



Army Public School Attack; A Comparative Study of Daily Dawn and The News International – The Elite Newspapers of Pakistan

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Abstract— Terrorism in Pakistan has made the environment gruesome for children with special focus. Army public school is witnessed in this regard. On December 16, 2014, it befell the school on the spur of moment. This terror attack dispersed the fracas around the setting of school located in Peshawar. On the second day, integrated media brought the fatal incident to the people throughout the globe. Therefore, this paper is aimed at determining as to how press of Pakistan treated the incident concerned editorials. The editorials excluding news stories, features, columns, article, and so forth of newspapers taken for this study as the units of analysis have been selected to know how they represented the issue. What terms the editorials of both newspapers used for the killers and victims.

Content analysis technique is used for analyzing the editorials as units of two newspapers for a week based publication. Editorial as a unit of analysis is taken to see as to what terms were used by both newspapers. It is found that daily Dawn newspaper fetches more different terms for attackers but The News International brings relatively less items as words for attackers. The daily Dawn newspaper employs the word 'Militant' more, while the News International exercises the words 'Taliban' and 'killer'. On the other hand, the daily Dawn newspaper bring the word 'helpless' more into play, whereas, the News International draws on the word 'victims' instead.

It is, hence, recommended that both the newspapers must use appropriate terms for any kind of issue they bring on daily interval.

Keywords— APS, Terrorism, Media, Attack, Killers, Victims

I. INTRODUCTION

It was the morning of 16th December 2014 on which a vicious terrorist attack spread the terror on Army public school warsak road, Peshawar which is located in the (Khyber Pakhtoon Khuwa KPK) province of Pakistan. The nature of attack added spree killing and shooting, hostage taking, suicide bombing and as per Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) report, seven terrorists entered the school around 10am, reached the auditorium – where school children were got gathered for a ceremony – and opened fire on them, fifteen minutes later, Special Services Group (SSG) team entered the school to set up the rescue operation, 7 terrorists were killed by them and they managed to rescue many hostages. A total of around 150 people left killed in the attack comprising 132

children. Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed the responsibility of this attack, saying that it was their revenge against Pakistan army and Operation Zarb e Azb. This attack ignited a series of reactions or a huge response in Pakistan. Public, government, journalists, political and religious parties everyone condemned the attack.

The entire nation came and stood together to convey unity with the sufferers of APS Peshawar attack. Many countries and international organizations condemned the attack and expressed their condolences. The incident took place in the coverage provided in national and international media of the incident took place.

Media has made a way into our lives like oxygen in our body in that people use the media for obtaining all kinds of data. On one hand, our print media brings information about the different national and international issues while, on the flip side, they also examine the day's news.

Editorial works as the newspaper's overt voice (López Hidalgo; Fernández Barrero, 2012 cited in B García Orosa, X López García, S Gallur Santorum, 2013), in terms of the structure or sources of information, use of language and selection of topics. According to Morán Torres (1988), the editorial is a powerful instrument in the propagation and origination of ideological derives that manipulate and even orient readers. Most researchers highlight three top features of editorial: a) It highlights and conveys the institutional opinion on a given topic which it considers to be top-notch and relevant. b) Besides, proffering opinion cum assessment on a given topic, the editorial also gives it importance simply by choosing it as the topic of the day. c) It is a nameless article, as it replicates the opinion of the newspaper with regard to a given story, even though there may be some exemptions.

Editorials, in shape of the editor's views, plays a significant role in shaping and synthesizing public point of view towards matters of national as well as international interest. Media texts work as means and advocates of social change in one manner or the other which makes them able to be analyzed from different angles (Fairclough, 1995). Van Dijk (2000) deems the media discourse to be indubitably the leading contributor of public point of view. Particular papers possess their own particular viewpoints and viewership depending upon their ideological orientation, political coalition and socio-cultural setting. This is why the same event is highlighted discrepantly in different newspaper headlines and editorials.

Editorials are one particular aspect of media phenomenon that focuses on different facets including, problems, opportunities and issues related to people and society. Van Dijk, (1989) challenge that the degree, nature and amount of editorial coverage and quarrels and issues attract is a pointer of socio-political significance an exacting newspaper points to such events. Moreover, the texts work as subjective, official and persuasive mirror image of public idea. In turn, these are wielded of influence by ideological doctrine leading social decision and as per Van Dijk (1998b), editorials define as to how one group see others between right or wrong. Thus, personal bias cannot be completely taken out as editorial points of views are institutional and social and due to this they attract research and scholarly attention.

The fact; how different newspapers news cover, report and analyze the same event or conflict represent their institutional and social nature. Moreover, they as usual achieve their ends by running different linguistic strategies (e.g. lexical choices, syntactic structures and so forth). By making use of different syntax and vocabulary, the angle and perspective of a particular stance is modified. This is where critical discourse analysis comes into play to unravel the hidden and not so explicit stances of media discourses.

Given the pivotal role played by the news as the shapers and molders of public opinion as well as propagators of the state policies. This study is aimed at analyzing as to how two of the most renowned newspapers, i.e. —Dawn and —The New International report and interpret one event differently. The massacre is the attack on Army Public School, Peshawar, where scores of deaths and wounded came up with possibility. This study is purely limited to the analysis of the editorials of the mentioned newspapers through an assessment of lexical choices and syntactic structures. Hence, the findings and discussions are solely based on the analysis of the editorials.

A. Army Public School

Since Pakistan joined the U.S. led war on terror in the aftermath of the 9/11 events, the country has witnessed countless bloody attacks and has borne the brunt of being an ally in the war. By choosing to side with the United States and against the then Taliban government in Afghanistan, Pakistan incurred the wrath of the different Taliban factions who resorted to bloody violence against the innocent people of Pakistan. The Taliban, in their war has vowed to injure

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Pakistan and its people irrespective of their age, sex, status, political alignment etc. But on December 16, 2014, they chose to inflict a deadly, fatal blow on its people in the country's history. On that day, seven Taliban gunmen entered Army Public School located in Peshawar and home to the children of army men and opened fire at random at the innocent school children. Some of them later on detonated their suicide vests which resulted in more casualties among the children caught up in the institute. Finally the security forces did succeed in killing the militants and clearing the area but not before 132 people (including children and women) were killed and another 84 injured. The city was bathed in blood and particularly the young blood of innocent minor school going children. Later, one Taliban faction took the responsibility of the deadly attack.

II. SIGNIFICANCE

The discourse has always been seen as constructor and perpetrators of ideologies. Language renders its service as a tool in the hands of groups, users and institutions which influence it on their gain. The prevailing research effort is top-notch on account of paying eyelid upon this influential power of language. While discourse analysis of critical type is a vivacious discipline in the west, it requires to pick-up the speed in Pakistani perspective, especially with reference to media discourse. It lives to be walked around, in a great deal, how due to conflicting interests; the same issue is represented in bottom up manner by discrepant media groups. Religious affiliation, social cum cultural orientations and political alignment, religious affiliation and socio-cultural orientation play the important role of main factors in influencing specific groups and thus their discourse is shaped and transformed accordingly.

However, the variety of studies have been executed concerning analysis of thematic type, the researcher anticipates to represent the importance of analysis of linguistic type via the notable results of this piece of work so that researchers and scholars are predisposed towards discourse analysis of critical type. The data analysis exposes, for example, that even the country has went through a good deal at the hands of the terrorists, the media discourse is yet undecided, misty and unclear in categorizing, knowing and condemning them.

Besides, since media voices (to some extent) shapes to the state narrative on a particular problem, it is discernible; our state narrative on terror concerned matters is blurred and mirrors undecidedness. On the flip side, following 9/11, the American discourse (and its state narrative by extension) on anti-terrorism war is unambiguous and passionate. This study is thus significant in the sense that it warns the readers (in an indirect manner) to be cautious about what they read and not

to take content for granted, rather strive to understand how a particular effect is created with the help of a particular selection and arrangement of words.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How are the victims and attackers expressed in the newspapers taken for granted?
- What words are used for the killers and victims by the newspapers?
- Which one of two newspapers does cover more to the issue?

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Newspapers are a very widely read type of discourse and editorials within a paper are a particular type of discourse as such. They reflect socio-political setting of a particular context and mold public opinion in particular direction. The editorials of the two Pakistani newspapers, for example, caught the attention of two researchers, Tabassum Shah and Bilal (2013). They studied the editorials of the daily Dawn and the daily Nation to examine the newspapers' roles in the ideological construction of the left and right wing. Their focus was on the editorial portrayal of the death of Osama Bin Laden and PNS Mehran base attack. They examined the selected editorials using such discourse-analytical devices as word choices, syntactic structures, global and local semantics and rhetorical structures. Results revealed that editorials are not an impartial representation of issues and problems. On the contrary, they represent the prevailing ideologies of the concerned newspaper.

In order to investigate the portrayal of Iran nuclear program in two different groups' newspapers, Ahmadian and Farahani (2014) examined the Los Angeles and Tehran Times' editorials. They focused on how public opinion is formulated and influenced by the power of language. Taking one paper as in-group and the other as out-group representation, the researchers analyze how the two different editorials have differently portrayed Iran's nuclear program in accordance with their respective ideological standing. They used Van Dijk's framework of analysis for positive self-presentation and negative other presentation. Focusing on certain discursive strategies like lexicalization and presupposition, the study reveals that in line with their respective ideologies, the same issue has been differently represented by the two newspapers. Using the same analytic framework of Van Dijk, Tahir (2013) investigated how Muslims are represented in an article published in the —Washington Post. The article focused on the protests of the Muslims against the publication of the blasphemous cartoons of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Through the ideological framework of —us vs them, the researcher explored how the article has finely

constructed the underlying beliefs regarding the representation of in-group and out-group. Examining word choices and employing other such strategies, the study concluded that Muslims and their actions were negatively portrayed as—others in the article.

Similarly Poorebrahim and Reza (2012) explored how Islam and Muslims are represented in the western discourse by examining the interrelationship of ideology and language. For this purpose, the researcher concentrated on the headlines of the print media in four newspapers, i.e. The Herald Tribune, The Times, The Independent and The New York Times. The ideological square model of Van Dijk, consisting of the positive presentation of the —self and negative presentation of the —other was used. Their examination of linguistic choices revealed that Muslims are negatively represented and Islam is frequently stereotyped.

In order to study how the uprising in Libya and Syria is depicted in the news editorials, Afzal Naeem and Harun Minhas (2015) critically analyzed the editorials of two papers, i.e. —The Arab News of Saudi Arabia and —News International of Pakistan. The researchers examined how the uprising was portrayed in two different cultural settings. While the Saudi Arabian paper represented in-group editorial voice, the Pakistani newspaper was representative of out-group editorial voice. Van Dijk's ideological square model was used to analyze the text. Data was analyzed according to the qualitative data analysis software package NVivo 10.

Findings reveal that the authorities are portrayed as —them whereas; the protestors are presented as —us. Further, the latter are seen as obstacles in the way of change that the common man represents. The study concludes that the Arab News deals the crises with more severity than the News International.

V. UNITS OF ANALYSIS

As it is a fact, newspapers bring information concerning a variety of subjects in the shapes of news reports, articles, columns, features, captions, advertisements, announcements, press releases and press notes, handouts, editorial and so forth. Therefore, this study is aimed only at analyzing the editorials as unit of analysis. Thus, the unit of analysis in this study is only editorial.

VI. METHODOLOGY

The aim of the current work is to see the role played by the two newspapers in the matter of APS (Army Public School) massacre. This is accomplished drawing on the use of syntactic structures and lexical choices used in the editorials. The observation as to whether a proper text relates with the problems in an overt and transparent manner or describes

things in a more blurred and covert way has been gone through. The news chosen for analysis were published the next day after the Army Public School attack was fallen. Daily Dawn and The News International newspapers of Pakistan are selected because these are, as per some quarters argue, to be more unbiased and neutral in the expression of even contentious matters.

Therefore, the study proffers an account of the attack; the Pakistani perspective as in-group editorial highlight via the editorial of the daily Dawn and The News International. Qualitative research design is got for this study to determine how the editorials develop and represent the actors: Taliban vs. those who were injured and killed as well. This is why it is interesting to see how the same issue has been chosen up by two different papers in two discrepant culture based environments.

The analysis includes syntactic structures and lexical choices used and via them to determine the perception of the editorials in depicting the victims and attackers. In other words, this study is aimed at highlighting how the —use sentiment (portrayal of the victims) and the —them sentiment (portrayal of the terrorists) are uttered via the use of language in the texts.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS

TABLE 1

Words and Expressions Used for the —Attackers by both newspaper

Dawn	The New International
Convict	Pakistani Taliban
The militants	The Taliban
Heavily armed militants	Suspect
Killer	Armed man
Gunmen	Suicide Bomber
Taliban insurgency	Killer
Taliban	Militants
Atrocious	
Suspect	
Culprit	

Table 1: It explains as to how both newspapers have represented the killers mentioned in the massacre befallen at Army Public School. It is explicit that daily dawn newspaper brings more different words for attackers but The News International brings less word used for attackers. The daily Dawn newspaper uses the word “Militant” more and the News International uses the word “Taliban and killer” more.

TABLE II

Words and Expressions Used for the —Victims/Survivors by both news stories

Daily Dawn	The New International
Helpless school children	Students at school
Dead school children	Dead bodies
More bodies	Mourners
Young children in school	The image of children’s bodies
Vulnerable	Vulnerable
Helpless	Victims’ families
The grieving families of the dead	The survivors
Victims	Desperate relatives
Survivors	The victims

Table 2: It explains as to how both newspapers have represented the victims mentioned in the massacre befallen Army Public School. The daily Dawn newspaper uses the word “helpless” more and the News International uses the word “victims” more.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The results of the paper are interesting in the sense that how the same issue or conflict is depicted differently by discrepant newspapers in different social cum cultural as well as political environments. This asks for more studies in the respective areas to expose the obscured ideological stances of newspaper news, especially in the context of out-group and in-group highlight. Moreover, the issue of Taliban still lives to be something like a chaos in the Pakistani media discourse. More clear and neutral research is needed to elucidate the peoples’ states and the attitude of media towards the problem. The undecided nature of the issue requires to be strong-willed in explained terms so that the state can bring a judicious policy in relation with the snags. At last, it is found that daily Dawn as compared to Daily The International News newspaper brings more terms for the killers and Daily Dawn uses the term “Militant” and The International, on the other hand, uses more the term Taliban and Killer for the attackers of the do massacre. In terms of using terms for the victims these also practice difference. Daily Dawn newspaper uses the word “helpless” more and The News International, hence, places the term victims for the affected children of the massacre.

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Mahesar Rameez Ali is enthusiastic to contribute his research excessively for standing at the crossroad of history.