

Portrayal of Human Rights Issues Existing in Pakistan: An Analysis of *Newsweek* (2005-2010)

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Abstract

The portrayal of human rights issues in media has been highly debated as most of the time they are not presented in the frame of human rights violations rather are tied with other political news. The present study analyses the portrayal of human rights issues existing in Pakistan through *Newsweek*. Due to limitation of time, articles from 2005 to 2010 are first collected and one article from each year is then analysed. 2005 did not have any article on human rights. The articles are analysed in the light of ideological square and perspectivising strategies. Among Perspectivising strategies, involvement strategies are scrutinized. The present paper concludes that human rights violations are tied with politics and in victims vs. victimized frame negative victimized and positive victims' image is created. High degree of involvement strategies has also been observed and analyzed.

Keywords: media, human rights, violations

Introduction

The interrelationship between media with human rights discourse is relatively a new phenomenon. The media in instances of conflict either act as a watch dog or a lapdog. Majorly it is seen that media is categorized as tool which serve as a protector and emblem of human rights and actively plays its role in safeguarding the rights of the people. (Hammarberg, 2012). But the other side of the coin cannot be ignored i.e., when media remains mute on human rights violation thus acts as a complicit in the crimes against humanity. The media conglomerates often comes across the question whether an incident of human rights violation is a news in its own way or it becomes a news in relationship with any other story. (Journalism, Media and the Challenge of Human Rights Reporting, 2002) For this reason, reporting human rights violations becomes a complex phenomenon, especially in the times of the conflict, it becomes ever harder to report from an objective stance.

As majority of news agencies follow agenda setting motive, the standard of ethics in the coverage of human rights violation has always been questioned. Journalists often misrepresent human rights violations due to their inadequate understanding of the issue. As stated earlier human rights violations are most seen in relation with other factors like politics, so they are presented not in accordance with international covenants of human rights. Other than this, the lack of understanding with respect to context further misinforms the readers about human rights violations. (Speak Up, Speak Out: A Toolkit for Reporting on Human Rights Issues). With respect to media's role as lapdog, it can be used as a tool for oppression and violence through the articulation of hate speech in particular. (Nwankwo, 2011)

Problem Statement

American media has been giving substantial status conferral to Pakistan after the incident of 9/11. The security situation in Pakistan has been a key theme for American media but the journalists are also covering problems existing in Pakistan on social sphere. *Time* and *Newsweek* both being news

magazine have been giving significant amount of coverage to Pakistani society. The present research analysis is restricted to only *Newsweek*. There is need to understand how human rights issues existing in Pakistan are presented by *Newsweek*.

- From which perspective, human rights violations are presented by *Newsweek*?
- Are human rights violations presented in connection with other events? If yes with what other factors or incidents?
- Which perspective strategies are used by *Newsweek*?

There are few researches that deal discuss the role of media in covering human rights violations more specifically with Pakistani context in American media. This research will serve as a pulpit to understand how American media adopts certain perspectives to cover human rights violations in developing countries like Pakistan thus undermining the role of media as a watchdog.

Literature Review

The language of media has been an interest for linguist and applied linguist for multiple reasons. Its data is easily accessible for the research and more importantly media language shapes certain attitudes among its readers or hearers. Simultaneously, as media uses various dialects, it has the charisma of attracting linguists. From socio-linguist's perspective, media language is a medium which reflects social attitudes and reveals information about others' cultural background (Bell, 1995). Media language provides information, and its significance is enhanced on how reliable the information is and secondly how it helps in persuading people to take a particular course of action (Durant & Lambrou, 2009). 'Language activates frames, new language is required for new frames' (Ibid). On the lexical level, words convey both connotative and denotative meaning, as they have the quality of value judgement. In media, the choice of lexical items is crucial in building any frame.

The words used to communicate the message(s) of a text –whether about an individual, a group of people, an event, a predicted or expected event, a process, a state of affairs or any of other subjects and themes of newspaper texts –frame the story in direct and unavoidable ways (John E. Richardson, 2007, p. 48). For the purpose of studying how language and society are inter-related and impact each other, the theory of critical discourse analysis is quite helpful. In the domain of CDA, discourse implies 'social practice' (Fairclough, Mulderrig, & Wodak, 2011). There are multiple approaches to understand CDA. In late 1970s, the CDA grew out of Critical Linguistics in Britain. At that time, the major emphasis was on the grammatical feature to study the social inequalities. It was based more on semiotic analysis and was tied with 'systematic linguistic theory' (Ibid).

Later Fairclough developed his own theory of discourse that focuses on discursive changes. The theory brought CDA closer to sociologists. His theory rests on three basic questions.

- How is the world presented?
- What identities are set up for those involved in the programme or story?
- What relationships are set up between those involved? (Fairclough, 1995)

One of the seminal work in CDA is by Teun Dijk who came up with socio-cognitive studies in CDA. His ideological sphere is crucial in understanding how positive self and other negative images are constructed. He (Teun Van Dijk) suggests that the ideological square is characterized by a Positive Self Presentation and a simultaneous Negative Other-Presentation; it is a way of perceiving and representing the world. The ideological square predicts that 'outsiders' of various types will be presented in a negative way and 'insiders' will be represented in a positive way (John E. Richardson, 2007). As critical discourse analysis rest son the ideology of hegemony and power, Reisigl and Wodak studied anti-Semitism and came up with discourse historical approach. For the representation of social actors, they came up with multiple strategies, like referential, argumentation, perspectivising etc. (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). With respect to representation, they focussed on the attributes

allocated to individuals through lexical items. For the purpose of perspectivising, they came up involvement and detachment strategies and focussed on mitigation strategies.

Theoretical Framework

Frames serve the purpose of making the incident meaningful by intensifying or flagging the very issue. Frames can be categorized in different and distinct ways. The natural vs. social frames can be analysed to demarcate between the social actors. Once they are identified, primary and secondary frames are then scrutinized.

The lexical items then serve as tools to build frames in any kind of discourse be it textual or verbal. Reisigl and Wodak have reflected upon how the choice of words on the part of the author or speaker reflects his/ her perspective on the given issue. The voice plays a crucial part in determining the involvement or detachment of the author while presenting issues at hand. With respect to frames and perspective generation, linguistic strategies aids in unveiling the macro structure of the text i.e., theme. According to Chaffe, involvement strategies include, use of first and second person pronouns, empathic participles and fuzziness. First and second person are usually used in spoken discourse while third person pronoun is a marker of written discourse. First person pronouns whether singular or plural reflect the high degree of involvement on the part of the speakers or authors (Kuo, 2003). Emphatic participles on the other hand, reflect the speaker or author's emotional stance by forcefully articulating any point of view (Radic-Bojanic). Others have included phonological feature, use of metaphors and direct quotation as markers of the involvement. Goffman describes metaphors as tools for creating frames (Rettie, 2004). Direct quotations also called as constructed dialogues appear in the text when the exact utterances of the speakers are mentioned rather than indirectly quoting them (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001).

Methodology:

In the present study, *Newsweek* is taken as the sample of the American media to study the portrayal of human rights issues existing in Pakistan. Articles pertaining to human rights violation published from 2005 to 2010 are selected through the frame work of Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Further critical discourse analysis (Wodak and Reisigl, 2000) has been used where the focus is on the presentation of actors and the perspectivising strategies. With respect to perspectivising strategies, the present study is delimited to the usage of personal pronouns, metaphors, direct quotations, emphatic participles and fuzziness.

Data Analysis and Findings:

Article: **The Truth about Drones** (Gerges, June 7, 2010)

'Although drone strikes have killed more than a dozen Qaeda and Taliban leaders, they have incinerated hundreds of civilians, including women and children'

But this is not the main frame. The primary frame includes concern for US national security and anti-Americanism in the backdrop of drone attacks in Pakistan.

Define the problem	Drone Attacks and US security at home Violation of UDHR (Article: 3)	Victims Category A Category B	Identities A. US Public at large B. Pakistani citizens	Usage of lexical items to describe the persons A. <ul style="list-style-type: none">fatally shooting 13 people at Ford Hood Texas5 American Muslims (got radicalized) B. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Civilians.. .. (incinerated)
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Identify the causal factors/agents	Multiple actors are involved.	Victimizers Category A Category B Category C	A. drone attacks B. Faisal Shehzad C. Al Qaeda D. Pakistani Talibans	<p>(A)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obama's <u>weapon of choice</u> Drone strikes have <u>killed</u> They (drones) have <u>incinerated</u> hundreds of civilians Drone attacks have become <u>rallying cry</u> for Talibans <p>(B)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He was <u>driven</u> by anger Failed time square bomber <u>Visits</u> to his home in Pakistan Shahzad has said he went to the Taliban for help He joins a growing list of homegrown terror suspects <p>(C)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qaeda's effort to <u>find and recruit terrorists</u> Shadowy Al-Qaeda <p>(D)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Pakistani Taliban and other militants are moving to <u>exploit</u>.
Judgements	Linkage between drone attacks in terrorist activities	Concern about US	Perspective Drone attacks are the cause of rising home grown terrorist attacks in US	<p><u>Metaphors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Damage drone attacks <u>inflict</u> on American reputation The CIA currently <u>wages</u> 24/7 <u>campaign</u> against the Pakistani Taliban and Al-Qaeda The <u>pace</u> of drone strikes has increased. In the first four months,... ...Afghanistan, the recognized <u>war theatre</u> Predators have <u>inflamed</u> anti American rage <u>Exploit</u> this anger <u>Rallying cry</u> for Taliban militants <u>Home grown terror</u> Its <u>fallout</u> is reaching home <p><u>Direct Quotation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Creating more enemies than we're killing or capturing</i> (Jeffery Addicott) Suspect was <i>captured by the murderous rhetoric of Al Qaeda and TTP that looks at the United States as an enemy</i> (John Brennan) <p><u>Emphatic participles</u> <u>at least</u> acknowledge, <u>clearly</u> its fallout</p>

				<u>Fuzziness</u> Pakistani Taliban
Suggest remedies	There is need to conduct cost and benefit analysis of drone attacks			‘Needs to acknowledge .. real debate about the costs of the drone war’

The construction of us vs. them has been carefully constructed through the choice of lexical items. Though the article criticizes the use of drone attacks in Pakistan as they are viewed as tools which are promoting anti Americanism, yet the criticism uses words like rationale in ‘The Obama team has its rationale for drone attacks’ to foster the legitimacy of using drone attacks. But while discussing the Faisal Shehzad, the lexical items like ‘plausible motive’ and his entry into the list of terrorist sketches a clear divide between us vs them.

On the other hand, drone attacks themselves are presented as actors who are killers and inanimate object at the same time. The article is mute on the whole debate about the sovereignty of Pakistan. Through the use of direct quotations, the journalist is again fostering the belief that cost and benefit analysis of drone attacks needs to be done as they are creating more anti-American sentiments in the United States. Similarly at the end of the article, journalist presents his perspective on the drone attacks and says ‘the Obama administration needs to at least acknowledge the dangers of military escalation and to welcome a real debate about the costs of the drone war. Because clearly, its fallout is reaching home’

Article: 2 **Hiding in the Plain Sight** (Holmes, November 30, 2009)

‘Throughout Pakistan’s volatile 62 year history, artist and writers have often had to keep half an eye on a cast of dictators and extremists.’

Main perspective: The limit on the freedom of expression in Pakistan.

But the issues is tied with the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, a former Prime Minister of Pakistan. (UDHR violation of article 3)

Define the problem	Human Rights violations in Pakistan and role of Military Rulers and Talibans Violation of UDHR (Article: 3 and 19)	Victims Category A Category B Category C	Identities A. Benazir Bhutto B. General public attending the procession C. Pakistani Artists A. Rashid Rana B. Imran Qureshi C. Bani Abidi	Usage of lexical items to describe the persons A. <u>Benazir Bhutto</u> returned to Pakistan after eight years in <u>exile</u> • <u>Bhutto</u> escaped unharmed B. <u>143</u> other people were <u>killed</u> C. (1) • events of Oct. 18 that prompted Rana to <u>make Red Carpet</u> • One of Pakistan’s <u>best known contemporary artist</u> , Rashid Rana • He became <u>desensitized</u> to the corpses and blood. • Later that night the photos, all too easily conflated with the human carnage on TV <u>shocked</u> him anew. (2) • <u>Painter</u> Imran Qureshi <u>plays on</u> Pakistan miniature painting.. by <u>adding unsettling details</u> that evoke the current war with the Taliban

				<p>(3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Bani Abidi's</u> video shows a traditional Pakistani brass pipe brand.
Identify the causal factors/ agents	Multiple actors are involved.	Victimizers Category A Category B Category C	A. Killers B. Zia ul Haq Musharraf C. Talibans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two months later <u>Bhutto's assassins</u> succeeded • Gen Zia ul Haq <u>military regime</u> introduced <u>strict Islamic Sharia</u>. • <u>Gen. Pervez Musharraf</u> and the <u>Taliban</u> have provided <u>their own brands of intimidation to free expression</u>.
Judgements	Pakistan as a country facing serious issues of militancy where freedom of expression is compromised	Pakistani Society (in general)	Perspective Multiple involvement strategies are used by the journalist to reflect how human rights violations are tied with politics of the very region.	Involvement Strategies <u>Metaphors:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benazir...<u>flying</u> into Karachi, • he was <u>struck</u>, (disaster metaphor) • brutal violence <u>surfacing under the surface of refined</u> society, (disaster metaphor) • <u>volatile</u> 62 year history, (threat metaphor) • <u>keep half an eye</u> on a cast of dictators, (threat metaphor) • <u>brands</u> of intimidation to free expression, (business metaphor, more specifically threat metaphor) • <u>unsettling</u> details, (conflict metaphor) • menacing <u>muddle</u> of threats, (threat metaphor) • <u>breeding grounds</u> for terrorists (germ and disease metaphor) Direct Quotations: For the purpose of being authentic. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'we were so delighted she was back' • 'One felt sure good times were ahead' • 'I love art history, and formal art concerns are very important in my work—but I cannot deny the time we are living in' <u>Emphatic participles</u> <i>quickly, often, perhaps, too easily</i> <u>Fuzziness</u> Animal flesh as a stand in for human also reflects the <u>kind of</u> political subtext increasingly common to the work... To many <u>Westerns</u>
Suggest remedies				

The whole article revolves around limit on freedom of expression. The artists and their work reflect the political situation in Pakistan. It is interesting to note that General Musharraf and Taliban are put in the same sentence to reflect upon their ideologies on freedom of expression. On general level, the whole country is labelled as ‘breeding ground’ for fanatics, this labelling is a kind of generalization made on part of the journalist. The usage of term western is a marker of perspective here yet it is fuzzy as the identity of who the westerns are in specific is not mentioned.

Article 3: Justice for Our Justice (Ahsan, 2008)

In this article, human rights violation with respect to seeking of justice in Pakistan is mentioned where the dictatorship has snatched the basic rights from the citizens.

Define the problem	Human Rights violations in Pakistan with respect to justice	Victims Category A Category B Category C Category D Category E	Identities A. Judges B. lawyers C. families of lawyer and judges D. prisoners E. potential victim (student named Khurram)	Usage of lexical items to describe the persons (A) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> thrown the judges out of the office Chief justice.. he had repeatedly demanded due process and habeas corpus for all prisoners B. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My <u>wife</u> was forced to go into hiding The Chief Justice and other independent judges were detained along with their <u>children</u>. C. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>all prisoners</u>, even those picked up by military D. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The young man is <u>no radical</u> He <u>professes</u> a deep fondness for America <u>His stand</u> is becoming increasingly common Khurram himself is now in the <u>protective custody</u> of his terrified parents
Identify the causal factors/ agents	Multiple actors are involved.	Victimizers Category A Category B Category C Category D	A. General Musharraf B. America C. Intelligence agencies D. military	(A) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had <u>declared</u> de facto martial law Magna Carta.. Bill of rights .. all of which have been <u>squashed</u> by Musharraf Pervez Musharraf’s suppression of Pakistan’s judiciary (B) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Prodged by America</u> to retain Musharraf

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <u>US</u> ambassador <u>blithely</u> ignored his brave call for justice. <p>(C)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notorious intelligence agencies.. could move against him <p>(D)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prisoners picked up by military
Judgements	Pakistan as a country facing serious issues with respect to seeking justice	Pakistani Society (in general)	Perspective The journalist himself is actively engaged I the movement for justice.	<p><u>Usage of personal Pronouns</u></p> <p>First person (singular)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>I</u> joined him <u>I</u> myself was kept in solitary confinement <u>My</u> wife was forced to go <u>I</u> felt that.. <u>I</u> delivered the concluding speech As <u>I</u> walked off the stage <u>I</u> found <p>First person (plural)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>We</u> need <u>our</u> chief justice back now <u>We</u> have gathered <u>We</u> lawyers returned to streets <p><u>Metaphors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The nation of <u>laws</u> Sun <u>streaked</u> over parliament Pakistan's <u>checkered</u> history <u>Thrown</u> the judges out of the office Crowd could have <u>recited</u> the concepts by name <u>Sea</u> of humanity <p><u>Emphatic Participles</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to put a <u>seemingly</u> esoteric issue but a critical one I felt that <u>virtually</u> the whole Pakistan
Suggest remedies				Reinstatement of all the judges

With respect to representation, multiple victims and victimizers are discussed in the article. The category of us vs. them is also visible where us includes lawyers, judges, their families and supporters whereas those who are on the side of President's Musharraf's decision are categorized as victimizers. In this article, frequent usage of personal pronoun (singular and plural) both are observed; the primal reason lies with the identity of the journalist. Aitzaz Ahsan is himself a lawyer and he had actively engaged in the lawyers' movement of the restoration of the judges in Pakistan. For this reason he has used his experiences to narrate the incidents.

Article 4: The Real Problem with Pakistan (Zakaria, 2007)

The article discusses the murder of Daniel Pearl in the light of Mighty Heart. It further discloses the real dilemma faced by Pakistan society.

Define the problem	Human Rights violations in Pakistan, and role of military leaders	Victims Category A Category B	Identities A. Daniel Pearl B. Chief Justice	Usage of lexical items to describe the persons A a group of jihadists kidnapped him and the brutally beheaded him B. dismissing the chief justice
Identify the causal factors/agents	Multiple actors are involved.	Victimizers Category A Category B Category C	A. Jihadists B. Gen Musharraf C. Provincial governors, landlords	A. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a group of <u>jihadists</u> kidnapped him B. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf has <u>abused</u> his authority Musharraf is a <u>dictator</u> Musharraf has gone <u>several steps so far</u> (C). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... are powers unto themselves
Judgements	Pakistan as a country facing issues pertaining to military rule.	Pakistani Society (in general)	Perspective Army rules in Pakistan	Metaphors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Broke</u> with islamists <u>Coffee house</u> intellectuals Economy has <u>boomed</u> It is also vast, <u>swallowing up</u> If Washington was to <u>dump</u> Musharraf.. Military could <u>sabotage</u> American foreign policy Direct Quotations Not a state with an army, but an army with a state Emphatic Particles United States would <u>do well</u> . Fuzziness Musharraf <u>may be doomed</u>
Suggest remedies				

With respect to victimizers, President Musharraf stands apart. He is depicted as a dictator who has been using his power. The word ‘abused’ reflects the negativity. Similarly, he is shown to be a man of high stature who has been transgressing his limits. Similarly the metaphors also carry negativity like ‘dump’ which is normally used for disposing off the garbage is used for Musharraf.

Article 5: It’s War Now (Hussain, 2006)

The article discusses the issue of armed rebellion in the province of Baluchistan, Pakistan. It discusses how economic development has been hampered in the region due to multiple reasons.

Define the problem	Human Rights violations in Pakistan with respect to economic development. Similarly, a rebellion is at its verge	Victims Category A	Identities A. Balochis	Usage of lexical items to describe the persons <u>Want</u> greater political autonomy
Identify the causal factors/agents	Multiple actors are involved.	Victimizers Category A Category B Category C	A. Balochist an Liberatio n Army B. military C. tribes	A. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rebel... sits quietly <u>playing with his AK 47</u>. The guerrillas belong to the <u>shadowy Balochistan Liberation Army</u> <u>Waging</u> a bitter war B. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pakistan military...<u>bombarding</u> our areas and killing innocent people C. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> blame <u>tribes</u> for holding progress
Judgements	The province of Baluchistan is witnessing serious rebellion	Baloch community	Perspective Blame game	<u>Metaphors</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Waging a bitter</u> war the Baluchs have <u>chafed</u> at Islamabad Tensions <u>flared</u> last year <u>Crush</u> the rebellion <u>Fair shake</u> of over the years <u>Direct Quotation</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Bombarding our areas a and killing innocent people. I don’t have any choice but to resist(Javandan, rebel)</i>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We will not allow anyone to challenge the writ of the state (Musharraf)</i> • <i>We are building roads and developing infrastructure so that the huge mineral resources in the province can be tapped. (Rashid Ahmed)</i> • <i>There is virtually no development for 60 years (Samna Ahmed)</i> • <i>It is war now (Bhugti)</i> • <i>Instability in Baluchistan would seriously destabilize an already fragile Pakistan (Samina Ahmed)</i> <p>Emphatic particples</p> <p>Fuzziness <u>Whoever</u> is to blame</p>
Suggest remedies				

In the above article, hampering of the economic development in Baluchistan is the main frame. There is blame game where government is criticising tribal leaders and rebels are criticising government for treating them badly. The blame game is reflected in the article through strong negative words, like ‘crush’ and war’. Direct quotations reflect the point of view of different actors. ‘Playing with his AK 47 reflects how common the weapons are in the hands of rebels. Marked by instability the common man remains the victim. ‘Whoever’ is a vague term as it does not clearly state the identity of actual victimizers.

Conclusion

The news related to Human rights violations are presented in connection to more political news. When the violation is committed by American themselves, the perspective of ‘us’ vs ‘them’ becomes visible and self- image is carefully constructed. With respect to representation of victims vs. victimizers frame, the former are presented as innocents and the latter as guilty. With respect to perspectivising strategies, only in one article first person pronouns have been observed to mark involvement of he part of the journalists. In other articles, usage of metaphors, constructed dialogue, emphatic particles and fuzziness has been observed. In general, human rights violations are presented through the ideological square of Van Dijk.

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