

Identity Construction of Malala Yousafzai in the Media: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Editorials in Two Pakistani English Newspapers

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Abstract

This study compares the media constructions of Malala Yousafzai in two Pakistani English newspapers, *The News International* and *Daily Times* vis-à-vis the events that occurred during three stages of her life. The study identifies these as “Malala the Taliban’s target and Nobel laureate”, and “Malala the United Nations Messenger of Peace”. Employing Fairclough’s CDA, it probes the ideological representations of these events in these newspapers’ editorials. The findings suggest that both newspapers constructed Malala’s positive identity during all three stages. However, in so doing, the use of a particular clause structure and lexis employed in these editorials helped one newspaper avoid naming the Taliban in a determinate term. Hence, this served to mitigate the Taliban’s “agency” as perpetrators. The other newspaper, by availing the same method of representation, pushed its political agendas and appeared to toe a similar line as some Western newspapers do on certain burning issues of international significance.

Keywords: *identity construction, Malala Yousafzai and the Taliban, media discourses, transitivity analysis*

Introduction

The relationship between the Pakistani English press and Malala Yousafzai has undergone dynamic changes ever since she received the Nobel Peace Prize on October 10, 2014. The more popular she grew internationally, the more controversial she became in her native country. Thomas and Shukul (2016) maintain that, with the passage of time, many people in Pakistan “largely sympathetic with the girl ‘who was shot’ [by the Taliban], harboured lingering doubts about the intent of glorification of Malala by the Anglo- American media” (p. 3). Interestingly, even the story of her Nobel Prize was looked at by a large section of Pakistani society with suspicion and “on social media congratulatory messages were followed closely by scornful and sarcastic ones” (BBC News, October 10, 2014). A journalist, Tariq Khan, condemned the news arguing that “it’s a political decision and a conspiracy” (ibid.). This attitude also reflected in the conversation of Pakistani politicians. For example, Liaqat Baloch from Jamaat-e-Islami, a right-wing religious political party, “welcomed” the news with these words: “Malala .

. . . is getting a lot of support and patronage abroad . . . but the attack on Malala and then her support in the west creates a lot of suspicions” (Borger and Imtiaz, 2014). Similarly, the news of her appointment as the UNO’s Messenger of Peace also received mixed responses.

Drawing on two Pakistani English newspapers *The Nation* and *Dawn*, readers’ online comments, Qazi and Shah’s (2017) study further substantiates these points. They maintain that though both newspapers constructed Malala’s positive identity, the approach of a clear majority of Pakistani readers’ towards Malala “remained enduringly fluid”, and mainly of “suspicion” (ibid., p. 12). In this study, we analyse the editorial discourses of Pakistan’s two English newspapers, *The News International* and *Daily Times*, written around the following three events: first, when the Taliban made a life attempt on Malala’s life in October 2012; next, when she won the Nobel Peace Prize in October 2014; and, finally, when she was made the youngest ever UNO Messenger of Peace in April 2017. The purpose is to understand and analyse how the editorial discourses of these two newspapers constructed Malala’s identity during these phases, and the ideologies these newspapers propagated in so doing.

Given the number of studies that have already been undertaken on Malala’s identity construction in the media, it could be argued that another study looking at Malala in a similar context would be unnecessary. However, we argue that this study is different in several ways and can make a significant contribution. First, the studies cited above suggest a shift in peoples’ attitudes towards Malala in Pakistan due to the powerful influence of media in the country. However, the landscape of Pakistani media is extremely vibrant, comprising a vast variety of print, electronic and social media channels. This situation makes it a compelling case to further explore Malala’s representations in different Pakistani media. Second, like in most other countries, in Pakistan too, media houses pursue diverse social/political agendas where, as Van Dijk (2015) contends, the representation of a political figure, as that of Malala, is a “part of the broader ideological structure of values” (p. 147).

This article studies not only Malala’s identity construction but also investigates the political ideologies underpinning her varied image constructions in the newspapers. The aspect of media ideologies and its critical appraisal in this study is likely to remain fresh and would keep opening new vistas for the students of journalism. We also believe that the newspapers this study sampled to explore the areas identified herein have not been made part of any study before. Also, the study’s elaborate theoretical framework would potentially contribute to advancing the understanding of scholars working within the relevant academic disciplines.

This study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach for the analysis of the selected editorial discourses (see “Research Methodology” section for detail). The term “discourse” is vague and entails a variety of meanings (see Kendall and Wickham, 2003). In the context of this study, we will use it in a broader sense mostly interchangeably with “text” and “language” to denote the same meaning as these. CDA is a critical study of discourse that views language as a form of social practice embedded in power relations (Fairclough, 2001). Janks (1997) describes discourse as a political site where “existing social relations are reproduced or contested and different interests are served” (Janks, 1997, p. 329). CDA is, thus, concerned with

analysing “connections between discourse practices, social practices, and social structures” (Kuzio, 2015, p. 79). In order to do that, CDA scholars, including us writing this article, usually study the form, structure and content of the selected genre of the text. While approaching the text, they investigate as to who produces it, for whom it is produced, and what are the social practices governing its production and consumption (see Fairclough, 2001). These are important questions that warrant investigations when studying a media discourse, and we have tried to do so this in this study (see methodology and analysis section). Similarly, a critical orientation based on these perspectives can open a greater possibility to understand those “power relations and ideological processes [embedded in language] which people are often unaware of” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 7).

In view of the foregoing argument, this article is the study of linguistic structures and the lexis used in the selected editorial discourses which the newspapers employed for the representation and image construction of Malala Yousafzai vis-à-vis the Taliban and other related events (see methodology for detail). To evaluate a media text, like the one selected for this study, the questions (mentioned above) are of fundamental importance. Also, the study will offer an insight as to how the newspapers operationalized this opportunity as a vehicle for the promotion of their political agendas.

CDA and the Media

The media enjoys large access to people and has the potential to influence the way they perceive reality in relation to the social milieu they interact in (Jackson, 2014). Carter (2013) argues that reality is socially constructed through discourses and people tend to rely heavily on media for their knowledge about the world. Similarly, Richardson (2007) holds that “discourses are discursively produced and there is a dialectical relationship between the media discourses and social practices” (p. 26). In a similar vein, Van Dijk (2000) postulates that the “media discourse is the main source of people’s knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, both of other elites, primarily politicians, professionals and academics” (p. 36). This suggests that the media wield enormous power on people and influence their opinion. A particular portrayal of a public figure, for example, a politician, a religious leader or a social activist, can be crucial both for individuals and society. For example, Ralf Miliband was “discursively constructed as a dangerous ‘Other’ [in the English media] and subsequently politically instrumentalised in a campaign against his son, Ed Miliband” (Stoegner and Wodak, 2016, p. 193). Similarly, Osama bin Laden was constructed “as an evil genius archetype with near mythic abilities” (Winch, 2005, pp. 285-299) in major world newspapers. CDA can unravel discursive structures of language embedded in social and discourse practices where such image constructions occur. Similarly, it can be used as an effective tool to study identity-related questions, as shown in Ainsworth and Hardy’s (2004) article. In that, they systematically compare the contribution of CDA with other approaches and show the “research questions that CDA can address . . . [which] other theories grappling with identity cannot” (p. 225). In this study, we will use these enabling insights to evaluate how the media discourses of the selected newspapers constructed Malala’s positive or negative identity, and, in so doing, how they positioned themselves in Pakistan’s prevailing socio-political milieus (see “Findings and Analysis”).

Research Methodology

CDA draws on various methodologies to understand the mutual relationship between discourse and society. However, in this study, we will draw on Fairclough's (1989, 2001) three-dimensional model to approach the selected media texts for the scope it offers for the deconstruction of media texts (see Richardson, 2007).

Fairclough's model illustrates that discourse exists at three levels, namely the "processes of text production, distribution, and consumption" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 78). Corresponding to these levels are three dimensions, viz. description (text-analysis), interpretation (processing analysis) and explanation (social analysis) (Fairclough, 2001, pp. 21-24). Description or text-analysis provides the linguistic basis of analysis i.e., clause structures and lexis. Interpretation or Processing Analysis and Explanation or Social Analysis are about the analysis of power relations embedded in social structures. It is these structures which provide conducive conditions for the production and distribution of certain types of texts while ensuring others relegation (see Fairclough, 1992, p. 78). In this study, we will first do the textual analysis of the selected editorials of the newspapers. The textual analysis can involve the linguistic analysis of lexicogrammar marker e.g., modality, transitivity, nominalization and lexis (Fairclough, 2001, pp. 137-200). Given the scope of this article, the study only considers the analysis of transitivity structures and the use of lexis in the selected media texts. We further explain (below) what they are and how we will use them in this study.

Transitivity structures represent the linguistic means of representing a social reality that is encoded in "PROCESS TYPES" and contains ideologies which are not straightforwardly visible to a common reader (Halliday, 2014, p. 213). The main types of processes are material, mental and relational processes (ibid., p. 214). Material processes use dynamic verbs, either transactive (involving two participants- actor and goal) or non-transactive (involving one participant- actor). The actor performs an action and the goal is affected by the action. Mental processes account for perception/ feelings, and emotional experiences and relational processes relate "one fragment of experience to another" and are realised by the verb 'be' and relate to both inner and outer experiences (Halliday, 2014, pp. 214-219). The analysis of the selected editorials will be informed by the study of these processes in their sentence structures. Other than these, this study also refers to the verbal processes that are used to express claims. In the study of transitivity structures, understanding social actors' agency is also significant in terms of presenting actors as responsible for actions using (in)determination and (un)specified terms (Van Leeuwen, 2008). The study of the transitivity structures of the selected editorial discourses can inform if these employ transactive models to represent Malala and the Taliban's actions - where the agent is made known to readers - or a non-transactive model where it is understated. Similarly, an analysis of how social actors and their actions are encoded in the transitivity structures can unravel ideologies and political agendas of the selected newspapers. Likewise, the study of lexical items occurring in the selected editorials is equally significant to investigate ideologies embedded in discursive structures of discourses. In Van Dijk's (1991) opinion, journalists' choice of lexical items is mostly ideological and, the representation of groups and individuals depends on that. Similarly, Fairclough's system of interpretation and explanation espoused in this study for processing and social analysis of the editorial texts can also render insights into the

political/power dynamics of Pakistan which influence the newspapers' discourse formations.

As explained earlier, this study focuses on three stages of Malala's life, namely "Malala the Taliban's target and the Nobel laureate" and "Malala the United Nations Messenger of Peace". We give below the vital detail of these stages followed by the research questions.

Stage one corresponds to the period when the Taliban shot Malala in the head on Oct 9, 2012, for advocating girls' education in the Swat valley of Pakistan. Stages two and three refer to the period between Oct 11, 2014, when Malala was awarded the Nobel Prize, and April 11, 2017, when she was appointed the UN's messenger of peace and beyond. During the latter two stages, she became "brand Malala" (Grayson, 2013) and the "media darling" (Mufti, 2014). However, in her native country, she became increasingly unpopular, and many conspiracies were built around her personality. Keeping the three stages of Malala's life in view and the CDA framework, we anchor this study on the following research questions:

1. How do the selected newspapers' editorials' transitivity structures and lexical choices construct Malala Yousafzai's identity with reference to the events related to the three stages of her life?
2. What do these representations of Malala vis-à-vis the Taliban and other events reveal about these newspapers' ideologies?

The data for this study was taken from two English dailies namely, *The News International* and *Daily Times*, as mentioned earlier. The selection criteria for newspapers considered two factors: daily circulation, and general perception about these newspapers' ideological approach i.e., liberal/ secular/conservative. *The News International* is published from all major cities of Pakistan and an overseas edition is published from London, UK. It is "conservative" and "pro-government" and is said to have "a moderate conservative perspective" (Mezzera and Sial, 2010, p. 16). *Daily Times* is a broadsheet Pakistani English newspaper that is published from three cities in Pakistan- Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi. It was founded in 2002. A general perception about this newspaper is that it promotes liberal and secular ideologies. In the forthcoming pages, we present our findings from both the newspapers.

Findings and Analysis

For presentation of the findings of this study, we considered three stages in Malala's life, as identified above. However, as the number of editorials written relevant to each stage of Malala's life vary (two each in the first and second and one each in the third), so do the analytical sections. Keeping with Fairclough's model, the main focus of the first level of analyses involves the study of linguistic features of the selected editorial texts within Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), more specifically an examination of their transitivity structures and lexical choices. This forms the basis for the second and third levels of analysis i.e., interpretation and explanation- within Fairclough's (2001) three-dimensional model.

First, findings from *The News International*, regarding all three stages of Malala's life are presented which are followed by those from *Daily Times*.

Malala's Identity Construction in *The News International* – Stage One

The News International's first editorial, "Condition critical" (October 10, 2012), discusses the Taliban's assassination attempt on Malala and constructs Malala's positive identity. It employs the transitivity constructions of material processes which position Malala as an actor and emphasize her display of courage and fortitude against the Taliban. The editorial reinforces Malala's positive identity both with reference to her past deeds and the current context:

She carried on despite threats to herself and her family, displaying the courage and stoicism ... it was Malala Yousafzai that they had come for... she was hit twice.... She did not die, and was rushed to the local hospital....Malala Yousafzai is the winner of the National Peace Award in 2011 and was a nominee for the International Children's Peace Prize. ("Condition Critical")

The lexical items employed for Malala's representation include courage, stoicism, courageous schoolgirl, winner of the National Peace Award in 2011 and nominee for the International Children's Peace Prize.

For the representation of the Taliban, however, the material processes are deployed in a way that hides the Taliban's direct involvement in the terrorist attack on Malala. This is an interesting aspect as material processes are largely deployed to feature people involved in actions and serve to represent agency (Thompson, 1996, p. 79). The use of non-agentive passive, for example, in the sentence "she was hit twice" obscures the Taliban's agency, whom the newspaper mostly refers to using indeterminate terms as 'they', and 'the gunman' etc. However, given that the Taliban themselves claimed the responsibility of making life attempt on Malala in the press, the editorial had to eventually establish their agency as terrorists. But in so doing, it first used a rhetorical question and then added the phrase, unverified report to further moderate it: And who was it who came for her? According to an unverified report, it was the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). This informs about the newspaper's strategies for discursive discourse formation ingrained in the local social practices for achieving political mileage.

In *The News International's* second editorial, "Clinging to life" (October 11, 2012), the focus shifts from Malala being the Taliban's victim to the international media coverage of the incident: The shooting of Malala Yousafzai made the front pages of newspapers in every continent in the world and many of the international TV channels. The editorial once again avoids highlighting the Taliban with reference to their terrorist activities. The use of nominalisation, shooting, serves to conceal the Taliban's agency and causal relationship. The newspaper avails the opportunity to criticize Pakistani authorities for not doing enough to curb fanaticism, though without naming who is responsible for what: you can ban the TTP [Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan] but you cannot ban the thinking that underpins it. The editorial blames the Taliban's terrorism and the rise of religious fanaticism in Pakistan on poverty and deprivation existing on a wider scale in the country. Thus, it provides the Taliban with indirect support.

Malala's Identity Construction in *The News International* – Stages two and three

The News International's editorial, "Malala's moment" (October 11, 2014), written in the backdrop of Malala's Nobel win emphasizes Malala's identity of a patriot and a voice for children's education. In this editorial, Most transitivity structures employed are mental, verbal and relational:

Malala Yousafzai stood tall as she received the world's most prestigious . . . Nobel Peace Prize . . . Malala made clear her commitment to her homeland, mentioning her identity as a Pakistani and a Pakhtun. . . . This then is a young woman who clearly stands for her country. ("Malala's moment")

Malala's positive identity is further reinforced with reference to her personal and national identities employing these lexical items as "stood tall", "commitment to her homeland", and "Pakistani and a Pakhtun".

The editorial points to the confused reception accorded to the Nobel Peace Prize event by various quarters in Pakistan using mental processes.

Sadly, back home the world's youngest prize recipient has received hesitant acclaim, with many criticising her for being undeserving of the award or for other actions that allegedly show her bias against her nation and her religion.

However, in a similar vein, as noticed in the first section, the editorial avoids mentioning those in her native country who criticize Malala. Though the editorial maps the ideological confusions existing in Pakistani society, it eschews establishing the agency.

The News International did not write any editorial in this context of Malala's becoming UN's Messenger of Peace. However, it reported the event entitled "Malala receives highest U.N. honor to promote girls' education" (April 11, 2017) and, thus, used nomination in order to establish an agency that emphasizes Malala's unique identity. The report mostly uses relational and verbal processes in which Malala is discussed with reference to her achievements on an international scale, constructing her positive identity as follows:

Yousafzai is the youngest Messenger of Peace. . . . She was also the youngest person to win the Nobel peace prize in 2014... Yousafzai has become a regular speaker on the global stage and visited refugee camps in Rwanda and Kenya. ("Malala receives highest U.N. honor to promote girls' education")

Interpretation (Processing Analysis) and Explanation (Social Analysis) of *The News International's* Editorials

The News International covered the Malala event extensively and constructed her positive identity during all three stages. However, the discursive strategies that were implemented helped the newspaper eschew representing the Taliban as terrorists and perpetrators of evil designs, which was rather obvious. When it did mention them, it first offered a protective scaffolding to its discourses to mitigate the Taliban's agency and responsibility. Fairclough's (2001) idea of discourse analysis (interpretation and explanation) relates to the study of social practices, power and ideology in the

production of discourses. Wodak and Meyer (2001) argue that these strategies are mostly dependent on the context and the social field. *The News International's* transitivity strategies for the representation of the Taliban and Malala look politically driven which are entrenched in the power relations within Pakistani society. Regarding the events related to Malala's first stage, Pakistani authorities, at that point, wanted to maintain a strong status quo on their long-standing Taliban-friendly policies. The newspaper contributed to that significantly, which reflected through the transitivity structures of editorial discourses.

Fairclough (2001) maintains that for both the writers and the readers, the knowledge of the member's resources (MR) is significant for the production of discourses. He defines MR as what people already have in their minds about language, social world, beliefs and values. *The News International's* approach and response to the Taliban's attack on Malala were, thus, in consonance with the taste of the newspaper's largely conservative readership, which was correspondingly related to the newspaper's monetary benefits as well. Similarly, it was also in accordance with its long-established policies and ideologies, which are largely described as 'central right cautious and conservative', as discussed elsewhere. Though the newspaper supports the egalitarian values, it does it in well-calculated manners that do not to offend the conservative elements of the country, particularly the religious right, which have often been supported by the country's powerful military establishment. The Taliban draw strong covert support from these sections of Pakistani society. We contend that *The News International* catered to these socio-political dynamics while constructing Malala's positive identity during all three stages of her life which this study identified and analysed.

Malala's Identity Construction in *Daily Times*---Stage One

The first editorial of *Daily Times*, "Vengeance coming full scale" (October 11, 2012), constructs Malala's positive identity of a "prodigy" who champions the cause of "girls' education" despite life threats from the Taliban. Employing the transitivity structures of material and relational processes, the editorial further reinforces her positive identity with respect to her national and international achievements. In this context, it affords her the scope to figure on subject positions as an actor:

Malala has been awarded the First National Peace Award of Pakistan. She was nominated for an International Children's Peace Prize by Kids Rights Foundation, an international children's advocacy group. ("Vengeance coming full scale")

The editorial uses many lexical choices to construct her several other positive identities. For example, her personal identity is constructed describing her as fourteen years old prodigy, and of a writer stating that her writings (on BBC blog) were soaked in the blood, terror and agony.

Daily Times, unlike *The News International*, highlights the Taliban's actions which construct their negative identity. For instance, it has been made clear in the editorial that Pakistan has exposed the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan's (TTP's) visage of being fundamentally opposed to progress. The editorial's transitivity structures situate

the Taliban variously at subject positions as actors using material and mental processes seated in transactive models. This crystallizes their agency fully as perpetrators:

They chose to shoot her in the head to minimise the chances of her survival. . . . The TTP . . . has condemned Malala for her open, secular and modern views on education and women's participation in the social and political arenas. ("Vengeance coming full scale")

The newspaper's ideological stance against the Taliban is encoded employing mental processes mostly using these lexical choices: gruesome killings, irrational people, ill-conceived notions, and fundamentally opposed to progress etc. The representation of the Taliban in these manners informs *Daily Times'* ideological stance on religiously motivated extremism, and the values the newspaper stands for, secularism and liberal ideologies.

Daily Times' second editorial, "President Karzai's timely remarks" (April 15, 2016), is a commentary on the press conference of the then Afghan President Hamid Karzai. The newspaper takes the opportunity to capitalize on the president's press conference to support its stance on Malala and the Taliban, using mostly verbal processes. The president sits at the agent position, exposing the Taliban and the threat of extremism:

President Karzai pinpointed that Pakistan's strategy of using extremist militants to do its bidding was taking its toll. . . . He described extremism as a snake that would not hesitate to turn around and bite anyone who used it against others. ("President Karzai's timely remarks")

The newspaper advances its ideological/political agendas in many ways as the editorial shows. For example, it condemns the Pakistani authorities for not doing enough to restrain extremism, and accuses Pakistan of protecting the Haqqani network stating that Pakistan has given a safe haven to them on Pakistani soil, annoying its ally in the war on terror, the US. The reference to the Haqqani network in this context relates to the newspaper's political stance, which is mostly aligned with the USA's policy and, prima facie, takes a conflicting line with the Pakistani government. Furthermore, it encodes its political agenda as follows: this is the blowback of the proxy war project, and Pakistan needs to revise its support for elements . . . [that] wish to tear this country apart, which further aligns the newspaper's policy with the USA's (see *The New York Times'* editorial of May 12, 2016, entitled, "Time to Put the Squeeze on Pakistan").

Malala's Identity Construction in *Daily Times* – Stages Two and Three

Daily Times' editorial, "Congratulations Malala Yousafzai" (October 11, 2014), written in the backdrop of Malala's Nobel win, constructs Malala's positive identity in a rather hyperbolic language, mostly using relational processes: "Malala Yousafzai is a star of rare talent and humility. . . . [She] has become an example of what is possible." The editorial supports Malala in her fight against the religiously charged violence in the country: "[S]he refused to become a victim of violence . . . when faced with death". The editorial's transitivity clauses of predominantly material and mental processes construct her identity of an invincible hero:

[S]he was awarded the 2014 Nobel. . . . She has proved to be an accomplished performer. . . . She has added something invaluable to the global discourse on Pakistan. . . . [S]he sounds more mature, lucid and intelligent than many Pakistani political leaders. (“Congratulations Malala Yousafzai”)

The editorials’ lexical choice to construct Malala’s identity encompasses universal values. She is described as a person who has a rare talent and is straightforward, honest, lucid, and mature. Her political identity is established mentioning her commitment to the nation: Malala remains firmly Pakistani and owns this country as her home.

The editorial, “Congratulations Malala Yousafzai”, takes this opportunity to construct the Taliban’s negative identity by portraying them as barbaric employing material process: “[T]he Taliban put a bullet in her head”. The choice of a transactive model in this sentence makes the Taliban’s agency and causal relationship clear. Other labels that contribute to the Taliban’s negative portrayal include people with draconian ideologies that seek to disempower women. Employing mental and verbal processes, the newspaper points to the confusion existing in Pakistani society regarding Malala, where people are referred to collectively as buying into conspiracy theories: “One would expect Pakistani women to appreciate Malala’s struggle, but many do not. . . . Conspiracy theorists say she is a foreign ‘agent’”.

Daily Times prioritizes the news of Malala being appointed as UNO’s messenger of peace by writing an editorial entitled, “Well done, Malala” (April 11, 2017) on her new achievement. It emphasizes Malala’s international stature and portrays her as a person who is refusing to be silenced despite life threats by the Taliban. The newspaper seizes this opportunity to criticize those segments of Pakistani society rather sarcastically that look at Malala with suspicion, hence, mapping the ideological confusions and contradictions existing in Pakistani society. The most transitivity processes are mental:

For the misinformed critic, Malala Yousafzai is an embarrassment to Pakistan. Indeed, she has been ever since she found herself at the wrong end of the barrel of a Taliban gun. . . . [E]ach time her star soars a little more . . . the political state apparatus dims that much more. (“Well done, Malala”)

Furthermore, *Daily Times* uses the opportunity to push liberal ideologies and the female cause using mental processes: Gone are the petulant remonstrations that sought to berate female victims of male violence for speaking out and tarnishing Pakistan’s image overseas. It disparages the government asserting that the Pakistani state should feel well and truly humiliated that it has left all the heavy lifting on this front to a young woman . . . to place education at the centre of all mandates. The newspaper further supports Malala lauding her stance against the Taliban in “Well done, Malala”: “[W]e commend her for continuing her crusade against those whose very inaction has surrendered the narrative to extremists.”

Interpretation (Processing Analysis) and Explanation (Social Analysis) of *Daily Times* Editorials

The analysis of *Daily Times* editorials with respect to all three stages of Malala’s life informs that the newspaper constructed Malala’s positive identity. In so doing, it represented the Taliban’s violence explicitly emphasizing their agency of terrorists and

as the ones who are disposed to ill-designs. This particular aspect sets *Daily Times* apart from *The News International*. The linguistic strategies applied for the exclusion and inclusion of social actors and the representation of Malala related events aligned with the ideologies this newspaper stands for, as described elsewhere. Van Dijk argues that “ideologies are typically, though not exclusively expressed and reproduced in discourse and communication” (1995, p. 17), and that these are “the basis of social representations shared by members of the social group” (Dijk, 1998, p. 8). *Daily Times*’ reporting of events related to Malala seemed to have catered to its members’ overall international/liberal approach and perhaps their position towards religious fanaticism. Similarly, the geopolitical conditions of the region and the socio-historical context regarding the Taliban’s activities also influenced *Daily Times*’ choices of lexical items. In the second editorial (first stage), *Daily Times* projected the USA and NATO as true friends of Pakistan, and strongly criticized the government of Pakistan vis-à-vis their policies towards the Haqqani network and other jihadi outfits. It also projected these Jihadi outfits as Pakistan’s proxies in Afghanistan. The USA had also pressured Pakistan on these accounts advising them to launch a full-scale operation against the militants hiding in North Waziristan so that they could be prevented from attacking the USA and NATO forces deployed in Afghanistan. This is an American perspective which *Daily Times* shared (see, for example, a news-report, “New Boldness from Militants Poses Risk to U.S.-Pakistan Ties”, in *The New York Times*, published on July 30, 2012, by Declan Walsh and Eric Schmitt). *Daily Times*’ criticism of the Pakistani authorities with regard to their strategic position towards Afghanistan, NATO and the USA, followed a tenor similar to the USA’s media. Nevertheless, its approach towards the representation of social actors, both Malala and the Taliban as well as on Pakistan’s position in the region, is also aligned with what the newspaper is known for in the liberal and secular sections of Pakistani society.

Conclusion

This study explored the discourse structures of *The News International* and *Daily Times* editorials to study Malala’s image construction in them, employing Fairclough’s three-dimensional CDA model. The findings suggest that *The News International*’s editorials prioritized Malala related news during all three stages. In the first stage, using mainly material and mental processes, they constructed Malala’s identity of a courageous individual who, despite genuine life threats, stood up to the Taliban for the sake of girls’ education. In the second and third stages, the newspaper, mostly using similar transitivity structures, constructed Malala’s positive identity of a champion of female rights as well as girls’ education. However, *The News International*, in the first stage, where it was most expected, eschewed a direct portrayal of the Taliban as responsible for a life attempt on Malala. If the Taliban ever featured at the subject position as actors, the editorials’ circuitous discourses made sure that the Taliban’s agency as the perpetrators of the terrorist activities is not established. In the same way, *The News International*’s editorials did not mention the Taliban in Malala’s second and third stage coverage despite the fact that it was relevant. The newspaper, however, following its cautious style, criticized the government for not doing enough to eliminate terrorism in the country. *Daily Times* shared *The News International*’s stance on Malala. However, what set it apart from *The News International* was its distinct portrayal of the Taliban as religious fanatics, terrorists and perpetrators of evil ideologies. It also

criticized the Pakistani establishment for the existing religiously driven intolerance in Pakistan, arguing that Pakistan deliberately avoided eliminating it because it needed proxies in Afghanistan. Thus, from this respect, it towed the Western media line.

The ideology of a newspaper is difficult to identify, particularly when an obvious incident of terrorism, as this study analysed, is reported. Yet, the study findings suggest that both the newspapers appropriated many angles of Malala's story to promote their political agendas and ideologies. Similarly, the study found a systematic connection between the discursive production of the Taliban and Malala related discourses, social practices and power relations. For example, while reporting the same incident, *The News International* made every effort not to establish the Taliban's agency and causality for violence/terrorism, whereas *Daily Times*, on the contrary, did it rather vociferously. *Daily Times* also dubbed Malala's stance on education as secular and attack on Malala as an attack on all those people who dared to think along secular and modern lines in Pakistan. It also described the Taliban's life attempt on Malala as an attack on the very ideology of this country. These are value statements and are in line with the newspapers' ideologies. Additionally, both the newspaper used Malala's story to construct their identities as well-informed commentators of international politics in line with their policies.

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