

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND PUBLIC RESISTANCE AGAINST POLITICAL POWER IN PAKISTAN: AN ANALYSIS OF FACE BOOK POSTS

Zohaib Ahmed Tanoli

M Phil English Literature Lecturer Department of English Wapda Postgraduate College Tarbela  
Dam Project

Dr. Shahid Nawaz

Assistant Professor, Dept. of English Linguistics, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur  
Waheeda Rehman

PhD Scholar English Linguistics AIOU Islamabad

Muhammad Rashid

M Phil English Linguistics Institute of Southern Punjab Multan

Corresponding Email ID: aqeelpk786@yahoo.com

### Abstract:

*Media has been playing very vital role in the development of public theology but after the emergence of social media, the trends have been changed. Freedom of thoughts and expressions are playing prestigious role in making resistance against the political ideologies and the power. The opinion given by public and the realities of the things are being illustrated through different parameters of discourses with help of cartoons and the symbols. The present study is qualitative in its nature describing the different ways of utterances for the purpose of making resistance against the political powers in Pakistan. The model are adopted for this study are Van Dijk,s (1998) and Fairclough (2003) with the semiotic analysis model of Zubair & Sijad (2010) which is media oriented. The results of the study show that there is existing extremely satire and different terms are used to criticize the political power exploring in a way that the parties and their supporters are biased rather than realistic. The parties are only concern with their interests rather than ideologies.*

**Keywords:** Freedom of Expression, Face book, Political Power, Resistance, Semiotic Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis

### Introduction:

Information technology has been an integral part of life since its emergence. From youngsters to elders, from non-professionals to professionals are affiliated with information technology officially or unofficially. Bryan (2006) describe define information technology as an umbrella term which revolves around the computer disciplines which permit organization to manage their relations, information and administrative aspects. Information technology play vital role for connecting and making relationships with others. Facebook has been the social media networking platform since the date of its emergence and has become the most users keeping and networking platform for the business as well as the advertisement of personal thoughts.

Pakistan is the multiethnic and multicultural country which possesses the number of languages as well as political parties. There are a number of political parties in Pakistan working for the gaining of power. Through producing the political terminologies for the construction and deconstruction of ideologies enable the media users to have certain type of ideologies. The new trend has been merged in all the areas of life so the political parties of ruling and opposition try to win the thoughts of people so in this regard, they tries to cons. Similarly, the resisting thought and posts are also being proposed by the natives as a social movement.

As there is ideological representation of posts to present the desired sense through media, the linguistics and semiotic analysis can counter the meanings and illustrations of such desired

ideologies that by which meanings have been presented by the posts. Construction and deconstruction of desired ideologies can be best observed by such posts and interpretations.

The framework of Fairclough's model (2003) and Van Dijk Model (1998) of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can evaluate manipulated and hidden ideologies as presented in political posts for the construction and deconstruction of the ideologies among the people. . The CDA of such resisting posts as presented on Face book can be used as the best tool to shape the public opinion towards desired realities.

Saussure (1916) defines semiotic in the following way:

*"Semiotic is the science which studies the life of signs presented in the correspondence society. It can be called by as semiology (root word of Greek language "Semeion" means signs) . Semiology has to describe the presented signs in the society and the laws through which these signs are governed."*

It is further described by Saussure that among many systematic symbols and signs, language, one is necessary to present. It can be illustrated that language is among one of certain signs through which production, use and exchange of signs are done within the society. A sign is a representative mark for something else which is clearly understood by the native speaker of society. So it can be said that semiology permits the human beings to observe the language in natural and de-naturalized correspondences.

Peirce defines semiotics as the system of principles to study of signs based on the specific behaviour presented in the society. In the same sense, Price (1985) proposes the definition of semiotics and illustrates his view in a sense that signs are necessary to describe the words as the words cannot be described very well without signs and symbols in the society. The term semiotics has key feature as is described by Barthes (1974) in his work on fashion, boxing and other elements. "Semiotics is based on the contextual sense and varies from culture to culture because of existed diversity in the culture and norms of different societies so the meaning extraction is meant a lot.

Semiotic discourse(s) of media is a great excess for our understanding as it provides us the knowledge of the political, social, economic, cultural, constructed and de-constructed ideologies and realities presented in our surroundings as it can be observed that to satirize government or issues of present or past can be presented by cartoons in the newspapers for exaggeration of the facts.

### **Literature Review:**

Hamrit (2016) conducted a research study on the Critical Discourse Analysis of the representation of Islamists on Facebook pages in post-revolution Tunisia. The objectives of the study were to critically analyze the secular and religious posts for the development of ideologies among the users. The study was qualitative in its nature with the adoption of Van Dijk model of CDA and the model of CDA of Fairclough to analyze the posts. The results of the study illustrated that the secular post posting people interpret the posts with the discursive strategies, selection of adjectives, metaphors and choices of words. The presence of aggression was seemed a lot in the posts.

Amedie (2015) made research study on the impact of social media on the society. The study was qualitative describing the impacts being flourished on the society by the social media. The study described that the social media has been a great tool of spread of information and sharing. There are many uses of social media in the age of digitalization but the false reporting

and over resting theologies are also being spread through social media. The study also told that the people tires to describe their inner as communication in the presence of social media quite easily.

Sutkute (2016) conducted a research study on “Social media as a tool of resistance or a new form of slacktivism”. The study was based on the qualitative analysis presented on social media in this regard. The results of the study illustrated that the social media has become a tool of accessible and abrupt information from one corner of the world to the other. It has become the tool of expansion of ideologies and resistance before different ideologies. The users of social media make the abrupt reactions on different posts freely for the purpose of making things clear according their information. The researcher says that the social media has made its place among the masses as the social movement against any theology or misconception to be verified or be cleared. The social movement regarding construction of the society can be easily made through social media with the rapid communications.

Reggie (2015) made a study on “Social media and the new struggles of young people against marginalization: a challenge to missional ecclesiology in Southern Africa”. The study was conducted in the qualitative way describing about the struggle being possessed by the young generation against the marginalization of their rights. The main objective of the study was to exposed the dark side of the social media through which the youngsters were trapped for different terrorist activities. The results of the study told that social media being the media of freedom of thought and expression is being misused by the natives of South Africa. They are not told the truth of the things by the posts and different people are interrupted by the process of recruitment in the militants groups. The results of the study show that the natives of South Africa would be cure in usage of social media as there are keen needs to be away from the captivation of young brains for own purposes.

Nien (2018) explored in his study about the role of social media regarding self-mediation, Banksy and resistance. The study was descriptive in its nature describing about the different angular ways of self-mediation for the purpose of transforming the cultural meanings. The method of study was semiology and the literature review of the previous conducted studies. The results of the study showed that social media can be used for the development of discursive ideology as well as with the cultural representation. The anti-war theology can also be promoted through the social media as well. The self-mediations of the exploring the things on social media will lead the people towards the production of discursive identities in the world.

### **Significance of the Study:**

The study is qualitative in its nature describing the existed resistance and gaps in the minds of people which will address the stakeholders to understand the anger regarding only theologies rather than practical work by the political parties and workers. The study will also help to understand the freedom of thoughts and expressions on social media as social media has become the name of social movement in present day.

### **Objectives:**

1. To analyze the discourse and semiotic being presented by Pakistani citizen against specific situation.
2. To manipulate the different ways of resistance adopted by Pakistani natives against political powers on social media.

### **Research Questions:**

1. How the situation is being manipulated through cartoons and posts by Pakistani natives?

2. For what reasons is political power being resisted through semiotics and discourses on Face book?

### **Research Methodology:**

The current study is qualitative in its nature describing the public resistance against political power in Pakistan through Face book posts. Gay (2012) says that qualitative research is the way of study in which the facts are described in the textual form without numerical description. The models adopted for this research paper are taken from the paper on semiotic representation of Islam in western media: CDA of a published article the famous Weekly Guardian (Zubair, S. & Sajid, A. 2010) along with, because the presence of political cartoons analysis and manipulation of hidden ideologies in the analysis, Van Dijk and Fairclough 's framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) for semiotic and linguistics analysis are used to manipulate the power, relationships and ideologies existed between government and the folk. The current study is with aim to expose and illuminate the hidden ideologies and desired semiotic discourse presented by Pakistani natives on social media by analyzing the cartoons by semiotic and linguistics perspectives as presented in the newspaper.

### **Framework of the Present Study:**

In order to explore the research questions of our study, the models of semiotic analysis, as already described, will be applied proposed by Zubair & Sajid (2010) along with the most applied CDA framework of Van Dijk (1998) and Fairclough (2003) for semiotic and linguistic analysis of the language and the cartoons presented in political sense about the ideologies of relationships between political powering people and the natives. The framework of Leeuwen (1996, 2008) is also applied to manipulate the social factors presented in both segments to present the over determination of their ideologies towards other motives that how these factors are presented physically. The model of semiotics presented by Zubair & Sijad (2010) is used as a toolkit to analyze and judge the semiotics resources which are presented on social media in the name of person, objects, settings, gestures and norms that what meanings does the specific sign carry and how signs are used with combination of words to present the desired ideologies and discourse. By using above mentioned models the purpose of manipulation of political and power ideological resistance is described between political parties and the public in the current situation.

### **Data Collection:**

The data is collected from the social media from the specific websites to manipulate the data. For this purpose, the selection of the posts was made from the huge groups of social media. In this regard the following groups were made under study for the purpose of selection of political posts:

1. University of Punjab
2. 92News

### **Data Analysis and Discussion:**



Figure 1

English Translation of the Text: Ex. President Asif Ali Zardari (PPP) swept away the blood of people, then human skin and dermic have been eaten by Lion (PML-N) and the Bat (PTI) is breaking the bones.

The image describe about the destruction of people of natives as they are being looted by every politician who have been claiming or claimed of prosperity of the natives. The Facebook user being native is describing as the all the political parties of the country tries to loot the people and they do not pay attention on the prosperity of the people. They are only concern with the confession of the sources as well as the retrieving of the taxes from the natives. The citizens of Pakistan are passing through desperate situation as all the major political parties tries to sweep away the sources of the nation rather than giving them equivalent relief. The semiotic analysis also show that the conditions of the native of Pakistan are very critical and they have lost all the things by the hands of ruling parties. The lion is symbolic of "Bravery and Wisdom" but here he is being represented as the hungry that have snatched the skin. Zardari motives were to provide "food, shelter and clothes" but swap the blood as he was also thirsty of wealth of poor natives of Pakistan. Bat is symbolic of controlling and hitting the ball but in the picture, it is being described as the hitting tool for the human body. As there has been nothing left in human body except boned after the sweeping of blood and skins lost, but the "Bat" is too cruel as it has no empathy for Pakistanis as it is not supporting rather than ruining the natives conditions.

English Translation: The journey from the Motto of "honour the vote" is ended on "honour the shoes".

The current post was made in regard of PML (N) narrative to "Vote ko izat do" (Honour the vote) but recently a bill have been passed regarding extension of the military officers of both land, air and navy in a way that the extension can be given in service of 3 years. The bill was being ordered by the Supreme Court of Pakistan to implement the extension tenure in the legal way. The passing majority was needed. The satire and the satirical words have been used in this post in a way that PML (N) was in favour of earning the thoughts of people and had slogan of "honour for vote" which has been delimited as to the "Bout ko izat do" (honour the Shoes). In Pakistan, the Urdu word "Bout" is politically used standing against the Army and their officials. The narrator tries to make critics the slogan of MPL (N) as they have received their destiny at the closing spot which is "only respect and the honour the bout". Through discursive use of discourse, the narrator pointed out that the destination of the political leaderships from the "huge slogans" is ended here to be surrendered before the army. The semiology of the text also describe that this slogan was being introduced for the sake of gaining favour of public because the current



government is being selected by the army officials rather than being elected. The theological meanings of the narrators is that political parties like PML (N) could not be succeeded in winning the desired ideology creation so at the end, they have to be agree with the army officials plans.



Figure 2

English Translation :Quid-e-Azam 's motto was *"work,work and work"* while Imran Khan 's motto is *"lie, lie and lie"*.

The picture has given the different semiology meanings in a way that the present Prime minister of Pakistan always used to tell a lie and have false motives. He has no direction rather than providing the nation the map of dreams in which a lot of promises were being made. The semiotics of the post illustrate that the founder of the nations believed in the hardworking and suggested the nation to work hard, day and night. The red lines existed between the two pictures of Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Imran Khan have certain discourse meanings as well. The red colour is stood for the danger so the dangerous line in this regard show the gap between the thoughts of the founder of the nation and the current ruling person of the nation. After observing the picture with the semiotic way, it can be observed that the current ruling person of Pakistan believe only in the false telling and false dreams rather than hard working. The nation has to bear such type of leadership for the destruction rather than construction as the people living only in dreams and maps, cannot work hard.



Figure 3

The critical discourse analysis of the current post shows the resistance against the political theology of the Prime Minister of Imran Khan having the bat in his hands and preparing “Manjan” (powerful doze) for the public and surroundings. After critically analyzing the post, the user have meant to illustrate that the Prime Minister is selling only the “Manjan” of his world cup 1992 winning and nothing to do practically with the nation progress. The natives of the state are very happy that the “Manjan” (symbolically as represented of prosperity and support” is under proceeding of being prepared. The natives of the nation are happy to take it at once rather than they are serious in the practical life. The Prime Minister (PM) is being named as Doctor Imran Khan who have to treat the nation so that the condition of the nation would be developed and purified but the focus of PM is only on to make the people happy by the “Manjan” with the bat (symbolic of victory of World Cup 1992 in Pakistan) in a way that soon the medicine will be prepared the natives will be prosperous but the fixation of the picture only tells about the process of “Manjan preparation” as there is no chance of being complete predations while the nation is happy that there will be something better soon.

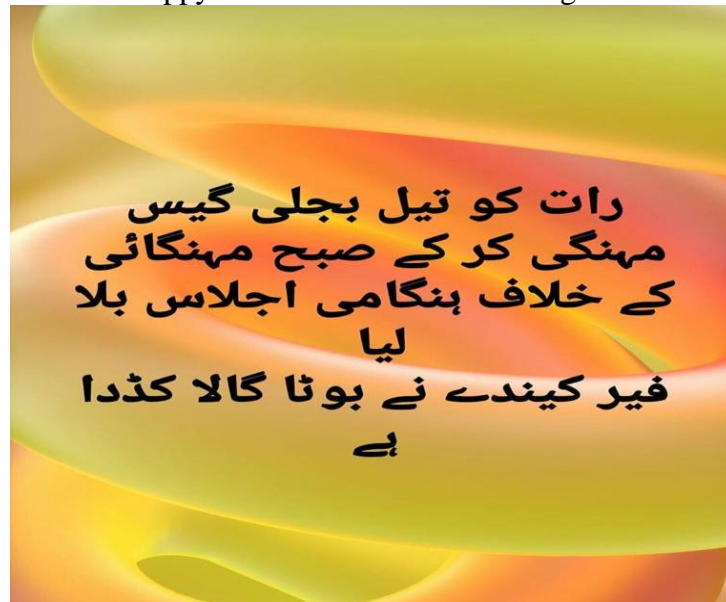


Figure 4

English Translation: At night, government increases the prices of electricity and gas, and in the morning calls urgent meeting against price increasing, later says that Bota (a name) calls the names.

The post and the used words in the post illustrate that there is a lot of ideologically resistance and opposition in natives of Pakistan as they are not willing to accept the duality of the government. The lexis and the statement in the post illustrate that that nation is being circulated in tow dimensions and the government tries to play on both levels. At one side, it is going to increase the prices of daily needed things while on the other side, it is going to make procession against price increasing. The critical discourse show that that Government of Pakistan is making fun with the people of Pakistan by notification in the night of price increasing of needed things while in the morning itself calls for the meetings that how to control this situation. The “Bota” in this post is being represented as the “folk of Pakistan” or the wise man who is surprised in this way that the dual game is being played by the government with Pakistani folks in a way that increasing of price is also being made by the Pakistani government while the procession is also being called by the state stakeholders against the price increasing of the daily usable things. The objection is also being received by the government that it is not being allowed freely rather than is being criticized or abused. The narrator being the folk says that in such situation when the prices are being increased and meetings are called to control the prices by the government itself then such of duality is intolerable and the abusing and criticizing the government policies is quite natural by the Pakistani folk.



Figure 5

English Translation: The government is snatching the 1000, 1000 rupees from poor (Bilawal Bhutto Zardari). The Poor People: Here is the list of wives of higher officers, gaining benefit from BISP.

This post is being taken in the recent report of identified cases of high ranked officers that their family members were acquiring supporting cash in the name of BISP (Benazir Income Support Program). The program was initiated to help the poor but the wives of officer ranked person were also getting benefit. The post is the satire by the Facebook user in a way that Chairman



PPP(Pakistan Peoples Party) Bilawal Bhutto is defending the BISP because the Government of Pakistan made revision of the lists of deserving people of the state. Through the discursive discourse, the Chairman is going to address the natives that the Government is very cruel that it is going to snatch 1000, 1000 rupees by the poor. The second part of the post illustrate that the list of the poor people is also whose husbands are gazette officers. The critical remarks and the ironical statement is also being remarked by the native of the country that the poor people 's husbands are officer in Pakistan who have no sympathy for the Pakistani nation and the wealth of Pakistan. The critical evaluation of the statement also shows that the founders of the program are defender of the program at any cast even knowing the misuse of the support program.

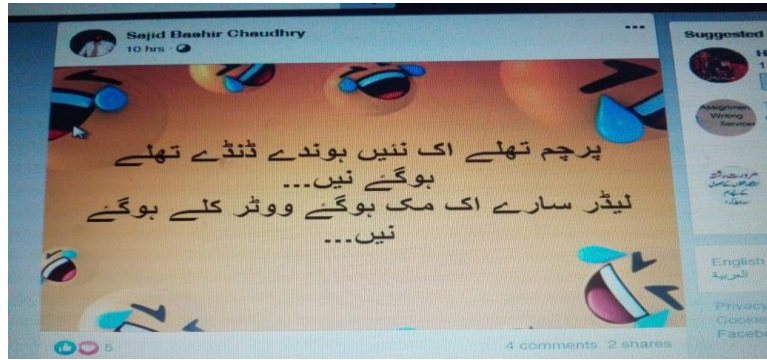


Figure 6

English Translation: Pakistani leaders are united but when there is threatened then they become united. The leaders of political parties are joined but the voters are separated and alone now. The current post is the Punjabi poetical description with the choices of different lexis that the leaders of Pakistani nation do not join under one flag as of Pakistan due their different interests and theologies but when they are being threatened by Army then they joined each other. Such situation described the separated minds and the gaps of the leaderships and the folk that they understand the situation of the political parties leaders that they could only be join together when they are being threatened by the powerful people known as establishment neither they are separated. The second part of the poetry show that the political leaders are not together on one issue by the supporters of the political parties is now alone and separated. They are not kept in concern because they were given different theologies. Fairclough says that through different choice of lexis, the ideologies are propagated but here the scenario is different because of freedom of thought and expression on social media. The narrator tries of illustrate that the supporters are being fooled by the political parties and are not given importance.

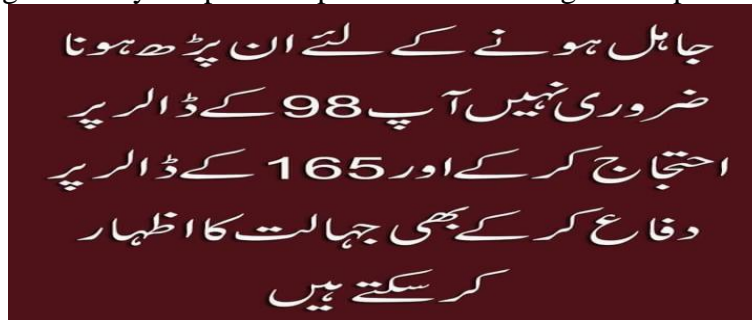


Figure 7

English Translation: being called as “Ignorant”, there is no need of uneducated; you can describe illiteracy after making protest when dollar was of 98 rupees and making defend of the dollar at the price of 165 rupees.

This post is being illustrated by the Facebook user to expose to see people who were happy to select and support the current political party for the government. But the supporters of this government were in opposition in the previous government. At that time, the dollar was cheap in price as compare to today but at that time, the government was criticized but now is being defended with the huge gaps in price. The narrator want to create the resistance against the theology of duality and the ground realities as the things were criticized when there were low price of the dollar but when there is increasing of the prices then the defend is being made. The illustrator calls as the ignorance of not accepting the realities. When the post is being observed critically, it also show that the satire is being made on the youth who is bit educated and supported the PTI in the election as it will provide more relieves to the natives. The narrator calls the supporters of the current government as the ignorant that they are not true in their claim and are false in defending the party. The ignorant behaviour can be described after defending such government in the case of price increasing rather being criticized. The devaluation of the currency in the tenure of current government does not meant before ground realities ignoring people.

**Conclusion:**

After whole discussion the study shows that there is presence of extreme resistance against the political ideologies among the Pakistani folks as they are not willing to accept the things on the basis of ground realities. The discussion of the study shows that there is huge gap between the natives of Pakistan and the political powering people of Pakistan. The resistance is being shown in a way that they do not seem agree with the political ideology of the parties rather than they have only been made as the playing tools to be played with these ideologies. The study also demonstrates that understanding of public in different situations is now different and the different angles are used to illustrate the situation.

## References

- Amedie, J. (2015). *The impact of Social Media on Society*. Santa Clara University.
- Barthes, R. (1974). *Mythologies*. New York: Wang.
- Bryan, V.(2006). *Information Technology Management*. Florida Atlantic University.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. London: Routledge.
- Figure1: Retrieved on January 2, 2020. Retrieved from <https://web.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=164111081525768&set=p.164111081525768&type=3&theater>
- Figure2: Retrieved on January 2, 2020. Retrieved from <https://web.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2560382460738441&set=p.2560382460738441&type=3&theater>
- Figure3: Retrieved on January 2, 2020. Retrieved from <https://web.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2537347996510530&set=p.2537347996510530&type=3&theater>
- Figure4: Retrieved on January 2, 2020. Retrieved from <https://web.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2441803562741168&set=gm.2995377840514410&type=3&theater&ifg=1>
- Figure5: Retrieved on January 2, 2020. Retrieved from <https://web.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2441786009409590&set=gm.2995330800519114&type=3&theater&ifg=1>
- Figure6: Retrieved on January 2, 2020. Retrieved from <https://web.facebook.com/618731421890885/photos/a.618734368557257/872728399824518/?type=3&theater&ifg=1>
- Figure7: Retrieved on January 2, 2020. Retrieved from <https://web.facebook.com/Sajidbashirch786/posts/2791869260893731>
- Figure8: Retrieved on January 2, 2020. Retrieved from <https://web.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1025971574405259&set=gm.1204878486384757&type=3&theater&ifg=1>
- Gay, L, R. (2012). *Educational Research*. Florida International University.
- Hamrita, M. (2016). A Critical Discourse Analysis of the representation of Islamists on Facebook pages in the post-revolution Tunisia. *Philology and Cultural Studies*. 9(58). 5-20
- Reggie, N. (2015). Social Media and the new Struggles of Young People against marginalization: a challenge to missional ecclesiology in Southern Africa. 1(2). 511-530.
- Saussure, F. de. (1916). *Course de Linguistique Generale*. Paris: Payot.
- Sutkute, R. (2016). Social Media as a tool of resistance or a new form of slacktivism. 1(10). 1-8.
- van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. London: Sage.
- Zubair, S., & Sajid, A. (2010). Semiotic Representations of Islam in the Western Media: CDA of an article in the Guardian Weekly. *The Journal of Humanities*. Retrieved on January 2, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Semiotic+Representations+of+Islam+in+the+Western+Media%3A+CDA+of+an...-a0276816814>.