

Persuading Through the Print Media: A Discourse Historical Analysis of No-confidence Resolution Against IK in Pakistan

Abstract: *This research aims at addressing the newspaper headlines during the time of the no-confidence motion to oust the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr Imran Khan and in doing so it highlights the various linguistic choices which help the journalists to persuade the masses. It is found that the newspapers employ various techniques and ways to portray a political conflict and bring it to the public's eye. Drawing on Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach (DHA, 2016) for Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1995) the study highlights the ideological perspective presented by the different newspapers through their respective linguistic choices for the same move. It reveals how the various uses of language portray the events differently. The overall findings show that newspapers steer the viewpoint of the general public, and how the news coverage cast an impact on the audience and shapes their opinion. Moreover, the newspapers sensationalize the situation to create the desired impact. By the use of metaphors, phrases and idioms the papers intensify the scenario and paint a dramatic colour to the picture.*

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Introduction

In any discourse, the meanings which are created by the lexical choices reflect the underlying ideology of the speaker or the journalist and in such cases, certain choices unfold perspectives developed through years, therefore to dig out and interpret those embedded meanings, an analyst needs to relate them with the historical happenings. For this very purpose, Ruth Wodak's model Discourse Historical Approach contributes to bringing the discourse analysis of the text to

life. It reveals the ideology underneath which is being inculcated and circulated by a dint of opinions, attitudes, convictions and representations. Ideology, as in DHA, is a one-sided perspective or viewpoint shared by a particular group. It is the ideology of that group that maintains its power relations (Reisigl & Wodak, 2016). In media projection, the information is made available and catchy with the easiest access to the people. News is selected and customized by sensationalism, dramatization, generalization and enhancement

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(Kozakowska, 2013). A headline in a newspaper is the top statement over a piece of news that captures the audience's attention and urges them to read the whole thing. The use of language here directs the masses towards a particular viewpoint. Leigh (2013) stipulates that the headline is the selling point of a newspaper and it is where the paper employs techniques including, the number of words, the number of lines and type size, psycholinguistic characteristics and rhetorical aspects. Montgomery and Feng (2016) state that the headlines mostly refer to the story they contain. To interest the reader and catch his attention the paper undertakes measures making available the degree of selectivity regarding different pieces of news.

The significance of the study does not merely lie in critically analyzing the headlines but also in highlighting the linguistic patterns employed in the newspapers that play a significant role in persuading the masses. This study may be rewarding in revealing the ideological constructs underlying the news headlines and lead lines and in showing the use of expressions that make the headlines worthy of attention.

Sociopolitical Background

The no-confidence motion is a vote according to Article 58, Clause 2 of the constitution of Pakistan which states that a premier ceases to hold office if he loses a simple majority. The motion arises with the question of whether the person in the position is still adequate for the position. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) emerged as the third popular political party founded by the Pakistani cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan, who stayed in power from 2018 to 2022. The motion for the 22nd Prime Minister Imran Khan gained momentum by the end of February 2022 and for a month the political tussle remained. Finally, the motion went successful and the then-premier Imran Khan was ousted by a vote of no-confidence.

Literature Review

Linguistic tools in discourse production are employed to persuade the masses to a certain viewpoint or ideology. As explained by Almagsoosi (2020) that it is through effective

speaking and writing writers urge the masses to perform in a specific way. Persuasive communication, as Stiff and Mongeau (2016) discuss is any message where the intention is to mould, reinforce, or alter someone's response towards a situation. Persuasion attempts to change attitudes that would lead to a change of behaviour of the people (Rhodes and Ewoldsen, 2013). A person is persuaded when his code of actions shifts from one perspective to another thus, a behavioural conversion appears (Miller, 2013). By the use of specific contextual cues media influence the masses through persuasion by altering the way people perceive some news. It directs the readers towards what to view, listen or read and what to not. Framing plays a significant role in how news is perceived (Gorham et al., 2019). Holbert and Tchernev (2013) stress that understanding the connection between persuasion and the effect it has on media can lead to the understanding of media influence. There is no doubt that media controls and influence public opinion, and at times manipulates it too as say Ejupi et al. (2014) that media serves as one of the prime agents in creating the thought of the masses. In the case of news, this act bereaved the audience of objective news (Nathan, 2016). In addition, Bakir et al. (2019) expound that power is exercised through persuasive communication which includes actions like public relations, advertising, influence campaigns, digital propaganda etc. As far as a written text is concerned, according to Young (2017), it is perceived in two processes involving 'word encoding' and 'lexical access' concerning the individual letters in a word, their position and visual features. Effective persuasive discourse employs preferred structures and specific strategies to actively achieve the desired political outcome (Dijk, 1997). Persuasive texts influence and control the addressee by entering a virtual relationship and in this way, media possesses the capacity to educate and direct its audience (see, for example, White, 2020; Johansen & Joslyn, 2008). However, Diehl et al. (2015) construe that by maintaining a friendly network media politically persuades through social interaction. Shabir et al. (2015) mention that in Pakistan, print media is of prime importance as it is where develops electronic and social media. Print media gives a complete picture

of any news including its analysis too. According to Nadadur (2007), print media in Pakistan with its persuasive techniques is a viable means of unifying the nation together for one cause or to even serving as a harmonizing agent among opposing schools of thought. Bilal et al. (2012) say the language of newspapers exhibits persuasive communication of opinions and ideologies, thus contributing to steering the opinion of the masses over the issues present in society. Further, Hussain and Munawar (2017) argue that with everyone's access to media it now holds a central position from where it actively shapes public opinion. Whereas, Qadeer et al. (2021) elucidate that through discourse Pakistani media holds the capacity to shape the realities by particular lexical choices, euphemisms, metaphoric expressions, etc. According to Richardson (2007), the purpose of journalism is for people to better understand the situation they lie within. With the apt use of language, the media propagates the agenda of the powerful, thus ideologies are actively inculcated by the gradual process of repeated portrayal. Having said that the present research is designed to unfold the media biases in constructing reality.

Research Methodology

This paper aims at analyzing meaning potential and the way print media employs techniques of persuasion during the political situation of the no-confidence motion. Foundational to the study are news headlines along with their lead lines from four different reputed daily newspapers of Pakistan; namely: The Express Tribune, Dawn, The Nation and Daily Times. Four newspapers have been selected to have an appropriate amount of data. These newspapers are well-circulated in the country and have a widespread audience. The research aims at analyzing 80 headlines (20 from each newspaper) by applying Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach. The selected data dates from 28th February 2022 to 10th April 2022, showing how the media covered the no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan.

The study is designed to answer the following questions.

What linguistic patterns are employed to help construe meaning potential in the newspaper headlines to persuade the masses?

2. What euphemistic expressions and connotations have been used to reflect the perspective of political leaders?

Theoretical Framework

This article aims at analyzing the linguistic patterns employed in the newspaper headlines to pursue the masses during the motion of no-confidence to oust the 22nd prime minister of Pakistan. Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach (2015) has been employed. To construct a positive Self Image and a negative Other Image some discursive strategies are employed in the given data. These are, (1) referential or nomination strategies including the use of metaphors, metonymies and synecdoche, (2) predicational strategies to promote negative or positive representations or to attribute stereotypical characters and (3) argumentation strategies which justify those attributes (Wodak & Boukala, 2015). According to DHA (ibid), intertextuality and interdiscursive relationships between texts and discourses must be considered, where intertextuality refers to the link developed between one text and the other while interdiscursivity refers to the various ways discourses are linked to each other. Discourses are open and often hybrid; new contexts can be created at many points, thus recontextualization (Reisigl & Wodak, 2016). Further, according to Reisigl (2018), DHA puts ample light on the historical factor and triangulation principle. The triangulation Principle in the words of Wodak (2015) is based on the concept of context and focuses on four aspects including co-text, intertextual relationship, extralinguistic social variables and the historical context. She (ibid) further proposed five questions for the analysis, 1) How are people's names used and referred to? 2) How their characteristic features are drawn? 3) Which arguments are employed in discourses? 4) From what perspective are these arguments presented? 5) Are the utterances delivered openly, are they intensified or mitigated? These strategies of nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivation, and intensification or mitigation are then realized in analysis at the textual level.

Analysis

The headlines selected for the study portray the ongoing events during the time of the no-confidence motion to oust the then Prime Minister Imran Khan. The following sections discuss the portrayal in detail.

The Express Tribune

Among all the four selected newspapers the chief of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto got coverage as he led a long march to dislodge the prime minister, which The Express Tribune puts as *'Bilawal throws down the gauntlet to PM'*. The material process here is the transitive action with the active construction of the text. The use of the phrase 'throw down the gauntlet' relates to the predication strategy attributed to Bilawal. On the days following the PM downs the prices of oil, diesel and electricity. This was an attempt to cool down the opposition but all in vain as Bilawal called forward the premier to dissolve assemblies and call new elections and so the paper puts it, *Opposition 'ready' to go for a no-trust move*, stressing the situation by the word 'ready' that now it will happen for sure. The next day the paper side by side puts two streams together as *'Elahi finds PM unperturbed by no-trust threat'* and *'PPP ups the ante with five-day ultimatum'*. Where on one hand the opposition party PPP is giving an ultimatum, a final demand to the PTI, the PTI is seen unruffled by the challenges.

The paper gave voice to PM and his spirits with headlines like, *'Imran undaunted amid no-trust hype'* and *'Fear my wrath when no-trust move fails: PM'*, thus portraying his resilience. Considering the narrative form here, we can say that this newspaper first showed how the opposition was so eagerly ready and then how the PM was unperturbed by whatever was going on. The newspaper's focus stayed on PM and his words as time and again his exact words are quoted such as, *'Zardari is my first target, says PM Imran'* with the lead line, *'Premier says won't spare opp after defeating no-trust motion'*. The nomination here brings the image of PM as strong and unyielding. The paper also portrays Imran's hopes of defeating the no-trust move and after that even paying back the opposition leaders.

'Didn't enter politics to keep a lid on potato prices: PM' with the lead line, *'Says three 'rats' are out to oust him from power'*. The rhetorical trope, here metaphor 'rats' has been utilized in portraying the participants employed in the process. Such metaphors, illustrating referential strategies, are observed in later days too when the newspaper puts the headline, *'Battle lines drawn'*. The use of this phrase here extrapolates that now the parties are ready to fight. Meanwhile, the paper addresses the situation of PTI as *'PM sees opposition in a blind alley'* and later as, *"We will lock them up like pigeons in a cage"*, the use of 'blind alley' here refers to the fixing the opposition was in and this situation of their makes them referred as 'pigeons'.

On the next day, the paper again puts two competing pieces of news together as *'Rude awakening'* and *'PM won't go down without a fight'*. The former alludes to the surprising and unpleasant fact that the people from within the PTI are leaving it stranded in this time of need and the latter ascribes the steadfast PM who is still determined and buoyant. The news treatment brings to limelight the 'Us' versus 'Them' representation by the paper as the headline on one-day pictures the unshakeable persona of the PM and the next day portrays the opposition's condition as *'No-trust delay enrages opposition'* which clearly shows the point of view that on one hand, the PM is all set and undaunted towards the no-confidence motion while the delay in it disturbs the opposition who is steadfast over holding the vote of no-trust. Amid all this, the headlines allude to the share of 'Foreign powers' in this whole scenario as Imran claims that the American powers are actually behind the no-trust move. Putting this claim of his in the paper as, *'Foreign powers pulling opp strings: PM'* with the lead line, *'Says he has proof of foreign backing for the no-trust move but refuses to show'*, the paper tries to steer the public opinion towards the motion. This intertextual reference is pointing at the written proof the PM claimed to have in the form of a letter, which is a move in toppling his government. He avidly asserts that foreign powers are using money to control local politicians.

'No-trust motion tabled in NA amid hullabaloo', the hue and cry raised along with

desk thumping in the National Assembly while the opposition leader Shehbaz Sharif puts forward the no-confidence motion are presented by the paper as 'hullabaloo'. Thus, by nomination strategy, the event was categorized as a fuss. On the other hand, the PM keeps referring to the threat letter. The intertextual reference towards the letter that the PM has, brings to light the gravity of the situation as the headline says, *'PM says letter warned of consequences if no-trust fails'*. The editor here with active construction of the sentence jotted down PM's words in a way to bring not just the authenticity but the criticality of the moment. Still, amid all this the vote decided to be on April 6 after the NA session was adjourned which ruffled the opposition's feathers as the paper puts, *'No-trust vote on Sunday'* with the lead line, *'Opposition leaders irked as NA session adjusted within minutes'* which clearly portrays the sentiments of the opposition. By the use of nomination strategy in the construction of the opposition and by employing the verb 'irk', the editor aptly denoted the situation.

While the PM asserted that he will fight till the last minute, he revealed the options given to him during the current political turmoil. The paper puts this as, *'PM lifts the lid on three establishment offers'* with the lead line appositely enlisting the three options as, *'Imran says he was asked to face a no-trust vote, call early elections or step down'*. By the use of the phrase, 'lift the lid' the paper implemented a predication strategy in constructing the incident. And in the lead line, the editor aptly enlisted all three options thus making the news coherent and a complete whole. The day when the PM advised the president to dissolve the assembly and hold fresh elections was subjected by the paper as, *'A day of high drama'*. Here by the noun, 'high drama', the nomination strategy is presented in the construction of the image for that day when the PM congratulated the nation over the repudiation of the no-confidence move. But the tables were turned when days later the Supreme Court sets aside not just Qasim Suri's ruling to repulse the no-trust resolution but also the president's dissolution of the lower house on the advice of the PM and so the no-trust move against the PM revived.

After midnight when the PM was ousted

by 174 votes the paper writes, *'BACK TO THE PAVILION'* with the lead line, *'PM Imran Khan showed the door through no-confidence vote after a day of high drama'* which clearly shows the newspaper's consideration of all this motion and voting a play and fuss. Thus, the news highlights the character of the PM and the role of the opposition in bringing this political drama.

Dawn

The same incidents have been addressed by Dawn too but indeed the manner and news process and presentation differ. It puts the start to it all as *'Bilawal kick-starts march to dislodge Imran'*. The use of 'kick-start' shows that now the engine has been started and the opposition won't back off and would for sure 'dislodge' the PM. It was when Bilawal started a long March to direct the people against the PM which Dawn writes in a lead line as *'PPP leader invites other parties to help end PTI rule'*. Considering here the indexical meaning we can see how the lead line portrays not just that it was Bilawal who started it but it was also he who invited the others too. But the PM is unmoved as the paper writes, *'PM counters rivals with relief'* with the lead line, *'Oil, diesel prices down by Rs10 per litre, electricity by Rs5 per unit'*. Here the paper uses double meanings with the word 'relief' as the PM is untroubled by the opposition's move and the other as he relieves the public of the strain they were in with the high prices of oil, diesel and electricity. Meanwhile, the opposition kept pushing over the no-trust vote in response to which the PM forewarned as the headline states, *'Beware of fallout if the no-trust move fails, PM warns opposition'* with the lead line, *'Maryam reacts to remarks against the party leadership, tells Imran he's already lost'*. We can see how tactfully the paper addresses both parties together in the same piece of news where they both are holding opposing views, thus the tussle vivid. Along this timeline the opposition leaders gathered at Zardari House to give the final touches to their plan of a no-trust motion against the PM which the paper states as, *'PPP, PDM fine-tune strategy to oust Imran'* with the lead line, *'Bilawal gives PM Khan 24-hour ultimatum'*. Here by the use of textual presence, the editor presented the picture together coherent as a whole which brings to view what all the

opposition parties are up to.

'No-trust is no longer just a threat', now it is way more than that. Looking at the presupposition here we can construe how the situation has been considered that yes, the no-confidence was a threat to the government but now it has exceeded that level and is now more than just a threat and the lead line states the reason as, *'PDM, PPP alliance claims to have sufficient numbers'*, thus again by the relation of presence the news fixes all the pieces of the story together coherently. While the PM states that this move is a good opportunity for him to grab all the thieves once he will win the vote, the paper puts the headline, *'Imran tells rivals exactly what he thinks of no-trust'*. The material process here is the transitive action with active construction of the sentence reflecting the event in its entirety. In later days the paper writes *'Opposition predicts the end of ruling coalition 'within days''*; here the referential strategy employed is the use of 'ruling coalition' for the government. This projects the meaning not only towards the ruling party but towards the 'opposition' too which stands in the competition. Another meaning could be that though the ruling is in the coalition, it still is no more powerful and in fact, is left with mere days.

'D-Chowk picked as first war front'. This headline manifests the predicational strategy employed by attributing 'D-Chowk' with the use of metaphor 'war front' portraying the acuteness of the situation. The lead line intensifies it more as *'PTI plans power to show to counter no-trust move'*. The word 'power show' further frames the self-presentation, as powerful, enough to counter the opposition with its 'no-trust move'. The day after, the same self-image is highlighted with the word 'juggernaut' which the paper puts as, *'No-trust has awakened PTI juggernaut: PM'*. Clearly, the paper favours the competency of PTI. It was the time when the people from within the PTI started turning against it and allies started mentioning retribution for them. For such renegades the paper used the word 'turncoats' as, *'PM, speaker weighs options against 'turncoats''*, with the lead line, *'Rashid suggests governor's rule; Fawad says PM to act against deserters ahead of vote'*. Here the ideological square is characterized by the negative other-presentation and a positive self-image, with the people going

against as 'turncoats' and 'deserters' while the PM is still calm and not readily taking action but weighing the options suggested. The mentioning of participants involved in the process highlights to the reader the important figures of the party. The next day some aggressive activists break through the Sindh House condemning the traitors on which the paper published, *'Hunting for turncoats, PTI workers breach Sindh House'*, hereby nomination strategy the image of PTI workers has been constructed as unruly and at the same time turncoats have been notified that they are being hunted.

'Confident Imran says 'will have the last laugh', the material process involved in the construction of this headline is the intransitive action with only one person, 'Imran' to whom the adjective 'confident' attributes. From the premier's cocksure remark his beaming confidence is evident. The paper not only highlighted Imran's spirit but also put a warning to the opposition about what is going to come their way. After this when the vote of no-confidence was going to be on the table, *'PM unveils 'foreign plot' against his govt'*. This alludes to the threatening letter the PM received according to which the country will face drastic consequences if the no-confidence vote will fail. *'Claims to have credible proof in the shape of a 'letter''*; with the above-mentioned headline this was the lead line which intertextually refers to the threat letter. Even with all this, the no-trust vote reached the table which the paper puts as, *'No-trust resolution against Imran 'on the table''*. With the absence of an agent and the use of passive voice the paper has highlighted the victim, in this case, the premier.

'With first wicket down, PDM vows to oust PM', the use of the word 'wicket' for Imran Khan alludes to his former rank as a cricketer. The action 'vows' brings the intensity of the situation to life. For readers, it will bring home the nature of incidents. All this while the PM keeps alluding to the foreign hand in all this conspiracy against him as *'PM sees 'global conspiracy' behind his ouster'*. The lead line further elaborates the headline as *'Claims threats to his life; fears family will be targeted when he leaves office'* when the PM reveals receiving death threats. Stressing 'global conspiracy' the paper employed a

nomination strategy in shaping up the situation while the sentence exhibits active construction in the material process. With the vote of no-confidence approaching the paper put into words the premier's end of rule as *'PM faces ignoble exit after historic ruling'*. Looking into the argumentative strategy here we can see how PM's rule has been mentioned as 'historic' while his exit is 'ignoble', a disgrace to what he achieved in his ruling era.

As Imran Khan was once an acknowledged sportsman, the use of sports jargon for him is quite common as, *'Imran to address the nation today, 'play till the last ball''*. The use of 'play till the last ball' highlights not just the unrelentless PM but also points to the situation as 'a play' where even a 'last ball' can prove to be a casting vote. Once again, the paper brings intertextual reference to 'imported government' as *'Disappointed Imran wants protests against 'imported govt''*. The editor emphasizes the PM's situation and stresses the involvement of foreign hands too. On April 10th the paper puts the final headline to the matter as *'Midnight vote seals Imran's fate'* which alludes to the earnest voting in the middle of the night that locked the PM's rule by 174 votes.

The Nation

Bilawal Bhutto's significant long march and his challenging remarks to Imran Khan got coverage in *The Nation* too as *'Now is the time for Parliament to move no-confidence against PM: Bilawal'*. The impactful representation of Bilawal here illustrates the predicational strategy along with his direct words from the procession. With the march successful from Karachi towards Islamabad, Bilawal's spirits were high and the paper gave his words a place in the headline too as *'Bilawal says PM Imran Khan 'has no future''*. Here the nomination strategy is visible in constructing the image of Bilawal as he addresses the public with surety and affirmation.

On the next day the paper addresses both the government and the opposition together as, *'Fully prepared for everything: PM'* and *'Bilawal sees victory 'if allied parties support' opposition against PM'*, thus employing the *topos of comparison* as an argumentative strategy. The stance of both parties is compared side by side.

With members of PTI going against itself and joining other groups the paper puts the headline, *'Opposition gaining momentum as cracks appear within PTI'*. The perspectivation here is the third person addressing the situation from an outside lens. This argument is elaborated by the *topos of comparison* that can be paraphrased as, 'With PTI losing it, the opposition is winning the game'.

'PM sees Zardari, Shehbaz, Fazl behind bars 'in near future''. The paper highlights the situation based on the strong stance of the PM. This constructs his image, by nomination strategy, as sure and confident of his position. During these days the paper's spotlight shifted from opposition to the government as the very next day again the PM's positive self-image was presented as *'Govt is stable and confident, says PM'*. This further brings to the masses the standpoint of PTI with everything under control. Meanwhile, Imran Khan visited Lahore and later Islamabad to address the people and the paper states, *'PM sees 'sea of people' in Islamabad day before no-trust vote'*. By the use of metaphor, 'sea of people' the paper employed a referential strategy. This gives a clear picture of how the government even with the threat of a no-confidence vote hanging is still firm and strong. During the processions the PM avidly pumped the nation and mentioned their upbringing as his chief motive, *'I am not here to check potato, tomato prices but to raise a nation: PM'*. This implies the PM's view of everyone together as a whole, a nation whose amelioration matters for the PM and not the prices of vegetables. The reference to a 'nation' here is to assemble the people together for one cause.

While the date for voting of no-confidence decided to be March 27th, the PTI announces to have a large historic gathering before the Parliament to show the opposition how the public is still standing with the PM. The paper puts this as, *'PTI announces power show in front of Parliament'*, with the expression 'power show' to intensify the situation and beware the opposition. With the procession being decided the PM egged on his people to keep supporting him and the country against the foreign powers as he claimed that all this is a play of America. *'PM urges people to come out against 'slaves of America''*, this reference is clearly intertextual and relates to the

allegation Imran Khan made that America is behind it all and this is a foreign conspiracy against him. Between all this, the PM kept on persuading and assembling the masses. At times he even tries to indulge in religion as no doubt it helps in steering the sentiments of people. *'PM says our society is not following Amr Bil Maroof'*, the PM said so during a procession where he motivated the nation to come out for the youth, for the coming generations and the well-being of all as he thinks it is the time that all must enjoin in the good and that is what is meant by 'Amr Bil Maroof'. The mentioning of 'Amr Bil Maroof' is intertextual to Imran Khan's concept of 'Riyasat-i-Madina' too, as he aspires to make his country the 'Riyasat-i-Madina'.

With receiving death threats the PM recurrently mentions the conspiracy of 'three stooges', the term he uses for the corrupt leaders from the opposition, that it is them that want to bring unrest to the nation while the PTI had worked very hard in its era to restore it. For the PM losing the government is not a big deal but what is important to him is his nation and its prosperity. *'Losing government is a minor thing, PM warns opposition'*, the paper's nomination strategy here portrays the PM as poised and confident, ready for the battle. *'Foreign hand', no surprise*, this again implies PM's claims that foreign powers are involved in this stratagem. The interdiscursivity here also leads to the threat letter the PM claimed to have received. But two days later the paper printed, *'Letter-gate!'* with the lead line, *'No foreign country sent a written threat'*, shattering all the scenario that was being created in the name of a threat letter which the PM declared to possess as a proof as the opposition questioned his delay in showing the letter if he possessed any in the first place. This move of a threat letter was also seen as a play when the PM realized he would not survive the vote of no-confidence.

As Imran Khan was challenged to resign and accept his defeat, he claimed that he would not let the opposition win and will fight till the last ball. *'Imran Khan will never accept defeat'*, here the choice of intransitive action with the active construction of the text (transitivity) illustrates the PM as firm and still enthusiastic, ready to face whatever comes his way. With the surety in his

manner, he keeps informing the nation about the threats he is receiving as the paper puts it, *'Imran Khan says his life in danger'*. News like this stirs the public's sentiments and so the media plays an important factor in steering their opinion. With this headline on one hand and on the other giving frame to the efforts of the opposition, the media plays well as on the very same day it was stated, *'Shehbaz Sharif will burn midnight oil to overcome price hike'*. With the predication here Shehbaz is positively attributed. In his image construction idiom, 'burn the midnight oil' is also employed intensifying the situation. Meanwhile, the public is shown the ray of light that with opposition inflation will decrease. Because at that time the people were stricken with the ever-increasing prices as the paper later puts it, *'Inflation-hit masses turn deaf ear to Imran Khan's protest call'*, thus bringing the fact that inflation is the cause behind such a turn down by the people. The paper again made use of the idiom 'to turn a deaf ear' employing the discursive strategy of intensification.

Finally with the vote of no-confidence the PM was ousted from office becoming the first ever PM to be removed by the no-trust move. The paper puts the headline as, *'Imran voted OUT'* with the lead line, *'First time ever a PM removed from office by a vote of no-confidence count as Khan refused to resign'*, thus bringing his resilience to the public eye. The capitalization of the word 'OUT' comes under the head of the intensification strategy as the paper stresses the PM's removal.

Daily Times

'Bilawal out to oust Imran'. It all started with that long march of Bilawal where he recurrently challenged the PM to hold elections or resign. The paper's use of transitive action with active construction of the text in the material process highlights the situation being in the hands of Bilawal who summons Imran Khan to face the vote of no-confidence which the lead line states as, *'PPP chief says it's time to table no-confidence motion'*. Here again, the voice is given to the PPP chief by active sentence construction. On the other hand, PDM President Fazlur Rehman claimed that he along with other opposition parties has decided to table a vote of no-

confidence against the PTI-led government. The paper states, '*Opposition finalise no-trust motion plan*'. Here the editor made use of the nomination strategy and highlighted the verb 'finalises' shows the intensity of the action performed.

When the opposition finally tabled the motion of no-confidence against the PM saying that it is for the betterment of the nation, the paper puts the headline, '*The match begins!*'. Here the word 'match' alludes to the PM, ex-cricketer, for whom the game has begun in which he will either lose or win while by the predication strategy the event has been categorized as a 'match'. On the day after the paper pictures the politics of the country narrating words of both the sides together within the same piece of news as, "*Bandits, stooges, rats*" and on the other side, "*Lowly, rabid, unworthy*". This is how now both opposing parties are addressing each other. The PM calls the leaders of PPP, PML-N and JUI-F 'stooges' and 'bandits' who have mortgaged Pakistan in their 30-35 years of rule on the country. He considers this time of no-confidence motion a good opportunity to 'take three wickets with one ball'. On the other hand, the PDM chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman calls the PM mentally unstable as the lead line states, '*Fazl says Imran Khan has lost his senses and is not stable*'. With quotation marks, the paper has framed the exact words of the political leader. The news also makes it evident what the leaders think of each other. The use of metaphors illustrates the paper's predication strategy too.

'PM throws public debate challenge to opp, media': Challenging media and opposition parties the PM brings a positive self-image and a negative other-image as he says that anyone standing in opposition to his party is welcome to come forward and question PTI's development of the country. He further emphasizes that what he has done in his three and half year's era nobody before him has bothered to do. With the lead line, '*Imran Khan says the entire nation is ready to go down with him rather than supporting the three stooges*' the paper employed direct discourse representation with not just giving voice to the PM but also by nomination strategy constructing the image of both the government and the opposition 'stooges'. The next day, the paper

addresses both the opposition party's Shehbaz Sharif said, "*National govt*" with the lead line, '*Shehbaz Sharif suggests the formation of a national government minus PTI for five years*' and the PM, "*Three rats*" with the lead line, '*PM says people have to struggle against three rats for country's future*'. In this way, the paper strategically employed nomination and constructed the image of both the parties by their respective motives where the PML-N suggested the formation of a national government excluding PTI which has made mere false claims and has ruined the economy of the country by buying expensive oil. While, the PTI keep on urging the nation to step forward against the three 'rats', Zardari, Fazl and Shehbaz. The PM also vowed to hunt the three of them down but he requires the nation's support in this.

With around twenty-plus MNAs dissenting the ruling party OTI the paper states, '*PTI in tatters?*'. The use of the question mark strategy of argumentation and intensification both have been employed considering the situation now with the MNAs dissenting on whether the party will survive the vote or not. With the day of no-confidence arriving the PM asserted time and again that he will play till the last ball and '*Will show my trump card a day before no-trust: PM*'. Though the PM did not mention his strategy the paper highlights the situation with the use of the noun 'trump card' in the nomination strategy portraying the upcoming events with sensationalism. "*Kaptaan will go down like a rat on a sinking ship: Bilawal*", here the paper again by nomination alludes to the PM with 'kaptaan' or captain. Predication is illustrated by the way the idiom 'rat on a sinking shape' has been used revealing the situation of PM, who according to Bilawal is now fearful of the no-trust motion and will soon back off. This statement of Bilawal was actually a tweet that the paper brought as a headline. In the tweet, the PPP chief further stresses that the PM cannot run forever and he has no spirit to face the defeat with grace.

Before the voting of no-confidence the PM said he will hold a huge procession, so on March 27th PTI in the name of 'Amr Bil Maroof' held the largest public meeting in Islamabad which the paper portrayed as '*PTI all set to hold power show in Islamabad today*'. The noun 'power

show' demonstrates the nomination strategy of constructing the event before the public. Leaders from PTI mentioned that PTI workers from all over the country will reach the destination and stand in support of the party as all are well aware that it is only Imran Khan who can take the country out of its challenges while the other leaders are 'dancing on the tune of foreign powers'. This same point in the words of PM is brought as a headline the next day as, *'Foreign forces behind no-trust motion: PM'* with the lead line, *'PM claims he has evidence in writing to prove foreign hand behind 'conspiracy' against his government'*. In his power show 'Amr Bil Maroof' the PM discussed the current situation throwing ample light on the achievements of his government and criticising the opposition. He further brings to the masses that he has received written threats and there is a foreign conspiracy behind all this. The lead line alludes to the written letter the PM received. The PM believes that foreign money is being used against him to change the government but he would not retreat.

When Usman Buzdar submitted his resignation with the premier and the PML-Q assured its support to PTI against the no-trust vote the paper writes, *'Pawn sacrifice in a masterful move'* with the lead line, *'Imran Khan wins back PML-Q as Pervaiz Elahi offered to step into Buzdar's shoes'*. It is clear that the editor referred to Buzdar as the pawn whose been sacrificed and masterfully the party PML-Q's support has been achieved as now the PM is thinking to nominate Elahi as Punjab CM. With the expression 'masterful move' the paper dramatizes the situation and added the colour of the game of chess with the word 'pawn'. Thus, PM's game has been shown. With MQM parting ways with the ruling party, the PTI now has lost the majority. At this the paper states, *'The curtain falls'*, the end of the show. By using this expression, the paper actually said to the PTI it is time to step down from the stage as its role is finished. Shehbaz Sharif even suggested, now that the PM has lost the majority he must resign. The opposition keeps on telling Imran Khan that he no longer has any future as the paper mentions, *'You have lost, your time is up now: opp tells PM'*, with the lead line, *'PPP says PM has witnessed his defeat, knows that there is no way for him to*

escape'. By nomination, the paper brings the collective stance of opposition. This stance alludes to the opposition being 175 in the Lower House which ultimately leaves the PM losing the majority so the opposition does not see any escape for the PM.

As the day for the vote of no-confidence was set the paper prints, *'Last ball' today* with the lead line, *'Voting on no-confidence motion scheduled for today'*. The use of 'last ball' alludes to Imran Khan's words as he said that he will play till the last ball and also to the fact that the PM was once the cricketer who is now in the same condition as if the pitch was ready for his last ball. On the advice of the PM, the President gave the approval to dissolve the assembly and thus the vote of no-confidence got dismissed which the paper mentions, *'Khan's gambit'* with the lead line, *'Deputy speaker terms no-trust motion 'unconstitutional', disallows voting and adjourns session'*. The paper refers to this situation as 'gambit', a stratagem. Furthermore, through the lead line, the practice to be 'unconstitutional' is focused to bring before the significance of the constitution by predication strategy. But the motion even after all this revived and the day was decided to conduct the voting. And the paper published, *'Last episode'*. With this expression, the paper has pointed at the nature of the event to be a grand finale, the last nail in the coffin. This last event in the course of action will be deciding whether a new PM will be elected or would the failure of the motion will lead to the carrying out of affairs by the government as it used to be. On the one hand, the paper in this way brings the agenda of the National Assembly to the public's view while on the other hand portraying Imran Khan's remarks about the decision being made. By employing the nomination strategy as PM's image is being constructed the paper states, *'Imran says won't accept 'imported government'; gives a call for the portest'*. The lead line further elaborates, *'PM says he is saddened by SC's decision but has accepted it'*. Thus, the paper made use of an indirect perspectivization in representing the premier. The PM keep alluding to the threat letter which he thinks should have been taken by the Supreme Court as a serious matter. Though he respects the Court's decision, he is not happy with it as he recurrently mentions that all this drama is foreign-funded. This must be stopped now or we as a nation will always be

slaves. He requests the nation particularly the youth to come forward for support.

'*THE END*'. Even after all the efforts of the government, the no-confidence motion against the PM could not subside and finally, the voting take place where a majority of 174 lawmakers voted against the PM's government which the lead line states as, '*174 lawmakers vote in favour of the no-confidence motion to oust PM, without PTI dissenters*'. The paper dramatized the event by predication strategy as capitalization is being used. 'The End' intensifies the situation, while the lead line brings the whole scenario of voting in one line that even without the PTI dissenters the opposition had the majority votes, 174 which favoured ousting the PM. This historical political drama made the PM, the first premier to be ousted by a vote of no-confidence.

Discussion

As stated in section 3, the analysis puts into view how the newspapers portrayed different events. By specific lexical choices the viewpoint of the public was not just controlled but at times altered too, for example, with the no-resolution reaching the table the Dawn publishes, '*No-trust resolution against Imran 'on the table'*', where by using

passive voice along with the absence of agent the paper highlighted the choices, in this case, the PM. Different newspapers put into words the same incident differently. Furthermore, the analysis shows that the headlines by The Express Tribune give more space to the PM and his point of view, in long detailed headlines as the PM's voice is given space more than the opposition is being presented. Dawn's style matches with that of The Express Tribune in a matter of length and brevity as the paper illustrates the opposition having enough votes in these words, '*No-trust no longer just a threat*', which is a very brief statement explains the whole scenario that the movement had exceeded the threat. The Nation mostly made use of exact words by the parties in bringing the news as, '*PM urges people to come out against 'slaves of America'*' or, '*Bilawal says PM Imran Khan 'has no future*'. While the headlines by Daily Times are more sensationalized and are brief and comprehensive, at times only specific choices to highlight the picture as, '*The curtain falls*' or, '*Last ball today*'. Hence, each of the four newspapers employed specialised techniques and special linguistic patterns to persuade the masses. In the end, the paper throws ample light on the ideological constructs of newspapers' choices with their viewpoints and stance.

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