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From Placards to Perspectives: Semiotic and Multimodal Analysis of Placards in Pakistan's Political Long Marches Between (2013-2022)

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Abstract

In order to create and express their ideological viewpoints as well as to support their political party, supporters hold placards during political long marches. The goal of the current study is to examine the different linguistic and visual semiotic resources that are used in the political long marches that have taken place over the past ten years, such as the Awami March (2014), Azadi March (2014), Inqilab March (2014), Azadi March (2019), and Haqiqi Azadi March (2022). The meaning of visual discourse was interpreted using the three elements of the theory: compositional, interactive, and representative. Moreover, the data was analysed using Fairclough's (1992) 3-Dimensional Model in order to critically examine the many ideological viewpoints that were developed and articulated in the political long marches. The study's thorough examination revealed that political party supporters employ a variety of linguistic and semiotic resources in their placards. Additionally, the study discovered a wide range of ideological viewpoints that

were created and communicated through the placards, including endorsing one political party, opposing one, disparaging a rival political party and a politician, advocating for change and reform, showcasing affiliations with a political party, and influencing others to support a political party.

Keywords: Political long marches; semiotics; MCDA; semiotic resources; ideological perspective

Introduction

Critical Discourse Analysis primarily centers its attention on examining the connection between patterns of spoken or written language and their contextual significance. However, there is another approach to analysis called Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) that came into practice due to the contributions of linguists like Kress and van Leeuwen, Hodge, Halloran, Baldry and Thibault .They began investigating the ways in which words, images and various forms of communication intersect to create significance. All these multiple resources combine to make meaning understandable. In simple words, Multimodal Discourse Analysis is an approach that explores various forms of communication, including text, color, and images. The purpose of this study, which is based on multimodal discourse analysis, is to critically examine the placards used in political long marches that have occurred in Pakistan over the past ten years, including the Haqiqi Azadi March (2022), the Azadi March (2019), the Inqilab March (2014), the Awami March (2014), and the Azadi March (2014).

The works of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) and O'Toole (1994) provided the foundations for multimodal studies in the 1980s and 1990s. To stress the importance of multimodality, Kress (2009) gave the example of traffic signs having three different modes: writing, image and colors. Writing alone would not work because the message will be too complex if only writing is used. The same is the case with images and colors if used alone. Many researchers have conducted analyses of the media with visual and verbal data. One of the examples is

Fathimah (2014), who has researched to investigate mothers' representation in six television advertisements. In their research on on-line airline advertisements, Hu and Luo (2016), as well as Kuswandini (2018), found that airlines strategically employed specific word choices and visual cues to create a sense of privilege for viewers, enticing them to choose their airline for travel. In a separate study on multimodal analysis, Jewitt (2009) also highlighted the significance of considering various modes of communication in combination while emphasizing the influence of social context on a given text. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) extensively explored images found in posters, school course books, children's books, and artwork. In a different domain, O'Toole (1994) examined various forms of art. Ali et al. (2014) researched the interpretation of visual images in the commercial advertisement of Lux. The main interest of the current study lies in the multimodal critical discourse analysis of the diverse linguistic and semiotic choices employed in the placards used in political long marches that took place in Pakistan in the last ten years, i.e., Awami March (2014), Azadi March (2014), Inqilab March (2014), Azadi March (2019), and Haqiqi Azadi March (2022). This research seeks to fill these gaps by identifying and describing various linguistic and visual semiotic resources as well as conducting a critical discourse analysis of these placards. In other words, the main purpose of this research is to investigate and analyze multi-modality and Critical Discourse analysis of the placards employed in the long political marches of Pakistan of the past decade.

Literature Review

Semiotic Analysis

Semiotic analysis is an approach critical in nature and involving the evaluation of meaning markers in a society, sign, objects, or language systems. It is a way of making sense of the latent meanings, codes, and ideologies present in different modes of communication.

This is a method of analysis where the significance of signs within a communication channel such as the novel, poster, advertisement is determined. Therefore, to decode a message, one needs to consider the domains of denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings regarding all the signs cemented into their social background. In this way, we analyze the semiotics of signs and signify what is encoded and transmitted in various media of communication. They include words, pictures, movements, sounds, and objects or any other medium that need to be used. Semiotic analysis looks at how these signs and symbols are deployed in a given cultural framework in order to make the various meanings being made pertaining to the given object. Gerson (2005) and Parsa (2004) realized that there is no word without images.

Discourse Analysis

The term "discourse analysis" was initially introduced by Zellig Harris, a linguist, in his 1952 article titled "Discourse Analysis." Harris defined discourse analysis as a method for analyzing connected speech or writing, extending descriptive linguistics beyond the scope of a single sentence. Since then, scholars have acknowledged the challenge of formulating a comprehensive and universally accepted definition for discourse analysis. However, a simplified way to define discourse analysis is to describe it as "the analysis of discourse."

Discourse analysis is a multidisciplinary approach that examines the social, cultural, and linguistic aspects of communication. It involves the systematic study of texts, conversations, and social practices to uncover the underlying structures, meanings, and ideologies embedded in discourse. The study of critical discourse analysis or critical language study in educational settings is, in a sense, significant since it provides details about educational policy and the practice of language teaching and learning, as well as inference (Fairclough, 1989).

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a research approach that seeks to analyze language use in context to expose the power relations and ideologies that underlie it. Through critical discourse analysis, scholars can break down advertisements, written texts, and other forms of communication in order to inform audiences, from a neutral point of view, of the implications behind them. In order to control and persuade the public to accept a notion that primarily advances the interests of the dominant group, dominating groups implant their ideologies in various forms of communication (De Saussure & Schulz, 2006). CDA tools, according to Machin & Mayr (2012), are used to analyse and interpret spoken and written language. In conjunction with semiotics, the study of meaning-making through signs (sign production) and representing them through specific signs (sign consumption), it gives a knowledge of the ideology behind the word/image (Chandler, 2001). Words and sentences might seem neutral in the surface, but when each of them is viewed as a lexical choice, it is obvious that the target group's perceptions are meant to be shaped.

Multimodal critical discourse analysis: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a research method that investigates the links of language, power, and social inequality. This branches out into multimodal CDA, which considers how modes such as text, image, and sound combine to produce meanings which are further implicated in social relations.

The approach of Multimodal CDA also takes into account other modes of communication employed in the text, including language, pictures or graphics and audio (Jewitt et al., 2016). Multimodal critical discourse analysis (CDA) is ideological mode of analyzing text because it looks into how power relations, ideologies and social practices are represented by different modes of communication in a text such as, language, visual and sound. concerned with the diverse forms of communication as a mode of text; language and pictorial, a

perspective expounded by Machin and Mayr (2012). The author pointed out that, depending on the assumptions of the people within a given context, Jewitt (2009) aspired that communicating messages using a variety of semiotic resources will amplify the intended meanings within a specific group of people or culture. The visual images' purposes and significance are derived from the group's use of the individual images as well as from the multimodal formula that also includes the new meaning that the students derive from using both the verbal and the visual semiotic resources (O'Halloran 2004 p. 1).

Political Long Marches

Political long marches have been a distinctive element of a variety of political movements over the years. Often, these marches have a big number of people undertaking long and tiring walks in order to arrests attention, garner support, and exercise political power. Long marches have been the part of Pakistan's political history and have been utilized most frequently by political combined opposition. These include processions where many people cover a lot of ground carrying this message in a quest to change something. These marches deal with subjects of corruption, the electoral process, and various social causes. Through long marches, the participants seek to mobilize other people, get coverage from the media as well as bring change in policies. But, like every other historical and political congregation, political long marches are not without controversies and hardships. The tasks involved in performing such travels may also be complex and involve both physical and organizational resources. Potential risks include exposure to difficult weather conditions, health risks challenges and likely to come across the law enforcement agents or rival demonstrators. How effective political long marches can be is a different story. It can be seen that though some marches have been successful in achieving is aims and goals, for example to raise some awareness or to make policy changes, others have encountered challenges and have not realised their intended effects. Which leads us to the factors that determine the

effectiveness of a long march, these include; The level of support received from the public, organization and the strength of the organizing Party or the group and, the response of the Government.

Political Long Marches in Pakistan

Over the past few years, political long marches in the context of Pakistan have still had an impact on the political processes of that country. These marches are also referred to as Azadi Marches by different political actors in order to protest against certain government's measures, to call for change in political leadership, or stir up support among people. Such marches have rarely lacked polemizing political discourse, numbers of involved citizens, and, at times, confrontation with the police.

Previous Relevant Studies

Some of the earlier similar works have substantially enhanced the knowledge regarding semiotic modes and the multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA) with special reference to placards. Kress & van Leeuwen (1996) came up with a social semiotic approach for understanding images and averring that shift, color, and layout are significant since they hold meaning. Jewitt and Oyama (2001) extended this idea by providing examples for how different semiotic modes work together to create meaning through their analysis of the placards against World Trade Organization. Machin and van Leeuwen (2006) focused on placards in anti-Iraq War protest programmes in London and explained how visuals and texts jointly produce a sophisticated protest against the war.

Some other writers including Ali et al (2014) have used Khan's long marches examining how language and imagery work in unison to reflect the political themes of the movement. Organizing lens. The said studies reported tactics such as rhetorical appeal, use of pro-assertion metaphors, and appropriateness of visuals when framing protest messages. In the same vein, Ali et al., (2020) noted that there is politics in every placard with regard to grammatical

and lexical features. Jakarta (2015) and Umiyati et al. (2022) developed this taxonomized approach to advertisements, showing in which linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, locational dimensions of multimodal discourse are instantiated, particularly in ads that are popular and memorable such as Colgate Superbowl Ad. These studies show how communication in placards and advertisements is a merging of language and visuals with political and social implications towards meanings and ideologies.

The semiotic and multimodal analysis of placards in Pakistan's political long marches integrates multiple linguistic and visual strategies, drawing on insights from various studies. Ali et, al. (2018) explored comparative characterizations in Arabic and English, which parallels the interplay of cultural narratives reflected in placards. Their 2019 works on conversation principles, nonverbal communication strategies and idiomatic expressions emphasize the importance of language and culture in effective communication, key elements in placard messaging (Ali et al., 2019a; 2019b; 2019c) further enhance understanding of the visual and symbolic elements in placards.

Similarly the study by Ali et al. (2020a) on punctuation highlights how textual features enhance clarity in communicative contexts, relevant to the textual elements of placards and another study about perceptions of linguistic standards (2020b) resonate with the multilingual and sociocultural undertones of political slogans. Not only this, Ali et al. (2021) examined code-switching as a strategic tool in teaching, mirroring its use in placards for engaging diverse audiences.

In the same vien, Ishtiaq et al. (2021a) contributed to semantic density analysis, applicable to understanding nuanced meanings in placards. Their subsequent works on gender representation and disagreement strategies (Ishtiaq et al., 2021b; 2022a) provide frameworks for analyzing social dynamics and interactional patterns in placards. The transliteration errors studied by Ishtiaq et al.

(2022b) highlight linguistic challenges that influence placard design and comprehension.

Structural patterns in linguistic systems, explored by Ishtiaq et al. (2022c), align with the syntactic organization in placards, while the syntactic analysis of Pakistani languages by Ishtiaq and Gill (2024) provides deeper insights into structural representation.

To sum up, a mass of articles was written on the use of placards during the political long marches regarding their importance, the messages they convey, the visual signs, the rhetoric and appeal of the placards, and their effects. As some researchers pay attention to the content and language of placards, few pay attention to the analyses of images, symbols and colours that feature in the placards in a multimodal fashion. For this reason, the current study targets this gap by adopting Multimodal critical discourse analysis. Closing these gaps in MMCD of placards in Long Marches would contribute to the understanding of conflict transformation, change, visual communication strategies, medium and other social movement dynamics.

Research Methodology

The present study focuses on examining the ways in which both verbal and visual resources are utilized and their impact on the subject being investigated in placards displayed in Pakistan's recent political long marches over the past ten years, which work together to form meanings. Therefore, purely qualitative method has been used by applying Fairclough's (2001) 3D Model and Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) Multimodal Placards from political long marches that have occurred in Pakistan in the past ten years, such as the Awami March (2014), Azadi March (2014), Inqilab March (2014), Azadi March (2019), and Haqiqi Azadi March (2022) are examined using critical discourse analysis. This study adopts a multimodal approach. A total of 500 placard pictures, 100 from each political long march, captured political long marches mentioned above, depicting demonstrators

carrying various placards, have been downloaded for analysis from the Facebook pages, Google, Instagram and Long-March social media pages. Out of these, a total of 15 pictures with placards were selected using a purposive sampling technique and subjected to a multimodal analysis.

The population consists of the placards displayed in political long marches in Pakistan over the past ten years, i.e., Awami March (2014), Azadi March (2014), Inqilab March (2014), Azadi March (2019), and Haqiqi Azadi March (2022). The sample size of the study is 15 placards used in the above-mentioned long marches. The 50 selected placards, 10 from each of the marches, were taken arbitrarily out of the 500 placards considering a simple random sampling technique adopted for the study. Selection criterion was based on purposive sampling keeping in mind that out of 500 placards, 15 placards were selected where number of features to be assessed, based on the two models, was maximum.. The theoretical approaches of Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) multimodal analysis and that of Fairclough's three-dimensional model of discourse analysis, are applied in this study in a bid to unravel multiple intersecting modes of communication and the hierarchies that are in operation within the interaction practices. The analysis suggests that different modes always interact in communication practices, and that the relations of power which underlie those practices are displayed in and through those modes. Through integration of these two avenues into the current study, it is hoped that a rigorous epistemological analysis of the way in which meaning is therefore co-constructed and contextualised across multimodal texts will be rendered.

Data Analysis

Linguistic and Semiotic Resources Employed in Political Long Marches

The current section will address the linguistic resources and the semiotic resources used in the placards in the political long marches.

Linguistic and Semiotic Resources Employed in Awami March (2014)

Some of the placards from the Awami March (2014) which had used linguistics and semiotic resources include the following:



Figure 1. Placard 01 in Awami March (2014)

The color saturation of the placard is achieved in red and black colors; based on Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) model. Red connotes exigency, while black means such things as hatred, corruption etc. . The words AWAMI IHTEJAJ written in BOLD letter type actually means a summarized common formal Urdu language is used to write about bad issues like extremism & terrorism The image of Tahir ul Qadri and the hand gestures of women symbolize the approval of the leader while big and bold fonts focuses the potential enemy as ‘terrorist’, ‘extremist’ – Inteha passand. The different three colours i.e. the red, green and white from the flag represent revolution, devotion, and sincerity The font size and the degree of the boldness of the letters helps to stress the necessity to read the message as well as with the help of analysis of the text within the scope of Fairclough’s three-dimensional model it becomes possible to reveal how the language, the discourse, and the sociocultural practices are connected. The formal Urdu caters to Pakistani cultural expectations, and the use of bold lettering bolsters the collective demand and sentimental significance of the message.



Figure 2. Placard 01 displayed in Awami March (2014)

Figure 2 shows how placard 02 has employed red, black, green, and white as its colours each of which forms part of the march's philosophy. The placard uses the proper written Urdu for stating the messages that are politically sensitive and contains a political socialization message regarding the future of the country, Pakistan. . The statement in bold, "Badlyga nizam, badlyga Pakistan" drawing attention through its boldface, makes an urgent demand for a change in the system. The pictorial representation of Tahir ul Qadri on the placard indicates his key leadership position in the revolution, whereas the actions of the women holding the placard symbolizes their endorsement and support of the cause.

Based on the three-dimensional analysis by Fairclough (2001), the formal language indicates power relations and social systems with the option of Urdu showing the significance of clarity and authority. Over and above that, the large size and bold shape of the font of the slogan further adds to the importance of the message. The facial expressions and physical gestures of the participants enhance the emotional influence of the placard, brilliantly engaging the public and magnifying its call for political transformation.

Linguistic and Semiotic Resources Employed in Haqeeqi Azaadi March (2019)



Figure 3. Placard 01 Haqeeqi Azaadi March (2014)

Linguistically, semiotically, and visually, the placard that Fazal-ur-rehman employed in his political long march in 2019 has extraordinary appeal. The two powerful phrases which are more or less at the center of the discourse are ‘jaan hamri ab qurban, mel k bhagaengy ab shetaan’ and Foj hamri qadam barhao, qoam tumhary sath hain’ which calls for sacrifice, perseverance, unity and strength. In this perspective, a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) explores how these phrases, symbols, and even relatively simple visual indications such as bolder fonts and contrasting colours work to pitch and bolster the political story. The first phrase literally means that sacrifices should be made against a superior foe while the second part of the phrase may be translated literally, as summoning the nation to be stronger, working side by side with the army and striving for a common collective cause. Using Fairclough three-dimensional model (2001), the ideology of this placard is nationalism and use of military elements; depicting the citizens’ martyrdom as a patriotic act, using the component of unity in order to counteract challenges. Linguistic features, layout and semiotic affordances jointly affirm how the manipulation of discourse acts out power dynamics and constructs societal images. By fully utilizing the cultural and

political contexts, the placard strives for persuading and instilling activism in the audience, thereby adding to the vast discourse related to the subject of long march.

Linguistic and Semiotic Resources Employed in Azaadi March (2014)

Here are some of the placards and some of the Linguistic and semiotic resources used during Azadi march (2014).



Figure 4. Placard 01 in Azaadi March (2014)

In figure 4, the placard, with the AZADI emboldened in white and the viewpoint of Imran Khan, imparts a stout message of freedom and leadership. As per the model of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the white color should be associating with purity and loyalty, displaying a the devotion of people to Imran Khan and their urge for emancipation. The bold fonts and graphics like “standing tall” beside the phrase “Main jhuka nhi, mai bikha nahi.” convey a message of a defying courage, unbending will, firmness, and an immunity to temptations, as expressed by the phrase “Main jhuka nhi, mai bikha nahi.”, rendering Imran Khan as a firm standing leader taking on the difficulties without any petty deal. From Fairclough’s 3-Dimensional model (2001), the poetic language on the placard resonates with the audience's political and social sentiments, emphasizing values like honesty and resistance to corruption. Critics may complain that the phrase “Main jhuka nhi” adds to inflexibility, yet the recurrence of the word “main”

shapes a rhetorical effect , linking Khan with these ideals and sending a wave of inspiration among the supporters.



Figure 5. Placard 02 displayed in Azaadi March (2014)

In Figure 05, Placard 02, the text "Eiwan e batil bhi larzan hain es that sy, hain sabit e qadam janib e manzil safar Hamra" conveys a powerful political message through both linguistic and visual elements. The phrase "Aiwan e batil" meaning "false institutions" is a metaphor criticising the the corrupt power setup, and the word "larzan" meaning "trembling" refers to the wobbling and weak nature of the regime's infrastructure in front of the agitation. Janib e manzil safar Hamra" can best be translated as "unity and determination" suggesting that it a collective mission towards a certain destination. The adoption of bolder font prints and the choice of either red or black highlights the rebellious stance and firmness, whereas, the positioning of the text is strategic and profound as it sends a signal of centrality and importance of the struggle.. From a semiotic and multimodal analysis, then, the 'terms' and 'visuals' of the placard together index resistance and determination. In Fairclough's three-dimensional model (2001) the language of placard defies power relations, "Aiwan e batil" and "larzan" symbolizes the volatility of corrupt structures. Graphically, the forceful font and the choice of colors adds to the confidence and firmness of the message, lending to the total effect. The placard effectively combines linguistic and visual elements to communicate a message of resistance, unity, and perseverance in the context of a political movement. The

placard by perfectly fusing linguistic and visual constituents together gets across a call for resistance, unity and consistency in the context of political struggle.

Ideological Perspectives Constructed and Transmitted Through Placards Displayed in Political Long Marches

On the basis of the variance in movements, political parties and their concerns, there is must be a great difference between the ideological perspectives that are shaped and passed via the language and semiotics used on placards in the political long marches of Pakistan. Placards represent particular political stances, demands and grievances graphically. These placards can be used for propounding a wide range of ideologies, like the following:

Ideological Perspectives Constructed and Transmitted through placards displayed in the Awaami march (2014)

The placards, slogans, banners and symbols used during Tahir ul Qadri's long march have a strong cultural and societal foundation in Pakistan. One can better comprehend the political and cultural environment in which Tahir ul Qadri's long march took place by studying the semiotics of the posters that were utilized. To rally support for Tahir ul Qadri's political program, many of the catchphrases make emotional language and appeal to pride in one's country and identity. A detailed analysis of some of the placards used in Tahir ul Qadri's long march is given below:



Figure 6. Placard 01 Displayed in Awami March (2014)

In Figure 06, Placard 01 presents four key participants: women holding the placard, flags from the Awami march, a picture of Tahir ul Qadri, and banners with written messages. According to Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) model, the placard uses transactional action processes, where the arms of the participants create vectors that connect them with the banners and flags, symbolizing support for Tahir ul Qadri's message of peace. The analytical process shows the participants as carriers, with the flags and banners as attributes, visually representing their support for Tahir Ul Qadri's promotion of harmony. The image is interactive, classified as a "demand," with the participants engaging the viewer directly, creating a sense of connection and equality through a frontal, eye-level shot. Fairclough's model reveals the ideological underpinnings of the placard, emphasizing Tahir ul Qadri's stance against terrorism, violence, and corruption while promoting peace and justice. The placard advocates for peaceful coexistence among diverse groups, aligning with Qadri's belief in a peaceful interpretation of Islam. Through both visual and linguistic elements, the placard conveys a call for unity, rejecting ideologies that foster hatred or division, and highlights the importance of standing against terrorism and corruption.



Figure 7. Placard 02 displayed in Awami March (2014)

The placard analysis, based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) model, identifies two participants: women and the banners they hold. In the narrative process, a woman holding a placard with Tahir ul Qadri's picture creates a transactional action process, with her arms forming a vector that connects her to the placard.

The image is also symbolic, with the banner representing the women's identity and the placard as a symbolic attribute. In the interactional dimension, the direct gaze of the participants makes the placard a "demand," as the women appear to ask for help and assert their rights. The medium shot and frontal angle create a sense of connection with the viewer, while the eye-level perspective suggests equal power dynamics. Using Fairclough's 3-Dimensional model, the placard explicitly expresses support for Imran Khan and the desire for re-election. However, hidden ideologies imply that the supporters view national unity as crucial, with the placard encouraging Khan to move forward, reflecting collective support. The call for re-election indicates satisfaction with Khan's leadership and a wish for his return to power. Fairclough's model highlights the need to explore both explicit and implicit meanings in texts and visuals.



Figure 8. Placard 3 displayed in Awami March (2014)

Fairclough's model emphasizes how language and visuals construct meaning and power dynamics. In Figure 3, Placard 3 is analyzed using Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) model, revealing both narrative and conceptual patterns. The central participant, a man, generates vectors through his hands, connecting him to the placard's stand, making it the Goal in a transactional action process. Other men behind him are Reactors, with their eye lines forming vectors towards the main actor, creating a transactional reactional process. These men and the central figure are also Carriers connected to their Possessive Attributes, such as the placard and flags, symbolizing support and unity. Interactionally, this placard is classified as an

"offer," as there is no direct gaze between the main actor and the viewer, creating an informal social distance. The use of a long shot with more than nine participants conveys a sense of group involvement, while the frontal horizontal angle involves the viewer in the scene. The composition focuses on the central participant's hands, emphasizing his actions as the core message, while the other participants are secondary. Salience is established through the brighter depiction of the main figure in contrast to those in the background, enhancing his symbolic power in the image.

Ideological Perspectives were Constructed and Transmitted through placards displayed in the Azadi march (2014)

To reveal the hidden ideologies and underlying message, placards utilize various modes of communication like background, language and discourse, design, ideologies, social and cultural context, etc. Below is a detailed study of a few of the placards that Imran Khan used during his long march(2014):



Figure 9. Placard (01) Displayed in the Azadi march (2014)

The text analyzes how language and visuals on a placard express political support for Imran Khan, using Fairclough's (2001) and Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) models. It highlights how the women holding the placard are key participants in conveying the message, using both linguistic and visual elements to show dissatisfaction with the current government and a desire for Khan's return. The placard's support is based on personal appeal, which some critics see as

oversimplifying political judgment. Hidden ideologies reflect a preference for Khan's leadership and opposition to other political parties.



Figure 10. Placard 02 Displayed in Azaadi March (2014)

The analysis integrates Fairclough's focus on language as a social practice with Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) multi-modal framework, examining how both visual and linguistic elements convey political messages. Fairclough's second dimension emphasizes the relationship between language and social practices, while Kress and van Leeuwen's analysis explores the representational, interpersonal, and compositional aspects of the placard. The bold text "IMPORTED GOVT ABSOLUTELY NOT" stands as a shield against foreign colonization, where the women in the image are performers of the narrative and conceptual performance. The women's gesturers and direct stares form a process of transactional action, in which they seem visually linked to the placard and in which their political stance is being symbolized. When viewed through the lens of the three meta- functions the placard is an assertive call for us to resist foreign rule and governance and a rallying call for home rule. The stance, location and movement of the women uphold a symbolic relationship to the message of emancipation. The center-margin structure highlights the woman in the yellow dress as the focal point, with the placard as the nucleus of information. Salient elements, such as mobile phones and flags, act as symbolic attributes, representing both the participants' connection to the political cause and their active

engagement. Ultimately, the placard promotes local governance, opposing external interference and supporting traditional values.



Figure 11. Placard 03 Displayed in Azadi March (2014)

The analysis of the placard draws on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) model, focusing on representational, interactional, and compositional processes. The women holding the banner are represented as participants in a narrative process, reacting to the placards rather than the viewer, creating a reactional process. Their gaze, directed at the banner, is considered an "offer," signaling detachment between the participants and the viewer. The frontal angle of the image invites the viewer into the participants' world, but the low angle gives the viewer power over them, as they are seen from below. Using Fairclough's 3-Dimensional model, the placard's explicit message expresses support for Imran Khan and a desire for re-election. However, hidden ideologies suggest that the supporters believe in Khan's leadership and national unity. The placard encourages Khan to move forward, implying that the nation is with him, and conveys a desire for another opportunity for him to lead. Fairclough emphasizes the need to analyze both the explicit and implicit meanings conveyed in texts and visuals.

Ideological Perspectives were Constructed and Transmitted through placards displayed in the Inqilab march (2014)

Following is a detailed analysis of the ideological perspective constructed and transmitted through placards used in the Inqilab march (2014).



Figure 12. Placard 01 displayed in Inqilab march (2014)

The placard "We are revolutionary children" from the 2014 Inqilabi march conveys a message of youth empowerment and social change. The term "revolutionary" reflects a commitment to challenging established norms and seeking justice, while "children" emphasizes the active role of the younger generation in advocating for a better future. Applying Fairclough's 3-Dimensional model (2001), the placard reveals a strong ideological stance of non-violent resistance, suggesting that these young demonstrators see themselves as agents of peaceful change rather than using aggressive means. The message highlights the youth's dissatisfaction with the government and their desire to reshape the nation's future. The second part of the placard, "Go Nawaz Go," expresses a clear demand for political change and dissatisfaction with Nawaz Sharif's leadership. Using the native language, Urdu, amplifies the emotional impact and the call for a more accountable government. Through Fairclough's model, this slogan is analyzed at three levels: its explicit call for leadership change, the underlying non-violent ideology of peaceful revolution, and the sociocultural context in which the younger generation expresses its frustration with the current government. Together, the slogans reflect a collective desire for reform and transparency in governance. The analysis illustrates how the slogans express dissent, a desire for change, and a call for more accountable government, aligning with Fairclough's comprehensive model for analyzing discourse in its broader sociocultural context.



Figure 13. Placard 02 displayed in Inqilab march (2014)

Every image conveys meaning on both a surface and a deeper level ,Machin (2007). The social, cultural, and historical context of each writing shapes its meaning. The sentence “Main jhuka nahi main bika nahi” emphasizes Imran Khan's reluctance to compromise on his ideals and integrity and expresses a strong and uncompromising position. It sends the message to stand your ground and resist giving in to intimidation or corruption. The sentence” Kahi chup chupa ky kharha nahi “ refers to being honest and upfront, not hiding or being reluctant to say the truth. It emphasizes the need for sincerity and honesty in politics. The line “jo ditty hoye hain mahaz par “ denotes the will and dedication to lead the way, showing that Imran Khan and his supporters are prepared to face difficulties and overcome hurdles in order to achieve their objectives. It portrayed him as a fearless leader who was willing to accept responsibility for his actions while fighting for change. The textual analysis of this placard demonstrates the speaker's aggressive and determined posture, in accordance with Fairclough 3-Dimensional model (2001). In terms of the Fairclough 3-dimensional discourse model, Imran Khan is expressing his feelings and thoughts through this placard by refusing to give up in the face of obstacles or opposition. First-person pronouns are used to imply his distinct and unique experience. The imperious tenor conveys a wish to be acknowledged and recognized. The placard expresses qualities of tenacity, grit, and self-advocacy in terms of the third dimension, sociocultural practice. It

conforms to cultural standards that place a strong emphasis on personal power and choice. Expression of feelings, bravery, and a strong sense of self are frequent and valued in Urdu poetry.



Figure 14. Placard 01 displayed in Haqiqi Azadi march (2019)

The placard in Figure 14 reflects multiple ideological perspectives, as analyzed through Fairclough's 3-Dimensional model. It sounds anti-incumbent frustration with the current leadership due to corruption, lawlessness and lack of morality, underscoring a wish for more openness and accountability. Poverty, unemployment, inflation also predominate and reflect a demand for wholesome environment, employment and social welfare projects. Further, the placard also talks of culture and morality, in tune with religious conservatism and a focus on safeguarding the traditional values and customs. These are political protesting voices of the people that are victim to and have been sidelined by the current political setup, placing a demand for political transformation, social justice, and a fair happy society. The multifaceted message comprises of an amalgamation of patriotism, a socio-centric approach, and a reformative desire.



Figure 15. Placard 02 displayed in Haqiqi Azadi march (2019)

The placard used during the Azadi March in support of Maulana Fazlur Rehman indicates an ideological stance based on the religious authority and discontentment with the political scene. “Mera Quaid Meri Jaan, Maulana Fazlur Rehman” reflects loyalty and faith in his leadership, that projects him as a personality with the capacity to deal with religious as well as political issues. His audience perceives him in a way of being a political figure who upholds correct Islamic practices in addition to being a fighter against the social injustices, making him a figure of revolt against the current regime which, in the view of his followers, is not catering for the needs of the public. This view highlights the need of the people for a leader who is in consonance with the religious values and has the ability to cause a significant change.

When linked to the Fairclough’s three-dimensional model, the placard becomes a form of discursive practice that discloses the sociopolitical discontent of Fazal ur Rehman’s supporters. It focuses on the interaction between political, religious and social ideologies with him acting as the rallying figure for the reformist spirits for both religious and political front. The placard sums up all the feelings of the people of getting continuity of religion, maintenance of social justice and leadership which can steer Pakistan through its crises, displaying an unwavering trust in the abilities of Maulana Fazlur Rehman to lead and deliver. These models of Fairclough (2006) together with Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) were employed on the data generated by the descriptive qualitative procedures.

After showing the findings of the study, a comprehensive discussion of the study is provided with reference to previous studies on visual, linguistic and significant resources observed in signs ads, placards and TV & magazine images. The first section provides a detailed review of the linguistic and semiotic resources after which the second section describes the ideological standpoint in the placards in political long marches. All of these placards had the following salient features about the most-used linguistic and semiotic resources; additionally, there are hidden ideologies conveyed in the placards. Linguistic and semiotic tools were critical for conveying critical messages during the political marches. Colors, symbols, language, and typeface were selected meticulously to convene people, to mobilize and inspire them, and to make a memorable impact through the linkage of the cultural background and knowledge of the audience concerned. Very Succinct and formal Urdu language was used, more specifically while dealing with sensitive topics such as corruption terrorism. Colors were made use of wisely and significantly, where we see white colour being used for purity and red colour for revolution, thus causing a unique emotional association with the target audience. Political placards displayed in Pakistani long marches served as a way of voicing public opinions on of topics like social justice, human rights and national identity.

Conclusion

The study carried out a ten years' multiple-modal critical discourse analysis of the placards used during the political long marches in Pakistan with reference to the linguistic and semiotic features. Particular marches researched were Awami March (2014), Azadi March (2014 and 2019), Inqalab March (2014), and Haqiqi Azadi March (2022). While conducting the research, the issue of how the use of words, both verbal and in written form, phrases, symbols, and images as depicted on these placards influenced political ideologies and beliefs affecting the march and the participants, as well as the general public was considered. In this light, this

study aimed at identifying power relations, politics, values and norms within the placards.

Adopting a qualitative research paradigm, the researchers applied Fairclough's (2001) 3D Model and Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Multi-Modal Critical Discourse Analysis on 20 filtered placard images selected from 500 images through random and purposive sampling. The study focused on both linguistic and the visuals structures at the textual, interpersonal and ideational level. It showed a variety of ideologies in the placards : social justice and fairness; free election; no more corruption; human rights; nationalism etc. The research is relevant to the field of multi-modal discourse analysis in that it illustrated how placards synthesize verbal and non-verbal features to disseminate strong political messages. This research focused on visual rhetoric, semiotics and the art of persuasive communication in relation to political and social realities of Pakistan. Through analyzing the interplay between language and visuals, the study was able to help us understand the additional subliminal messages which the placards forwarded. The study held pragmatic lessons for readers, those who make placards, and posters, and for the researchers of the field. For the general readers, it contributed to the development of their appreciation of multimodal discourse; for the creators of placards, the study supported their attempts at constructing more effective messages; for scholarly readers, it offered them the means of analysing the relationship between the text and the visuals. The implication of the study is to further understand the involved nature of Pakistani politics and social structure as manifested by the symbols, sign, and colour on these placards. In general, the authors evidenced the key influence of the placards on the formation of the people's discourse and reflection of the people's wants. They worked towards the enhancement of the society and the promotion of equity by serving as a visual reflection of the collective opinion of people.

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