Multimodal Analysis of the Political Posters before Election Campaign (2018) in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT--*This paper will analyze the political posters used for election campaignsof different but prominent Pakistani political parties like Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI) and Pakistan Muslim League Noon (PML-N).The study will supremely focus on the representation of their leader through posters and later on it will pinpoint the similarities and possible differences between each of the poster especially emphasizing on what they denote. To instigate the target audience to vote for the particular party itis significant to study the main linguistic and visual strategies. That is used to highlight the power and presence of a politician. While keeping in mind the cult of persuasion we must concentrate that how these parties grip the audience/ voters to an emotional extent that they actually get seriously attached with the concerned party.For the analysis, this research will focus on nine significant posters that have been selected randomly. These posters belong to three prominent Political parties that are present in the country. They will use these postersin the election campaigns'2018 and will roll these throughout the country for their target audience. Therefore, the researcher has used critical discourse analysis tools to identify the discursive strategies used. These strategies will help to persuade the Pakistani population to vote for their preferred politician. Van Leeuwen's (2008), social actor theory will assist in order to understand of how participants are represented. As far as images are concernedKress and van Leeuwen's(2006) visual grammar will be use.These politicians have been symbolically treated as to inspire the masses and presented as warriors and saviors that can lift up the misery from people. These posters have chronic impact on the psychology of the people that instigate them to vote or to support their respective party Furthermore, this study will also probe various tactics that have been implied by the political partiesin their posters to create a powerful discourse that hit audience emotionally and provoke them for specific action.*

***Keywords--** Posters; critical discourse analysis; visual grammar; social actors' theory;political discourse.*

RESEARCH QUESTION

How politicians as social actors use visual grammar to deliver their message to their target audience in election campaigns

I. INTRODUCTION

Political posters always play a vital role in any political campaign. These posters have a strong influence that has an impact on the political party and the politician along with their voters. Political posters carries such linguistic notions that are based on language, gestures, symbols etc. which delivers the message of the political parties, they in fact carry a whole package that is evident in the successful election campaign. Thus, the focus of the political

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posters is to deliver multidimensional meaning. These meanings are conveyed through colors, punch lines, motto, slogans and placements of pictures, it carries a broad spectrum. Such posters address to a particular set of audience that is voters and every political party ensures that the exact effect must be made through them. These posters possess a certain magnitude that adhere the consequences of winning the hearts of the audience as well as their votes.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

As per Chilton (2002) politics is a struggle of power; a struggle between those who stress over the utilization of authority and power for those who deny it. Several states are noticeably based on the struggles for power. On the other hand politics is observed as a collaboration and teamwork of institutes for solving issues which arise, such as the ones which involve money etc. In short politics try to find ways to help in organizing the society

Here, discussion of political analysis is important due to the fact that it would help in finding ways to persuade people to register their vote for any of the political parties which they prefer. (Benito, Fernández-Díaz&Íñigo-Mora, 2009; Chilton &Schèaffner, 2002; van Dijk, 2006a,2006b).

While choosing one of the political genres, it is important to note that the context varies with the text that surrounds it. E.g. Parliamentary debates take place in parliamentary buildings while the streets are full of political posters. It is on the audience understanding that how they interpret the unseen meaning displayed. Political posters symbolize the politicians which are not seen during the campaigns. The audience doesn't see or hear the candidates often but when they so they visualize political actors in them

2.1 Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

According to Fairclough (2002), language plays an important role in politics as it develops a social structure which allows building a relationship to ascertainthe power differences and to replicate the ideologies made. Although he focuses on the verbal language, Fairclough also considers other modes of communication as part of political discourse which include photographs which forms the basis of political posters.

Whatever mode of communication is used it should be clear and understandable e.g. clear language would help politicians convince the audience to vote for them. (Fairclough, 2012).Here, we will see how CDA helps develop a connection between various linguistic and visual alternatives and what they deliver through the context. This means that CDA sets up an interaction between the discourse and the society.

As per van Leeuwen, CDA reflects the idea that texts and talks play a major role in the injustice occurring in the society it demonstrates various techniques through which this is done and does not limit itself to any of the analytical approaches.

CDA is utilized as a part of this paper since it focuses on the diverse choices used to make significance in writings keeping in mind the end goal to call attention to how discourses are shaped, with what reason and to what degree. In this sense, the standards of CDA permit the link betweenlanguage and power.

Wodak(1989)recommended that CDA is such a multidisciplinary study. Additionally, there are diverse defenders of CDA. VanLeeuwen (2008)suggestspoliticians indulged in social practices as social actors. He also examines the diverse manners depicted through the discourse given by the politicians to establish relationships between discourse and context.

Van Leeuwen's(2008) way to deal with CDA will be the vital tool for the analysis of the posters in this research. Since it particularly centers on the depiction of social actorsin discourse as individuals or in gatherings, as dynamic operators or patients; it likewise focuses on their nomination, functionalization and Identification, among others. According to VanLeeuwen (2008), itis important to see how individuals show up in visuals and their relational associations with the group of onlookers by examining their social distance, social relation and social interaction.

2.2 Multimodal discourse analysis

Considering the political posters, we see that it is a phenomenal case of multimodal text since it utilizes both, the written and the visual. Multimodal text highlights the fact that use of use different modes of communication must also create an understanding for its reader as a whole.The structure ought to be significant and should bode well.

This article therefore, refers to multimodality. We notice how different signs symbols and language combine to convey some meaning Jewitt(2009)), Thibault (2000), Ventola and Moya (2009) and Parodi (2012), state that the present societies are much more interested in multimodal texts as language is integrated with other sources. This gave rise to the theories of multimodality and multimodal discourse analysis in the past few decades. O'Halloran (2011: 120) also identifies it as 'multimodality', 'multimodal analysis', 'multimodal semiotics' and 'multimodal studies' (MDA).

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), the model of visual language use the term modality. It consists of three main types which are used for the development in multimodal text. These are (a) the 'information value', or compositional organization (e.g. center/margin, top/bottom or left/ right); (b) 'salience', or different elements designed to catch the readers' attention (e.g. size, color or sharpness, back grounding or foregrounding); and c) 'framing', or presence or absence of frames that connects or disconnect aspects pointing out whether they go together or not in conveying themeanings.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study has been conducted on the basis of 3 posters of 3 main political parties (PPP, PTI, and PML-N) of Pakistan, which have been chosen randomly. In the analytical perspective of CDA posters have been analyzed to understand in terms of discourse and as social practice.Van Leeuwen's(2008), social actor theoryassisted in knowing how participants are reflected in posters. Finally, for the analysis of the images in the political posters Kress and van Leeuwen's(2006) visual grammar theory will be employed.

IV. DISCUSSION

The analysis has been based on selected posters of the concerned political parties. Researchers have keenly observed in all the dimensions that arouse sentiments. Pictures of the political leaders in posters are one of the prominent features and when it is combined with written text it delivers a specific message for its target audience. According to Johnston (2006), in order to explore the function and the rhetorical strategies of the political campaigns we need to analyze the content of the political posters.

Somehow political parties use these posters as a major tool to attract and create magnitude. These posters along with its color schemes, slogans, meaningful messages and inspirational images coveys or hit the target audience that is indeed the voters. These posters no doubt attract huge attention and add importance to the political campaigns. The gravity of the electoral campaign intensifies due to these posters.

4.1 Multimodal analysis

4.1.1 Color scheme of political posters

Researchers have observed that the color scheme plays a vital role in depiction of certain messages. In analyzes of the selected posters, it can be seen all posters carry common colours one of them is brooding green which conveys strong message. It symbolizes Pakistani spirit as Pakistan's flag is also green. Green also symbolizes growth and sign of life. The presence of green colour in all posters depicts their intention to show affection to their mother land. Element or the color "White" symbolizes peace and in Pakistani flag it represents minorities. So addition of white color signifies the respect and importance that is being given to minorities. White color also symbolizes peace around the world.

4.1.2 Leaders' position in Posters

The appearance of these politicians in the poster highlights that he is the main social actor and therefore the most central element of a poster. The placement of the visuals in the poster is by choice and with the specific purpose which is to link with the audience. In terms of multimodal analysis it is vivid in PTI and PNL-N posters that the position of candidate is on right side. But in PPP posters this position varies from left to right and in the middle of the poster. The pictures of the politicians in the posters are keenly observed and interpreted as a symbolic way of looking forward to being Pakistan's next PM (Prime Minister) in the near future. In this case, this is considered an offer image (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) because they are not interacting with the target audience by not looking directly at them. Leader pictures are a clear representation to the target audience that this man can lead the nation to the heights of glory. It has been observed that the motivational pictures of the significant political leaders have strong communicative markers. As we see that all pictures show the determination, courage and bravery, an actual dare that is required and praised by the people. These images have strong nonverbal message to convey to the people as they convey the brave side of the leader and political party vice versa. These posters instill

people with determination and led them to vote for their chosen leader through the appeals they made through strong visuals.

The visuals or pictures of respective leader of each political party signifies inspiration and exhibits the symbol of loyalty.The leaders ofPTI and PML-N appear to be pointing finger towards the audience to make sure they are attentive towards him.

4.2 Social Actor theory

Within the text of political posters, the presence of social actors can be valuable in understanding their depiction across the texts. There are two key types of categorization for defining social actors: functionalization and identification (Van Leeuwen, 2008: 42-45).

Functionalization noticeably clarifies thatsocial actors are referred through their activities, actions and the things they do, such as occupations or roles. It is also visible in the form of the presence of the electoral logos for example bat and lion.

Identification becomesevident when social actors are elected not through their work, but in terms of what they certainly are. Moreover, it can be divided into three types: classification, relational identification and physical identification. Relational identification is taken as the representation of social actors through their personal relationships, kinship or work relations instead of their own image, for example the presence of Benazir Bhutto in the poster instead of Balawal Bhutto. This switch between the leaders depicts their desire to relate to their ancestors and their sacrifices.

Physical identification reflects social actors through their physical characteristics to exclusively differentiate them within a definite context for instance the link between the political leader of PML-N and their voting symbol "Tiger" represent their ultimate longing to relate to the qualities of a Tiger.

Furthermore, electoral symbols have also been mentioned in the posters. These political symbols range from Tiger by PMLN, Bat from PTI and Arrow from PPP.

4.3 Text analysis
4.3.1 Political Party Name & Slogan

It is clear that the logo, text and the name of the party appear at random places in the posters which show their uniqueness and different paradigms each party possess. However, party names appear in capital letters and in a bigger font than the rest of the written text that helps to highlight their party's name. These logos actually exit in all the posters in abbreviated form to show that every party is having significant entity. They cannot be ignored as they no doubt represent the influential language. These slogans serve two main aspects, first to attract the target audience, and second to instigate them to vote for their chosen leader.

4.3.2 Language preference

Language mentioned in the posters via catchy phrases, is the only linguistic representation mentioned on the posters and that is in the Urdu language. As the national language of Pakistan is Urdu, and somehow political master minds know exactly how to use it to achieve their purposes. They also use Urdu as a tool to reach out to maximum masses.

Fine blend and utilization of certain parts of speech were observed in the posters. The solid use of nouns along with adjectives and verb is the salient factors highlighted in the slogans of each party. We have seen that PTI claims to be a party of youth therefore, the posters have roman English messages. That is quiet a new trend in the political posters for elections in Pakistan. Slogans like "Naya Pakistan" is the fine mingling of noun "Pakistan" with an adjective "Naya means (New) in English" is considered to be a smart choice for a catchy slogan.

4.4 Visual grammar

If we keenly analyze the combination of Noun and verb in the slogan, "Pakistan Bachana ha (We have to Save Pakistan)". Here the noun "Pakistan been incorporated with verb "Bachana (Save). In the second poster of PMLN there is a vocal appeal to the voters to emphasize on the political symbol "Tiger". It is mentioned as, "SherkaNishan, Roshan Pakistan (The symbol of tiger embodies bright Pakistan)". In the aforementioned slogan we observed certain chemistry between noun "Pakistan" and adjective "Roshan (Bright)". We witnessed that every communicative message on PMLN posters has been written in Urdu language in order to make it simple for masses to understand.

The use of noun in PPP's poster which is their Family name, "Bhutto" is combined with action verb, "A gaya means (arrived), medaan main (means Bhutto has arrived in the competition/ to compete). Emotions have been aroused and the use of noun and adjectives serves as a package of certain thoughts portrayed quiet skillfully.

The posters of PPP convey rich legacy through significant pictures of generation that sacrificed for the party as well as for Pakistan. The posters are filled with the pictures of leaders of past and present conveying the strong

emotive appeal. It is evident from the posters that concerned party believes in giving all power to its people. The party name suggests the same. PPP's posters are ranging from slogans to pictures of the leadership depicting the sacrifices that have been made for the people. The pictures of the late leaders are aptly woven with present leadership along with the strong slogan of "Democracy is our politics" in the posters.

V.   CONCLUSION

Researchers have found out that these political posters actually provide a whole package. They have been formed while keeping in mind the goal oriented approach and that is to attract the concerned people to vote. The traces of social actor theory by Van Leeuwen (2008) are evident. This theory relates to the posters in a way that political leaders of the respective parties are embodiment of the specific qualities that can lead the nation to prosperity. Their representation within the posters has meaning behind the fabricated realities of language, color, pectorals and symbols. It was revealed that a leader is depicted as true epitome of vigor and courage.

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