METAPHORS AT WORK IN MEDIA DISCOURSE: A CASE OF AUGUST 2014 ISLAMABAD *SIT-INS*

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate how metaphors have functioned in the discourse of mainstream Pakistani English Newspapers in their coverage of August 2014 anti-government *Sit-ins.* These Sit-ins were planned by two major opposition parties Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and Pakistan Awami Tehreek. It has analyzed that how metaphors, working as linguistic choices, played their role to represent the major stakeholders- The Government, PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf),and PAT (Pakistan Awami Tehreek) in a desired certain way during this event of grave political importance. It anchors around the basic assertion of Critical Linguistics which suggests that ideological processes in discourse depend upon linguistic choices. (Fowler, Hodge, Kress, &Trew, 1979). This study will apply Cognitive Metaphor Theory of George Lakoff and M Johnson (1980) which frees metaphor from the domain of literature and studies its role in other discourses at textual level. Later named as Critical Metaphor Theory this theory has been applied by many Critical Discourse Analysts as it shares the basic belief of CDA that discourse is a social phenomenon, metaphors may construct social realities for us, and powerful may require their metaphors. This study, therefore, falls in the domain of CDA.

Keywords: Metaphors, Discourse, CDA, Critical Metaphor Theory.

INTRODUCTION

Following allegations of massive rigging in 2013 General Elections, the cricketer turned politician Imran Khan's political party hesitantly accepted the election results demanding a probe into the election results of 4 constituencies which would serve as a test case for the credibility of whole of the electoral process. Government's inaction, led the PTI demonstrate several demonstrations throughout the Punjab. In one of these demonstrations on 27th June in Bahawalpur, PTI chief Imran Khan announced his plan of Azadi March, a public protest march to Islamabad culminating in a sit-in, demanding PM Nawaz Shrif's resignation.

As soon as the PTI chief announced his plan, Dr. TahirulQadri's political party PAT Pakistan AwamiTehreek also announced a similar march. PAT named their march as Inqilab March owing to the fact that they had a different agenda and a different stance. They were motivated to march on capital by a ruthless extra judicial killing of their followers at Minhaj Trust which is situated in Model Town Lahore, and is the religious/educational headquarter of Dr. Qadri's mission. The Punjab Police assailed Minhaj Trust and killed tens of workers. Gullu Butt assisted the police in committing the atrocity.

Dr. Qadri initially refused to join Tehreek-e-Insaf's protest, but later he announced that his march would proceed on the same date. The announcement of this informal alliance and parallel marches imposed a great pressure on PML (N) government. In the coverage of this event, media appears to assume the role of a self-styled power centre in a stronger way than ever before. Its social function of producing, reproducing, maintaining and bringing about

change in the relations of social dominance is very much apparent. Some print media groups, being dependent on the group's policy come in front as actors of this game not as reporters but as supporters of one or the other of the three stakeholders i.e. the government, PTI and PAT. The use of particular metaphors makes it possible for the media to represent a particular party according to its own will. The facts, during this campaign of media, go to background. The public opinion is formed and the outcome is social injustice. The role of CDA is to investigate this function of creating injustice through a skillful use of language.

This research has investigated the following questions.
- How did metaphors function in the media discourse during the *Sit-ins?*
- Did metaphor discourse represent particular groups with biasness?

LITERATURE REVIEW

In late 70's a group of four linguists rendered a new framework for discourse analysis focusing particularly on media discourse. They named their framework as Critical Linguistics (Fowler, Hodge, Kress, &Trew, 1979).Discourse, in their opinion, carries both linguistic and ideological processes, and ideological meanings depend on linguistic choices (Trew, 1979 b).They saw a deep relationship between linguistic structures and social structures. Discourse is inseparable from social meaning (Kress & Hodge, 1979).

Critical Linguistics, in its major portion, dealt with what was later on named as 'Ideational' function of the language by the Systemic Functional theory. This theory views that language performs three meta- functions: The ideational, the interpersonal and the textual. In its Ideational function the language represents the events, situations, people and so forth. Its interpersonal function represents social relations and identities. The textual function serves to develop texts out of lexical choices, grammar and so forth (Halliday, 1985).

The term Critical Linguistics and Critical and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are often used synonymously. Today the term CDA has replaced the formerly used term CL. The multi modal roots of CDA lie in Rhetoric, Text linguistics, Anthropology, Philosophy, Socio-Psychology, Cognitive Science, Literary Studies and Sociolinguistics, as well as in Applied Linguistics and Pragmatics. (Anthonissen, 2001; Chilton and Wodak, 2007).

The CDA as a network of scholars came into view in the early 1990s, after a small conference in Amsterdam, in January 1991.Supported by University of Amsterdam, Norman Fairclough, Gunther Kress, Teun van Dijk, Ruth Wodak, and Theo van Leeuwen met to talk about theories and methods of Discourse Analysis, especially CDA. The meeting enabled them to discuss with each other the very diverse and different approaches. In this process, the differences and similarities were explained: differences with reference to theories and methodologies in Discourse Analysis (Renkema, 2004) and similarities in a programmatic way, both of which frame the range of theoretical approaches (Wodak, 2004).

As CDA is not influenced by a particular methodology, it has utilized a large number of tools from different theories and methods. Along with the systemic functional grammar and the socio-cognitive model of Van Dijk as discussed above, the Cognitive Metaphor theory George Lakoff and M Johnson (1980) has been applied many times by Critical Discourse Analysts. This theory has served to enfranchise metaphor from the domain of literature and brings to light its role in our discourse at the textual level. Owing to its utility for CDA,

Charteris Black has applied this theory in CDA and has relabeled it as Critical Metaphor Theory (as cited in Meadows, 2006).

Critical Metaphor Theory in its beginning shared the belief of CDA that discourse is a social practice and metaphors may construct realities for us , particularly social realities and that powerful people may require their metaphors(Lakoff& Johnson,1980) .Veronika Koller (2005) argues that the research in the recent years has inclined to take socio-cultural dimension of metaphor to background as it sticks to conventional cognitive linguistic model which stresses on the effect of human neural makeup on language and cognition. She does not approve this backgrounding and maintains that the cognitive model put forth by Van Dijk should be improvised upon so as to exploit the full benefit of CDA.

METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative research. Its methodological framework is a nexus of CDA and Critical Metaphor Theory. CDA looks discourse as a network of linguistic choices while CMT particularly focuses on the role of metaphorsin discourse.

This study has selected the limited corpus from four mainstream English newspapers of Pakistan-DAWN, The News, The Nation, and Daily Times. Only those news items have been selected in which metaphors perform major function in constituting discourse. This study will not considers metaphors in literal sense, but it will also focus such linguistic choices which may serve as metaphoric expressions if taken in extended form. The corpus has been gathered from newspapers which are collected form Library archive

Analysis

Political and media discourse extensively use metaphors because of their vast rhetorical worth. Linguists have suggested that our conceptual system is metaphorical in nature. Lakoff and Johnson has observed many examples from our everyday conversation to demonstrate that we frequently use metaphors and try to interpret one kind of thing in terms of another. Often we do this act unconsciously.

In the coverage of Long march event by English print media, there are evidences of metaphoric expressions. A critical discourse analysis of the metaphors used by the newspapers, under our study, reveals that they don't only embellish the discourse, but also perform discursive functions. Here is a brief analysis of metaphors that occur in the four mainstream English papers.

A. Dawn
   i. Saner minds prevail amid maneuvering
   Islamabad: The temperature and the political weather kept most of Islamabad indoors for most of Wednesday.
   But it was only after darkness fell that the feverish activities that had kept the ruling party occupied behind closed doors were revealed, making it clear that the government was following sane advice and had not just rolled over in the face of the march, but also continued to take steps to establish a judicial commission to investigate the alleged malpractices in the general elections of 2013." (Dawn, August 14, 2014)

This is the headline and the leading paragraph of Dawn of August 14, 2014. It seems as if it were the extract of a novel depicting a terror/tense situation. Right from the beginning it mystifies the situation as it starts "It was after the darkness fell". But our concern, here, is the use of metaphors. The phrase 'The political weather' is metaphorical. It implies that it was too hot because of the 'feverish activities' which again is a metaphor to represent the aggression in the temperament of the marching protesters. The metaphor feverish has been placed in juxtaposition to the sanity of the other party. The activities of the protesters have been labeled as feverish which suggest that they lack wisdom and sanity. On the other hand the newspaper clearly tells that the government "was following sane advice". Here the newspaper just used an adjective instead of a metaphor because one needs a metaphor when one intends to denote something abnormal or irregular. So the comparison of metaphor 'feverish' with the modifier 'sane' clearly implies that what is the stance of Dawn newspaper during the coverage of this event. The political weather has been hot due to the fever of the protesters who aim nothing else but the ouster of the government which is very sane.

ii.   PTI kicks off Azadi march.
The lexical choice kick off is a phrasal verb. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines it as: to start a game of football. This phrasal verb possesses a metaphoric significance here. The use of this metaphor suggests that PTI, one of the two marching parties, is going to play a football game with the government and it has kicked off its first stroke. This metaphoric representation performs the discursive function. It might force people believe that the march is not a sane activity, but it can be compared with the immature soccer game of the youth.

  B. The News
  i.   Government will have sleepless nights till peaceful end of protests.
  Islamabad: Will Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief DrTahirulQadrihonour separate understandings they have given to wind up their protests after a round of speeches in Islamabad or create a scene ,spawning a nightmarish situation for the government.(The News , August 14, 2014, page 2)

This is a separate news story which appeared on page 2 of The News of August 14, 2014.The 'sleepless nights' is a metaphoric expression which evokes a situation, in the mind of reader, of constant anxiety in government. It gives a fictional touch to a media discourse. It has been used here to a highlight the haunting perplexity of the government since the long march began. The adjective phrase 'spawning a nightmarish situation for government' is also a rhetoric expression which modifies the scene of plight wherein the government has been placed and which has been caused by the protest adventure. The anxiety of the government could not be depicted in a better way if a usual media jargon had been used. The use of 'sleepless nights' and 'nightmarish situation' create a scene of fear. So, just like Dawn newspaper the News also use rhetoric language.

  ii.   "Govt should act with restraint and not waive red rag at the bull and stop arrests; crisis should be resolved, not by confrontation; if Imran and Qadri are working on a foreign agenda, PM should come out openly with accusation." (The News, August 15, 2014)
This advice to the government appears on the page 5 of the News of August 15, 2014.In the first line there is an idiomatic expression 'waive red rag at the bull'. It means to provoke someone already in an angry mood. In this new item this idiomatic expression represents the marching activists. It implies that any act of arrest of the protesters by the government would

aggravate the situation and it would be equal to waiving red rag to the bull who is marching on capital. This idiomatic use of language suggests that The News considers government sane a player of the long march bullfight. The metaphor of bull for the long marchers shows their temperament. There passion to knockdown government at any cost. This choice of metaphors clearly manifest that the newspaper has a clear angularity towards government in the coverage of this event.

iii.   **"Azadi and Inqalab coming on luxurious containers**
        Islamabad: Both the Azadi March of Imran Khan and Inqalab March of DrTahirulQadri have been containerized as luxurious containers have been specially made for both the revolutionists by the same vender. However, Qadri'sInqilab have less luxuries while the revolution of Imran Khan costsRs - 4 million more, The News has learnt."

Azadi and Inqalab are the titles of the two marches; however, in the above mentioned story they are metaphors for the leaders-Imran Khan and Dr. Tahirul Qadri respectively. These metaphors highlight the irony of situation. The newspaper through a choice of such metaphors intends to highlight the difference between appearance and reality. This representation of the situation suggests that the leaders who claim to raise voice for the poor and are themselves coming in luxurious containers. The use of word 'revolutionist' as a modifier for both leaders is a sarcastic satire on the leaders who are coming on luxurious containers. The compound structure which includes inqilab and luxury in one clause is a clear verdict, by the newspaper, on the reality of marches.

iv.   **Sheikh Rasheed is in search of a *'job'* as he cannot live without power. (The News p.5, August 16)**

This sentence is critical of Sheikh Rasheed's role in the current scenario. He is an important stimulator of long march event. His search of a 'job' is highly metaphorical. Usually we use the term job searching for a university graduate who starts searching a job soon after completing his degree as it will be very difficult for him to make both ends meet if he remains unemployed for a long time. But here an ex minister is in search of a job as he cannot live without power for a long time and he is out of job for seven years. He never experienced such a long unemployment before this long interval of powerlessness. This metaphoric expression reveals that the newspaper is highly critical of the forces that are playing their role from behind the curtains.

C. The Nation
    "Stick for Qadri, carrot for Imran
    Lahore: The government has decided to deal with PTI and the PAT differently about their long march ventures."

The two parallel phrases 'Stick for Qadri, carrot for Imran' contains two metaphor. These metaphors represent the discrimination in behavior of government for two leaders. 'Stick' implies that government will deal Qadri with iron hands while it will try to tempt Imran by allowing him to march on Capital. These are the obvious connotations of these two words. However, the use of these two metaphors performs another cognitive function. It also belittles the status of the two leaders. Stick is not an appropriate metaphor for a thing or person with even a little esteem. One can use stick for taming a thing of low stature. This usage of language suggests that the newspaper does not look the two leaders with the due esteem.

D. Daily Times

SC (Supreme Court) intervenes to rescue 'democracy'
Court rules an extra-constitutional step by an authority or state will be deemed as complete violation of constitution. (The Daily Times, August 16, 2014)

This is the headline of Daily Times which appeared on August 16, 2014 paper. A surface level analysis would find it difficult to identify a metaphor in the headline, but the word 'rescue' is metaphorical. The normal usage of language suggests the lexical choice 'safe' instead of rescue. The word rescue evokes an image of high danger, violence, or fear and usually the rescuer has to rescue something forcibly. Supreme Court may play the role of savior, but not of a rescuer. It is the obligation of administration to rescue something as it is entitled to use force or physical powers when needed. On the other hand court may save something by giving a verdict in its favor.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the data reveals that metaphors or metaphoric expressions which appeared in the media discourse functioned to ridicule at the *Sit-in* activity as a whole. However, most of them served to represent the two groups which participated in *Sit-ins*- Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and Pakistan Awami Tehreek as less powerful and less privileged stakeholders in the present game of politics. At times these metaphors have been used in such a way to caricature the leaders of the two groups. i.e. *"Stick for Qadri, carrot for Imran.*

The metaphor discourse of the media criticized all the three stakeholders, but as whole it remained more biased towards the less powerful groups-PTI and PAT. This tendency of media confirms the basic assumption of Critical Metaphor Theory that powerful need their metaphors.

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