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**Analysing Persuasion- Seeking Strategies in Pakistani TV Channel Logos:
A Multimodal Discourse Analysis – Based study**



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Abstract

Logos play an important role in the contemporary media that is highly commercialized. They serve as condensed multimodal texts to develop institutional identity and dissemination of certain explicit and implicit ideologies as desired by controlling ideological group. In this regard, the news channel logos are taken as the strategic semiotic tools of forming authority, recognition and competitive positioning. The data for the study has been collected from official logos of five major Pakistani news channels, the Geo News, ARY News, Dunya News, Samaa TV and Express News. The study employs a qualitative research approach which has been devised by drawing upon Ledin and Machin's (2020) Multimodal research model. It considers every logo as a communicative unit that does not depend on the audience response. The analysis of the data has been done at linguistic and semiotic levels. These levels include semiotic levels, color (hue, saturation, value), spatial composition (framing, symmetry, containment, layout) and typography (font weight, form, alignment). The findings of the study reveal that the use of visual imagery such as different colors are one of the important semiotic resources in the process of meaning-making. This technique embodies urgency, trust and prestige. Whereas, typography strengthens authority, accessibility and tonal positioning. Spatial structuring highlights institutional positioning in terms of balance, enclosure and visual hierarchy. The research contributes to the literature on the Pakistani media by showing that Multimodal discourse analysis (MMDA) can reveal the visually coded identities. It has a role in a wider media literacy by underlining the socio-institutional implications of design choices in modern communication practices. Moreover, it finds that TV channels logos are tactfully designed and are ideologically loaded. They are instrumental in positioning a certain ideological group as different other.

Key words: Multimodal Discourse analysis, News Channel Logos, Pakistani Electronic Media, Visual Communication, Institutional Identity

INTRODUCTION

Visual communication has become one of the most powerful forms of expression of identity, power and ideological orientation by the contemporary media institutions. At present communication is not monomodal rather has become multimodal in nature. In a world where digital and broadcast media run 24/7 and vie against one another to capture the attention of the audience. Visual signs like a logo are not only regarded as a decorative tool but as compact semiotic elements that convey institutional values and ideological bent of the controlling group. In a rapidly growing and vibrant television news industry in Pakistan, branding has become a strategic requirement. Each channel has to stand out in an environment that has been polarized politically, as well as competition in business and also changing audience loyalty. The logos in this landscape have become an integral part of any institution's significance and positive self-representation.

Despite the fact that visual branding is considered a fundamental aspect of media industries around the world, yet the ideological analysis of news-channel logos through the lens of multimodality in Pakistan is less explored domain. The previous

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literature has been inclined to concentrate on such aspects as marketing tactics, the psychology of the viewers and the content analysis in politics, without addressing the importance of visual semiotic components, which take place before the consumption of content. Multimodal discourse has become a fertile research domain internationally in the field of advertising (Machin, 2007), digital interfaces (Ledin and Machin, 2020) and corporate branding (van Leeuwen, 2011) but there is little use of these constructs in South Asian news media.

In Pakistan, where the news stations tend to be dominated by certain political affiliations, national discourses and ideological leanings, the logo is a very important semiotic space. Its design decisions, be it vivid or subdued, contemporary or conventional, commanding or informal, support and affirm the identity assigned to the institution by itself. The exploration of these options allows having a deeper insight into how visual means determine the perceptions of credibility, urgency, cultural belonging and institutional power.

The present study thus, critically decodes the logos of five leading Pakistani news media namely Geo News, ARY News, Dunya News, Samaa TV and Express News by using multimodal discourse analysis research approach of Ledin and Machin (2020). The study explores the multiplicity of color palettes, typographic forms and compositional strategies as they are used to construct ideological and institutional identities of these channels.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Research and Background

At present the research on multimodal discourse and media studies has become a research hot spot. Theorists have acknowledged that communication is executed in a variety of semiotic techniques instead of through the prism of linguistic forms. The theory of the linguistic communication was formulated by M.A.K. Halliday in 1978. Halliday did not discuss visual texts but his theoretical work formed the foundation of subsequent multimodal theories, which held that meaning is a product of patterned choices in a system of possible options. The present study differs by applying social semiotic principles to analyze TV channel logos at linguistic and semiotic levels. van Leeuwen (2011) provided comprehensive theoretical formulation of color as a semiotic resource. Through visual examples in cross-cultural aspects, he showed how hue, value and saturation convey metaphorical associations e.g. trust, danger, transparency and authority. This piece of work is directly informative to the current research since it offers methods of interpretation of how color decisions in news logos between Pakistani news such as high-saturation reds or low-value blues, encode ideological positioning and institutional identity. While comprehensive, it remained theoretical and did not examine institutional logos, which the present study effectively does. The current research isolates logos as primary ideological site and examines how Pakistani news channels encode power and identity through their choices.

In 2020, Per Ledin and David Machin published *Introduction to Multimodal Analysis* (2nd edition) that replaced the metafunctional theory of multimodal research with a systematic system of inventories. Their model divides semiotics resources (which include color, hue, value) typography (weight, shape, proportion) and layout into socially based choices instead of abstract symbols. Hafeez's (2016) is one of the first empirical studies of Pakistani news-channel branding, and the analysis of brand personality is based on the survey of viewers and the evaluation of promotional

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materials. Results showed that some of the channels like Geo News and Bol News use different visual techniques in accordance with their editorial appearances, e.g. bold letters with a sense of professionalism and saturated reds with a sense of confrontation.

A multimodal critical analysis of Pakistani comedy talk-show logos conducted by Akram, Barkat and Tariq in 2022 based on visual samples on broadcast and online platforms. Their approach was a multimodal analysis coupled with critical discourse tools to show that, even entertainment-based logos contain ideological implications concerning modernity, tradition and social identity. In 2022, Pakistani adverts were analyzed in semiotic and multimodal pattern by Kayani. They used both print and digital advertisements as ad samples to investigate typography and color in terms of expression of classes, genders and cultural meanings. They reported that the selection of visual designs is not neutral but rather pegged on larger social values and power systems.

Operational Definitions of Key Terms

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA): A methodological theory that looks at the way meaning is being constructed by using various semiotic modes; such as visual, linguistic, spatial and material characteristics within particular social settings (Ledin and Machin, 2020).

Semiotic Resources: Communication tools that are developed within the society and are available as a cultural resource (Kress, 2010). These resources include color, typography, layout, texture and spatial organization. Such resources are not context specific and carry different interpretations in different contexts.

Logo: A short graphic mark used to represent an institution that ciphers using its design characteristics symbolic, cultural and ideological meanings. Here logos are not just viewed as branding tools but as texts that are multimodal.

Institutional Identity:

The elicited ethos, authority, professionalism and ideological position of a news entity as conveyed by visual choices of design, without depending on linguistic communication.

Theoretical Framework

The present research is based on a multimodal and social semiotic approach of analysis:

Halliday's Social Semiotic Theory (1978):

Halliday considers communication as socially contextual and a matter of choice. The meaning is produced out of possible options and not predetermined constructs. This view assists in examining how news logos represent institutional identity and positioning in terms of ideology using semiotic resources.

Kress and van Leeuwen's Grammar of Visual Design (1996; 2006):

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This theory extends Halliday's metafunctions i.e. ideational, interpersonal and textual, to visual communication. It provides tools for examining representation, interaction and composition in images, emphasizing that visual design is culturally oriented.

Ledin and Machin's Multimodal Framework (2020):

Ledin and Machin focused on the inventory of semiotic resources, considering such elements of the material world as color, typeface and layout to be routinized by society. On the whole, these frames enable the work to view Pakistani news logos through the ideologically expressive semiotic lens that compress institutional identity, political orientation and communicative ethos.

Conceptual Framework

The present research applies Multimodal Social Semiotic lens to study the news logos in terms of two categories of analysis:

Social Analysis:

It explores the way in which Pakistani news logos are institutionalized identities, forms of political positioning and communicative ethos in a social and cultural setting. Linguistic and Visual Semiotic Analysis:

It analyses visual and textual mediums like color, typography, layout and composition and the way in which the semiotic resources are used to produce ideological meanings. It can be inferred that news logos are ideologically loaded texts.

Research Questions

The present study attempts to answer the following research questions:

What visual and verbal resources are used in the logos of the selected TV channels?

How are different ideologies propagated discursively through the logos of selected Pakistani news media?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study employs a qualitative research design, which is based on the Multimodal Discourse Analysis research approach by Hodge and Kress (2006). It is an interpretive, qualitative study that seeks to understand how the semiotic resources used in news channel logos convey institutional identity, power and ideology. It focuses on decoding logo as a multimodal text, the meaning of which is formed through the intentional use of color, typography and composition. The analytical categories used in the present study include back grounding, fore grounding, color symbolism, framing and use of multimodality as an ideological cue.

Data Selection and Collection

The purposive sampling approach was used to select the top five Pakistani news media in the country: **Geo News, ARY News, Dunya News, Samaa TV and Express News**. These media outlets were chosen because they are representative of Pakistani electronic media. Images of each logo were collected from official broadcasts and available archives on the channels. It was solely focused on a still picture of logos to assure analytical attention to semiotic composition instead of focusing on motion effects.

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Analytical Framework

The study is based on the multimodal analytical frame work by **Ledin and Machin (2020)** according to which semiotic resources can be systematically categorized into the following three categories:

Colour

Hue

Value

Saturation

Typography

Typeface weight

Serif vs. Sans-serif form

Curvature, angularity and geometric structure

Composition

Framing

Spatial hierarchy

Balance, symmetry and arrangement

Social Semiotic Analysis

Within the interpretations of social semiotic tradition developed by Halliday and subsequent extensions of the theory by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the analysis of the study presents semiotic choices as motivated by social reasons as opposed to accidental aesthetics. There were two dimensions of meaning in which interpretation was organized:

Institutional Identity

The way visual decisions convey visual values like credibility, professionalism, cultural alignment, authority or accessibility.

Ideological Positioning

It is an attempt to find out how color typography and layout are used to convey some form of urgency, neutrality, nationalism or modernity in the socio-political media environment of Pakistan.

ANALYSIS

Ledin and Machin (2020) are of the view the slogans and logos are important identity markers of media outlets. They are very craftily designed to convey the underlying ideology of the controlling media group. Similarly, it is observed that Pakistani news outlets, namely Geo News, ARY News, Dunya News, Samaa TV and Express News, form the institutional identity and ideological positioning by employing strategic uses of visual semiotic tools. Being multimodal in composition logos are based on a system of color, typography and compositional structure which convey meanings. They argue that color is also one of the most powerful semiotic tools in the logos of these news channels. Colors in visual communication form strong cultural codes. Warm colors, especially red and orange are linked with speed, energy and dynamism. Cool colors, on the other hand, like blue and gray, are associated with the sense of

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calmness, neutrality, power and professionalism.

Marcel (2011) maintains that the use of visual and verbal practices in in media communication has become almost inevitable and they are used to make the process of meaning making more comprehensible. Typography is one of the important persuasive feature of media discourses. Similarly, it is observed that fonts are also loaded with cultural, ideological and aesthetic meaning. They are, most often taken as the index of the personality and communicative ethos of a given institution. The use of bold, geometric lettering can be interpreted as the power and professionalism, whereas less bold, rounded fonts can be perceived as friendly or approachable. Typography in news logos is therefore not just a way of giving a linguistic meaning but also a symbol of institutional style. It is obvious from the text under analysis that there is composition of hierarchy, balance, symmetry, framing and spatial segmentation. These spatial decisions affect the interpretation of the viewer by regulating the movement of the visual and creating a center of interest.



Geo News

Marcel Danisey (2011) opines that the use of color symbolism plays an important role in enhancing the effect of multimodal communication and color connotations are context specific. Likewise, it is obvious from the logo under analysis that Geo News achieves the dynamic by its bold use of orange and blue. The orange color of the top curve of the logo is associated with the momentum, creativity and speedy spread of information and the dark blue of the bottom part of the logo is the contrast to the active color to the feeling of reliability and journalistic honesty. The central white circle which seems to be an eye or a pupil makes associations with clarity, transparency and purity even greater. The whole chromatic composition is presented against a clean white backdrop giving an impression of a fusing of vibrancy and trust. Such a combination of warm and cool colors is a visual metaphor of a news company that has to be energetic in its reporting and also reliable in its presentation.

This energy is depicted in the typography of the Geo News logo. The text is written in a dense, solid Urdu typeface whose geometric form exudes authority and perhaps the journalistic weightiness. The strokes are heavy, which indicates perseverance and clarity, which supports the impression of stability, which is also supplemented by the blue element of the logo.

Ledin and Machin (2020) demonstrated that framing in multimodal communication is never neutral. Ideological messages are framed very tactfully to achieve the desired goals and to promote the product. Similarly, it is obvious that the Geo News logo has visual symmetry and balance which is achieved by the centrally placed eye-like object surrounded by contrasting curved shapes. Circular patterns may represent unity, continuity and attention. This compositional arrangement promotes the identity of the channel as one which observes everything and is on the alert.

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ARY News

Kress (2006) identified that visual imagery is an important semiotic tool to propagate desired ideology to the target audience. In this regard, the use of different colors in a balanced manner is of vital importance. In this regard it is noticed that ARY News applies a palette of black, red and gold that is in a dramatically contrasting palette. The upper part of the logo is anchored by black, which has traditionally been associated with authority, firmness and professionalism. Red, which is used under it, implies a sense of urgency and immediacy, which are qualities of breaking news. The use of gold color at the boundary gives it a prestigious touch of excellence and high standards of journalism. This three-color palette enables ARY to create a self-assertive, aggressive and interventionist positioning among other TV channels logos. The semiotic tools employed highlight that the channel is a strong player in the media industry that has authority and asserts its capability to provide latest information with speed and impact.

Hodge (2006) affirms that in visual grammar the use of low and high angle implies the concept value and urgency. It is pertinent to mention here that in the logo of ARY News, boldness of the typeface in upper case letters creates modernity, accuracy and assertiveness. The clean lines of the typography also reflect the strict lines of the rectangular shape of the logo with its focus on discipline and clarity. The ARY News has a hierarchical arrangement which is formed by a stacked rectangular arrangement. The red rectangle with NEWS is placed at the top of the black rectangle with ARY, which creates a disciplined, stable and reliable formation. The gold flourish in the boundary of the logo symbolizes aspiration and ambition which adds to the impression of upward movement and growth. The overall impression which emerges from the analysis of the logo under analysis is that this particular TV channel is very much alive and updating itself according to the changing scenario across the globe.



Dunya News

Ledin and Machin (2020) illustrated that semiotics are context oriented. They are designed accordingly to catch the attention of maximum viewers. For this purpose, different linguistic moves are used including the use of bilingualism as well. Similarly, it is obvious from the analysis of the logo of Dunya News. It adopts a bold

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Urdu script in a speech-bubble shape. Foresight with Urdu puts languages and cultures on the forefront, solidifying the brand in the Pakistani cultural identity. Typography in this case is an indicator of national appropriateness. The logo of Dunya News is in the form of a speech-bubble, which may connote dialogue and social debate. The form gives an impression of openness and the communicative nature of news media. The Urdu script is centrally positioned in this bubble and this adds a sense of balance and inclusivity.

The addition of the tagline “ ” expands the semiotic load of the logo beyond its visual and typographic elements. The phrase functions as a verbal anchoring device that reinforces the channel’s claim to comprehensive news coverage which means “a whole world of news”. By using Urdu, the slogan strengthens the national-cultural alignment already established through the script of the main logo which ensures that the communicative message remains rooted in the linguistic identity of the Pakistani audience. The placement of the tagline beneath the speech-bubble icon also contributes compositionally to the hierarchy of meaning. Positioned as a supporting textual layer, it stabilizes the visual structure and guides the viewer’s reading path downward, which creates a coherent flow of ideas and information to the target audience as propagated by this media group.



Samaa TV

Fairclough (2003) maintained that media discourses are contextually structured and propagated to be comprehended by large number of the people. He argues that media discourses create audience qualitatively and quantitatively. Similarly, it is obvious from the logo under analysis that Samaa TV is a bilingual TV channel with the use of Urdu and English. Such combination of scripts implies an appeal to a wide range of viewers and indicates the channel that wants to attract both the traditional and the modern audiences. The use of blue color is widely associated with trust, authority, stability and professionalism. While typography represents clarity and truthfulness. This is done to make the desired message more prominent for the target audience. The contrast between blue background and white text ensures readability and gives impression of clean and straightforward communication which is a very essential feature of good news organization. Similarly, the stylized word “ سماء ” uses a modern geometric script which blends modernity and tradition. English word “SAMAA” indicates global connection using capital letters which signal authority and importance. It also implies that every piece of news aired from this channel is worth listening.

Machin (2020) highlighted those framing techniques employed in multimodal communication make the process of meaning making more persuasive. It is obvious that the horizontal two band format of Samaa TV gives an impression of stability and consistency. Horizontal divisions tend to create a sense of breath, tranquility and neutrality, which has become a characteristic feature of news broadcasting. This

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structural balance is in line with the bilingual text and it generates a cohesive and inclusive design. It is an ideological move to create linguistic solidarity with viewers.



Express News

Dijk (2009) notes that the use of different typo graphic techniques to highlight the underlying ideology is a prominent feature of media discourses. He believes that no use of linguistic move in media discourses is neutral. According to him everything is said against something unsaid. It is obvious from the logo of Express TV channel that it has made a use a lower case English word 'express' in modern sans-serif font and bold Urdu word underneath it, نیوز, in a grey white rectangle and the tagline (keeping an eye on every news) ہر خبر پر نظر, which its journalist nature. The lower-case English is focused on the accessibility and friendliness whereas the heavier Urdu prepositions the brand into the local cultural norms. Similarly, it be seen that horizontal panels are used in Express News but in a clear contrast. The red band is very striking and this positions the channel as a fast, alert and high-activity news organization which is full of vim and vigor to provide latest and authentic news and views to the audience. While the gray below is somewhat soft and so the urgency and professionalism are both kept implied. The horizontal segmentation eloquently conveys the identity of the channel as an energetic but stable provider of the timely information. The word "نیوز" in **traditional naskh** style Urdu font signals local cultural identity of this particular TV channel. The tagline (an eye on every news) positions this channel as a guardian over news narratives and ideologically constructs it as a watchman. It implies that this TV channel feels it as a responsibility to keep its viewers updated with authentic news. It has wide range and magical style of news coverage. This is how it has positioned itself superior to other channels.

The overall impression which emerges from the analysis of the selected data reveals that the use of visual and verbal practices used in the logos include the **use of color**, typography and composition. This is done to make logos ideologically loaded and multimodal in nature. Through the use of these devices the logos turn into ideological texts which present institutional narrative strategies. They combine visual materials to construct their positive image, which means a description of what kind of journalism they would like to be i.e., an urgent, neutral, authoritative, modern, culturally rooted or communicative. Besides, these visual semiotic strategies are not independent of their socio-cultural background. The Pakistani media is an industry that functions in a competitive political environment. The channels have to maneuver the politics, ideological demands and the necessity to gain the audience trust. Accordingly, the analysis reveals that the Pakistani news channels and their visual preferences can be seen as the institutional values and they are very effective in shaping public perception.

Findings and Conclusion

The present study was undertaken to find out what visual and verbal practices are used in selected TV channel logos of Pakistan and what ideology is disseminated through the multimodal nature of TV channel logos. The study employed a devised model to analyze the data at linguistic and semiotic levels. The findings of the study reveal that there are clear and conscious patterns in the application of visual semiotic resources by the Pakistani news channels to create an institutional identity and ideological tone. These results demonstrate that the logos of Geo News, ARY News, Dunya News, Samaa TV and Express News are ideological signs that strategically use color, typography and layout to shape the perception of people and to promote self-projection in the competitive scenario. The use of visual practices in the logos includes use of color imagery, typographic techniques, foregrounding and backgrounding, visual coherence, persuasive language, playing with the psyche of the target audience and personification technique.

Still another important linguistic move is the use of spatial composition. The stacked rectangles, which ARY uses, show hierarchy and institutional order. The horizontal lines of the Express News create the impression of immediacy with the help of a high level of chromatic contrast. The speech-bubble design of Dunya News represents communication and transparency of dialogue. The symmetrical and balanced structure of Geo brings a feeling of the vigilance and insight. The neutrality and stability are conveyed in horizontal banding at Samaa.

Lastly, the study observes that cultural relevance has been interwoven in every logo. These logos can appeal to Pakistani audiences with the help of Urdu script, symbolic shapes and colors, related to national sentiment. The visual branding is therefore an important weapon in bargaining identity in a competitive and politically sensitive news world. These multimodal techniques indicate that visual branding is not neutral at all, but an ideologically biased mode of communication that influences the interpretations of authority and credibility of news organizations among the audience. The study affirms Fairclough's (2003) stance that media discourses are one of the best sites for ideological investment.

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