



## REPRESENTATION OF FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN REGIME CHANGE OF PAKISTAN: A MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED CARICATURES

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### ABSTRACT

*The study aims to investigate the representation of foreign interference in regime change of Pakistan through the multimodal Analysis of Selected Caricatures. The study is qualitative and interpreted in its nature. The data was collected through purposive sampling. Moreover, the cartoonists working for The Dawn and The News used neutral semiotic features. These features affect the political image or ideology of the government in a significant amount or in a negative way. On the other side, it can be seen that the caricatures were more embarrassing for the politician addressing the change in government (regime change through conspiracy). Thus, according to its policy, the media are working for and against the government. The News and Dawn have shown aspects of a plot to overthrow the current government in Pakistan that may come into existence via an international conspiracy. This study concludes that media (through cartoons) represents its ideology with a neutral image, again, a manipulation of reality for a commoner to know the truth. A chaotic and ambiguous situation has been created through media for the audience. The study is significant in analyzing the media stance towards any social change in society in a lighter mode.*

**Keywords:** Foreign Interference, Semiotics, Political Ideology, Caricatures, Media

### INTRODUCTION

Newspapers' cartoons are considered an essential source of information. Cartoonists used these cartoons as a form of political satire and social commentary. In the past, these cartoons were explored using verbal devices only, and there was a need for visual interpretation to understand the hidden meanings of the sketch in the Pakistani context. This study has explored the intended purposes of published cartoons by using a non-

verbal device named visual metaphor. The research may be beneficial for understanding the impact of visual metaphors in political cartoons and how these metaphors help people understand the political ideologies of different political parties in Pakistan. The research may help those scholars who want to conduct their research in editorial cartoons using linguistic devices such as metaphors. This study may also be helpful to all linguists and research scholars in the way that they find the semiotic device, visual metaphor, as a key to exploring cartoons and other genera of infotainment. They may find that the semiotic device visual metaphor is critical to exploring cartoons and videos. This research may provide suggestions to linguists and scholars on how to use linguistic devices to explore non-verbal genres (Azhar et al., 2021).

The research is expected to give valuable practical contributions to the critical discourse analysis field, especially semiotic discourse analysis. Practically, the result of this research will become one of the sources in linguistics that focus on multimodal discourse analysis. This research will contribute the language to the existing media discourse and give more knowledge about sign language, which contributes to exploring the hidden ideologies of some particular groups.

### **Research Questions**

1. How do the English Newspapers in Pakistan use caricatures to expound the political ideology through caricatures?
2. Which semiotic and linguistic choices are used in media to show its intentions towards the existing political situation in Pakistan through caricatures?

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Despite being an essential tool for humans and an essential part of our lives, language is just one of many possible systems for producing meaning. Many other systems could be used. It is possible to measure various other methods, some intertwined with language, while others function solely to supplement purpose. According to Gee, the most crucial mode of communication in digital media is not limited to the use of the English language; instead, visual symbols and signals are just as important. Web pages, newspapers, magazines, and textbooks incorporate words, images, and colour to correct perception. This is true even in

the case of books. As a result of the increasing reliance placed on a diverse collection of semiotic resources for the projection of meaning, communication is unavoidably evolving into a more multimodal form. As evidence supporting this claim, Halliday (4) states that "...many other modes of meaning exist outside the world of language, and these modes can work independently or interdependently on different levels within a multimodal text." Gee emphasizes that each of these semiotic modes or genres has its own unique set of rules and conditions and that these rules and conditions can also function as a meaning repertoire. This study intends to investigate the pragmatic consequences, as well as determine the visual cues that are associated with visual elements (Mhamdi, 2017; Mowafy, 2022; Omosebi, 2021; Sari & Noverino, 2021).

Researchers have found success using semiotics as a helpful technique for many years. After researching the subject, several academic semiotics are utilized not only to build social agendas, ideologies, and concepts but also to govern the thoughts of individuals. The print media provided ample space for accomplishing this goal. Cartoons and caricatures shown in the media significantly influenced people's thinking by simplifying complex issues and presenting them efficiently for all viewers to grasp.

### **Research Methodology**

The present research is the semiotic analysis of political caricatures. These caricatures are used to propagate a specific political ideology. A prominent Pakistani English newspaper used these caricatures. These Newspapers are "The Nation, The News International, The Express Tribune and Dawn. The researcher used a qualitative method of research in this research. The researcher aims at a semiotic analysis of these political caricatures to decode the hidden meanings of these political caricatures according to the title of this research, "Representation of Foreign Interference in Regime Change of Pakistan".

The present research is based on the semiotic analysis of political caricatures having regime change ideology. The researcher took parodies from prominent Pakistani English Newspapers. The researcher tried his best to make the data valid and reliable. He used random sampling techniques to collect caricatures published in prominent Pakistani English Newspapers.

## Newspapers

The researcher considered the following points for the selection of Newspapers.

- The researcher selected “The News International” due to international recognition of the Newspaper.
- The researcher selected “The Nation” due to a leading media group.
- The researcher selected “The Express Tribune” due to a prominent Pakistani English Newspaper.
- The researcher selected “The Dawn News” due to admittance of its maximum readership.

The researcher selected all these Pakistani English Newspapers because these are the most influential media groups.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher used the following models to analyze the selected caricatures of English newspapers of Pakistan.

According to Lakoff, a metaphor always includes a topic or target and a vehicle, a source to which the mark is metaphorically compared. The combination of these two elements constitutes a metaphor. Therefore, "love" serves as the target domain in the expression "battlefield of love," while "battlefield" serves as the source domain.

The researcher used Pierce’s (1903) semiotic analysis method. Pierce’s (1903) theory of signs presented three forms of warning: Icon, Index and Symbol. Pierce said that an Icon is the direct presentation of an object. He said an Index is a logical statement about the described thing. He explained that symbol is culturally adopted meanings about an object. Pierce said that, through Icons, Index and Symbol, we can easily interpret an image and analyze hidden purposes of an image. This analysis helps the researcher to analyze political caricatures and ideologies hidden in these caricatures.

Kress and Leeuwen (2006) social semiotic modal, an effective modal for Multimodal Analysis of caricatures. The researcher used this modal to analyze the social meanings of these caricatures. This modal allows the researcher to analyze an image in multiple ways. In

this way, the researcher can explore the embedded implications of these caricatures. The researcher applied this theory because he wanted to analyze the social belongings of these caricatures.

The present research utilizes a qualitative approach; hence, data were analyzed accordingly. In the current study, four English Pakistani newspapers (The Dawn, The Express Tribune, The Nation, and The News International) cartoons were analyzed for the visual analysis of caricatures published in mentioned newspapers from March to May 2022. The researcher conducted a detailed study of data based on data collected through a random sampling technique. Eighteen cartoons were analyzed during this research from selected Pakistani English newspapers. The findings were generalized based on a study conducted on chosen comics. The researcher collected the data from four English newspapers from March to May 2022 using Internet sources. Cartoons from four leading newspapers (Dawn, The Express Tribune, The Nation, and The News International) have been selected for the present research.

### ANALYSIS OF CARICATURES



### **Caricature 5: The News International, May 6, 2022.**

#### **4.6 Semiotic Analysis of Caricature 5**

In caricature 5, a person is visible with the words “FOREIGN CONSPIRACY” in right hand and “GOVT TO FORM COMMISSION TO PROB ALLEGED FOREIGN CONSPIRACY BEHIND IMRAN KHAN OUSTER: MARRIUM AURANGZEB” in left hand with long nose and falling cap on his head and his hair in the air shows intense anger of the man.

##### **4.6.1 Source and Target Domain**

In this caricature, “GOVT TO FORM COMMISSION TO PROBE, ALLEGED FOREIGN CONSPIRACY BEHIND IMRAN KHAN OUSTER: MARRIUM AURANGZEB”, is the source domain and “FOREIGN CONSPIRACY” which is affected by the letter (holding the cartoon in the present picture), is the target domain.

##### **4.6.2 Icon**

Words “GOVT TO FORM COMMISSION TO PROBE ALLEGED FOREIGN CONSPIRACY BEHIND IMRAN KHAN OUSTER MARRIUM AURANGZEB” are collectively making the statement that the government is making the commission upon the claim of former Prime Minister and the word “FOREIGN CONSPIRACY” is fading up now because the balloon is losing its air. In this figure, the cartoonist depicts the country’s present situation—specifically, the former Prime Minister’s narrative about his government's fall through conspiracy.

##### **4.6.3 Index**

The exaggeration represents the sweeping statements of the politicians, as the former Prime Minister is blaming the USA for the fall of his government through conspiracy.

##### **4.6.4 Symbol**

The conspiracy is a symbol of regime change in Pakistan. But in this picture, it resembles the fair of a powerful country, which means that the influence of that country is a big reason behind its bad socio-political conditions.

#### 4.6.5 Social Semiotic Analysis

In this caricature, a person is visible with the words “FOREIGN CONSPIRACY” in right hand and “GOVT TO FORM COMMISSION TO PROB ALLEGED FOREIGN CONSPIRACY BEHIND IMRAN KHAN OUSTER: MARRIUM AURANGZEB” in the left hand with a long nose and falling cap on his head and his hair in the air shows intense anger of the man. In this caricature, the person with a losing cap and long nose is an Ex-prime minister. He is holding a balloon that is losing air. He has the words “FOREIGN CONSPIRACY”, which is the former Prime Minister’s narrative that he left his Prime Minister’s office through foreign conspiracy. The letter on the left hand, which is from Information Minister Maryam Aurangzeb’s statement, is “GOVT TO FORM COMMISSION TO PROBE ALLEGED FOREIGN CONSPIRACY BEHIND IMRAN KHAN OUSTER.” In this caricature, the cartoonist wants to explain that the former Prime Minister is angry due to the Foreign Minister’s statement, and his narrative is losing its importance. The artist is trying to explore the whole political scenario. The former Prime Minister lost his office through a vote of no-confidence, and he blamed Foreign Conspiracy by America because he had not obeyed America’s orders to give air bases for armed operations in Afghanistan. Still, at the same time, the new govt is not ready to accept his narrative. It explains that the former Prime Minister is unhappy with the Information Minister’s Statement. He is angry because the balloon is losing air, which means he is losing his narrative of conspiracy against his government.

The Nation



**Caricature 6: The Nation, May 10, 2022.**

#### **4.7 Semiotic Analysis of Caricature 6**

In this caricature, a man holds tightly a letter with the written word conspiracy. He is sitting on the chair, which is the symbol of the Prime Minister's chair. It shows that man is not ready to leave the Prime Minister's seat.

##### **4.7.1 Source and Target Domain**

In this caricature, the word "conspiracy" depicts that it is the main reason behind regime change in Pakistan. However, while the regime change is the target domain, the source domain attracts the cartoonists to create such cartoons for the general public because the present government is not facilitating low-income people.

##### **4.7.2 Icon**

In this caricature, a man sitting on the chair resembles the national assembly member holding it. Moreover, it asserts that Pakistan is facing the issue of foreign involvement in the internal matters of Pakistan.



### 4.7.3 Index

The line “conspiracy” refers towards the gap between the government and foreign conspiracy. However, the population cannot choose their national assembly members, and the members of the national assembly are also not able to vote for electing the government.

### 4.7.4 Symbol

A man standing in a national dress with a smiling face seems ironic. In this figure, the government is relieving people with low incomes, but the family, on the other hand, seems worried as the relief package is out of their reach. It means the government cannot provide facilities to its population during the pandemic. In this, the cartoonist exposes the government as it failed to facilitate its population.

### 4.7.5 Social Semiotic Analysis

The present caricatures describe the government’s situation. The man sitting on the chair resembles the former Prime Minister, who tightly holds a letter with words of conspiracy. The cartoonist depicts that he is not ready to leave his Prime Minister’s chair, and tightly controlling the letter shows that he firmly stands by his narrative of a foreign conspiracy. The present situation also describes that the former Prime Minister only thinks about his Prime Minister’s chair and is not concerned with other problems of his country. Pakistan is a developing country and faces numerous problems like inflation, health issues, educational problems of the people, unemployment, corruption and other structural problems. During the fearful situation in Pakistan, the former Prime Minister only concentrated on his chair.

Through this artwork, the artist attempts to illustrate the predicament in his homeland and the influence that more developed nations have on less developed countries such as Pakistan. Since the former Prime Minister was quoted as saying, "America has done conspiracy against my government," the primary heading of the figure made it possible to interpret it symbolically. When a country is already subject to the influence of other nations and economies, assisting other nations and economies is more challenging when those other nations are in better circumstances.

The political philosophy being figuratively spread through this cartoon is that Pakistan is not a sovereign state with the ability to make its own choices but instead that it is

subject to the sway of a superpower that determines Pakistan's course of action. This view is being propagated through the use of the cartoon. This great country's decisions will positively and negatively affect the people there. It has been said that a picture is worth a thousand words, mainly when the image is being used to illustrate something.

The Nation



**Caricature 7: The Nation, May 13, 2022.**

#### **4.8 Semiotic Analysis of Caricature 7**

In caricature 7, a person is visible with the words “MY EXILE ENDS... AGAIN!” and “REGIME CHANGE”, highlighting Ex-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The cartoonist wants to deliver the ex-prime minister’s message through a regime change operation. The former Prime Minister left his office by a no-confidence motion, and I am coming to Pakistan. So, my exile ends again.

##### **4.8.1 Source and Target Domain**

In this caricature, the word “REGIME CHANGE” is the source domain, and the person with the words “MY EXILE ENDS AGAIN”, who is the Ex-Prime Minister, resembles the target domain ss

#### 4.8.2 Icon

The words “MY EXILE ENDS... AGAIN! and REGIME CHANGE” state that the Ex-prime Minister is happy about regime change. He thinks that due to the regime change operation, he will be able to move toward Pakistan, and his exile ends again because he already faced expulsion in Pakistani political history.

#### 4.8.3 Index

The exaggeration represents the sweeping statements of the politicians as the Former Prime Minister is blaming the USA for the fall of his government through conspiracy.

#### 4.8.4 Symbol

The present caricature symbolizes the current political scenario in Pakistan. One former Prime Minister of Pakistan left his office and tried to develop a narrative of a regime change operation against his government. It means that he is not happy in the present situation. On the other hand, an Ex-Prime Minister is pleased with this situation. His flying position in the air shows that he is comfortable, and soon, he may come to Pakistan, and his exile may end again. Both have no concern with the wrong social and economic position of Pakistan.

#### 4.8.5 Social Semiotic Analysis

In this Caricature, a person is visible with the words “MY EXILE ENDS... AGAIN! and REGIME CHANGE”, highlighting Ex-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The cartoonist wants to deliver the ex-prime minister’s message through a regime change operation. The former Prime Minister left his office by a no-confidence motion, and I am coming to Pakistan. So, my exile ends again.

The words “MY EXILE ENDS... AGAIN! and REGIME CHANGE” state that the Ex-prime Minister is happy about regime change. He thinks that due to the regime change operation, he will be able to move toward Pakistan, and his exile ends again because he already faced expulsion in Pakistani political history. The cartoonist wants to say that no one concentrates on Pakistan’s wrong economic and social position. Politicians only think about their benefits. One politician thinks his exile will end and he can get the Prime Minister’s chair again. While the other politician is not ready to leave his office and blames the USA for

foreign conspiracy against his government, no one is ready to solve numerous problems of his country.



**Caricature 8: The Express Tribune, March 29, 2022.**

#### 4.9 Semiotic Analysis of Caricature 8

In caricature 8, a person is visible with the words “ABRACADABRA!” and “LETTER”. This caricature has two sides. On one side, a man stands with a stick and a cap, resembling a magician. On the other side of the joke, the same person drops a pigeon from the lid, and the pigeon has a letter in its mouth.

##### 4.9.1 Source and Target Domain

On one side of this caricature, the person holding a cap and a stick is the source domain, while on the other side of the joke, a pigeon carrying a letter in his mouth is the target domain.

##### 4.9.2 Icon

The words “ABACADABRA! AND LETTER” collectively make the National Security Council statement that there is no conspiracy. In this figure, the cartoonist is depicting the country’s present situation—specifically, the narrative of the former Prime Minister about the fall of his government through the conspiracy.

### 4.9.3 Index

The exaggeration represents the sweeping statements of the former Prime Minister blaming the USA for the fall of his government through conspiracy.

### 4.9.4 Symbol

The conspiracy is a symbol of regime change in Pakistan. In this picture, a letter in the hands of a standing person symbolizes the former Prime Minister's narrative of a foreign conspiracy against his government. He blamed the USA for a conspiracy against his government.

### 4.9.5 Social Semiotic Analysis

The present caricature describes the foreign conspiracy narrative of the former Prime Minister and the political scenario after the fall of his government. On one side of this caricature, a person standing in a three-piece suit and holding a cap and a stick resembles a magician. He will unfold some crucial things out of this cap with his post. He seems to be speaking, and his words are "ABRACADABRA!". On the other side of this caricature, the same person stands with the same cap. He drops out a pigeon. The pigeon has a letter in its mouth. The whole farce describes the foreign conspiracy narrative of the former Prime Minister against his government. He blamed the USA for the fall of his government. Pakistan is a developing country and faces numerous problems like corruption, unemployment, inflation, health and educational problems. Pakistan gets debt from powerful countries like the USA through US aid. It means that Pakistan is already under the influence of the USA and other developed countries. A country which is already under the result of a nation. How can it blame this country for foreign conspiracy against him? It means the former Prime Minister's narrative of Foreign conspiracy is weak and unconvincing.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the cartoonists working for The Dawn, The News, The Nation and The Express Tribune used different semiotic features. These features did not destroy the political image or ideology of the government in a significant amount or in a negative way, as illustrated by the caricatures that were previously mentioned. On the other side, it can be seen that the jokes were more embarrassing for the politician addressing the change in government.

This suggested that these media work for anti-politician agendas, which is a shame. The difference in the methods of seduction used by “The Dawn, The Express Tribune, The Nation and The News International revealed that the cartoons published do not significantly influence the viewers' ideal approach to the propagation of political ideology, whereas the comics posted metaphorically opposed to the government in their depiction of the situation. On the other hand, all of "The News, The Express Tribune, The Nation and The Dawn" have shown aspects of a plot to overthrow the current government in Pakistan via an international conspiracy.

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