Representation of Pollution in Media: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Newspapers' Headlines

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Abstract

This paper critically decodes the newspapers' post titles to highlight how same event is represented differently by print media through their headlines. The present study attempts to locate how discursive techniques are employed differently by different newspapers to propagate desired ideologies to the target readership regarding the representation of smog phenomenon.   In this regard four Pakistani English Daily (The Dawn, The News International, Pakistan Today, The Express Tribune) and four Indian English Daily (Hindustan Times, The Hindu, The Times of India, The Indian Express) have randomly been selected to show how Environmental changes are discursively represented by different ideological groups. The news on the selected issue published in 2017 and 2018 have been randomly selected for analysis. The present research employs Van Dijk's (2004) Socio Cognitive model to critically analyze the use of different linguistics moves to represent an event accordingly. It suggests that language is one of the best sites to invest ideology and to shape the mindset of the target audience. This research model has been made operational through inclusion and exclusion process. Some of the analytical categories, missing in the existing data have been excluded. The findings of the research suggest how print media discourses are used as an insidious weapon to represent same event differently. This is how the concept of linguistic solidarity and distance is played up. The post titles of print media propagate different worldviews by camouflaging one thing at the cost of other.

Keywords: Smog, Fog, Pollution, Discourse Analysis, Representation, Climate Change

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I.   Introduction

News Media has emerged as the agent of social, political, religious and economic change in the world. Its importance and significance has multiplied in last two decades (Carvalho, 2008). Contrary to face to face communication, media discourse is the discussion of an issue on media in print or oral form (Michellington, 2016, May 06). The media discourse is broadcasted for a reader or listener who is not present on the place of production of

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discourse. It means that the media discourse is written and transmitted to a group of people who benefit from it. At the same time, the ideological underpinnings of the media discourse are disseminated among the readers/listeners through different discursive techniques. Media discourse is that on record and public interaction which represents events, news, ideas (O'Keeffe, A. 2012).

Print media discourses play a significant role in the construction and propagation of desired ideology to the target readership. It is "written language embedded in identifiable genres for mass public consumption across global and local contexts" (Hout & Cotter, 2015). Mala (2010) has listed number of objectives of printing a newspaper including educating people, sharing information, leading public, interpreting the facts, protecting the rights of the people, persuading public to act, inspiring people, providing discussion forums and entertainment. Print media discourses are often used as a distorting prism to reflect reality as desired by the controlling ideological group. They embody power with in and behind them. They represent a constructed version of reality and people often start believing what is made available to them through print media discourses.

Pollution is defined as "substances that make air, water soil etc. dirty" by Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Hey & Holloway, 2015). Environmental pollution is a hazardous phenomenon and, horribly, it is increasing day by day. Though it is a centuries old danger, industrial revolution catalyzed it and has become a big danger to nature and life. Smog is one recent example of smog which has emerged as a life hazard in many parts of the world. Smog is caused by industries, automobiles, burning in open places and like. Since environmental pollution is a dangerous thing, it has always been a talk of town. Environmental pollution, specially smog, has emerged as a big winter problem in Pakistan and India. It causes respiratory problems, accidents and delay in different tasks and operations. Media gives it projection in through oral and written mediums. Print media representation of smog, in specific, is the focus of the present study.

Representation of environmental pollution or air pollution in media discourse has been an area of interest of the researcher and scholars. They have concluded that the authorities should play their role to use social media to establish the through of people regarding social media. Bell (1994) has researched public discourse and compared it with media coverage on scientific information. The study focuses environmental issue in the world. The results revealed a mismatch in the media discourse and public discourse. Tilt & Xiao (2010) analyzed the media coverage on environmental pollution by state owned media house, an autonomous news channel and a non-Chinese newspaper. They came to a conclusion that state-owned news channel covered the news which support the government. The other two sources reported independently, and they were playing their part in understanding and addressing pollution problem.   Kay, Zhao and Daniel (2014) have researched on the discussions by common people on air pollution carried out on social media. They have used content analysis method to probe the arguments and discussion of social media users and concluded that it is not a proper forum to discuss the issue.

Fedorenko and Sun (2016) discuss the representation of environmental issue on social media. Their conclusion links air pollution with public health and suggests to use social media to promote understanding of environmental issue in the countries of the world. Manzo and Padfield (2016) maintain that the media representation in Malaysia is considered an opportunity to become a part of global agenda to address the climate change issue. The

study explores the attempts of news reporting in Malaysia to frame climate change as well as the study is undertaken with the objective to compare the media culture on climate change with cultures in other parts of the world. Koteyko, & Atanasova (2016) has researched and elaborated the use of discourse analysis in Climate change communication. They have concluded that the discourse analysis, contrary to other methods, analyses theme as well as form and can highlight different dimensions including ethical, moral, cultural aspects of issue of climate change.

Lu and Zhu (2017) study public opinion on Weibo relating to haze. The study offers suggestions to government to how to consider public discourse regarding environmental pollution. They have highlighted the way the issue of haze pollution is constructed on social media.

Gunster, Peterson & Saurette (2018) has researched on 12 newspapers from four different countries including America, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia. They have probed the "idea of hypocrisy" in media discourse about change of climate and environmental issues. They have found that such hypocritic discourses are used to weaken the advocacy of climate lovers and those who talk against climate change and its reasons. Cynk (2018) conducted critical discourse analysis of "Newsweek" magazine and compared Polish and English editions. The study concluded that the media discourse does not support and promote the issue of climate change and pollution. The researcher considers it responsibility of the magazine to inform and persuade the readership on the issue of climate change. The results reflect that the task is not performed by the magazine properly. Moreover, the English edition of the magazine provide more attention and gives more coverage to the issue as compared to the Polish edition. Mojadam, Matlabi, Haji, Cheraghi, Bitaraf, & Khafaie, (2018) studies media discourse in Iran on dust in the atmosphere and its hazards for the environment. They calculated percentages of representation of the phenomenon in the newspapers. They highlighted the role of print media in the awareness of the hazard of pollution in the air and its impact on environment.

II. Theoretical and Methodological Framework

The present study is qualitative in nature as approach of documentary analysis is used to find out and analyze discourse practices of Pakistani and Indian newspaper in news headlines. The theories of Wodak (2001), van Dijk (2004) and Fairclough (1989) have been employed to carry out the present research. Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) is the field of study which evolved from critical linguistics. It is a "special approach to the study of text and talk" (van Dijk, 1995). It studies relation between ideology and discourse. CDA is a method to analyze the text in social, political and historical perspectives. According to Fairclough (1989), when we study language critically, it analyses social interactions in a way that explains linguistic meanings as well as elaborates hidden meanings. He links language with ideology and power and explains it through relationships between text and language, genre and order of discourse and society and culture. Fairclough (1995) maintains "A range of properties of texts is regarded as potential ideological including features of vocabulary and metaphors, grammar, prepositions and implicature, politeness, conventions, speech exchange, systems, generic structures and style (p.2).

Van Dijk (2004) opines that ideologies are socially shared belief systems of the groups. He calls them social and cognitive. His suggested two levels for analysis include macro level and micro level. The macro level of analysis is abstract and power relations between groups and institutions are determined on this level. The micro level deals with social actors of the groups and their power relations. At Macro level, power relations like power as control, text and talk and their control, access, discourse, context and mind control, and relations of inequality are considered.

The emphasis of Fairclough (1989) is on social aspects. He describes that constitution of language is on social identities, relations, knowledge and belief (Fairclough, 1995). Wodak (1989) lays stress on the setting and context. His approach is historical. He focuses the content of the utterance and description of the text at linguistic level. Wodak and Fairclough describe the ideological moves employed by media to cater the needs of different readers. Thus, same events are represented differently by different media groups keeping in view the target reader ship.

The present study critically analyzes the role of media in portraying news on pollution in general and smog in specific for the readers of two different countries i.e. Pakistan and India. The data has been collected from English newspapers published in Pakistan and India. For collection of data, four Pakistani and Four Indian national dailies have been selected and their headlines have been shortlisted from these newspapers bearing the news of smog/pollution. The rationale behind selection of these newspapers was to determine the techniques used by these newspapers to satisfy the local as well as international, social, regional, and political needs of the intended audience.

The headlines selected from different newspapers of Pakistan and India are numerically as following:

Table 1: Selected Newspapers

NEWSPAPER	No. of Headlines
PAKISTANI NEWSPAPERS	
DAWN	06
THE NEWS INTERNATIONAL	07
PAKISTAN TODAY	06
THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE	06
	25

INDIAN NEWSPAPERS	
HINDUSTAN TIMES	06
THE HINDU	06
THE TIMES OF INDIA	06
THE INDIAN EXPRESS	08
	26

Following headline have been used for analysis:

Pakistani Newspaper Headlines

Newspaper	Date	Headline
Dawn	November 1, 2017	Lahore smog: EPD takes action against pollution-causing factories, vehicles
Dawn	November 9, 2017	Killer Smog
Dawn	July 22, 2018	'High temperature, water scarcity and air pollution are major challenges'
Dawn	September 10, 2018	Punjab braces for smog control
Dawn	November 14, 2018	Smog to blanket Karachi for next couple of days, says regional met official
Dawn	Dec 4, 2018	India pollution watchdog fines Delhi over toxic smog
The news International	October 29, 2017	Smog building up over City
The news International	August 27, 2018	'Air pollution shortens life by more than a year'

The news International	October 5, 2018	Punjab yet to buy air monitors to combat smog
The news International	October 19, 2018	Clean and Green Pakistan: With smog season looming, govt shuts polluting brick kilns
The news International	November 12, 2018	'India responsible for 70 percent smog in Pakistan'
The news International	November 13, 2018	'Pollution, climate change big issues'
The news International	November 16, 2018	Govt ordered to implement smog guidelines
Pakistan Today	October 30, 2018	The mystic fog is back again for a sixth season
Pakistan Today	November 8, 2018	Delhi suffers toxic smog hangover after Diwali firework frenzy
Pakistan Today	November 10, 2018	As India's smog hits 'severe' level, city chief under fire after reports he is abroad
Pakistan Today	November 14, 2018	Absence of sea breeze turns fog to smoke in Karachi
Pakistan Today	November 17, 2018	Govt to address smog issue, Senate told
Pakistan Today	November 29, 2018	Lahore second worst in world air quality rankings
The Express Tribune	November 03, 2018	Winter is here, toxins are in the air
The Express Tribune	November 05, 2018	Polluted Delhi air akin to death sentence, say doctors

The Express Tribune	November 07, 2018	'Air pollution caused highest death toll in 2015'
The Express Tribune	November 08, 2018	Smog in Indian capital severe after unfettered festival fireworks
The Express Tribune	November 13, 2018	Delhi 'lungs' turn sickly brown in days
The Express Tribune	November 16, 2018	Parliamentary caucus declares smog national emergency

Indian Newspaper Headlines

Newspaper	Date	Headline
Hindustan Times	October 6, 2018	Air quality deteriorates, turns 'very poor' in Delhi and neighbouring cities
Hindustan Times	October 20, 2018	Day after Dussehra, Delhi's air pollution spikes to season's highest
Hindustan Times	November 6, 2018	Delhi enveloped in smog as wind blows in smoke from farm fires in Punjab, Haryana
Hindustan Times	November 8, 2018	Delhi's debilitating smog is shocking but not surprising
Hindustan Times	November 9, 2018	Smog continues to cloak Delhi, air quality hazardous
Hindustan Times	October 28, 2018	This is how air pollution damages children's health
The Hindu	November 12, 2018	Delhi smog: NGT summons Chief Secretaries of 4 States over stubble burning
The Hindu	November 14, 2018	Stubble burning and smog
The Hindu	November 18, 2018	'90% citizens aware of air pollution but lack awareness of causes and impact'

The Hindu	November 28, 2018	'Most people unaware of true cost of pollution'
The Hindu	December 5, 2018	'Air pollution kills 7 million every year'
The Hindu	December 6, 2018	'India third largest contributor to carbon emission'
The Times of India	November 5, 2018	Delhi's air quality deteriorates to 'severe' ahead of Diwali
The Times of India	November 5, 2018	Polluted Delhi air akin to death sentence, say doctors
The Times of India	November 5, 2018	Delhi smog: Tourists cutting short visit, say air quality bad
The Times of India	November 5, 2018	Delhi: India's own 'smog tower' may help combat air pollution
The Times of India	November 8, 2018	Air pollution: How to tell smog from fog
The Times of India	November 9, 2018	This is how the smog is affecting your body!
The Indian Express	November 14, 2017	Odd-even, vehicle ban no solution to pollution menace: Gadkari
The Indian Express	December 5, 2017	No mechanism to compile data on 'Pollution Under Control' certificates: CIC
The Indian Express	September 13, 2018	In war against smog, China plans to replace polluting diesel trucks with modern ones
The Indian Express	November 13, 2018	Thick haze engulfs Delhi, air quality remains severe
The Indian Express	November 19, 2018	Surviving the smog: A Delhi dad shares his 6-point plan
The Indian Express	November 20, 2018	Air pollution cuts average Indian's life expectancy by over 4 years: Study

III. Analysis and Discussion

Media acts as a distorting prism to reflect the desired ideology in accordance with the ideological controlling group. As far as the representation of smog phenomenon in Pakistani and Indian newspaper is concerned, the Pakistani Dawn through its headlines gives coverage to its context as Lahore smog and environment protection department takes action against pollution causing factories and vehicles. So, here the phenomenon of smog has been specified with Lahore. The expression Lahore smog implies that there can be different types of smog but here the newspaper is giving coverage to the particular type of smog that is Lahore smog. Besides, it may also be taken as that there have been the phenomena of smog falling in different areas of the country and province, but this particular newspaper is only concerned about giving representation and media coverage to Lahore smog.

As far as the phenomenon smog is concerned, it is a kind of mixture of fog and smoke. The Oxford dictionary defines the term smog as a kind of blend and combination of smoke and fog. Here, Lahore smog may also be taken as state metaphor. Another representation of the same phenomenon in the mentioned date is as a killer smog. So, the phenomenon of smog has been given two shades as Lahore smog and killer smog which highlights smog as something dangerous.

Analysis:

Van Dijk (2004) argues that language is a product of a society it belongs to. With the changes in geo-political scenario language changes as well. Similarly, at present, phenomenon of fog is getting attention at rapid speed. It has become one of the major issues for the media to represent it accordingly. In this regard the headlines of India newspapers mentioned above illustrate that this phenomenon (fog) has become a kind of challenge for the Indian government and environment protecting agencies. Some of the major cities of India are being badly affected by it. Different weather scientists have been mentioning various causes of this phenomenon. Some are of the view that bricks kilns and polluted smoke of factories are the root causes of wide spread of fog. At the same time, this phenomenon has also been represented as "mystic fog". The use of adjective "mystic" with noun "fog" categories fog into various categories. The use of adjective "mystic" implies that this phenomenon has become quite mysterious for the India government. Despite doing its best has not been in a position so far to overcome this trouble. The message that is being propagated is that Indian watchdog and other agencies have not been doing enough to combat against this issue which is continuously causing problems for the masses. This menace is causing serious troubles for human beings in the form if serious diseases polluting the air, causing deaths at large scale and spoiling the lives and their festivities as well.

Still another significant feature about the representation of smog through the headlines of India print media is the use of different adjectives i.e. Delhi smog, Brown smog, Worst smog etc. and use of metaphor to highlight its intensity i.e. Cloak Delhi, Subtle burning, engulfing haze etc. illustrate that until or unless this menace is tackled tactfully , will continue causing various troubles for the people and implied message that is being imparted through the discourse of Indian print media is that government should do maximum to get rid of this problem so that death rate and pollution causing factors should be minimized.

Ours is an age of blurring boundaries. The natural phenomenon in any form results in disturbing harmony in nature. At present, it has been observed that human beings have made enough progress in different domains of life but at the cost of spoiling nature across the boundaries. Not only is the phenomenon of smog causing trouble to the people of India, but its gravity is equally felt in Pakistan as well. A media war like the other issues has also been observed regarding the representation of fog through print media discourses.

The technique of positive self and negative other representation is one of the significant features. At present, it is obvious from media representation of fog. Pakistani media has been accusing Indian government that it has not done sufficient to resolve the issue. On the contrary, its representation in Pakistani print media is just like a blame game. The government of Pakistan and Punjab are very much alert and putting everything to handle the serious issue.

"Punjab braces for smog control"

The line quoted above implies that Punjab government is fully alert and has been doing enough to get rid of this menace and to protect its people from the harms of fog. Dijk (2004) asserts that lexicalization is one of the significant linguistic features for positive self and negative others' representation. Moreover, the use of present indefinite in the example cited above implies that Punjab government has been and is doing best to tackle this issue. The government of Pakistan in order to make pollution free and green Pakistan shuts polluting brick kilns as a protective measure criticizing Indian government for its inability to do satisfactory. The headline, as an example in this regard is mentioned below:

Government to address smog issue, Senate told.

It implies that the highest law making, and governing body of Pakistan has been active to provide relief to the people from the menace by representing Indian government negatively i.e.

"Delhi suffers toxic smog hangover after Diwali firework frenzy".

The line cited implies that Indian government is more inclined to words celebrating its festivals by putting aside grave issues of smog faced by its people. In this way, it is obvious from the headlines of both the countries that a war of words is going on both sides for positive self and negative others' representation. The analysis of the headlines supports Foucaults'arguments that power is in everything and everywhere. Here, in the resent analysis it is suggested that politics is everywhere and in everything. That is, what is a significant feature of media discourses at present. The following tables reproduces the use of linguistic moves employed by the ideological group behind discourses to highlight how politics is done through language.

Table 2: Use of Metaphor

Pakistani newspapers	Indian newspapers
Lahore smog	Enveloped in smog

Killer smog	Cloak Delhi
Mystic smog	Subtle burning
India's smog	Menace
Delhi lungs	

By using persuasive language, different attributes have been assigned to smog like killer smog, Lahore smog and Indian smog. Smog has been represented as an active phenomenon capable of harming human beings. For instance, killer smog, a smog that kills humans.

The device of using place as a state metaphor is quite obvious in the print media representation of smog for instance, Lahore smog as the representation of smog present in Pakistan. Smog has been represented as an unpleasant phenomenon causing harm to the human beings. At the same time, the technique of positive self-representation has also been played up i.e. Punjab braces for smog control

Table 3: Competing Discourses

India pollution watchdog fines Delhi over toxic smog	Punjab braces for smog control
India responsible for 70 percent smog in Pakistan	

The line mentioned above implies that Pakistani government (Punjab Govt.) is fully aware of the dangers smog may result in. therefore, it is taking precautionary measures to handle this menace.

Use of lexicalization is also very significant in imparting desired ideologies to the readers. For example, different lexical items have been used for smog i.e. killer, mystic, toxic, sickly brown day. The very word mystic implies the relationship of smog with something mysterious. The words toxic and killer imply something harmful for humans. Therefore, smog has been represented as something harmful and dangerous as is obvious from the use of lexical items used for smog. Similarly, in Indian newspapers, different lexical items have been used for the representation of smog for instance, enveloped, debilitating, subtle burning, killer and thicker haze. The very use of such lexical item as debilitate implies the worst state of things and cloak implies the action of hiding and covering. Through the use of these lexical items, the phenomenon of smog has been represented with process of hiding and covering of various things to make the present situation of living worse. This is how smog has been represented as an unpleasant phenomenon that causes problems for the people.

Table 4: Use of Lexicalization

Pakistani newspapers	Indian newspapers
Killer	Enveloped
Mystic	Debilitating
Toxic	Subtle burning
Sickly brown day	Killer
	Thick haze

As far as representation of smog in Indian newspapers Hindustan Times is concerned, highly loaded lexical items have been used to show how fatal, dangerous, and troublesome it is for general masses. The use of lexical items like deteriorate, debilitating, dangerous etc. implies that smog has become of the crucial issues for the Indian government to tackle. At the same time, it must be remembered that everything is said against something unsaid. The implication behind Indian print media coverage of smog phenomenon is that Indian government has yet not taken satisfactory measures to handle this issue. It is an indirect appeal of the controlling ideological group of Hindustan Times that Indian government must come forward to save the health of the poor people including the innocent children before it is too late. However, the use of adjectives like shocking, dangerous, deteriorate highlights the intensity of the situation.

Another Indian newspaper The Hindu represents the smog phenomenon through its headlines by employing the technique of number game. This stylistic device is employed to stress the issue under discussion. On one hand, stress is laid to the gravity of the problem and on the other, it is made authentic with the help of number game technique. Here, in this case, this technique is as under;

Air pollution kills 7 million every year

90% citizens aware of the air pollution but lack awareness of causes and impact.

Table 5: Use of Number Game

Pakistani Newspaper	Indian Newspaper
70 percent smog	90% citizens aware of air pollution but lack awareness of causes and impact
	Cuts life by 4 years

	Air pollution kills 7 million every year

The implies meanings are that the Indian government should not only take measures to minimize this trouble, rather it should also educate the general masses what it is and how to take safety measures.

The use of superlative degree 'the largest contributor' and the adjectives subtle with noun burning is ideological. It imbricates that the issue on surface level seems insignificant but on deeper level, it is of grave significance and must be tackled likewise. At the same time, the newspaper is also representing the Indian government negatively by using superlative degree 'the largest contributor to carbon emission'. It implies that to make the world polluted Indians' contribution is second to none. The use of the phrase here is derogatory.

Same event finds different representations in different newspapers through their headlines. In this regard, print media discourse serves as a distorting prism to propagate a desired ideology accordingly. The same phenomenon of smog coverage in Pakistani and Indian newspapers is different. The leading English Daily (Dawn) on one hand gives coverage to smog phenomenon taking it as a serious trouble to be tackled immediately and on the other it represents Pakistani government and especially the government of Punjab very active and alert to tackle the issue. One of the headlines goes like this; Punjab braces for smog control

The use of verb 'brace' is layered in meaning. It connotes that Punjab government is fully ready to handle the serious issue of smog which proves unpleasant for the people of Punjab (Pakistan). Moreover, here, in the above-mentioned headline Punjab has been used as state metaphor, which stands for Pakistan. Still, another linguistic device used is the use of present indefinite tense 'braces' which implies universality. It is often used to show a continuity in the same process. It connotes that Punjab government has been ready to handle effectively the troublesome issue of people. This is how through the technique of lexicalization different characteristics have been attributed to smog.

Content analysis sometimes is used to support the qualitative findings quantitatively. It is a technique employed in social sciences to supplement the findings and then to generalize the data. Similarly, the present research employs this technique to support the qualitative findings quantitatively. The following table reproduces the list of linguistic devices employed by the newspapers through their headlines to represent the same event differently. Loades use of language is one of the strongest means to position an ideological group as in/out group.

IV. Conclusion

The study concludes that the way same phenomenon of smog has been given different representations is highly ideological. The portrayal of smog in different newspapers is different and same phenomenon has been represented quite differently by the newspapers through their headlines. The newspapers of the country play a blame game by linking smog with the reasons created by the other country. The smog has been personified by the

newspapers by saying it killer and mystic. The lexical items used by different newspapers carry layered meanings. This is how it is pointed out that print media discourses act as distorting prism to represent a desired version of reality to the target audience.

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