

## The Role of Lexical Choices in Shaping Political Representation through Print Media Practices in Pakistan

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### Abstract

*Language generates different realities, and this power of language is exercised through institutions and organizations by establishing their hegemonic control. Similarly, media enjoys a powerful position in shaping the realities through discourse. Print media in Pakistan has attained a significant position in recent years, and with this controlling position, it may influence the readers' mind more emphatically to shape their subjective perception. This study looks into the role of print media in shaping the public opinion through its power of producing the lexical choices for the news reporting of the political speeches of prominent Pakistani political leaders. For this purpose, the speeches of the prominent leaders of major political parties were selected and three Pakistani newspapers namely The News, Dawn and The Express Tribune were selected for political representation through media reports. The speeches were selected on the basis of having media coverage on the front pages of these newspapers. Lexical choices with a focus on connotations, euphemism and metaphoric expressions used in the print media reports were studied to see how the power of media shapes the political discourse for its readers. This study reveals some important tendencies and a considerable difference between the actual speeches and the printed reports regarding the lexical choices. The print media reports adopt their preferred setting in choosing different words in the speech representation of various leaders, which results into the influenced perception of the readers. In this way, Pakistani English newspapers, in general, construct the realities to represent the political discourse.*

**Keywords:** Lexical choices, connotations, euphemism, metaphor

### 1. Introduction

Print media enjoys a substantial space to construct a discourse that influences the public opinion. In this regard, Cook (1998) opines that print media presents a discourse that is constructing the meaning of the text, and it is this foundation that the audiences construct the meanings with the support of their knowledge. This construction of meaning in discourse is exercised, in the words of Fairclough (1989), through the hidden power of media; as it can constrain the content to favor certain interpretations. It exercises its power in the choice of lexical items along with the power of inclusion and exclusion.

The role of Pakistani print media is very important in shaping the image of the political leaders as well as the political discourse that generally affect the overall perception of the public. Media practices are significantly influencing the political scenario through many means. The normative expressions from media, subjectivity and power, along with many more, contribute to create a favored perspective.

In this background, the political speeches featured with so many techniques to meet their political agendas are reported frequently in the newspapers. This study is an attempt to understand the role of print media in the shaping of political process through the analysis of lexical choices, and it will provide the insights to understand the implicit practices of print media, which play a strong role in the construction of political environment.

## 2.Role of Lexical Choices in Media Discourse

Media discourse has some prominent preferences in the selection of lexical choices. It is assumed that information attained by a journalist, on the whole, is based on the use of lexical items. While words bear different semantic shades, it is very critical to select specific words for a news report. These words often give a clue to understand whose perspective is being presented. In this regard, a very relevant example in the context of Pakistan is the lexical choice among terrorist, Taliban and freedom fighter. In this context, Bülow-Møller (1989) is of the view that “there is no such thing as a free choice; no two expressions convey precisely the same message” (p. 83).

The news reports in most of the cases having biased lexical selection may not be the result of any intention. In this regard, Bolinger (1980) elaborates that, “one reaches instinctively for words favorable to one’s point of view” (p.120). The same view is further taken in the constructionist paradigm of Critical Discourse Analysis that language is not a neutral tool of conveying information. In this connection van Dijk (1988) is of the view that the lexical choices in news report might have different semantic implications. According to Hayakawa (1978), words conveying judgments, opinions and expressions of approval or disapproval that favor particular mind set should not be used in news stories:

*Instead of sneaked in, tramp and dictatorial set-up, one should write entered quietly, homeless unemployed and centralized authority, respectively. The former words would be put towards the subjective end and the latter words towards the objective end on the scale of objectivity. (p 38)*

Theorists and practitioners of CDA agree that words are ideologically contested; therefore, vocabulary chosen for the text is always meaningful and contributes towards achieving set goals. In the analysis of the speeches of the leaders of political parties, the use of specific vocabulary in the presentation of their ideas is of great importance.

Fowler (1987) expressed his views while commenting on the effect of lexical choices that vocabulary presents ideology and systems of beliefs through which this world is organized. As a result of using such vocabulary the language of a news report reflects and, at the same time, conveys its readers a specific image of the world along with a specific approach towards reality. In other words it is evident that reporters choose certain words over others and in this way they make decisions as to how things should be represented and how they should understand those choices (Pape & Featherstone 2005). Therefore, semantic perspective has a great importance in this analysis. Fairclough (1989) says that “significant are the words in the text that occur in any text because those words are chosen with free will” (p.113).

Adjectives are important in news texts because they portray people and events. It is a common observation that adjectives are used in news reports; however, “they must be used with extreme

care or subjectivity will creep in and the mere use of adjectives will create a favorable or unfavorable impression," describes Merrill (1965, p.73). He gave the examples of "serene state of mind" and "flat, monotonous voice" as subjective, the earlier biasing the reader for whereas the latter against the person described. Furthermore, he gives the example of "the blue sky" as a neutral adjective (p.73).

Merrill's views on adjectives can be further developed to extend it to cover all parts of speech. There are lexical choices that are objective, impartial and neutral, but still there are words having subjective and biased shades. Moreover, it is not that all the words have this apparent property; there are degrees of subjectivity and objectivity. Though such cases are obvious in which words which can be identified as unequivocally biased or unbiased, there is a tendency of words which lay in between both the positions.

Euphemistic vocabulary is used when there is need to stay away from negative wording (Fairclough 1989), and it provides an angle of ideological choice. In this context, "euphemism is characterized by avoidance language and evasive expression" (Allan and Burridge 1991, p. 3). Moreover, euphemism and dysphemism function in situations when a Speaker avoids using or purposefully decides to use distasteful expressions. As a matter of fact this type of avoidance is the present trend of political language. It is a tool to avoid taboos in language along with helping in face saving.

The other element in identify discursivity in discourse through vocabulary is metaphor. Fairclough (1989) is of the opinion, "Metaphor is a mean of representing one aspect of experience in terms of another" (p.117). Moreover, he says that metaphors may signify ideological views as events. Keeping this view in mind, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) state other dimension that "the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (p.5). They stress that metaphor is pervasive not only in language but also in thought and action.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) believe in the power of metaphors. According to them metaphors can construct realities for us, and mostly these types of realities are social realities.

In the analysis of news reports covering political speeches, the role of words representing the views of politicians is significantly critical; therefore, the above mentioned angles are taken to analyze the role of vocabulary in the media coverage of the political representation.

### **3.Statement of Problem and Purpose**

Political leaders depend on print media to reflect their speeches on the prominent place of the newspapers for masses, and in this way they rely on the power of media to access them so that their point of view may change the public perception. However, it is a common observation that newspapers significantly influence the political situations; therefore, they exercise their power of representation to create a favored perspective. The purpose of this study is to understand the role of print media in the shaping of political process through the analysis of lexical choices. It also aims to present the insights to understand the implicit practices in the use of lexical choices of print media, which can play a role in the construction of political environment through its power of having access to the reader.

## 4. Method

Fairclough (1995) is of the view that different wordings may have connections to different ideological positions; therefore, he concludes that the structure of a vocabulary is generally based on ideology. On the other hand van Dijk (1988, p.71) derives the term of "opinion-controlled lexical choices" for a specific type of vocabulary items that are present in good number in news reports of newspapers. He thinks that some lexical choices are more subtle than others.

With the above mentioned perspective, the reports of three Pakistani English newspapers have been selected: *Dawn*, *The News* and *The Express Tribune* ((Please see appendix for original reports). Four speeches have been selected with the condition of given prominent space on the front pages in national newspapers. The purpose behind this is to maintain an equal criterion for all the political leaders and their coverage in newspapers and to avoid any misrepresentation by taking privileged coverage of one speech over the others getting less important printing space. Moreover, the reports of speeches have been taken as representative texts. The news reports of all the above mentioned newspapers on different political speeches of different political figures have been analyzed with the perspective of their lexical choices. In addition to the actual expression, the reports use their own expressions which shape overall image. Therefore, actual expressions of the speakers are not analyzed unless they are in abundance.

The analysis presented in the next pages is of lexical choices made by the news reports with contrast to the vocabulary used in the political speeches of different political leaders. This point of lexical choices with the perspective of construction of reality is taken from Fairclough's (1995) three dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis though the semantics along with lexical choices is the concern of almost all CDA practitioners. The particular focus of this analysis beside the choice of vocabulary is on the use of connotations (adjectives and metaphors have also been added) and euphemistic expression in news reports.

## 5. Analysis

### 5.1 Connotations in News Reports

The first speech selected for the study was delivered by Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, The Prime Minister of Pakistan, in the UN on September 26, 2014 (Please see appendix for reports). The vocabulary used in the report of *The New* has very few connotations and the most important verbs, to join clauses, are not ideologically contested as the frequently used word is 'said'. However, the verbs like 'reminded', 'recalled' etc. are few exceptions. The news report has further used some expressions which depict the representation of the nation by the speaker though it is a fact also but the expressions and the words are important. The common expression in many sentences is, 'Prime minister said Pakistan' with the change of verbs only and they are: 'remains committed', 'were disappointed', 'was ready', 'was committed to eliminate', 'will continue to support', and 'has maintained'.

Since these expressions are not taken from the direct quotes, the angle of discursivity in the choice of words contributes to the powerful image of the speaker. To take just one example, the actual expression in the speech is: 'we were disappointed at the cancellation of the foreign secretary-level talks', but the expression used in this report is presented with a little modification of 'we' with 'Pakistan'.

The vocabulary used in the report of *Dawn* has fewer amounts of connotations and the most important verbs, to join clauses, are not ideologically contested as the mostly used word is 'said'. However, the verbs like 'reminded', 'hoped', 'urged' etc. are few exceptions. The report has used the expressions of its own. For example, the expression like 'India argues that Pakistan caused the cancellation' seems a metaphoric expression as countries are arguing like human beings. There are few more similar expressions like: 'Indian officials had warned Pakistan earlier this week', 'The prime minister covered a number of key issues in his speech' etc. In first example, individuals are 'warning' a country as if a country is a living being; the reporter, in the second example, has declared the content of the speech as 'key issues'. It is worth mentioning that these expressions are not from direct quotes though they are in abundance in the reporting of the speech.

The amount of connotations in *The Express Tribune* is far less and the most important verbs are 'condemned', 'added', 'reiterated' etc.

The second speech selected for this study was delivered by Imran Khan, a very popular political leader and the chairman *Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf*, on November 30, 2014 in a massive public gathering (Please see appendix for reports). *The News* in the report seems to be employing similar set of words, for example: 'grinding halt', 'charged', 'alleged', 'blame', 'warned', 'shut down' etc. The expressions like 'believed by many' and 'despite extending invitations' are used to generate specific view in the report. Most of the work in the report seems to reflect through the lens set by above mentioned examples.

*Dawn* in this report has used some prominent expressions, for example: 'Challenging the government', 'obstinate', 'paralyze', 'hostile measures', 'shut down' etc. The connotations of most of the terms are justly used or at least carry the same sense as the speaker wished to convey. The expressions like 'multitudes' and 'accentuate every pause', 'signature repertoire' contribute to create certain perception in the report, which is meaningful.

Lexical choices used in the report of *The Express Tribune* have been mostly employed to enhance the political impression of the speaker. The use of adjectives is prominent in the report to contribute the strong image of PTI: 'massive rally', 'much-talked', and 'longstanding demand', are few expressions taken only from first paragraph. The connotations of most of the terms are contributing to the political fervor of PTI. For example, the term 'frenzied' has its negative connotations but the way it is used for PTI supporters, seems a quality. The similar pattern of vocabulary prevails in the report. the term 'stand still' for the country is a metaphorical term, 'unveiling' for a plan, and the term 'historic' are having metaphorical values and their meaning can be recreated on the basis of individual experiences.

The third speech selected for this study was delivered by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Chairman *Pakistan People's party*, on October 18, 2014 in a massive public gathering at Karachi (Please see appendix for reports). The prominent impact is generated in the report of *The News* through the words like, 'massive public', 'puppet Khan', 'Bhuttoism', 'political orphans', 'umpire' etc. The verbs in principle clauses are also important: 'he touched upon', 'he announced', 'he exhorted', 'The PPP's young leader declared', 'Bilawal said' etc. These verbs provide a proper position to the speaker, which may generate impact on the perception of the readers. This report includes many connotative expressions. There are many of those expressions which the speaker has used.

However, this report also includes expressions regarding the participation of the audience as well as the strength of 'jalsa', for example:

*'A large number of supporters and loyalists .....converged at the Bagh-e-Jinnah's public gathering .... to pay homage to the people who had lost their lives in the Karsaz bomb blasts at Benazir Bhutto's homecoming rally on October 18, 2007.'*

The terms *loyalists*, *homage* and *homecoming* create a specific view in the readers' mind about the speaker.

The report of *Dawn* uses very few expressions in the sentences to create subjective reality. The prominent impact is generated in the report through the words like, 'mammoth rally', 'Bhuttoism', 'political orphans', etc. The verbs in principle clauses are also important: 'he said', 'he dwelt at length', 'he underlined', 'Mr Bhutto-Zardari cautioned', 'the PPP leader said', 'he did not mince his words' along with 'invited', 'derisive of', 'paying tributes' etc. These expressions provide a proper position to the speaker, which impacts on the perception of the readers. This report includes many connotative expressions which the speaker has used: 'MQM of Lahore', 'Uncle Altaf', 'political orphans', 'puppets' etc.

The prominent impact is generated in the report of *The Express Tribune* through the particular vocabulary like, 'massive rally', 'puppet opposition leader', 'Bhuttoism', 'Ziaism', 'kicking off his political career', 'dictatorship', 'Oxford graduate' etc. The verbs in principle clauses are also important: 'he said', 'he added', 'Bilawal urged', 'The PPP leader also hit out at MQM, saying', 'Bilawal criticized' etc. These verbs help creating a particular perception about the speaker.

The last speech selected for this study was delivered by Asif Ali Zardari, Co-chairman *Pakistan People's party*, on December 27, 2014 in a massive public gathering at Karachi (Please see appendix for reports). The vocabulary used in *The News* seems to have used similar set of words, for example: 'called tomcat', 'slain PPP chairperson', 'oppression', 'criticizing', and 'dictator' etc. This report does not include many connotative expressions. There are many of those expressions which the speaker has used. However, this report does not include any expression regarding the participation of the audience as well as the strength of *jalsa*.

Lexical choices used in the report of *Dawn* seem to have a specific function as they are set with a certain perspective, for example: 'hound', 'warned', 'critical' etc. This report does not seem to have included many connotative expressions.

The vocabulary affecting the perception of readers has been used in the prominent place in the sentences in most of the report of *The Express Tribune*. For example, the verbs used in principle clauses are: 'blamed', 'said', 'added', 'announced', 'dispelled', etc. These words shape the argument coming in the subordinate clause. The vocabulary used in the report is ideologically flavored, for example: 'slain chairperson', 'victimization', 'dictator' etc. Though the report does not seem to have included many connotative expressions, yet there are many which the speaker has used. However, this report has not included any expression regarding the participation of the audience as well as the strength of *jalsa*.

## **5.2 Euphemism in News Reports**

Different newspapers used euphemism differently to depict the speech of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif (Please see appendix for reports). *The News* has used some of the expressions like: 'Nawaz said Pakistan was disappointed at the cancellation of the foreign secretary-level talks with India.' The above mentioned example can also be taken as a euphemistic technique as this expression is used to interpret 'we', and this report has interpreted it as 'Pakistan' and not as 'government'. This report does not seem to use many euphemistic expressions; instead this report has omitted the information to avoid such reporting.

The report in *Dawn* does not seem to use euphemistic expressions; instead this report also uses the technique of omission to avoid such reporting. Therefore, this report has touched only two issues of the speech and the rest of the speech is not reported.

*The Express Tribune* does not seem to have used euphemistic expressions and prefers to omit the information to avoid such reporting. Therefore, though this report has touched many issues of the speech, the details of dimensions of those points are mostly missed, and the rest of the speech is not reported in this report.

The newspapers showed some important tendencies while representing Imran Khan's speech (Please see appendix for reports). The expressions used in *The News* like: 'He came down hard on Nawaz and Zardari and questioned why they not be dubbed as dacoits for looting billions of poor Pakistanis of whom 110 million could not afford two-time meal' are, though, present in the speech, but they are reflected as it is and euphemistic expressions seem to be avoided deliberately.

The report in *Dawn* has not mentioned harsh comments of the speech and has used euphemistic techniques to minimize some impressions. The most critical part of the speech in this context was the critique over Nawaz Sharif, and it is not reflected in the speech coverage. This report has used the term 'government' whereas the speaker has used the name 'Nawaz Sharif', and, therefore, the newspaper has used euphemistic expression in this issue.

*The Express Tribune* has used euphemistic techniques to minimize some impressions. The critique over Nawaz Sharif is reflected in the speech coverage with euphemistic expression. In original speech, the speaker has used the terms 'chor', 'dacoit', 'money lender' etc, but the expression presented in the report is as under:

*'Referring to Premier Nawaz Sharif's recent speech in Havelian wherein he complained that Imran used harsh and derogatory language, Imran said he used harsh language because he was concerned for the welfare of the people.'*

Moreover, the term 'complained' for the prime minister is meaningful in the above mentioned example. Some other similar euphemistic expressions can be traced in the rest of the report.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari (Please see appendix for reports) has used certain offending terms like 'kuth putli Khan' and 'kuth putli' etc. in Urdu, but the report published in *The News* has not only translated it into English, it has avoided euphemistic techniques to soften those expressions, for example:

- 'He said that puppets and political orphans staging protest sit-ins in Islamabad.....'

- ‘Without naming the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan and referring to him as among the puppets staging protest sit-ins in Islamabad, he exhorted the PTI leader not to rely on his ‘umpire’ any more to grab power .....
- ‘To make the ‘Puppet Khan’ (referring to Imran Khan) the opposition leader in the National Assembly....’

This seems a political expression which should have been handled tactfully, but it has been documented as it is. It is also worth mentioning that this technique is employed only against PTI and not against any other party or leader despite the fact that the speaker has used sarcastic remarks against MQM and the present government. The choice of words and the selection of clauses have created an impact of the following statement which is different from the intensions of the speaker. The report says:

*‘He paid rich tributes to ZA Bhutto, saying that as Quaid-i-Azam had founded the country but could not establish democracy as his life had not provided him the opportunity, it was Bhutto who had realized the long-awaited dream of a democratic order in the country...’*

Though the speaker has used this expression but he has provided a context by presenting a tribute to Quaid-i-Azam and by adding honorific as ‘Hazrat Quaid-i-Azam’; the speaker mentions that Butto fulfilled his dream of democratic Pakistan. The expression used in the report seems some careless arrangement of words and clauses.

As a whole, this report seems to have used euphemistic expressions; when it is not used, the whole information is missing. For example, the speaker mentions ‘Model Town tragedy’, ‘failure of foreign policy’, and wastage of money on ‘Metro bus’ etc. in the speech, but so many other expressions used against the government are not presented in the report. Therefore, it is evident that euphemistic expressions have not been used against PTI, but the whole information or the argument has been avoided in case of speaker’s criticism on other parties. The speaker has used so many popular slogans of PPP but this report mentions all those in the following way: ‘Mr Bhutto-Zardari’s speech lasted about 90 minutes and was punctuated by almost all well-known slogans of the PPP.’

The report in *Dawn* has avoided terms like ‘kuth putli Khan’ and ‘kuth putli’ etc., and presented euphemistic expressions to avoid negativity, for example:

- ‘He said some external and internal forces wanted to push the country into the kind of civil war .....
- ‘The youthful leader was highly derisive of the Tehrik-i-Insaf, terming its sit-in a drama and alleging that it wanted to become the “MQM of Lahore”. ‘

Similar set of words can be identified in the report using generalization as is found in the second example mentioned above. However, there is one expression in the report that shows criticism against PTI: ‘..... He touched on most issues confronting the country and inveighed against the ‘puppets’ staging dharnas in Islamabad.’ Even this example is a comment over what the speaker has said. However, this report has not shown such expertise of euphemistic expressions regarding



MQM as few examples can be identified where this report has tried to show the message delivered in the speech. For example, the speaker has used the term 'Uncle' sarcastically in the speech, and this expression is present in the report:

- '.....even the Muttahida Qaumi Movement chief 'Uncle Altaf''
- 'MQM of Lahore'
- 'He did not mince his words while talking about the Muttahida Qaumi Movement. "The MQM has been in power in Karachi for the past 20 years and everyone knows what has gone on over the two decades.'

The term 'did not mince his words' shows bitterness though it can also be taken as euphemistic expression as it seems a generalization technique to convey the message, but here the selection seems bitter. As a whole, this report seems to have used euphemistic expressions; when this technique is not employed, the whole information has been avoided. For example, the speaker mentions significantly about some 'script writers' and 'script' in the speech, but they are not mentioned in the report. Therefore, it is evident that euphemistic expressions have been used in the report, and on some places the whole information or the arguments have been avoided in the report.

The speaker has criticized PTI more than any other party but the reflection shown in the report published in *The Express Tribune* seems to focus more on MQM. However, this report does not include such sarcastic language that the speaker has used against this party. Besides, the criticism on government is less than that of MQM; however, that has been placed earlier in the report. Moreover, the words have been selected carefully regarding the mentioned issues. Sensitized expressions used by the speaker are avoided. Expressions like 'Bhuttoism', 'Ziaism', 'dictatorship' etc. are prominent in the report. Moreover, some expressions like 'Oxford graduate', 'the scion of Bhutto family' etc have been added in the report in the favor the speaker.

Asif Ali Zardari (Please see appendix for reports) has used certain terms which are offending like 'tomcat' etc, but the report in *The News* has not used euphemistic techniques, except few examples, to minimize any offending thing regarding the former President Pervaiz Musharraf, for example:

- 'If army wants 'tomcat' to do politics, it should announce he is their representative'
- 'Criticising former president Musharraf, he called him a 'tomcat' (Billa).....'

This political expression has been documented as it is. It is only on one place that the expression, 'tomcat' is replaced with 'dictator': The speaker has mentioned 'generals and politicians with narrow vision' in the speech, but it is reported as 'those with narrow vision' in this report.

On the whole, this report seems to have used euphemistic expressions to favor the speaker or missed the information instead of using this technique. For example, the speaker fears that this law of military court may not become 'kala qanoon', black law, but this expression of 'kala qanoon' has not been used in the report.

The terms like 'tomcat' has not been reported in *Dawn* and this effect is minimized in following way: 'Without naming retired General Pervez Musharraf.....; He was very critical of Pervez

Musharraf's political activities....' Instead of reporting what the speaker has said about Pervez Musharraf, this report has given a general comment over it. The speaker has mentioned 'generals and politicians with narrow vision' in the speech, but it has not been reported in *Dawn*. Since expression of 'kala qanoon' has been avoided, it is evident that euphemistic expressions are not used; instead the whole information or the argument is avoided in the report.

*The Express Tribune* has used euphemistic techniques to minimize the negativity of the argument regarding the former President Pervaiz Musharraf. For example, the term 'Billa' expressed in this report is: 'Zardari blamed former military ruler Pervez Musharraf.....' Another example of euphemism is traced when the speaker calls the generals 'short-sighted', (*kum sooch wale*), and they had 'weakened the Jihad in Kashmir', and expression is reported as: '.....army generals 'mixed up' the jihad in Kashmir with the Afghan insurgency....'

The term 'mixed up' is used instead of 'weakened' in the report to minimize the negative effect. The similar example has been presented when the issue of Makhdoom Amin Fahimis reported, where the expression used by the speaker is 'disloyal', 'betrayal' (*gadari*) for him, but the reported term is 'ditched' in the report. As a whole this report seems to have used euphemistic expressions; they have not been employed on many places at the cost of avoiding the information. For example, the expression of '*kala qanoon*' is not used in the report.

## 6. Findings and Conclusion

All the twelve reports have touched many issues of the speeches; however, some reports have presented the details and avoided the main points. All the reports have different evidences of metaphors favoring their preferred arguments. Mostly, the reports have avoided to include the information instead of using euphemistic expressions. A small number of evidences have been found to have used generalization technique to soften the expression.

All the three reports of the selected newspapers covering the speech of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, in the UN on September 26, 2014 do not seem to have used euphemistic expressions; they have used the technique of omission instead of reporting such expressions. Therefore, all the reports have touched many issues of the speech, but the details of dimensions of those points are mostly missed. The rest of the speech has not been reported. All the reports have different evidences of metaphors: *The News* has avoided many expressions used in the speech; *The Express Tribune* has used many metaphors in the direct quotations in the report, and *Dawn* has used many metaphoric impressions provided in the speech along with creating some of its own.

*The News* has used ideologically contested vocabulary and lexical items used or referring speakers and their parties, except PTI, have positive connotations whereas lexical choices used for PTI and its leader have negative connotations; the lexical choices included adjectives that seem to construct an aggressive image of Imran Khan. *The News* has not used euphemistic expressions even it has avoided to use them where it seems pertinent. On the other hand, lexical choices in the reporting of *Dawn* and *The Express Tribune* seem to contribute the positive image of the PTI leader. *The News* has not used euphemistic expressions whereas the other two reports have substantially used it in the favor of the speaker. *The News* on some places where this euphemism seems appropriate, avoided reporting things regarding PTI leader, Imran Khan.

The reports of *The News* and *Dawn* regarding Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's speech on October 18, 2014 have used ideologically contested vocabulary, and lexical items regarding connotation are also significant in both the reports; however, *The Express Tribune* has constructed a very strong image through the use of specific lexical choices. In addition to it, euphemistic expressions are identified in the report of *The News* and *Dawn* on varied issues; moreover, *The Express Tribune* has not used it, but the report seems to have more evidences of metaphors as compared to other both.

Regarding the reports on Asif Ali Zardari's speech, 'The New' has used ideologically contested vocabulary, and lexical items regarding connotation are significant; whereas *Dawn* and *The Express Tribune* have used very few connotations. In addition to it, *The News* seems to have used euphemistic expressions; whereas *Dawn* and *The Express Tribune* have this technique in reporting speaker's comments about former president Pervaiz Musharaf. Mostly, the reports have avoided to include the information instead of using euphemistic expressions. Only *The News* has some evidences of metaphors used by the speaker but not the other two. Moreover, only *The News* seems to have used generalization technique to soften the expression.

In conclusion, this study confirms some tendencies and different patterns involved in the presentation of political speeches. So far as the lexical features of the all the reports are concerned, evidences are identified that the reports in covering the political speeches create and shape the perception of the readers and take sides to their favored arguments. In this context, the most important role is played by the verbs: one category is of those reporting verbs which have been used in the principle clauses, and the other is of those used in the participle phrases in the beginning of sentences.

With regard to connotations and euphemistic expressions, it is a significant fact that political speeches are enriched with cultural expressions, but their reflection in newspapers is a careful business as their representation produces subjective reality and can influence the image not only of the speaker but also of the newspaper. With this view, it has been observed that both the above mentioned expressions were found though not in all the reports but in the favored topics and speeches. Quite same is the case with the use of metaphor: if all the metaphors used in the speech are used in the report, it can again create an imbalance in the report as report requires denotations at maximum. Only selected metaphors were used in most of the reports and where they are used more than normal, though they are also from the speeches, they have given the impression of newspapers' taking sides.

The lexical analysis provides the evidences that favored choices are in practice in Pakistani English newspapers to influence public perception. Biasness in the choice of lexical items is evident; therefore, media discourse through the power of lexical choices is influencing political discourse in Pakistani scenario. In other words, Pakistani Print Media, in general, construct the realities, believed by a number of readers, by exercising its authority to represent political speeches to their own preferred settings.

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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](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.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/641107-scriptwriters-want-puppet-pm,-opposition-leader-bilawal>
- b. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1138944/bilawal-spells-out-bold-agenda-for-ppp>
- c. [https://epaper.tribune.com.pk/DisplayDetails.aspx?ENI\\_ID=11201410190013&EN\\_ID=11201410190004&EMID=11201410190004](https://epaper.tribune.com.pk/DisplayDetails.aspx?ENI_ID=11201410190013&EN_ID=11201410190004&EMID=11201410190004)

#### 4. Links for the Reports on Asif Ali Zardari's Speech

- a. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/642488-ppp-won't-allow-misuse-of-military-courts-zardari>
- b. <https://www.dawn.com/archive/2014-12-28/>  
[https://epaper.tribune.com.pk/DisplayDetails.aspx?ENI\\_ID=11201410190013&EN\\_ID=11201410190004&EMID=11201410190004](https://epaper.tribune.com.pk/DisplayDetails.aspx?ENI_ID=11201410190013&EN_ID=11201410190004&EMID=11201410190004)