pomi Butt, and around 10 of his companions.”

This was the fifth paragraph of the lead story. This edition of Daily Times conveyed the Gujranwala incident as an attack not as a clash as it was presented by The News. However, it justified the government by putting the fact in most unfamiliar way if compared with the other newspapers. It represented the late arrival of police as a matter of routine not as a matter of pre-planned conspiracy. The police came late as it was a routine. Who told the reporter that police

came late because of its routine? This was an assumption which replaced the fact. Furthermore, the discourse about the clash seemed to award a clean chit to the government in this matter. The piece of discourse ‘**PTI chief Imran Khan termed it a pre-planned attack**’ showed that it was termed as a pre-planned attack by the PTI chief; however, in reality it was not so. The very next sentence emphasized the positive stance of the government by telling that the CM ordered to arrest the alleged masterminds of the incident.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of the data selected from four mainstream English newspapers of Pakistan revealed that the English Print media predominantly emphasized positive-description of the government and mitigated the negative-description of the same; on the other hand, it mitigated the discourse structures which could favor the opposition parties-PTI and PAT. This ideological discourse structures were achieved by polarizing the discourse by several techniques. At times less important macrostructures were given top headline positions instead of the most important ones. For instance, the speeches of the opposition leaders were particularly mitigated in effect by ignoring most crucial aspects of their demands. In addition to the marginalization of the two marches from top positions, Inqilab march of PAT was further sidelined as compared to Azadi march of PTI. Most of the papers did not spare the top position for PAT even though they had more severe issues against the government.

This research concluded that the leading discourse of English print media of the county remained polarized and partial in favor of status-quo and the government. The ideological discourse structures constructed during the coverage of the whole issue functioned to enact and maintain the discourse of the powerful instead of resisting it by giving an equal and just space for coverage to the groups who raised a voice for the change of power relations.

Acknowledgement

I would like to enhance my gratitude to all my worthy teachers, dear friends and my family. With the grace of Almighty and His Beloved Prophet (SAW), I have put my efforts in the conduction of this research and it will InshAllah be a landmark in the field of Critical Discourse Analysis.

References

- Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays by M.M. Bakhtin* (C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.). Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bell, Wendell (1997). *Foundations of Future Studies* (volume one). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Bloor, B. & Bloor, T. (2007). *The practice of critical discourse analysis, an Introduction*. London: Hodder Arnold.
- Fowler, R. (1991). *Language in the news: Discourse and ideology in the British press*. London: Routledge
- Fowler, R., Hodge, B., Kress, G. & Trew, T. (Eds.). (1979). *Language and control*. London: New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Ives, P. (2004). *Language and hegemony in Gramsci*. London: Pluto Press.
- Khan, A. R., Amin, R. U., Alam, M. F., & Shah, S. R. (2016). Hiding agency of severe actions in English print Media: A critical discourse analysis of 2014 Islamabad sit-ins. *Science International*, 28(4), 763-766.
- Khan, A. R., & Nawaz, S. (2015). Metaphors at work in media discourse: A Case of August 2014 Islamabad sit-ins. *European Journal of Research and Reflection in Arts and Humanities*, 3(3), 48-54.

- Kress, G., & Hodge, B. (1979). *Language as Ideology*. London: Routledge.
- Popp, R. K. (2006). Mass Media and the Linguistic Marketplace: Media, Language, and Distinction. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 30.1, 5-20.
- Shojaei, A., Youssefi, K., & Hosseini, H. S. (2013). A CDA approach to the biased interpretation and representation of ideologically conflicting ideas in Western printed media. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 4(4), 858-868. doi:10.4304/jltr.4.4.858-868
- Trew, T. (1979a). Theory and Ideology at Work. In Fowler, Hodge, Kress, & Trew, (eds), *Language and Control*. London, New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul
- Van Dijk, T. (1988). Semantics of a press panic. *European Journal of Communication* 3, 167-187.
- Van Dijk, T. (2015). CDS: A socio-cognitive approach. In *Methods of critical discourse studies* (eds.) Wodak, R.E., and Meyer, M. London: Sage
- Daily Times, August 14-16, 2014
- Dawn, August 14-16, 2014
- The News, August 14-16, 2014
- The Nation, August 14-16, 2014