

## CARICATURES AND RELIGIO-POLITICAL IDEOLOGY IN PAKISTANI PRINT MEDIA DISCOURSES

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### Abstract

**Purpose of the study:** The research intends to decode semiotic discourses of Pakistani English newspaper daily DAWN from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 to know how word- picture conjunction works to mirror social reality about two Pakistani religiopolitical parties leaders (Jamait-e Islami & Jamait-ul –ulma Islam, (henceforth JI and JUI)). It also attempts to know how politics is done in the name of religion.

**Methodology:** The data for the present study was collected from the Pakistani English newspaper Dawn (daily) and analyzed at linguistic and semiotic levels by employing [Hodge & Kress's \(1997\)](#) research model. Besides, [Kruger & Casey's \(2000\)](#) model was operationalized to analyze focus group discussion data at five levels. It was done to validate researchers' semiotic analysis with general perception.

**Main Finding:** The study finds that highlighting the rhetoric of politics is one of the prominent features of print media semiotic discourses. The heads of religiopolitical parties use different visual and verbal practices to disseminate their political ideologies in the name of religion. The use of word-picture conjunction is a more persuasive technique for ideological investment.

**Application of the Study:** This study is significant for the researchers interested in media studies to know how ideologically loaded visual and verbal practices employed in print media discourses help disseminate ideology in and behind lessons.

**Novelty/Originality of the study:** The study is unique because it has critically decoded written and semiotic discourses of the mentioned Pakistani English newspaper related to the PDM anti-government move. It highlights that visual and verbal practices are more persuasive to propagate desired ideology. To the best of researchers' knowledge, this semiotic data has not been researched through this perspective before.

**Keywords:** Newspapers, Political Cartoons, Semiology, Ideology, CDA.

### INTRODUCTION

Print media discourses are one of the best sites for ideological investment, and they represent the unrealistic growth of a nation. Various linguistic and semiotic moves are employed to disseminate a desired version of ideology to the target readership to win their consent and make them behave in a desired manner. Politics in the name of religion has been a notable feature of Pakistani political scenario. Different religion-political parties have been making their presence felt in the political arena by manipulating religion in various shades. Similarly, the research in hand highlights the role of Pakistani religiopolitical parties (Jamit Ulma Islam and Jamait-e- Islami) to get rid of Imran Khan's Government. The section that follows briefly introduces the prominent theorists in the field of discourse analysis and media studies.

[Van Dijk \(1995, 2006\)](#) argues that rhetoric is the art of speaking or writing persuasively. Its purpose is to hegemonize the target audience's mindset and make them behave in a desired manner. For this purpose, different language modes are tactfully used to convey the message at linguistic and semiotic levels. At present visual means of communication have become an integral part of political rhetoric employed in newspapers across the globe. [Beard \(2000\)](#) observes that making speeches is a vital part of a politician's role in announcing policy and persuading people to agree with it. He asserts that political discourses (both visual and verbal) are carefully crafted to exploit the general masses on different grounds. It carries power within and behind it. Political rhetoric is party and person-specific. Newspapers' cartoons represent what is up around us in the political scenario.

[Eco \(2001\)](#) argues that if a picture says a thousand words, a cartoon says a million, and they are crucial aspects of news and how we communicate with each other. There are various modes of communication, and semiotic discourses effectively propagate maximum to the audience using few words or no words. Visual discourses are loaded with multiple interpretations, and they are culturally oriented. One needs culturally trained senses to decode them comprehensively. The significant feature of semiotic discourses is that they are meant for everybody, whether educated or not and hence, are perceived likewise. Most often, caricatures are regarded as an alternative to formal news reporting. Political cartoons provide light relief from gloomy political discourse. One of the significant features of political cartoons is to present commentary on current socio-political affairs. Now, it has become almost an essential part of print media discourses.

Therefore, every ideological group publishes some sort of political cartoon in their newspaper to disseminate a desired ideology to the target readership about the scenario prevailing around.

Political cartoons capture imitable human nature to humanize the topic they depict, and at the same time, they perform the dual function of providing information and entertainment to the public. Another significant feature of political cartoons is that they combine humor with the latest political news to disseminate thoughtfully humorously. It highlights their many-fold appeal. Even a lay reader can extract a bundle of information from them using his/her preexisting knowledge of a particular context. Moreover, they describe the historical record of a person being cartooned and the political climate of a country.

The role of religious, political parties and their leaders has always been prominent in the Pakistani political landscape. Religion has been an essential issue for the people. It has been observed that various political parties, including religious, political parties, have been conducting politics in the name of religion through different stages of Pakistan's history. Similarly, the present research decodes the discursive construction of Pakistani religiopolitical parties' leaders' caricatures presented through Dawn's semiotic discourses (English daily newspaper). Political cartoons representing two major religious, political parties (JI and JUI) have been selected and analyzed from the data collected for the current study so that the selected individuals can choose the leaders of these parties. How do semi-ideological debates represent it? Pakistan's newspaper during the anti-government movement.

### Objectives

The present research attempts to achieve the following objectives:

1. To know the use of linguistic and semiotic devices employed to propagate the religiopolitical ideology.
2. To understand how these religiopolitical parties vary in their attempts for the exact cause.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This section briefly introduces the most similar and recent researches published in the relevant area. It has been done to generate a gap for the present study. The section that follows chronologically analyses the available existing body of knowledge.

[Williamson \(1978\)](#) examined textual and semiotic aspects of the language used in the adverts to construct gendered identities. According to the constructed stereotypes, the research analyzed visual and oral language in the technological age in assigning gender roles to women/men. Along with gender identity, there was also a focus on the concept of power. The results highlighted that the female gender is usually represented as a commodified body entirely dependent on the male gender. On the contrary, the male gender is associated with power and dominance. Adverts positioned male and female genders ideologically and more often stereotypically.

[Sajid & Zubair \(2011\)](#) highlighted the power of the image in shaping general perception. Political caricatures of the religious leader of MMA were purposively selected and analyzed by applying the multi-modal discourse analysis technique to lay bare how the dual face of the spiritual leader is cartooned. The analyses (linguistic and semiotic) were validated by incorporating the views of Focus Group Discussion participants. The research suggested that semiotics carry a bundle of interpretations and need to be decoded to explore possible meanings embedded in various language modes. Politics is done in the name of religion to marginalize the female gender from the social domains of power by exploiting religious discourses.

[Khan \(2016\)](#) researched the ideo- stylistic analysis of Tahirul Qadri's (religiopolitical leader) religious speeches at various national and international forums. The research contends that Mr. Qadri has used different stylistic devices to convey his religiopolitical ideology to the masses comprehensively. The speaker skillfully interweaved oration and politics to politicize religious discourses. The research illustrates that it is essential to know how language is used explicitly and implicitly. Stylistic devices produce the rhetorical effect, and the desired message is propagated to the target audience more persuasively.

[Sajid et al. \(2019\)](#) Pakistanis work to represent Pakistani religious leaders and the Pakistani military through a semi-debate in English (daily). DAWN revealed that religious, political parties have been trying to justify their stance that they are doing noble [Sajid et al. \(2019\)](#) use Pakistani English semiotic discourses to depict Pakistani religious leaders and the Pakistani Army (daily) work. The data for the research was collected from the semiotic discourses of the mentioned newspaper. The researchers employed a sociological discourse analysis research technique to analyze the data. The findings highlighted that Pak-army and religious leaders have been working together to restore religious harmony.

[Waqar et al. \(2020\)](#) researched Pakistani newspaper cartoons to highlight how National Interest Agenda is propagated through the newspaper's caricatures. The political jokes which appeared in DAWN and The Nation (dailies) were compared. The researchers employed [Barthe's \(1974\)](#) and [May et al.'s \(1995\)](#) models of discourse analysis, and sociological discourse studies were used to analyze visual and verbal practices employed. The research contends that 'The Nation' semiotics represent a positive image of the Government, whereas the semiotics of DAWN played a minor

role in disseminating the National Interest Agenda. The political cartoons are highly ideological in the dissuasion of desired ideology.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study answers the following research questions:

1. What discursive modes have been employed by Dawn (daily) through its semiotic and linguistic discourses to represent the religious leaders of JI and JUI (F) post PDM protest?
2. How does the representation of both leaders vary on ideological grounds through visual and verbal practices?

## METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

The research approach used in the study is qualitative because an in-depth analysis of the selected political cartoons has been done to lay a bare bundle of interpretations embedded in the semiotic discourses. It has been done to explore possible layers of meanings embedded in the semiotic texts because the social construction of reality can be explored by de/constructing the meta-linguistic features used in the coinage of semiotic discourses. To comprehend and deconstruct how political cartoons published in the selected newspaper represent religious leaders of the mentioned religiopolitical parties, the researchers have employed [Hodge and Kress's \(1997\)](#) **\*full reference is missing** Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication. The main postulates of the research model used are as under:

1. What meanings are being made in the text?
2. How is meaning being made in the text?
3. What resources have been drawn to make meanings in the text?
4. In what social environment is the meaning being made?
5. Whose interest and agency is at work in the making of meaning?

Besides, the researchers have conducted two (02) focus discussions to validate their findings of visual analysis. The first group consisted of 06 participants who are MPhil in linguistics. At the same time, the group consisted of the participants who are M Phil in other subjects than English linguistics with the same number (06). It was done to know their views in detail because semiotics carries a plethora of information. They are culturally oriented and are decoded differently.

Moreover, our senses are culturally trained to interpret the caricatures accordingly. The data collected through focus group discussions were analyzed by applying [Kruger & Casey's \(2000\)](#) model. The levels of analysis are Word, context, frequency, internal consistency, and finding the big idea. In this way, the research methodology employed in the present research is an integrated research approach. The rationale behind using an integrated research approach is that the data analyzed in the study consists of three modes i-e linguistics, semiotic, and focus group participants' remarks. To analyze each method of communication, the researchers needed to employ the relevant research model accordingly. The selected political cartoons about the representation of the selected party leaders have been analyzed by using the devised research model.

### Semiotic 1



**Figure 1:** Molana Fazul Ur Rehman Leading the PDM

**Source:** The Daily Dawn: October 6, 2020

## DATA ANALYSIS

[Hodge & Kress \(1993\)](#) assert that multimode communication is more effective. Word –picture conjunction technique is more persuasive in propagating the desired ideology using the minimum number of words. They argue that different visual and verbal practices are employed in reproducing the meanings more comprehensively. Similarly, the semiotic under analysis embodies a bundle of interpretations in it about the representation of a political leader (Molana Fazul-ur-Rehman) who is leading JUI (f) and PDM (Pakistan Democratic Movement) simultaneously. Semiotic discourses are historically and culturally oriented, and one needs linguistic and meta-linguistic knowledge to extract meanings from them. This political caricature embodies the religiopolitical scenario of Pakistani political and religiopolitical parties. As far as the very first point of the research model propounded by [Hodge & Kress \(1993\)](#) is concerned, the caricature answers the question asked in the first point that what type of meanings are disseminated through the semiotic text. The answer at explicit and implicit levels is that in the political history of Pakistan, the role of religiopolitical parties has been a very significant one.

Politics in the name of religion has been done throughout history in various shades. Politics is a game of power. To attain power at discursive and coercive levels, religious cum political parties have been making alliances either among themselves or with the other political parties to exploit the masses in the name of religion. It is done to gain the power to realize their aims under the guise of implementing religious scenarios. It is evident from the political history of Molana Fazul-ur-Rehman that he has ever been ready to go to any length to get a high post and make an alliance with the ruling parties for his political interests. The same is evident in the caricature under analysis. He is symbolically assisted by two main political parties of Pakistan (Pakistan Peoples' Party and Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz Sharif) in a tiger and arrows. However, it is obvious from his political career that he has seldom been on good terms with these political parties. The concept that nothing is absolute in politics is evident here in the cartoon, and hence dual faces of the politicians have cartooned the political cartoon under analysis.

[Hodge & Kress \(1993\)](#) affirm that communication at present involves multi modes, and this is done to disseminate the message to the maximum number of people. Media discourses use different techniques in the form of visual and verbal practices to convey profound messages lightly. The semiotic address under analysis belongs to the religiopolitical scenario of Pakistan during the regime of Mr. Imran Khan (cricketer turned politician). It represents almost all the major political parties sitting on opposition benches at present. The most prominent among them are PML (N), PPP, and JUI. These parties have established a platform to record their protest against the Government of Mr. Khan. This alliance is known as PDM (Pakistan Democratic Moment), and the leader of the religiopolitical party, JUI, is the president of PDM. The discursive modes employed in the cartoon imply that Molana is fully armed with arrows (the election symbol of PPP). Besides, a lion in an aggressive posture (the election symbol of PML (N) is obvious in the picture. The religious leader of JUI is fully armed with bow and arrows, and a lion in an attacking position seems at his beck and call is on his way to hunt the Prime Minister, Mr. Khan. The meaning that is being imparted is that Pakistani political parties under the leadership of a religious party are ready to end PTI's (Pakistan Tahreek-e- Insaf) government.

The use of metonymy is a persuasive technique in political discourses to impart underlying meanings. In this technique, the part stands for the whole. It is how the semiotic under analysis provides an answer to the second point of the research model employed in the study. The leader of JUI has been used by operationalizing the concept of a person as a state metaphor. At the same time, PPP and PML (N) have been represented through their election symbols. The caricature represents the leader of JUI in a driving position. He is metaphorically assisted with the strength of the other two parties. By operationalizing the concept of word-picture conjunction, the central importance of this particular religious party has been made evident through the stereotypical commanding get-up of its leader. It implies the power JUI wields in the political scenario of Pakistan at present.

[Pine & Haukanes \(2021\)](#) opine that certain things are represented in the background deliberately at the cost of others. The resources drawn upon to propagate the intended ideology include the use of capital letters in bold font (PDM), the mess in the background, the use of animal imagery, and a forest. The wide opened eyes of the leader, the lion in the attacking position, the use of black and grey colours, four arrows at the back of the JUI leader, and a lion with raised ears are the discursive moves used to highlight the intensity of the situation that prevailed in the political scenario of Pakistan. The use of linguistic and visual devices imparts the meaning that the major political parties in Pakistan are fully aware that without support from the religious party, they cannot get rid of the sitting Government. They know that people can easily be exploited in the name of religion. Therefore, despite their differences, they are willing to work under the leadership of JUI (F).

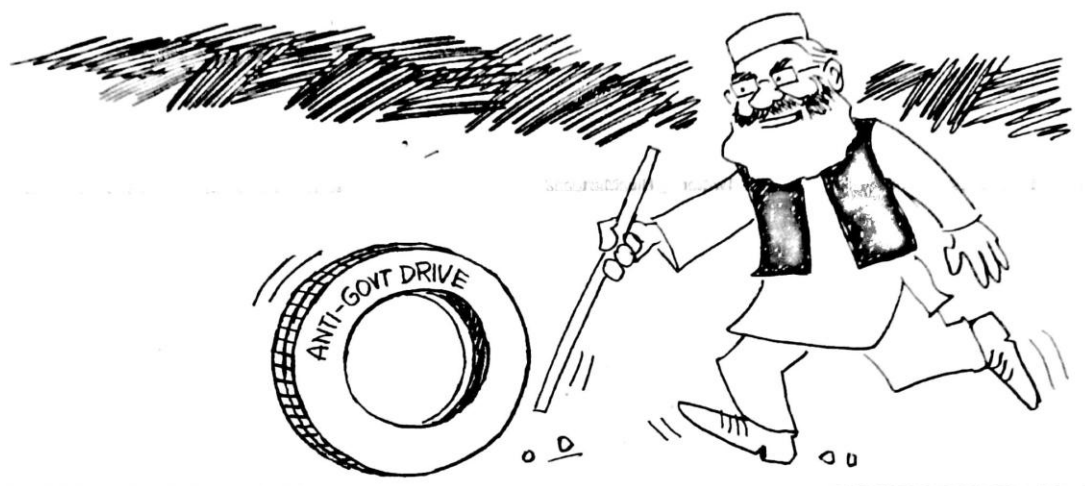
[Eco \(2001\)](#) holds that language as social semiotic, and one needs various competencies to decode it from multiple dimensions. The process of meaning-making is culture-specific. It answers the fourth (04) point of the research model employed. The underlying meanings disseminated through the text belong to the Pakistani socio-political context. It has been a common phenomenon among various religious and political parties to safeguard their interests.

[Fairclough \(2012\)](#) maintains that no use of visual and verbal language is ideology-free. Everything is said against something unsaid. A similar conflict exists here because semiotic dictation dictates that religion has always been a touchy subject, particularly in Pakistani politics, where religious organizations and political parties (PPP and PML-N)



collide. The particular print media group (DAWN) has been very effective in criticizing government policies from time to time. Therefore, on the one hand, an interest-based political alliance among various religious and political parties has been reflected. On the other, the concept of power behind discourses has been played up through this particular semiotic discourse.

## Semiotic 2



**Figure 2:** Anti-Govt Drive

**Source:** Daily Dawn November 03, 2020

[Reed \(2021\)](#) contends that meanings belong to culture rather than specific modes, and expressing something visually and verbally makes a difference. Similarly, the political cartoon under analysis highlights the existing political scenario in Pakistan, which is going on in PDM. The leader of JI (Molana Siraj-ul-Haq) has been shown moving the wheel carrying the linguistic message *Anti- Govt- Drive*. It implies that the way the sitting Government of PTI is working is not acceptable to JI and its leadership. Therefore, an anti-government drive moment has been initiated by its administration. The meanings of de-establishing the sitting Government of PTI have been propagated to the target audience. The caricature implies that the Government's way seems threatening to the religious party (JI). Therefore, its leadership has decided to launch an Anti- Govt- Drive. It is typically between the leadership of both religious parties that they are doing their best to get rid of PTI's Government either by struggling single-handedly or by making alliances with other political parties. The underlying message of gaining power in the name of religion is apparent here as far the ideological stance of both parties is concerned.

[Barthes \(1977\)](#) asserts that an image is not reality. Still, at least it is a perfect analogy, and it is precisely an analogical perfection that defines the photographic print to common sense. The meanings in the text under analysis have been made through a layered production style by employing visual and verbal modes of communication. The moving wheel in the picture connotes that steps against PTI's Government have been initiated by using discursive and coercive meanings of power. The stick in the hand of JI's leader (Sarj-ul-Haq) signifies that this political party has been attempting to encourage the current administration to rule the nation according to Islamic teachings but has received no response. Thus the decision has been taken to employ the power of the stick as well. The rod in the hand of JI's leader is not thick enough, which implies that in the future, its thickness may be increased if no response is given from PTI's Government. It is just the beginning. A suggested message imparted through the caricature is that harmless-looking, this religious party may get violent with the time to stop the Government from exploiting the masses.

[Hodge and Kress \(1993\)](#) opine that critical discourse analysis should not only be confined to language. Instead, we have semiological discourse analysis, where cultural connotations associated with visuals are at work. To decode the political cartoons, one needs to know artistic intent to extract possible exact meanings from semiotic discourses. Social, cultural, political, and religious myths have combined to propagate the underlying ideology of JI to the target audience. The cap on the head of the leader in the picture connotes Pathan culture in KPK (a Pakistani province).

Moreover, the element of visual coherence is also apparent here. The linguistic message (ANTI- GOVT- DRIVE) correlates with the visible message as well. The man is eying at the audience to join him in his struggle against PTI's Government. There is a correlation between the movement of a person's feet and the wheel shown in the picture. Both are on the move. The language written on the Centre of the wheel is capital letters with bold font. This typographic technique has been used to highlight the important step taken by JI's leadership to keep the wheel rolling to get rid of the Government. The black colour showing haphazardness in the background implies that despite difficulties in the past and

now, JI's leadership is determined to oppose the Government on all fronts. The proportion of white and black colours in the picture connotes that the plan against PTI's Government is now in a black and white (written) form. In this way, appropriate linguistic and semiotic techniques (in the form of bold font and moving wheel) have been made to convey the intended message more comprehensively.

[Finnegan \(2002\)](#) suggests that language is more often heteroglossia rather than homoglossia. Similarly, the semiotic under analysis carries multiple interpretations in it at socio-political levels. The mythical meanings associated with the Pakistani religiopolitical environment are being conveyed using visual and verbal devices as far as the concept of power within and behind discourses is concerned. The political cartoon being deconstructed implies that the process of sign-making is a process of constituting a metaphor. The controlling media group wants to impart the message that representation depends upon what one has in mind. If correlated with the Pakistani print media group (DAWN), the cartoon suggests that in Pakistan, religiopolitical parties have always been struggling to gain power at any cost exploiting the general messages in the name of religion. The comparison of both the images, which appeared on November 3, 2020, and October 6, 2020, reveals that these political parties want to have power at any cost. It is why these parties seem planning against PTI's Government either single-handedly or by establishing alliances with other political parties.

### FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

[Hodge and Kress \(1993\)](#) argue that semiotic analysis ignores general perception and researchers' opinions about technical codes and how they are decoded seem dominant. They suggest that public perception can be incorporated to minimize the level of subjectivity. The researchers have conducted two focus group discussions among the students of linguistic and other disciplines to address this issue. It was done to validate the findings of semiotic analysis of the mentioned semiotics by comparing it with the perception of the focus group participants. These people are representatives of the larger population. The discussions have been visually recorded as well. The focus group data has been analyzed by employing [Kruger & Casey's \(2002\)](#) model for focus data analysis. The levels of research in this section include a word, internal consistency, context, extensiveness, and finding the big idea. The area that follows reproduces the remarks of the participants on the selected cartoons. One of the participants expressed his comments about the semiotic (01), which are as under:

*"In Pakistan, it has been a tradition not to let the Government go properly. Similarly, this PDM is repeating the history under the umbrella of religious parties. The sitting Government did the same in the past. The religiopolitical parties have been used for various purposes to de-rail democracy."*

Another participant remarked as under:

*"Religious parties and especially JUIF have been a plaything in the hands of mainstream political parties. The same is obvious that Molana Fazal-ur-Rehman has been equipped with the strength of PPP and PM-LN in the form of arrows and tiger. It implies that Molana has no power of his own. He seems nothing in the picture without arrows and the lion. Moreover, this picture illustrates that nothing is absolute in politics. Yesterday's enemies are today's friends." Very soon, these parties will get rid of Molana when he is no more needed."*

Another said:

*"All the political parties have been harming the masses, as is obvious from the black colour in the background. Additionally, Molana seems reluctant even though he is equipped with mainstream parties' strength." Mostly, people are befooled in the name of religion. Therefore, for the time being, the headship of PDM is with Molana. Other parties will never bear him as soon as the purpose is served."*

While commenting on semiotic two (02), one of the female participants remarked:

*"This is another brand of religion. The difference between JUIF and JI is that the latter is doing anti-government drive single-handedly. This cartoon implies that JI is trying to represent it positively by not standing with other political parties. It connotes that their struggle is purely for the sake of religion. This semiotic illustrates that JI believes in the solo struggle against irreligious Government."*

Another participant's views are as under:

*"From both sides, religious parties are in action to de-rail democracy with violence either in the form of arrows, tiger, or stick. They could have done it by using the discursive power of religion, but they seem more inclined towards violence and politics in the name of religion."*

Another said:

*"It is obvious from the background of two semiotics that leaders of religiopolitical parties are in action. There must be some invisible forces behind them at work because it is believed in the Pakistani context that religious parties are at the mercy of some controlling ideological groups. People in Pakistan are mostly exploited in the name of religion. Our history represents all this."*

The remarks of another participant are as under:

*"According to me, Molana Fazal-ur-Rehman (PDM), despite having weapons and numbers, is not as confident and aggressive as is JI's leader alone. The black colour in the background in both the pictures implies the heavy loss they have been doing to the country, but the masses never bother it. They very soon get excited in the name of religion."*

The words most frequently used by the participants are religious, politics, the game of interest, violence, exploitation, and corruption. All these words imply that in Pakistan, religious parties have been exploiting religion to do politics. At the same time, they seek assistance from other political parties and have been in the case of Molana Fazal-ur-Rehman. All such activities are meant to realize their presence when these religious parties are no more in Government.

As far as internal consistency is concerned, all the participants from both groups believed that everything is fair in politics to gain power. The participants remained consistent in their stance. The big idea drawn from the two discussions is that religion in Pakistan is most often used to make the masses behave in the desired manner. Even religious ideology at the implicit level propagated by the heads of religious parties in Pakistan is highly political, as these semiotics illustrate. The sole aim behind this struggle is to be in power by any means.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of the data collected from Pakistani English daily (DAWN) reveals that semiotic discourses of daily DAWN act as a distorting prism to represent ideologies of in/out groups accordingly. The goal of the research was to determine what approaches and instruments were utilized to emphasize Pakistan's political scene. The research findings contend that the mentioned religiopolitical parties want to do away with the Government (Imran Khan's regime). In this regard, the apparent difference observed is that Jamiet-e- Islami (JI) believes in struggles against Khan's Government single-handedly. At the same time, JUI is more inclined to do this in collaboration with other political parties. Discursive moves in the form of a person as a state metaphor, use of capital letters with bold font, and the technique of in/exclusion and back/foregrounding have been tactfully used to propagate desired ideology to the masses.

Other JUI-led political parties have placed their power in the hands of Maulana Fazlur Rehman and trusted the JUI leader, knowing full well that his political career showed that he was facing difficult circumstances. Has a long history of coping. But one thing that is a bit confusing that though Molana Fazal-ur- Rehman, who is fully armed with a lion and 04 arrows from the respective parties, is not as confident and aggressive as is the leader of JI. Though he is alone as the picture depicts, yet he is very confidently moving the wheel, carrying the linguistic message in the form of ANTI\_ GOVT\_ DRIVE. One of the possible reasons behind Molana Fazal-ur- Rahman's indecisiveness could be that he depends a lot on his allies and could be left alone when their interests are served. Therefore, he is somewhat lost in speculation and still is thinking about whether to cross the line or not. One of the research findings is that print media's semiotic discourses mirror the existing social reality. The semiotic discourses that have appeared in daily Dawn also highlight the ideological bent of this particular newspaper according to data collected for the present research. The study concludes that the mentioned religiopolitical parties manipulate religion for their political purposes. These activities are represented through semiotic discourses that employ various discursive moves in visual and verbal practices in this regard.

## LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

This research intended to decode semiotic discourses of only one Pakistani English newspaper, i.e., daily DAWN. Thus, for further studies, other newspapers can also be selected to know how word-picture conjunction works to mirror social reality in the context of Pakistan.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Dr. Muhammad Akbar Sajid collected and analyzed data at linguistic and semiotic levels. Mr. Muhammad Riaz Khan wrote down the introduction and literature review sections along with providing technical assistance. Ms. Sumaira and Mr. Muhammad Javaid Jamil managed Focus group discussions, transcription, and reference sections.

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