Vol. 24(2), 2024, pp.73-91, ISSN: 2072-0394(Print), ISSN: 2663-8886(Online)

An Investigation into Gender Roles in Selected Pakistani Film Posters: A Multimodal Analysis

Asmat A. Sheikh
Department of English
The Women University, Multan
&
Ujala Nadeem
Department of English
Islamiya University Bahawalpur

Abstract

The electronic media including cinema and films have surrounded us in such a way that our minds are greatly influenced by it. All visual media compositions, including photographs, advertisements, newspapers, websites, and film posters are carefully crafted by the composers and are thought out to create the appropriate effect. This study aims to examine the representation of gender roles in selected Pakistani film posters by applying Machin's Multimodal Theory (2007) for better interpretations of gender roles. For this purpose, the data was chosen from Pakistani film posters released in 2019 using a purposive sampling technique. The findings of the study reveal that the theme of gender discrimination is highlighted in Pakistani film posters by portraying males as independent, empowered, and dominant figures and by assigning females very constrained and subordinate roles. Semiotic tools like setting, colour, framing, focus, positioning of elements, gaze, and font style are used to interact with the viewer. These choices create a visual language that we can analyze. This study will certainly be useful for raising awareness among academicians and the general public about the serious repercussions of media as a powerful agent for changing, molding, and generating public opinion.

Keywords: Gender roles, media, multimodal analysis, Pakistani film posters, Technology.

Introduction

Technologies have surrounded us in modern times. Electronic media including cinema is one example that has not only surrounded us, but our minds are also greatly influenced by it. The advancement of technology is growing so fast that everything has come closer and these far-reaching effects of mass media have made socialization rapid. This study aims to open a discussion about the representation of gender roles in selected Pakistani film posters by applying Machin's Multimodal theory (2007). The composers carefully craft and thoughtfully create the appropriate effects in all visual media compositions, including photographs, advertisements, newspapers, websites, and film posters. To

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-commercial 4.0 International License.

interact with the viewer semiotic tools like colour, framing, focus, positioning of elements, and font style have been used (Machin, 2010). A visual language is made up of these choices that we can analyze (Machin, 2012).

The inspiration for this study came to the researcher as a regular Pakistani movie watcher from the question: For disseminating a particular ideology and enhancing the stereotypical representation of women in Pakistani movies, what major semiotic resource systems are deployed by the filmmakers? In this global world where everything has come closer owing to technology, socialization has also become rapid due to the far-reaching effects of mass media. Certain ideologies and behaviours are constructed and certain social constructs such as gender are developed in society. In movies, gender roles are one particular genre that portrays the stereotypical gender roles to juxtapose men and women in particular societal constructs. As a part of the process of socialization, these roles are then taken up by the society. Masculinity and femininity are the accepted roles with the former usually related to men and the latter to women.

It is identified through the reinforcement of gender stereotypes in film posters that every system has some particular type of policies regarding curriculum not only for implementation in a state but also to create balance in the recognition of all cultural and economic rights. Questions relating to the production of movie posters are made in this way. The current study will examine the visual and semiotic contents of selected posters of Pakistani movies. When there is no understanding of the written meaning of the message verbally, then the message should be converted by images visually. An effective impact is created by visual images on someone's behavior or towards some thinking process and beliefs (Jewitt, 2001). Gaining massive attention from Pakistani youth is the biggest concern of these images is when they look at the posters after their premiere launch. Mills (2003, p. 6) argues "In communication, a message is simply transmitted from one individual mind to another. Thus, the speaker develops an idea, encodes it in language, and the listener decodes this message back to the original idea". The gender-biased phenomenon is quite common in a country like Pakistan. More social linguists are associated with the use of linguistics in our society. How a person speaks, and his comments are independent because the primary focus of the study of societal signs and symbols is to explore the independence of language speaking. Instead, Machin and Mayr agree with the semiotic linguists that language shapes society (2012:17).

Patriarchal Mindset of the Society

Because of the patriarchal mindset of society, women always have to face gender discrimination as patriarchy always encourages disrespect, humiliation, and marginalization for them. Pakistani society is a male-dominated society and in the Pakistani film industry, man always acts as a gatekeeper of interest that is why most of the fields are run by male leaders. Humiliating and insulting behavior towards women is becoming very common across the globe. If one wants to see Pakistan on the road to

development, one has to change such a patriarchal mindset. Women's participation in the Pakistani film industry is equally important in the development of Pakistan's entertainment industry, as it gives a changed attitude and concept of femininity to the world. Women constitute almost half of the population of Pakistan and neglecting them or throwing them on the back foot means the country will lose their contribution in the development. So, one must realize the fact, that the empowerment of women is as important for Pakistan as that of men. Giving empowerment to women does not mean that male dominance will be challenged or they will start receiving less value. Rather empowerment demands a respectful attitude and equal opportunities for women.

Significance of the Study

Previous research studies lack various features of gender roles in which femininity and masculinity are being compared and depicted in Pakistani film posters. Therefore, the present study deals with the semiotic analysis of selected movie posters to elaborate on gender roles. By doing so, it would be able to convince the readers of their claims regarding howgender roles in film posters are propagated and procreated through language used in media. The portrayal of different contents delivered by the genders majorly in movie posters carries great significance. The depiction of the role of females in various posters of Pakistani movies is both submissive as well as weak in nature and very few times it has been shown as prominent as compared to the role of males which is usually domineering and objectified. The study is also significant in identifying what major semiotic tools are employed by Pakistani filmmakers for disseminating a particular ideology and enhancing stereotypical gender representation.

Statement of the Problem

The posters being the pre-texts, function as the salient key for an open interpretation of the film. Women have always been treated as belonging to a lower stratum and subjugation due to the prevalence of several stereotypical factors in the society. While their male counterparts are portrayed as dominating and empowering. It also needs to be explored why female images are portrayed as marginalized and inferior in comparison to male images. Inferior, biased, and humiliating attitude towards women which are becoming very common across the globe needs to be explored. This also lays a heavy responsibility on Pakistani film production houses and poster designers to evaluate the consequences of a particular depiction before publicizing any content.

Objectives of the Study

To understand the nature of gender roles and the motives behind the use of such language of differentiation, the researcher has designed two major objectives.

- To exploit gender roles portrayed in selected Pakistani film posters

- To examine the visual and semiotic contents in selected Pakistani film posters.

Research Questions

- How gender roles are portrayed in Pakistani film posters?
- What sort of visual and semiotic messages are used in the posters of Pakistani films?

Review of the Literature

For the present research, it is mandatory to have different viewpoints and reviews of several writers about the hard work and struggle of females in a male-dominated society. This section aims to have various ideas and notions and to have a brief overview of the idea of representation of gender in film posters. To clarify inequalities like the exploitation of women, depriving them of positions of decision-making and leadership, and not having equal opportunities in society, the use of traditional gender roles has been made. As Karl Marx (1867) argued, "Marxism deals with unequal representation of classes". The present work also reveals various ways in which, class and cultural factors co-relate with gender issues in creating a woman's experience.

The visuals made for a movie are utilized for its commercial purpose because the content of the movies is advertised through them before their release. An image needs to be full of creativity so that the audience gets struck at one glance and the purpose of branding a movie also gets successful. This branding is linked with the idea of 'hot' media from McLuhan's (1964) essay 'Media Hot and Cold Contained within Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man'. Within this essay, the concepts of hot and cool media and its relevance to the observer are described by McLuhan (1964, p.36). As McLuhan (1964) argues: 'Hot media are, therefore low in participation, and cool media are high in participation or completion by the audience'.

Mitchell (1974) argues that the exploitation of women can also be affected by the psyche of men through the loss of capitalism because any change in the status of women should be attained by the loss of capitalism and in the male psyche as well. So, females are always regarded as weak, shy, fragile, timid, submissive, nurturing, and sentimental whereas traditionally males are always dominant, rational, and decisive (Mitchell, 1974). Woolf (2014) states that a woman must have her property by at least a room that she should own if she desires to write fiction. Because a woman is always overburdened with responsibilities and household chores. Moreover, she has always been derived from all the funds and resources. This economic lack of finance has a dreadful effect on her mental and artistic awakening. So, an escape from all of these hurdles and drastic effects of patriarchy can trigger her emotional and mental development. For centuries, male dominancy has written misogynistic remarks about females to promote an inferiority complex in them while claiming their superiority.

Another discussion added by Van Dijk (1993) that advertisements make social and political evolutions and ideologies are expressed and reproduced in discourse and communication, including non-verbal semiotic messages such as images and movies. Mills (1997) states that "The type of clothes a woman chooses to wear, the type of bodily stance she adopts and ways of thinking about herself are always determined by the discursive framework of femininity". Her duties in a male-dominated society always bound a woman. She found emotionality and functionality in her character that is wrapped in the quilt altogether and used them as a struggle in her life. Again, this is the story of a woman who is struggling between her moral values and societal pressure. Tyson (1998) classifies the statement: 'more women than men suffer from hysteria' as a patriarchal assumption, rather than a fact". Women have always been treated as a lower stratum and their subjugation is due to the prevalence of several stereotypical factors in society. For example, girls have been socialized since their childhood that they should remain silent, shy, and timid regarding their bodily appearance as compared to boys. Marxism is quite visible in the text.

It was suggested by Jewitt & Oyama (2001) that as far as the social semiotic analysis of visual communication is concerned, it involves the description of semiotic resources, the role of images, and the way people interpret images. It is claimed by Bignell (2002) that hodographs and print advertisements are a system of signs that give and form meaning to consciousness and reality. Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006) state that for expressing meanings strained from common cultural sources, verbal structures and visual structures can be used. According to their view, particular interpretations are pointed with visual structures just like linguistic structures of experience and forms of social interactions. The interpretation of an advertisement by the viewer cannot be controlled by the creator.

Whereas, Shihada (2007) holds class responsibility as the major factor that triggers patriarchy and promotes the violation of rights of the women. This work also uncovers how the presence of capitalistic concepts and the related consequences over women's economic circumstances are quite evident. According to (Shaheed et.al, 2009:26), "Pakistan has more concerns with the obstruction towards female empowerment based on religious argumentation, societal structure, and socio-economic categories". Female political delegations are obstructed by negative remarks. This aspect of using mudslinging contributes immensely to regard females as segregated and marginalized beings. They opine that this situation hinders females from developing political experiences and skills. Tere (2012) states that as women in India belong to various groups, it cannot be concluded that women's portrayal on the Indian silver screen can be identical. Moreover, the portrayal also depends on the category to which they belong. For example, the story of a woman in a village would be entirely different from that of an urban middle-class woman's story. Thus, the context in which films locate women characters plays a very important role. The existing power structures need to be dismantled through women's agency as well and women should able to negotiate their position within this structure. This is high time that in cinema, women's portrayals as

objects of the male gaze need to be redefined. Narration and propagation of women's experiences and dilemmas are the need of the hour. He also suggests that this paradigm shift in women's representations in films will help support the cause of women in Indian society. To help women realize their dreams, Indian cinema needs to create a special, separate, and independent space. Entertainment is not the sole aim of cinema. Social change should be sought through entertainment. Instead of sticking to the "formula film"; it should portray more progressive representations of women. Such portrayals would bring positive change in the society.

In a study aimed to investigate the representation of gender-binary relations in Pakistani television commercials, Nasir (2017) suggests that the layers of meanings are presented by the advertisements through semiotic modes at a symbolic level displaying men and women in traditional roles, subscribing to patriarchal structures. Tehseem, Sibtain, & Obaid, (2018) generalized that the portrayal of women's subordinate roles in media can be subjected to gender inequality in Pakistani society. As advertisements are the reflection of society, therefore women in Pakistani advertisements are portrayed as weak and marginalized through multimodal representations whereas men are depicted in empowered roles. So, advertising plays a vital role in creating certain stereotypes within society and influencing people on a large scale (Qamar & Farrukh, 2021).

The finding of the study conducted by Afshan (2018) shows that the initiatives are being taken by Pakistani media to break the gender stereotypes against women by portraying them as capable of performing all tasks that are traditionally associated with men. To become more independent and hardworking women need to unleash their potential. Today, high-rank positions in sports, education, athletics, government, and private sector jobs are occupied by women in Pakistan. Shahid & Qadir (2018) claim that the documentary *Saving Face* constructs multimodal gender identity representation and construction successfully and conveys the issues of women with respect by giving them more space and power which reflects the impact of globalization on Pakistani gender representation. The finding reveals how language and ideology were intertwined in the film during this period because women got more power in society. The multimodal analysis of the social documentary film *Saving Face* reveals three significant ideas.

A study based on the semiotic representation of female emojis in Google undertaken by Nazia & Sadia (2019) concluded that the newly introduced professional female emojis including doctor, scientist, teacher, and technologist portray women images as rejecting the stereotypical womanish stuff and occupying once male-dominant professions. It was discovered that women were portrayed much more positively in movies directed by women. These positive portrayals are largely affected by the presence of a critical factor behind the scenes (Kunsey, 2019). Iftikhar, Shahnaz & Masroor (2019) construed that to appropriately represent the theme of the movie various linguistic and visual modalities are intentionally converged together in movie posters. In a study aimed at understanding how the meanings in the posters and films were created from a multimodal perspective

that university brands are created from a combination of modes in their advertising posters and films, Febrianti (2020) argues that the modes feature consistently in the university brand artifacts to communicate the vision and mission relevant to a current strategic plan. It is also asserted that a more permanent identity of a university is a logo, from which a brand originates. It is concluded by Jha (2020) that depictions of men are hegemonic hood, fully confident, heroic, powerful, and self-dependent, customers. Women are depicted as sexual objects, stereotypes, seducers, feeble, dependent, powerless, vulnerable, and easily available objects in film posters. Belgrimet & Rabab'ah (2021) claims that the English posters use a variety of semiotic modes. They also argue that the majority of the sampled posters are conceptual It is indicated through the English posters that such visual characterizations tend to be static and immovable. The results indicate that the verbal as well as visual elements contribute to the deployment of meaning included in the English posters. Memon (2021) suggests that placards are not just the pieces of material resources they are constructed of. They are much more than that. Various linguistic and other semiotic meanings are carried by them to create a strong message on the placards. Thangam et al. (2022) declares that the Indian film industry, among other stakeholders, is greatly contributing to women's empowerment. To change society, the film industry is touching on the topics that are rarely discussed in public. The problems faced by women have begun to gain greater visibility in the films. A quiet rebellion is witnessed in India through this new surge of women-centric movies.

The images of women are not accurately portrayed by Pakistani electronic media through its drama serials suggested by (Toor, Kashif & Alvi, 2023). suggests that. These depictions often defy stereotypes as "rebels" and promote the idea that women who stay at home are the "ideal." A study demonstrates that female characters are breaking gendered stereotypes by using linguistic features. Language is now being used to confront while the same language was previously being used to conform instead. It was also seen that the empty adjectives are used by both genders equally (Kiani, Umar & Sultan, 2023). Anurudu, Igboanugo & Onu, (2023) claim that movie posters are not needed only in the promotion of the movie (advertising) or merely exist as peripherals as erroneously perceived by many. Rather they occupy a central place in movie production and are image summaries of movie content. They believe that to express character diversity, themes, and discursive and counter-discursive strategies movie posters combine orthographic and non-orthographic language forms, images of clothing, iconic images, etc.

Research Methodology

This section describes the research design, proposed framework, sampling procedure, and data collection procedure.

Research Design

This research is qualitative and descriptive in nature. This section is closely linked with the explanatory techniques. A methodology is designed to investigate various interactive designs;

which is qualitative methodology in order to interpret societal realization for which language is very important. The capacity of human beings to communicate can be defined as language. This section represents the literature that has been retrospected through various linguistics and semiotics surveys. Multimodal discourse analysis is crucially important for semiotic as well as linguistic analysis while involving its gaze, colour, and settings. To highlight diverse features, the term multimodality is related to various signs and symbols (Iedema, 2003:39).

Framework for the Data Analysis

Ample attention has been pointed to the study of multimodality as a new trend holding the promise of providing more in-depth results about the analysis of different types of discourse, in the last couple of decades. Machin's Multimodal Analysis (2007) is a distinctive and on-hand framework that clearly and critically explains the innovative approach to visual analysis. It is a productive analytical framework in sociolinguistics and discourse analysis. It is made clear from the outset by the author that his modal is inspired by Kress and Van Leeuwen's *Reading Images* (2006). Halliday's (2014), social semiotic approach to language is the base of much of the work in multimodal discourse.

Here language is considered as one among several semiotic resources such as gestures, images, music, etc. which people use to communicate or to make meaning, with each other. It has also been used to explore print genres as well as genres such as web pages, film, and television programs. It also shows how multimodal texts are constructed and how semiotic tools like colour, framing, focus, objects, settings, poses, positioning of elements, and font style contribute to the making of how meanings are read by the viewers. A 'proximity' to the events and an engagement of people in the events are established by the use of multimodal discourse. These images and experiences enter into people's homes by contraction of distance. The viewer occupies the position of 'witness' of the events from the position of 'spectator'. Introduction to Multimodal Analysis has proved an essential resource for studying multimodality within visual communication in media and cultural studies, critical discourse analysis, journalism studies, and linguistics.

Sampling Procedure

Subong (2006, p. 5) argues that a sample is taken as finite as he states "finite populations are data sets from which the numbers can be determined or counted immediately through certain delimitation or putting into a certain scope and coverage of subjects of study". Subong (2006, p. 6) defines the process of selecting a sample as "the process of selecting several individuals (a sample) from the population, preferably in such a way that the selected individuals represent the larger group from which they were selected". A qualitative approach is followed for in-detail analysis of symbols and signs for the proper understanding. Qualitative research emphasizes the exploration of the themes that give rise to literary work about multimodality. Ragin (1994) argued that a smaller sample size helps to evaluate the hidden meaning and unveil the reality behind social constructionism. On the other hand, qualitative researchers

believe that the social phenomenon will be misinterpreted by the bigger sample size. To qualitatively analyze the Multimodal Discourse Analysis, qualitative research helps to evaluate the hidden meaning and the significance of the remarks that outspoken for the members participating in the film industry for their promotion. The study follows a selected sampling technique for the collection of the required data.

Data Collection

The data have been selected from Pakistani websites i.e., Pak magazine. Keeping in view the time constraints and objectives of the study, the researcher has selected five film posters of Pakistani movies (2019) for detailed analysis under Machin's model of multimodal analysis (2007). The data have been selected through a purposive sampling technique, i.e., the posters have rich material suitable for the research study.

Data Analysis

In this section, the researcher attempts to analyze the Pakistani film posters selected through a purposive sampling technique following Machin's model of multimodal analysis (2007).

Females occupy a considerable and significant portion of the world's population. The representation of females as inferior to men is so frequent in the current Pakistani cultural and entertainment industry as well as almost in every field. Derogatory comments are very common on the floors of the houses these days. Women are criticized based on their physical appearances and film posters are of greater importance for the representation of females as it is the reason for the depiction of gender roles publicly. This is not only about mudslinging remarks that have been used for females but also it is a matter of female objectification, suppression, and subjugation. In the remaining section, the data consisting of five Pakistani movie posters released in 2019, have been analyzed under the framework as discussed in this study.

Semiotic Analysis of The Movie Poster "LAAL KABOOTAR"



Figure 1: A Film Poster taken from the premier launch of the movie 'Laal Kabootar' released in 2019

Participants

As Machin (2007, p. 118) states the participants tell us more specifically what kind of people are represented. From the biological point of view, two people are visible in the picture, one male and one female. The male member with his face toward the audience looks dominant in the image while the female image posing with her side face and not facing the camera directly demonstrates her repressed and subordinate position.

Settings

Machin (2010, P. 45) argues that 'settings are used to represent actions, identities, values, and discourses.' A dark background behind both participants is prominent and both the participants are merging with the background settings. A male member of the image is facing the camera and he is helping to make the settings of the image more serious with tense expressions on his face. On the other hand, the female participant with some serious expressions enhances seriousness in the setting of the poster.

Objects

As Machin (2010, P. 43) states 'we are concerned with the ideas or values communicated by objects and how they are represented. What discourses do they communicate?' The male protagonist of the movie expresses himself as a superior being over the female by holding the main object of a smoked cigarette. While smoking, the mage clearly defines the concept of dominancy and patriarchy as the man is reflecting almost his full body posture and front side to the audience. His rough but serious look is displayed while wearing a chain around his neck and a wristwatch. In contrast to the male, the female without the use of any object appears simple and due to her side face pose her facial expressions are not completely visible. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the poster is dominated by masculinity features more as compared to femininity.

Gaze

From the perspective of gaze, it is evident that the poster is displaying the male gaze more prominently than the female gaze. Because female character of the movie poster is not facing the camera while the male character with his direct eye contact with the audience is posing different attitudes and expressions. Thus, the concept of gaze is also supporting male features more significantly than the features of the female participant.

Colour

The red colour in coordination with the title of the film '*Lal Kabootar'* dominates the overall scene. A few colours are depicted in the poster but again there is a description of different colours in the dressing of the male protagonist as he is expressing himself more

prominently as compared to the female protagonist. The male dominancy is visible in this visual. The female protagonist is merged with the background as she is wearing a red shirt and she is also made subordinate and suppressed by the dominant male personality because she is standing behind the man. She is regarded as a subjugated personality due to male participants. Moreover, she is not even looking into the camera. That is the reason that the colours of the female are not so clearly visible in the picture except for a red scarf around her neck and a red shirt. She appears messy with loose hair.

Semiotic Analysis of The Movie Poster, "SHERDIL"

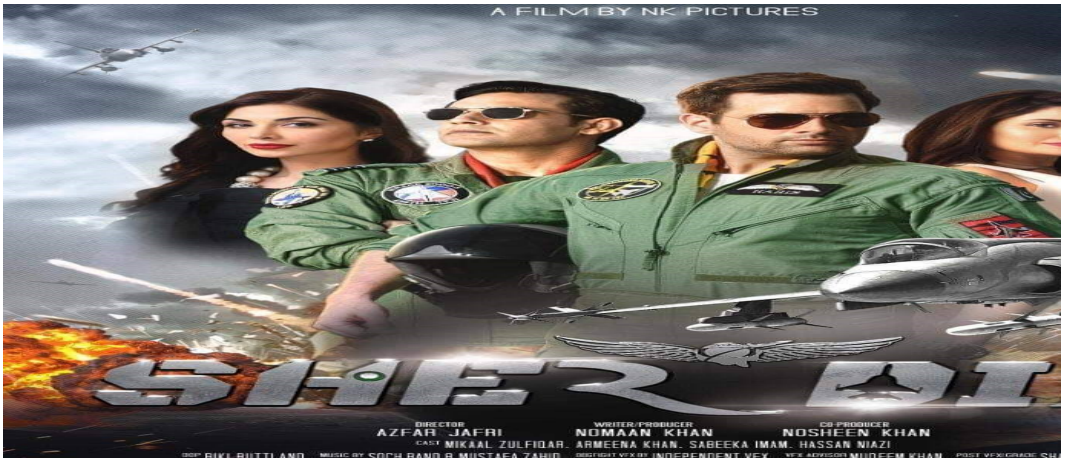


Figure 2: A Film Poster taken from the premier launch of the movie 'Sherdil' released on 29th March 2019

Participants

Four participants including two males and two females are visible in the picture. The poster demonstrates male dominancy as both the men have been centralized and the strength and power of these characters is reflected through their gestures and expressions. The symbols of valor, bravery, strength, prestige, and power are also revealed through the attire of both the male members as well as from the title of the movie *'SHERDIL'*. The overall male dominancy is depicted through the male gender playing the role of an angry young man. On the contrary, female inferiority is depicted by positioning women in the back of men. Both the female characters are wearing simple dresses as compared to the men who are wearing prestigious uniforms. The poster also uncovers the fact that women are not capable of certain jobs and assignments that are dominated by or reserved only for males in our society. It can also be interpreted as women's marginalization. Hence, concerning the availability of opportunities gender discrimination is quite prominent in the figure.

Settings

The element of masculinity dominates the setting of the poster as there are representations of JF-17 thunder aircraft in the poster. It is also directly linked with the male protagonists of the movie as they are presenting themselves as pilots in specific uniforms they are wearing and one of them is also holding a helmet in his hand. The settings have been made more significant for the audience by the whole representation of pilots and aircraft as they demonstrate the features of strength and power associated with the male participants of the movie in comparison to the female participants.

Objects

Machin (2007, p. 32) remarks "object can transport meanings". As regards the objects of the film poster, it is obvious that several objects of the figure like helmets, sun glasses, and badges are possessed only by men. Due to certain settings and possession of specified objects, the poster connotes the dominating features of men over women. Females are showing their simple but beautiful features of femininity and showing no particular objects. On the contrary, men are highlighting their empowering nature and powerful expressions due to their appearance and the particular settings that provide a linkage between boys and objects which are only male possessions displayed in the visual.

Gaze

Both the male characters with some serious expressions and inviting looks are not looking into the camera while both the female characters are directly looking into the camera. Gender discrimination is quite evident in this poster and it disseminates the message of male dominancy over females.

Colour

Colours are significant for the description of a better understanding of an image. The poster presents a grey and black coloured background in which many fast-moving aircraft ejecting smoke are visualized to convey the serious and war-like theme/ content of the movie to the public and audience of Pakistan. Colour of fire is also contributing to the overall grim scenario. Moreover, the boys are wearing green coloured uniforms representing themselves as pilots while both girls are wearing red lipstick in black and white coloured dresses depicting beauty in the image and showing no powerful features like the opposite gender. They are just passive objects of beauty and decoration added to the poster as an attraction.

Semiotic Analyses of Film "BAAJI"

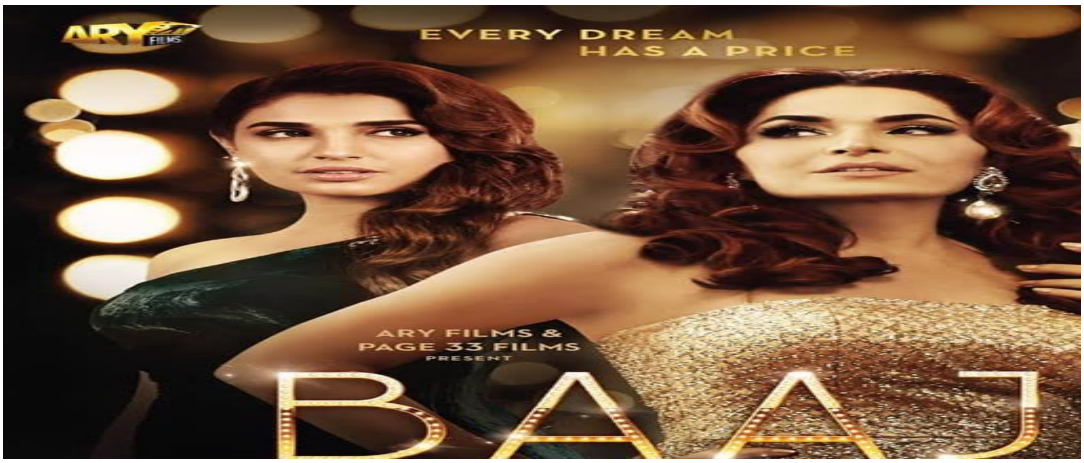


Figure 3: A Film Poster taken from the premier launch of the movie "Baaji" which was released in June 2019

Participants

There are two ladies visible in the film poster who depict beauty and elegance. Both female participants are giving expressions of femininity as their entire appearance portrays female objectification. The title of the movie *'Baaji'* itself is a feministic word meaning 'the elder sister' in the Urdu language which is associated with women. They are standing in a stylish, glamorous manner giving an expression of gracefulness. Everything including the dresses, the jewellery, the hairstyle, and their makeup looks so perfect and modern that their stunning looks cannot be denied. The female characters if displayed in a prominent position in a film poster, are always shown as decoration pieces and objects of beauty with maximum body exposure presented for the male gaze.

Settings

The setting of the poster displays very vibrant backgrounds with a black and golden colour. These two colours match with colours of the costumes worn by both female participants in the image. A deliberate effort has been made to match the background setting with both women's dresses so that the audience can perceive it more clearly to make a connection with the ladies and the graphical representation of the movie including its title in large and bold font. The main protagonist *'Baaji'* is positioned in the forefront and the other female character is in the background. The positioning of *'Baaji'* becomes more prominent owing to the black background and the dress of the other character.

Objects

No objects are visible except the jewellery items including rings, bangles, and large-sized earrings worn by the women in this poster, and these are linked directly with the feministic features of females. The attire of both ladies looks very modern and classy and the jewellery and the perfect hairstyle have made both the females more provocative and objectified for the viewers. The poster has deliberately been made for women only by the graphic designer. Therefore, the theme of gender discrimination has been purposely highlighted in the given movie poster (Mills, 2003).

Gaze

Both the women unlike the men are not facing the camera; rather they are looking in different directions, again reinforcing the concept of gender discrimination. Both the ladies are looking sideways. This type of gaze may be a cause of great attraction among the audience. It seems '*Baaji*' is trying to listen with concentration to the woman in the background who is looking at her eagerly.

Colour

The colour combination of golden and black creates the background in the film poster. And the same colours have been utilized by the image designer in the dresses of both female characters. A sense of sensuality and modernity has been lent through bright and vibrant colours. The golden and black colours are the illustration of trending fashion among females these days. The image has been made more attractive and profound for the audience through meaningful colour selection.

Discussion and Findings

Owing to the prevalence of stereotypical gender roles in our society, women have always been considered belonging to a lower stratum and subjugated by empowered men. For example, girls are told since their childhood that they should remain silent, shy, and timid regarding their bodily appearance as compared to boys. The researcher has used Multimodal Discourse Analysis to evaluate gender stereotypical behavior. To evaluate the procedure of Multimodality, Machin's (2007) model of semiotic resources has been used based on which selected film posters are analyzed for better interpretations of gender roles. To communicate with the viewer semiotic tools like colour, framing, gaze, focus, positioning of elements, and font style have been used very skillfully. These semiotic choices make up a visual language that we can exploit, interpret, and analyze Mills, 1997).

As far as gender roles in Pakistani film posters are concerned, the present work suggests that males have been portrayed as independent, empowered, and dominant and females

have been assigned the constrained and subordinated roles. They are shown as weak and inferior beings. After analyzing the selected film posters through Machin's Multimodal, the study also suggests that most of the posters are dominated by masculine features as compared to feminine features. The male images have been centralized to reflect gender discrimination and the strength and power of these participants are demonstrated through their gestures and expressions. They also try to show their authority over females through their violent attitudes, wild actions, expressions of anger, and cruelty. Sometimes, the symbols of valor, bravery, strength, prestige, and power are also revealed through the attire of the male members.

On the other hand, the expressions depicted by female participants are that of fright, oppression, and complaint in the posters under investigation. The depiction of female gender conveys the message of female objectification in the film posters as the image portrays her beautiful figure with her maximum body exposed. The theme of gender discrimination is highlighted in the image i.e., the female protagonist is presented as the epitome of beauty, glamor, and sensation in comparison to the male protagonist whose body is completely and properly covered. The attire of both ladies looks very modern and classy and the jewellery and the perfect hairstyle have made both the females more provocative and objectified for the viewers. Most Pakistani women fall in the marginalized section of our society and are regarded as disempowered, weak, submissive, inhuman objects, and repressed beings in comparison with their male counterparts. The concept of oppression and marginalization that females have been facing over the years by males has also been conveyed through the portrayal of gender discrimination in the poster of the movie "Tevar". Semiotic tools like colour, framing, focus, positioning of elements, and font style are used to communicate with the viewer.

A visual language is made up of these choices that we can analyze. In the Pakistani film industry, man always acts as a gatekeeper of the movies which is why most of the fields in the country are run by male members of society. Insulting behavior towards women is becoming very common across the globe. If one wants to see Pakistan on the road of development then one needs to change such a patriarchal mindset. Women's participation in Pakistani politics is equally important for the development of Pakistan. Women constitute almost half of the population of our country and neglecting them or throwing them on the back foot means we will lose their contribution to the development of Pakistan. So, one must realize that the empowerment of women is as important as that of men for the progress of Pakistan. Empowering women does not mean that the male part of society starts showing a disrespectful attitude towards them rather empowerment demands a respectful attitude towards women. The analysis of the images also points out the dire need to redress gender bias to present society more realistically for shaping the worldview of the next generations.

Future Recommendations

This study will certainly be useful for raising awareness among academicians and the general public about the serious repercussions of media as a powerful agent for generating, changing, and moulding public opinion. It also has the power to construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct public opinion at its own will. Future researchers will be able to better convince the reader of their claims regarding howgender roles in film posters are propagated and procreated through language and the images used in media. It will also help understand what major semiotic resource systems are deployed by the filmmakers for disseminating a particular ideology and enhancing stereotypical representations of women in Pakistani movies.

Limitations of the Study

The study is qualitative and excludes the quantitative interpretation of data. The researcher might extend this study by including quantitative data in her M. Phil research. Moreover, owing to the time constraints, this research is limited to the analysis and interpretation of a limited number of film posters.

References

Afshan, N. (2018). Breaking Gender Stereotypes: A Multimodal Analysis of Selected Pakistani Electronic Media Advertisement.

Anurudu, S., Igboanugo, A., & Onu, A. (2023). Multimodal discourse analysis of selected Nollywood posters. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Publications (IJMRAP)***,** *5*(11), 57-63.

Belgrimet, S., & Rabab'ah, G. (2021). A multimodal discourse analysis of English posters in violence awareness campaigns against women. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 11*(2), 191–201. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1102.06

Bignell, J. (2002). *Media semiotics: An introduction***.** Manchester University Press.

Febrianti, Y. (2020). *A multimodal semiotic analysis of university branding posters and films* (Doctoral dissertation).

Halliday, M. A. K. (2014). Language as social semiotic. In J. Flowerdew & J. E. Richardson (Eds.), *The Discourse Studies Reader* (pp. 263–272). John Benjamins.

Iedema, R. (2003). Multimodality, resemiotization: Extending the analysis of discourse as multi-semiotic practice. *Visual Communication, 2*(1), 29–57. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357203002001751

Iftikhar, S., Shahnaz, A., & Masroor, F. (2019). Multimodal discourse analysis of the poster covers of academy award winning animated feature movies. *PUTAJ–Humanities and Social Sciences, 26*(2), 49–80.

Jewitt, C., & Oyama, R. (2001). Visual meaning: A social semiotic approach. In T. Van Leeuwen & C. Jewitt (Eds*.), The handbook of visual analysis* (pp. 134-157). SAGE Publications.Jha, A. K. (2020). The representation of gender in Bollywood film posters: A Semiotic Analysis. *Global Media Journal: Indian Edition*, *12*(2).

Kiani, S., Umar, L., & Sultan, A. (2023). Gendered language: A critical discourse analysis of Pakistani dramas. *Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 11*(4), 4349-4357. https://doi.org/10.1234/pjhss.2023.01104.4349

Kress, G., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Kunsey, I. (2019). Representations of women in popular film: A study of gender inequality in 2018. *Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications, 10*(2), 27-38.

Machin, D. (2007). Multimodal analysis of photographs. *Discourse, war and terrorism*, *24*, 123.

Machin, D. (2010). *Visual communication: Understanding images in media and culture.* SAGE Publications.

Machin, D. (2012). *Visual communication: An introduction to the visual culture* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Marx, Karl (1867). *Das Kapital: Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (Erster Band). Verlag von Otto Meissner.

McLuhan, M. (1964). Media hot and cold. In *Understanding media: The extensions of man* (pp. 22–32). MIT Press.

Memon, S. (2021). A multimodal analysis of selected placards from the 'Aurat March' 2018 of Pakistan. *Review of Applied Management and Social Sciences, 4*(2), 467-478. https://doi.org/10.31014/aior.1993.04.02.375

Mills, S. (1997). *Feminist stylistics*. Routledge.

Mills, S. (2003). *Feminist stylistics*. Routledge.

Mitchell, J. (1974). Psychoanalysis and feminism: Freud. *Reich, Laing, and Women (New York: Vintage, 1975)*, 116.

Mitchell, J. C. (1974). Social networks. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 3*(1), 279-299. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.an.03.100174.001415

Nasir, M. H. (2017). *Subscription or subversion: gender representation in Pakistani television commercials* (Doctoral dissertation).

Nazia, K., & Sadia, K. (2019). Semiotic representation of gender in Google emojis: A liberal feminist perspective. *Linguistics and Literature Review, 5*(2), 127–137.

Qamar, H., & Farrukh, F. (2021). Understanding media practices: Construction of female image through language in Pakistani television series. *SN Social Sciences, 1*(8), 210. https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-021-00207-9

Ragin, C. C. (1994). *Qualitative comparative analysis**. In** The comparative political economy of the welfare state* (p. 320). University of Chicago Press.

Shaheed, F., & Equality, G. (2009). *Gender, religion and the quest for justice in Pakistan**.*** Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung.

Shahid, M. B., & Qadir, S. A. (2018). Social semiotic multimodal representations of gender identity in Pakistani documentary film *Saving Face**.** FWU Journal of Social Sciences, 12*(2), 190.

Shihada, I. M. (2007). The patriarchal class system in Nawal El Saadawi's *God dies by the Nile**.** Nebula, 4*(2), 50-66.

Subong, P. E. (2006). *Statistics for research: Applications in research, thesis and dissertation writing, and statistical data management using SPSS software**.*** Rex Bookstore.

Tehseem, T., Sibtain, M., & Obaid, Z. (2018). Exploring gender stereotypes in media adverts: A multimodal analysis. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 57*(2), 155-175.

Tere, N. S. (2012). Gender reflections in mainstream Hindi cinema. *Global Media Journal Indian Edition, 3*(1), 1-9.

Thangam, D., Vaidya, G. R., Subramanian, G., Velusamy, K., Selvi Govindarajan, K., & Park, J. Y. (2022). The portrayal of women's empowerment in select Indian movies. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology, 81*(1), 187–205. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajes.12489

Toor, Z. M., Kashif, F., & Alvi, U. F. (2023). Gender contestation and identities: A multimodal analysis of selected Pakistani plays (dramas). *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review, 7*(1), 159-177.

Tyson, L. (1998). *Critical theory today: A user-friendly guide* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1993). Principles of critical discourse analysis. *Discourse & Society, 4*(2), 249-283. https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926593004002006

Woolf, V. (2014). *A room of one's own* (1929). In S. A. Graham & M. S. De Angelis (Eds.), *The people, place, and space reader* (pp. 338-342). Routledge.

Dr. Asmat A. Sheikh has been an Associate Professor (Former Chairperson), Department of English, The Women University, Multan

Ujala Nadeem is an M.Phil. Scholar, Department of English, Islamiya University, Bahawalpur (Pakistan)