

News Headlines in Pakistani Newspapers on Budget of the Fiscal Year 2019-20: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

This study is a critical discourse analysis of the newspaper headlines published in different Pakistani newspapers regarding Pakistan's fiscal year 2019-20. There are three Urdu newspapers and five English newspapers which are published in Pakistan. They have been selected randomly. This study focuses on a single issue of the budget of Pakistan for the year 2019-20 as it is represented in the newspapers. The Urdu newspapers target the local readers and try to attract their attention by highlighting the aspects of their interest. In contrast, the English newspapers address the local and foreign readers and provide information to present a positive picture of the country. It has been found that these news headlines represent the ideologies of the editors regarding some national issues and, they are not purely neutral while providing information to the readers.

Keywords: Newspapers, News, Headlines, Budget, Ideology, Politics

1. Introduction

In Pakistan, a fiscal year starts from July 1 and ends on June 30 of each year. The Federal Government of Pakistan presents the budget for the following year, usually in the first half of June. This budget is presented in the National Assembly of Pakistan, which is discussed and examined by the parliament. The budget is discussed and analysed in Senate by the senators. The President of Pakistan gives the final approval to it and signs the same. Although this procedural process takes a week or so, the real warmth is found when the Finance Minister unfolds it in the National Assembly of Pakistan. The newspapers in Pakistan give particular space to this budget, and they cover almost all significant aspects of it to provide a transparent picture for the readers. These newspapers are dominated by different views and analyses on this budget.

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This paper aims at the discourse analysis of the selected newspapers headlines and the statements of the political leaders which they make to propagandise their ideologies and the political stance of their parties.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a recently developed branch of study which offers different ways to explore the hidden meanings and ideologies behind a given discourse. It is considered a valuable tool to analyse a written or spoken discourse. CDA is not restricted to describe the given text or spoken talk but also considers the social and political context where these words are used (Van Dijk, 1995a). Newspapers of a country play an essential role in presenting economic, social and political aspects according to the pertaining ideologies. Taiwo (2007) believes that language can also create reality along with reflecting reality. Our words carry different layers of meanings and, they can represent the interests and intentions of the writers and the speakers. The researcher has employed CDA of newspaper headlines relevant to the Pakistani budget presented in the National Assembly of Pakistan for the fiscal year 2019-20. These headlines offer a pen picture of the budget to the people belonging to different sections of society. People can have better, prompt and easier information of the budget through newspapers. These newspapers are beneficial for busy people and cannot read the whole article on the budget, also called the Economic Survey of Pakistan. On the other hand, the terms used in the budget and the jumbled figures are not easy for an ordinary person to understand. The newspapers present this information in a more straightforward language and through highlighted figures.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Using language in various contexts to demonstrate and investigate its social, political, personal and economic impact may be regarded as the significant facet of CDA (Asgar, Shahzad & Hanif, 2020). Critical Discourse Analysis is comparatively a modern field of study that deals with the social issues of society such as dominance, inequality, social power abuse and how these issues are reproduced, enacted, legitimised and resisted through text or discourse in a social and political setting (Van Dijk, 1993). Critical Discourse Analysis takes a clear stance and wants to expose, understand, and finally resist social inequalities (Van Dijk, 1998:1). Hence CDA investigates the particular social ideologies that represent the inequalities and the abuse of social power to suppress the underprivileged people of the society or to corner the minorities of a country. The prime focus of CDA is to expose those ways and methods through which the privileged class enacts these inequalities and the underprivileged resist against them.

CDA aims at highlighting the relationship between social practices, discourse practices and social structures that look dark and hidden to a common man (Sheyholislami, 2001). Luke (cited in Taiwo 2007) relates that CDA is a discourse analysis that points out the subsided ideas behind a discourse. Language does not reflect the external or surface reality only. Fiske (1994) believes that words are not neutral because they possess the power to portray the hidden interests of the speakers. The significant role of CDA is to unfold the ideologies and intentions hidden behind a written or spoken discourse.

Media Discourse

Newspapers are famous for using a particular language in their headlines and analyses while writing about topical social issues. Taiwo(2007) claims that the headlines can be of two types: a) thematic headlines which carry some theme, message or opinion, b) surface structure headlines with some speech statement, important question or a matter of daily life. He (2007) further maintains that themes of these headlines can

vary from religious to political issues, educational policies, and typical workers' issues. On the other hand, the surface structure headlines can be based on some speech, some question or some simple headline. Rechniewski (2001) believes that the news headlines have more impact on readers than even the articles as the headlines have more formal and practical linguistic characteristics. He(2001) further opined that the headlines have a cataphoric nature and stand powerful devices that help readers interpret the message behind these headlines. Their discourse seems to represent specific ideologies. Schudson(2001) states that the primary responsibility of newspapers is to report only what we call 'news'. It is contrary to their professional norms if they mediate some hidden agenda or ideology. Some influential journalists have control of newspaper articles and headlines, and they use this genre to represent specific ideologies as they have control of the minds of their readers. This is reflected in the newspaper headlines, articles, lead and body. Headlines are often short and catchy, which attract the readers more than the detailed notes, and they recall these headlines more. That is why, the journalists exploit the headlines to present their ideologies through the new stories (Van Dijk, 1988).

Language, Ideology and Power

Van Dijk (1998) believes that ideologies develop social group attitudes that schematically establish opinions about common issues like power abuse, inequality and dominance. These ideologies are a kind of foundation to social judgment and social propositions are developed through the statements and expressions stated in the newspapers (Van Dijk, 1988). Fairclough (2003) claims that ideologies represent different issues of the world that play their part to maintain and establish the relationships of domination, power and exploitation. They can work as sources of interactions or they can result into identities. Critical analysis of texts can depict different ideologies behind them.

Significance of Newspaper Headlines

Newspaper headlines are written in a particular discourse that carries different ideologies that attract the readers of different social groups with different professions. Headlines are often short and appealing and are helpful for the readers to skim and scan the news in concise time according to their own taste, occupation and mindset. Izadi and Saghaye-Biria (2007) studied three leading U.S. newspapers, The New York Times, The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal to find out the ideological representations of U.S. policies about Iran's nuclear programme. Mahmood M, Javed, and Mahmood, R (2011) studied the newspapers headlines and found that his political affiliation influences the editor's ideologies with the party in government or in opposition. Rechniewski (2001) believes that the news headlines are more powerful and effective than even the articles because they have more formal and linguistically more effective words. He(2001) asserts that the news headlines have cataphoric nature that guides the readers in understanding the hidden message behind that headline.

Methodology

The data for the present study has been collected from different Urdu and English newspapers of Pakistan. The source of data is the headlines and the statements published in the newspapers on the budget 2019-20. The purpose of the study is to explore the representations of an issue by different newspapers. The researcher formulated Critical Discourse Analysis to explore the embedded ideological meanings in the newspaper headlines discourse. The present research aims to analyse the data thematically and linguistically to know the treatment and critique of a national of Pakistan budget 2019-20.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Data for the present research was randomly collected from the English and Urdu newspapers that are published in Pakistan. The objective behind this was to investigate how significant national issues like budget are presented differently by various newspapers. Critical Discourse Analysis model has been applied to analyse the text of the newspapers.

Surface structure classification of News Headlines

Plain Headlines

Plain headlines are the simple statements that describe the news in a simple way. The plain headlines collected in the present research narrate the budget in simple way that appeals the masses on a large scale. With the help of CDA the researcher will disclose the implied ideologies embedded in the headlines. In the following headlines printed in the English newspapers, the word "**tax**" has been **topicalised**.

- Massive Revenue Aims for Rs.568bn fresh **tax** measures (June 12,2019, DAWN)
- 10pc **tax** has been introduced on ginned cotton.(June 12, 2019,DAWN)
- Large increase in income and sales **tax** collection (June 12, 2019, DAWN)
- 17pc sales **tax** on ghee, oil and Rs..2 per kg on cement. (June 12 ,2019, Pakistan Observer)
- Massive **taxation** measures in budget to enhance revenues. (June 12, 2019, Daily Times)

In these plain headlines of English local newspapers, the single word '**tax**' has been topicalised. The readership of English newspapers is elite and educated strata of society. Moreover, on the international level, the main purpose behind giving the topic of tax to the most of the main headlines is to attract foreign financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank. Such dignified international organisations take an interest in the tax net and other matters regarding the state revenues. Still, international investors and the private organisation also focus on tax rates in developing countries like Pakistan. It expresses that the present government is severe to implement the program charted by the IMF for the country's economy. She wants to generate her own resources through tax collection.

In Urdu newspapers headlines the word "**Tankhahein**" has been **topicalised** as following:

- Grade 16 tak **Tankhahon** mein 10% tak izafa
(10% increase in pay of salary persons of grade 1 to 16)
- 17 say 20 grade kay mulazmeen kay leay **Tankhahon** mein 5 % izafa
(5% increase in pay of salary persons of grade 17 to 20)
- Sarkari mulazmeen ki **Tankhahon** mein 10% izafa
(10% increase in pay of the government employees)

Speech as Headlines

Such headlines are written in direct narration stating the speaker's exact words, and the speaker's name is also registered with the statement. It is almost a tradition that all stakeholders and prominent political figures respond to the budget every year. Their speeches are full of statements that are the matter of public interest and are given space in the newspapers as headlines. On one side they are representing their party position

and on the other side they are formulating public opinion towards the steps taken in the budget. Some statements of such speeches are so powerful that they become unforgettable for the people for the years to come. There is always an apprehension of receiving a strong response from the people due to some of the speech news headlines. The editors of different local newspapers also follow the policy to provide a balanced space to both the sectors of the society: those who represent the government and those who are in opposition. The editors also invite the statements of all the major sectors of the society to satisfy the variety of readers and to increase the number of them. Here are some statements regarding the budget of Pakistan.

- Mushkil halaat mein ghareeb dost aur ameer dushman budget (*even in tough conditions a poor friendly and the rich non-friendly budget*), Faisal Wowda (June 12, 2019, Jang)
- Wozra ki tankhahon mein kami, Maeeshat ko faeda nahi ho ga (*Decrease in the pay of the ministers, but no benefit to the economy*), Saeed Ghani (June 12, 2019, Jang)
- Awaam ki mazed cheekhin niklin gi (*it will add to the sufferings of the common people*), Maryam Orangezab (12 June, 2019, Express)
- Budget Moashi tamer e now ka road-map hay (*this budget is a road-map of economic revival*), Federal Ministers (June 12, 2019, Express)
- Budget manzoor nahi honey den gay (*we will not let this bill be passed*), Bilawal Bhutto (June 12, 2019, Nawa-e-Waqt)

Headlines with Pointers

These kinds of headlines make the reader know about the comments. Such headlines comprise two parts, i.e. there is some information and, the other part is a comment followed by the given information. Such headlines often target a particular class of readers and, there is the use of a specific register as well. They also represent the political inclination of various newspapers.

- Mushkil halaat mein ghareeb dost aur ameer dushman budget (*even in tough conditions a poor friendly and the rich non-friendly budget*), Faisal Wowda (June 12, 2019, Jang)
- Brokers and analysts categorised the budget" negative". (June 12, 2019, DAWN)
- Opposition rejects anti_people budget.(June 12,2019 The Express Tribune)
- Sweeping withdrawal of expectations
- Budget to test economy, patience
- Budget freezes PSDP spending
- CPEC allocations slashed
- Mehngai ka tofan aey ga (*it will bring flood of inflation*), Karachi Chambers
- Budget zalimana hay(*this is an atrocious budget*) Shahbaz Sharif

Questions as Headlines

Some headlines are written in interrogative form. Such headlines are used to stir the feelings of the readers about a particular event or an issue. Such questions charge and mobilise the public opinion. They make the readers develop some political opinion. Such headlines also show the ideologies of the newspaper editors who attract the readers' attention towards some aspect of the issue.

- Why Pakistan faces a revenue short fall? (June 12,2019 Daily Times)

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- Budget mein nokaryon ka zikr kahan hay (*where is the mention of job opportunities in this budget*)? (June 12, 2019, Express)
- Budget IMF ki sharait pr mabni(*budget is based on the conditions set by IMF*)? Shahid Hassan Siddiqui(June 12, 2019, Nawa-e-Waqt)

Linguistic features of the Newspaper Headlines

Topicalization

It is an essential characteristic of the news headlines which focus on some particular aspect of the issue. Different newspapers highlight particular areas of their interest and ideology according to their agenda. In the following newspapers published in various newspapers topicalise other words like "**CPEC**", "**Defense**" "**Foreign Grants**" and "**Mehngai**" (Inflation)

- CPEC allocations slashed
- Defense budget to be kept static to Rs. 1.15 tr (June 12, 2019, Pakistan Observer)
- Foreign grants have been estimated to decline to Rs.28.52 bn (June 12, 2019, DAWN)
- Mehngai ka tofan aey ga(*it will bring flood of inflation*), Karachi Chambers

Evaluations and Judgments

It is also an essential feature of news headlines where the statements of the politicians and the other relevant people are used as headlines. The editors try to extract those parts of the statements which stir the feelings of the readers. These statements are the evaluations or the judgments of the people who are either in favor of the issue or they express their reservations regarding that issue.

- Budget IMF ki sharait pr mabni? Shahid Hassan Siddiqui(June 12, 2019, Nawa-e-Waqt)
(*budget is based on the conditions set by IMF*)
- Mushkil halaat mein ghareeb dost aur ameer dushman budget, Faisal wowda(June 12, 2019, Jang)
(*In difficult conditions a poor friendly and rich non-friendly budget*)
- Wozra ki tankhahon mein kami, Maeshat ko faeda nahi ho ga, Saeed Ghani(June 12, 2019, Jang)(
The decrease in the pay of the ministers cannot bring any benefit to the economy)
- Awaam ki mazeed cheekhin niklin gi, Maryam Orangzeb (12 June, 2019, Express)
(*The common people will suffer more*)
- Budget Moashi tamer e now ka road-map hay, Federal Ministers (June 12, 2019, Express)
(*The budget is a road map of reestablishment of the economy*)
- Budget manzoor nahi honey den gay, Bilawal Bhutto (June 12, 2019, Nawa-e-Waqt)
(*We will not let the budget be passed*)

Passivization

The news headlines in which the agency is not mentioned are also an important feature of headlines .It is called passivization. Such headlines are written in passive voice. It means that the subject or the agent is not mentioned in the headlines. The reason behind such headlines is that the editor does not want to show the name of the agency just to hide the person who is making the statement.

- 10 Pc tax has been introduced on ginned cotton (June 12, 2019, DAWN)
- Regulatory duty has been reduced on mobile phones (June 12, 2019, DAWN)
- Current amount deficit to be reduced to 6.5pc (June 12, 2019, Pakistan Observer)
- Defense budget to be kept static to Rs. 1.15 tr (June 12, 2019, Pakistan Observer)
- Foreign grants have been estimated to decline to Rs.28.52 bn (June 12, 2019, DAWN)

Information`

It is the major purpose of the headlines to provide information to the readers of the newspapers simply and effectively. The Finance Minister of Pakistan presents the budget in figures and the additions or the decreases are mentioned in percentages. So the newspapers also provide figurative information to their readers about the budget e.g. All the relevant units and quantities are used with care. They are provided in a precise form that is requirement of the headlines. Where possible, information is provided in figures to make it clear and compact for the readers. Such information is also important as the readers want to make different comparisons. All budgets are compared with the previous budgets to show the tendencies of the rise or fall in the figures. Here are some headlines found in the newspapers, and they are clearly providing information about a particular area of the budget.

- PTI govt unveils Rs. **7.02 tr** budget (June 12, 2019, Pakistan Observer)
- **Rs. 1.863 trillion** allocated to PSDP in federal budget (June 12, 2019, Pakistan Observer)
- Minimum wage set at **Rs. 17500** (June 12, 2019, The NEWS)
- Inflation target set at **8.5 pc** (June 12, 2019, The NEWS)
- **Rs. 3 tr** foreign loan planned to finance budget (June 12, 2019, DAWN)

4. Conclusion

This study of the budget news headlines shows that newspapers provide information regarding issues and express hidden ideologies. Some ideologies work behind a discourse of the newspapers. Critical Discourse Analysis of the newspapers shows that the headlines are exploited to develop public opinion on national issues like the country's annual budget. The same issue is reported through different discourse in different newspapers as the editors have their own vested interests and inclinations. On the other hand, the English newspapers consider the foreign readers and topicalise those more relevant aspects to the foreign readers. The Urdu newspapers target the local readers and topicalise the words of their interest. Critical Discourse Analysis of the newspaper headlines shows that there is also another picture of the matter beyond the printed text of the newspapers.

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