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## A Critical Discourse Analysis of Discursive Reproduction of Ideologies in Pakistani and Indian Press Media in the Aftermath of Pulwama Attack

**Abstract** *The present study, based on Van Dijk (2005) ideological square model, aims to show how the two countries, i.e., Pakistan and India, represent each other through their newspapers' discourse. Using Van Dijk's (2005) framework (positive self-presentation, negative other-presentation) for discourse analysis, this study examines linguistic features in fifty editorials of three Pakistani and three Indian English newspapers. The aforementioned model adopted from Politics, Ideology and Discourse is used to detect discursive structures within editorials and to discover the hidden ideologies. Besides, the researchers have used different discursive strategies such as actor description, euphemism, evidentiality etc., for microanalysis. Moreover, the macro analysis has been done by using the macro strategies, i.e., positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. The study revealed that Pakistani editorials used micro strategies more than that Indians. The study also revealed that Pakistani editorials relied mostly on positive self-presentation, while Indian editorials focused on negative other-presentation.*

**Key Words:** Discourse, Critical Discourse Analysis, Ideology, Editorial, Pulwama Attack, Kashmir

### Introduction

Pak-India relations have always been critical and turbulent since the partition. Mahmood (2002) writes that it is a dismal reality that the prospects of establishing normal relations between Pakistan and India have always appeared dim. There have been three major wars between the two countries in 1948, 1965, 1971. As a result, tension or state of the cold war has always existed between the two countries. Cameron (1991) says a number of prominent Indian leaders considered partition to be temporary; they were convinced that Pakistan, like the prodigal son, would return to the fold of Mother India. It was India that conducted the first nuclear test in 1974, which spurred Pakistan along a similar path and India that first declared a nuclear weapons capability after further tests in 1998, which Pakistan almost immediately replicated. The post 9/11 period is considered very crucial in Pakistan India relations. The rapid developments in the global strategic environment originating from September 11 events once again brought major powers into the limelight (Ali 2017).

On 26 November, in one of the most gruesome terrorist attacks the world has witnessed, armed gunmen opened fire on civilians at several sites in Mumbai, India. The attacked places were the Taj Mahal Palace & Tower, the Oberoi Trident Hotel, the Chhatrapati Shivaji Train Terminus, Leopold Cafe, Cama Hospital, Nariman House Jewish Community Centre, Metro Cinema, St Xavier's College and a lane near the Times of India office. More than 160 people were killed in the attacks. An almost three-day siege of the Taj, where gunmen remained holed up until all but one of them were killed in an Indian security forces operation, accounted for the bulk of the casualties.

According to Mahmood (2002), Ajmal Kasab, the only attacker captured alive, confessed that the attackers were members of Lashkar e Tayiba (Henceforth LeT). Tracking calls and communications all linked back to Pakistan, from where the entire attack was plotted and directed. In the wake of the attacks, India broke off talks with Pakistan.

In 2016, JeM (henceforth JeM) terrorists disguised as soldiers, carry out a deadly attack on Pathankot airbase in India's north-western state of Punjab in January. The attack comes a week after Prime Minister Modi made an impromptu visit to Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif in an effort to revive bilateral talks.

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In September, JeM terrorists storm an army base in Uri, in Indian, Administered Jammu & Kashmir, and kill 17 Indian soldiers.

On 29 September, India, in its first direct military response to the attack in Uri, conducts 'surgical strikes' on suspected terrorists across the LoC in Pakistan Administered Jammu & Kashmir.

## **Pulwama Attack**

In the calmness of the month of February, it was February 14 when a suicide bomber crashed 300kg explosives in a packed car into a convoy of Central Reserve Police Forces (Henceforth CRPF), killing dozens of Indian personnel and injuring hundreds (Ahmadian and Farahani 2014). The terror took place in Pulwama, about 20 km from the city of Srinagar. India alleged Pakistan and portrayed it to be the culprit behind the said incident, and vowed revenge and retaliation. Jaish e Muhammad accepted the terror attack being carried by it for freeing Kashmir from India. Indian air force dropped 1000 kg bombs across LOC to satisfy his thirst and to take revenge, thus breaching the LOC rules. Later on, on 27<sup>th</sup> February, Pakistan retaliated and captured an Indian pilot and crashed their plane. Later the pilot was released to ease the tension and as a gesture of goodwill (Amir Shojaei 2013).

After the brutal attack, allegations and the blame game started. India, through its media, tried to isolate Pakistan internationally (Eissa 2014). Nationalist, religious and cultural antagonist vibes were there, with both countries spitting biasedness and envenomed statements against each other. They used media as a weapon to portray and to represent the dominant ideologies and to make people form opinions in accordance with the views presented. The religious, political and social values were used as an instrument to portray the other country as the main culprit (Tahir 2013).

The current research is an attempt to decode the presentation of the two countries in the linguistic and discursive use of technologies. To study the comparison of language and the embedded ideologies, this study is particularly done. The current study is aimed to get to know the representation of Pakistan and India in the light of the Pulwama attack in the respective newspapers of the two countries. A CDA based qualitative and quantitative research is designed to get to know the disparity and polarity present and the ideologies associated with those domains in the print media is the lens to inspect and address the issue at hand formulated for conducting this study.

## **Significance of the Study**

The study is an attempt to update the present bank of knowledge. It is documentation and preservation of the articles regarding the Pulwama attack. The findings of this study give an insight into the use of the stereotypical and manipulative role of media for propagating certain ideologies. The study is of great significance as it is the political arena analysis of discourse. Critical consciousness will be fostered in the minds of society. People will get to know and get the awareness of exploitation by the media and will somehow try to draw a line on the standing of the two states over the issue of Kashmir.

## **Literature Review**

Media is a medium to propagate and to spread news, rumours or to invoke and investigate the people. It is the media that make people opine and think about a particular perspective and how to think about a particular issue. When in times of crisis and conflicts, it is the pivotal role of media to instigate nationalistic feelings among the nation (Okuda 2016). Media acts as a prism to invoke nationalism. The historical and ideological wars of political narratives are put forward by the media (Le, 2009). These kinds of news occurring beyond the first-hand experience of the audience adhere them to official as well as foreign policy circles of the national identities and political governments. So, media gives not only views on the national issues but also the international issues that are dealt with in this media of discourse.

Vigna (2019) argues that the cross border nationalistic media ignite a war and trigger hate. The votes for the extreme nationalist political parties are higher than the less nationalistic or secular parties. In the case of India and Pakistan, the leaders of both sides are not only aggressive against one other but also considered as the hero of their respective nation/country. The debate or issues between both

countries are usually more heated up during the election period. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi enhances the election campaign and exploits the Pulwama incident greatly by putting pressure on Pakistan (Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2019).

The current Pulwama incident is one of the examples of the perpetual incidents that have taken place between both countries where they left no stone unturned to initiate a verbal war which leads to an uncertain situation on the border and many times to a war. Pakistan and India fought three wars, and there is continuous tension on the Line of Control (LoC) and border regions, especially on the issue of Kashmir, which is still unresolved and is a bone of contention between them. In these wars, they used their media for patriotism and propaganda against one another. According to van Dijk (1998), “Social conflict is thus cognitively represented and enhanced by polarization, and discursively sustained and reproduced by derogating, demonizing by excluding ‘others’ from the community of ‘us’, the civilized”.

Yarmohammadi (2018) argue that the countries have used nationalist’s narrative mostly for manipulating their respective masses through media for domestic legitimacy during war times, the media further ignite the nationalist narrative to achieve national cohesion. Media has always been used as a propaganda tool in times of war. This process of manipulation through media is not new. Since the birth of the radio and the newspaper, it has blindly supported its respective ideology. In this regard, India and Pakistan are taking advantage of their respective media outlets too.

### Research Question

The research question that this study attempts to answer is:

1. How Pakistan represents India and India represents Pakistan through their daily newspapers’ editorials?

### Methodology

The research will be pure of a descriptive approach. Descriptive is an appropriate approach because the researcher aims to identify the macro strategies in the editorials of both countries, i.e. Pakistan and India.

Besides, the qualitative research design is employed for answering the developed question. As the qualitative approach deals specifically with the description of any discourse, so it is adopted for this research.

### Sampling Procedure

The sample of the study consisted of 60 editorials on the issue of Pulwama. Thirty editorials were selected from Pakistani newspapers and thirty from Indian newspapers. Moreover, the data which were easily available and was made open to be accessed by the public was chosen. So, the editorials were chosen, which were available and were easily accessible to the researchers.

### Data Collection

Editorials were the data for analysis in this study. The data was collected from the internet. The researchers took 30 Pakistani and 30 Indian newspapers editorials, which were in English. The editorials were selected for the month of February and March as the Pulwama issue was hotly debated in those two months.

Thirty editorials selected for analysis from Pakistani newspapers are shown in the following table.

**Table 1.** Editorials Taken from Pakistani Newspapers

Country	Selected Newspapers	Number of Editorials
Pakistan	Dawn	10
	The Nation	10
	Tribune	10
Total		30

The selected Indian newspapers along with their editorials are presented in the following table.

**Table 2.** Editorials taken from Indian Newspapers

Country	Selected Newspapers	Number of Editorials
India	The Hindu	10
	The Times of India	10
	The Economic Times	10
Total		30

### Analytical Framework of the Study

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is greatly helpful in understanding the hidden meanings in the text. CDA is defined by different scholars according to their approach of analyzing the text. According to [van Dijk \(2001\)](#), CDA is defined as the study of the abuse of social power, inequality, and dominance in the social institutions and groups and how power and ideology are used in the text. The institution or group that controls the discourse might also control the minds of people. Thus, CDA aims to find an answer to the question, who controls the public discourse and how it affects the actions of the less powerful people. [Fairclough \(2001\)](#) argues that CDA finds an answer to how language is used as a tool of power for inequality in society and its use in the domination and exploitation of some people by others. CDA addresses diverse issues that mainly include racism, gender, sexism and media representation. CDA is to analyze a text but it takes a star from analyzing the social issues and problems. According to [Wodak \(2013\)](#) “CDA sees discourse– language use in speech and writing – as a form of ‘social practice’. Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation, institution and social structure, which frame it”. CDA allows researchers to explore the elements in the text at the micro and macro levels. At the micro-level, it tries to find the grammatical structures, words used in the text while at the macro-level, it explores the role of the text in the context (Yunus, 1997). There are different approaches to conduct the CDA research, in which the most popular among these approaches belong to van Dijk, Fairclough, Wodak. For the current study, the socio-cognitive approach of Teun van Dijk has been employed. The Socio-Cognitive Approach in discourse analysis investigates the relationship among discourse; society and cognition, as all other critical discourse studies only consist of the relationship between discourse and society. The interpretation of message or text requires different cognitive structures as the text or message makes no sense without the socio-culture knowledge ([Dijk, 2002](#)). For example, in our study, it is necessary to understand the turbulent relations between India and Pakistan and their stances towards Kashmir for the interpretation of newspaper editorials regarding the selected incident of Pulwama. According to [van Dijk \(2016\)](#) “A socio-cognitive approach to discourse is a particular application of a more general theory or philosophy of social constructionism, which holds that social and political ‘reality’ are constructions of social members”. He further elaborates that in the socio-cognitive approach, the cognitive component deals with memory, mind and the cognitive process involved in the comprehension and production of discourse. The socio-cognitive approach finds the ideological representation and dichotomy of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ and for this purpose, the socio-cognitive model emphasizes on the following categories:

- The political, historical, social context and the main actors in the discourse.
- The relationship of power and conflict in groups.
- The positive and negative attitude of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ in the discourse.
- The selection of lexicons, grammar emphasizes or de-emphasizes the approach of various groups ([Dijk, 2008](#)).

[Dijk \(2005\)](#) assumes that positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation is the general strategy to organize the ideological discourse. In the ideological discourse, the ‘self’ boasts up while the ‘other’ derogate. Moreover, this strategy emphasizes the good things and de-emphasizes ‘our’ bad things and the opposite for ‘Others’. The ‘others’ bad things are presented with more exaggeration and good things are ignored.

## Data Analysis

### Analysis of Pakistani Editorials

#### Positive Self-Presentation of Us-Group (Pakistan)

This type of self-presentation is done through these macro strategies i.e., 'Emphasize our good actions' and 'De-emphasize our bad actions'. For positive self-presentation i.e., 'Emphasize good actions of us-group and mitigating bad actions of us-group, many micro strategies are involved. The researchers tried to find out these micro strategies for the Macroanalysis. The researchers are therefore going to give some examples from the editorials and to analyze it accordingly.

In the example mentioned below the 'us-group' i.e., Pakistan is presented very positively in such a hyperbolic (Hyperbole) way to attract and convince the readers. Even the number (*Number game*) is mentioned in a vague (Vagueness) expression and exaggerated at the same time. The micro strategies that is 'Hyperbole' 'Number game' and 'Vagueness' are used to exaggerate us-group in a positive way.

"As a mature, sensible, peace-loving nation, Pakistan took a certain number of steps that could truly be listed as a case study for crisis management as well as international relations students."

(The Express Tribune: A responsible state: Pakistan's post-Pulwama behaviour)

In the following example it is not stated that Pakistan sends the armed men to prevent India from complete possession of Kashmir but words such as political, moral and diplomatic support are used to mitigate an action which India does not like.

"To Pakistan's credit, although it has vowed political, moral and diplomatic support for the Kashmiris..."

In the following example of Dawn, by the use of the strategy, i.e., *comparison*, Pakistan is being compared positively that Pakistan believes in dialogue so offers for dialogue. On the other hand, India has been negatively portrayed by saying that she always rejected the offer and compared her as she believes in war.

"This is possible solely through an unwavering commitment to dialogue and offers Pakistan has extended and India has rebuffed consistently."

(Dawn: After Modi's win)

#### De-emphasizing/ Mitigating our Bad Actions

Again, for positive self-presentation, we sometimes mitigate our bad actions. And in this process are also used some micro strategies. In the following example, through the use of *euphemism*, it is stated that it is political, moral, and diplomatic support of Kashmir. In Pakistani leaders speeches, we have confronted many times, saying that Kashmir is our integral part and we will, in this way, send our brothers to defeat the Indian army and to take our land back. But here in these editorials, through the use of strategy, i.e., *euphemism*, words/phrases such as 'send our brothers, take our land back etc.' are not mentioned; instead, it is called moral, diplomatic, and political support.

"To Pakistan's credit, although it has vowed political, moral and diplomatic support for the Kashmiris..."

(Dawn: Pulwama Attack)

#### Negative other Presentation

Through the use of a strategy that is *polarization*, this example is presented to show how two groups are categorized as good and bad at the same time. India is being presented as the master of U-turns that how consistently she breaks promises. On the other hand, Pakistan has been described as consistently trying for peaceful relations with India.

"...India's consistency of backtracking on its promises of dialogue and initiating anti-Pakistan rhetoric whereas Pakistan has been time and again pushing towards peaceful Indo-Pak relations."

(The Nation: Response to India)

Editorials from the Pakistani side used the strategy, i.e., Example/Illustration, because examples have more emotional impact, so they are more persuasive. Every group, according to their ideologies,

gives illustrations (Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010). In the examples given below, once again, India is being illustrated negatively that it is not the first time that she is blaming Pakistan (us-group) for the Pulwama attack, such allegations Pakistan has already faced in Uri attack in 2016.

By giving an example from the past, the readers are being told that the genocide of Muslims, which was occurred in Gujrat in 2002 was due to the Indian ruling party BJP. So, the use of words such as pogrom, anti-Muslim, etc., are used to tell the audience about the brutality and to link the on-going situation of Muslim to that of the past.

“Similarly, in 2016, Delhi blamed Islamabad for the Uri attack only to shelve the probe, having found no evidence implicating Pakistan.”

(The Express Tribune: Pulwama attack and finger-pointing at Pakistan)

“The BJP engineered the worst anti-Muslim pogrom in Gujarat in 2002 when Modi was the state chief minister.”

(The Tribune: Modi back in the game?)

In the example given below, we see how the good quality of the ‘them group is mitigated by the use of strategy, i.e. *Disclaimer*. First, it is showed that there are so many Hindus who are peace lover but then exclusively focused on the bad aspect of the Hindus that although there are people who are good, their voice is very low as compared to the rest of the Hindus. Furthermore, vague (*vagueness*) expression is used to mitigate a large group of good people into so many numbers. So readers are not provided with real information. Instead, saying that so many numbers of Hindus are moderate and peace-loving.

“There are so many numbers of Hindus who are moderate and peace-loving, but somehow or the other hawks overcome their voices... mean mitigating their positive quality.”

(The Express Tribune: A responsible state: Pakistan’s post-Pulwama behaviour)

## Analysis of Indian Editorials

### Positive Self-presentation of Us-Group (Indian)

In the following example, *hyperbole* is used to present us-group positively. It is said implicitly that India is a responsible state, and the Indian army took care to avoid casualties but to target only terrorist.

“The Indian side also stressed that it took care to avoid civilian casualties and that this was an operation targeting terrorists and not Pakistan military installations.”

(Times of India: Surgical Strike 2.0: Pakistan gets a clear message from India that hosting terrorists and staging terror attacks will prove costly)

### De-Emphasized our Bad Actions (India)

In the following example, the bad actions of the us-group are mitigated through *euphemism* by not calling India explicitly an undemocratic regime and a cruel state but instead saying that Kashmir needs an elected government. At the same time, the death of a prominent Muslim leader Mufti Mohammad Saeed is mitigated/ ignored by placing it on the object position.

“Jammu and Kashmir need an elected government in place without further delay in order to address the discontent that has been mounting since the death of the People’s Democratic Party patriarch, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed.”

(The Hindu: J&K needs a government)

### Negative other Presentation

In the following example, through the use of strategy *Actor description*, Pakistan has been described negatively that the attacker Adil Ahmad Dar was radicalized by Pakistan based terror outfit. So Pakistan is being described as the safe haven for a terrorist.

“Jaish-e-Muhammed (JeM), which has claimed the attack, has identified the bomber as Adil Ahmed Dar, a local youth radicalized by the Pakistan-based terror outfit.”



(Times of India: After Pulwama: The need of the hour is to enhance defence, isolate Pakistan and stop politicking on security)

In this example, the U.S. group has been presented by the strategy (*Comparison*) positively by saying that India is successful in bringing her pilot back. On the other hand, Pakistan has been negatively depicted and at the same time mitigating the good quality of Pakistan that gesture cannot be expected from Pakistan.

“India is ecstatic to get back a war hero who had shot down an enemy aircraft superior to the one he was flying.... Pakistan is releasing him, said Pakistan PM Imran Khan, as a gesture of peace. Such grace is a rare commodity, especially on Pakistan’s part...”

## Findings and Discussion

Having analyzed thirty editorials of both the countries by using binary schema, i.e. positive self-presentation and negative their-presentation of Van Dijk’s model, the researchers found differences in the frequencies of the discursive strategies. In Pakistani editorials, the frequency of occurrence of discursive strategies was higher than that of Indian editorials.

Pakistan has focused on its positives more than the negatives of others. All the micro strategies were analyzed to let the readers know whether Pakistani editorials’ focus was on positive self-presentation or negative other presentation. Through the micro strategies, e.g. hyperbole, vagueness, disclaimers, polarizations etc., the researchers reached the conclusion that Pakistan’s focus was on positive self-presentation. One of the reasons which the researchers observed during the analysis was that Pakistan was in a defensive mood, so it negated all the allegations and blamed and told the positive stories about the us-group. Therefore, Pakistan mainly focused on positive self-presentation. Furthermore, the above-mentioned strategies, especially hyperbole, vagueness and polarization, have been used to present us-group in a positive way, while euphemism has been used to de-emphasize the negatives of us-group.

On the other hand, India mainly focused on the negatives of the them-group more than the positives of the us-group. The researchers analyzed the editorials through the aforementioned strategies to let know the readers about the nature/ approach of Indian editorials, whether its main focus was on positive self-presentation or negative other presentation. So, in light of the above analysis, the researchers reached the conclusion that India’s focus was on presenting Pakistan in a negative manner. And the reason, as the analysis revealed, is that India was in an aggressive mood because of the attack, which killed almost 40 Indian military personals. Because of that aggression, it tried to present the ‘them group in a negative manner, at the same time, forgetting to focus on its positivity.

The findings of the present study are dissimilar to that of [Vigna \(2019\)](#), as he suggested that in the case of Pakistan and India, the leaders of both sides are aggressive against one another. On the contrary, the present study revealed that in the Pulwama attack context, India was in an aggressive mood, but Pakistan was in a defensive mood.

However, the findings of the study of [Yarmohammadi \(2018\)](#) are similar to that of the present study. He argues that the countries have used nationalist’s narrative mostly for manipulating their respective masses through media for domestic legitimacy during war-times, the media further ignite the nationalist’s narrative to achieve national cohesion. Media has always been used as a propaganda tool in times of war. This process of manipulation through media is not new. Since the birth of the radio and the newspaper, it has blindly supported their respective ideologies. In this regard, India and Pakistan are taking advantage of their respective media outlets too.

## Conclusion

The editorials are shaped by the socio-political, religious and cultural aspects of the areas under concern, so they are never free from the subjectiveness, i.e. the business is always present. The study analyzed the ‘us- them’ sentiment present in the selected print media newspapers of Pakistan and India over the Pulwama attack. By incorporating the Ideological square model, the lexical choices were analyzed. It was revealed through the study that both the countries, through their editorials, dealt with the issue within the socio-political as well as the religious climate of their countries. It was

observed that the Pakistani newspapers are more balanced and rational while dealing with the issue. Being more concerned with the plight of people who were dead and who were facing the troubles in Kashmir, they are amply represented through the U.S. sentiment while THEM, i.e. India, is criticized and placed as an out-group. U.S. sentiment is stronger as they are more defensive, and THEM sentiment is comparatively weak as compared to the Indian editorials.

However, the Indian editorials have abundantly used the THEM sentiment in their editorials. Strongly negatively connotated words are there in Indian editorials. Pakistan is implicated in and is made the cause behind the said attack forcibly. The weaknesses are exploited for their benefit, and an overall agenda is there to distort the picture of the country in world affairs and in the international community. 'Us' sentiment is also dealt with great care for manipulating the audience, as is evident from the findings of this research study. The government, its people, and culture and each and everything are glorified and praised to invoke the feelings of people to lead them to war and to get the support of their masses. To overcome the opposition forces who at the time were criticizing them, they were made to look on for compromise at that hour. The goal to get a unified strength is stated, and the vehement nationalism is evident in the language of their editorials.



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