

CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL HIERARCHIES THROUGH LANGUAGE: REPRESENTATION OF CLASS IN PAKISTANI TV DRAMAS THROUGH CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND SOCIOLINGUISTICS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze how language is used to represent and maintain social hierarchies in Pakistani TV dramas. A qualitative research approach was employed with Fairclough's CDA model and Basil Bernstein's code theory as the research tools to conduct this study. To choose the most relevant dramas, a purposive sampling technique was used. The sample was collected from two mainstream entertainment channels, Hum TV and ARY Digital. 'Udaari' was selected from the former channel that is written by Farhat Ishtiaq, while from the latter one 'Mere Pas Tum Ho' was selected that is written by Khalil-ur-Rehman Qamar. A comparative analysis was conducted between the two dramas to unveil how they shape public perception not only by representing social stratification, ideological messages and the prevailing stereotypes but also by challenging them. The dramas of both female and male writers were selected respectively to understand their contributions in shaping or reinforcing public perceptions. The results of the study showed that Pakistani TV dramas serve more than just entertainment, reflecting and at times questioning the conventional practices and socioeconomic differences.

Keywords: Representation of social classes, Critical Discourse Analysis, Pakistani TV Dramas, Basil Bernstein Code Theory.

INTRODUCTION

Language is not only a tool for communication but also constructs social identities. Language variations are often intertwined with social differences

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in the domain of sociolinguistics (Arslan et al., 2024). In multilingual societies like Pakistan, language other than a medium of communication is also used to mark one's social identity and regional background. Similarly, in Pakistani TV dramas the linguistic choices are made carefully not only to represent but also to occasionally challenge the prevailing social biases.

Television dramas in Pakistani culture often reflect the social practices, while serving as a means of entertainment. Language is used as a key differentiator among all the dramas for the characters who come from varying social and financial backgrounds. The difference between classes is often drawn by assigning standard forms of English and Urdu to the characters from higher sociocultural contexts, whereas the characters from lower middle class are often equipped with low varieties including regional dialects and sometimes with cockney Urdu. This is because standard English and Urdu are considered as prestigious languages, while colloquial Urdu and local languages are marked as a sign of lower social background or benightedness (Mirza et al., 2024). In this way, these dramas strengthen public opinions regarding the prevailing social discriminations.

Sociolinguistics is a field of study that focuses on the interconnection between language and society (Wardhaugh and Fuller). Moreover, Pierre Bourdieu was the one who introduced the idea of linguistic capital. He suggested that the linguistic competence of a person determines their accessibility to the possible resources and potential prospects, aligning with the social perceptions (Bourdieu, 1991). In Pakistani culture, the elites often speak standard forms of English and Urdu as they are considered as high status languages. On the contrary, regional dialects are associated with the lower class. These patterns can be observed evidently through the language preferences in the media representations, often promoting class consciousness. Furthermore, Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model in the field Critical Discourse Analysis (1995) serves as an instrumental framework for this study. By focusing on the dynamic relationship between text, discursive practices and social practices, it provides an in-depth understanding of how social stratification among the audience is preserved through the choice of language in media narratives.

The existing body of knowledge related to language usage in Pakistani

media mainly focuses on analyzing the political representation, gender portrayals and religious narratives in media. However, the area of research analyzing the representation of social class in Pakistani TV dramas through language still remains unexplored. Karim et al. (2024), in their research conducted a semiotic analysis of social class representation in Pakistani TV commercials, presenting there is a need for further research on how social class system is represented and perpetuated in Pakistani TV dramas through certain linguistic choices. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine how Pakistani TV dramas represent social hierarchies. Keeping the account of it, this research critically analyzes the word choices and dialects of the characters who belong to various sociocultural backgrounds. The analysis is conducted by following a systematic approach as per Norman Fairclough's CDA model. Firstly, it examines how language functions as a part of a discourse. Secondly, how it is utilized and comprehended in varying situations by the people. Thirdly, how it depicts class-based differences both to reinforce and challenge these preconceived practices. Moreover, Basil Bernstein's code theory helps to analyze how media sustains and creates power structures within the society by marking specific linguistic styles as prestigious. In this way, these two frameworks conjointly provides a through understanding of how language in Pakistani TV dramas serves more than just a mode of entertainment, conveying deeper ideological messages and reflecting socioeconomic stratum.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze how Pakistani TV dramas portray and challenge social structures and ideologies through language in the chosen dramas.
2. To examine how specific language preferences in the selected dramas promote social class prejudices within Pakistani culture.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How Pakistani TV dramas portray and challenge social structures and ideologies through language in the chosen dramas?
2. How language preferences in the selected dramas promote social class prejudices within Pakistani culture?

LITERATURE REVIEW

In Pakistan, the drama industry masterfully presents the real picture of the societal practices, class system and cultural values. They serve as a crucial part of Pakistani society, not only by mirroring the social dynamics

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of the country, but also by shaping public perceptions of it. It depicts varying social classes, ranging from elites to lower class, through their appearances, dialects, behavior and word choice, highlighting their social identity and role as members of society. Thus, it is very crucial for the audience to understand how the social representations in Pakistani TV dramas reinforce or challenge certain sets of rules or stereotypes, influencing public perceptions profoundly.

This research uses the contemporary body of knowledge available on academic databases ranging from 2010 to 2025, ensuring that the research has relevance to contemporary times. Its prior focus is to analyze how Pakistani TV dramas represent social dynamics, linguistic capital that is used to portray a specific class, character attributes and development, medium of language and varied dialects. Social class refers to a group of people characterized by common social and economic status (Saunders, 2006). This idea sets the base for understanding the character's background and social standing as a whole. Moreover, dialects are closely concerned with regional variations. John Edward (2009) said dialect is “a variety of language that differs from others along three dimensions: vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation”, whereas Haywood et al. (2002) asserted that dialects are the forms of language that are closely connected to the geographical features. In simple terms, it can be presumed from these two definitions that while dialects have their own key features, they are deeply associated with regional factors and geographical aspects. According to Trudgill (1974), sociolect, most commonly known as social dialect, “is a variety or lect which is thought of as being related to its speaker's social background rather than geographical background”. This means sociolect, in simple terms is a language shared by a group of people having common social features. Additionally, linguistics representation can be defined as the way certain characters or groups are portrayed by the use of particular word choices, accent, speech patterns and other linguistic elements (Rosenberg, 1974). Together, these concepts enable a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of language used in Pakistani TV dramas, reflecting as well as shaping class-based identities.

Throughout history many theoretical frameworks have been introduced

by various linguists to critically understand the role of language in society. Basil Bernstein (1973) proposed the concept of elaborated and restricted codes which play a significant role in examining how language reflects social divisions. Elaborated codes are used by the elite class, often in formal contexts and are marked by explicit expressions. However, restricted codes are mutually intelligible as they are shared by a group of people having similar contextual and linguistic competence and are therefore characterized by implicit expressions.

In addition to this, William Labov (1966) in his book 'Social Stratification of Language' attempted to underscore the complex relationship between class system and linguistic variations. He expressed that language is not only the reflection of social norms, but also a powerful medium for creating and upholding social discrepancies. Moreover, the three-dimensional CDA model presented by Norman Fairclough makes it easier to trace how certain characters perpetuate social stereotypes while socializing with each other. This influences public opinions and social beliefs profoundly. Nawaz et al. (2023) in their study focused on how power relations and underlying gender roles are represented and reinforced through certain linguistic choices.

According to Pierre Bourdieu (2018), linguistic capital consists of diversified speech patterns and language proficiency. Additionally, Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital suggests that most of the prominent languages consist of a standard or prestige variety. The individuals equipped with these "legitimate languages" enjoy social advancements and greater prospects for success. Zafar and Asif (2024) in their study used Bourdieu's model to explore social hierarchies and power dynamics in a certain novel. The study uncovered that the selected novel encompassed an array of social, symbolic, economic and cultural elements that were analyzed with the lens of Bourdieu's concept. The results showed human behavior and experiences are radically influenced by socioeconomic biases. All the above discussed frameworks significantly demonstrate how language, besides just a source of interaction, performs different other functions. Moreover, they significantly help to unveil how Pakistani dramas convey concealed, yet profound ideological messages through certain dialogues and linguistic attitudes, highlighting their active role in constructing and strengthening class-based stereotypes.

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METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research approach is employed to conduct this study with Norman Fairclough's CDA model and Basil Bernstein's code theory as research instruments to explore how social classes in Pakistani TV dramas are represented through language. Norman Fairclough's CDA model serves as a groundbreaking framework to uncover how language creates and perpetuates social class biases by mainly focusing on the textual elements, discursive strategies and social settings of a discourse. Textual Analysis is the first dimension of this model which mainly deals with the linguistic elements of a text which includes lexical choices, vocabulary, syntax and grammar. The second dimension is discursive practices that deal with the text's production, distribution and consumption in different situations. Social practices is the last dimension which analyzes the bilateral nature of language and socioeconomic circumstances. This means that it focuses on how discourse influences social practices and is in turn influenced by it (Fairclough, 2007). On the other hand, Bernstein's code theory plays a crucial role in examining how certain social class associations are presented by the characters through the cautious use of restricted and elaborated codes. Restricted codes are the representatives of the proletariat and exhibit simple language patterns with context dependent discourse. However, elaborated codes are the identity markers of the bourgeoisie and include complex linguistic patterns with context-free discourse (Barrett, 2024). A purposive sampling technique was used to select the relevant dramas. The sample comprised two Pakistani dramas including Udaari and Mere Pas Tum Ho. These dramas were the best fit for this research as they gained popularity, audience feedback and masterfully represented the socioeconomic instabilities. The scenes that conveyed ideological messages, class-oriented stereotypes and social imbalances were particularly transcribed. While analyzing the dramas to explore how they reflect social structures, the main focus was directed towards specific lexical features, such as linguistic forms, tone and politeness techniques, code switching strategies and ideological charged statements.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

UDAARI

The drama serial Udaari was penned by Farhat Ishtiaq and aired on Hum TV in 2016. This drama called into attention certain sensitive issues, such as pedophilic activities and class-based marginalization. The storyline of the drama shifts from a village named Mirpurkhas to a metropolitan city of Lahore. These two locations foster a rich atmosphere to uncover how language is used to reflect social hierarchies. By using Bernstein's code theory and the three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis model presented by Norman Fairclough, it becomes quite easy to determine in more depth how language in Udaari both reflects and perpetuates social class disparities.

LEXICAL CHOICES AND CODE-SWITCHING DIALOGUE

Words or dialogue (discourse) spoken by Rasheeda to Iqbal

“Hor shode ta jawna ni, itni wade shadi he, kia BAAT he una di” (4:48, Ep no. 1).

Words or dialogue (discourse) spoken by Arsh to Mili's mother (Muneera)

“Waow Auntie! Me ap k ic social work se itna impressed ho. That is really brilliant” (27:7, Ep no. 1).

The word choices used by the characters from rural and urban origins differ notably at the textual level, demonstrating socioeconomic inequalities. Rasheeda and Iqbal are the two characters who belong to the village and typically employ Punjabi expressions often blended with rustic Urdu. Their lexical choices and speech styles can be observed when Rasheeda tells her brother Iqbal that they will be singing at the function at Lal Hawale (residence of the one of the popular landowners of that village) switching between Punjabi “Hor shode ta jawna ni, itni wade shadi he” and colloquial Urdu “kia baat he una di”. It exhibits a language style deeply inspired by their traditional speech patterns and communal values. On the other hand, characters such as Mili and Arsh have a more sophisticated register, often switching between standard forms of Urdu and English, which is considered a symbol of social prestige and high education in Pakistani society. It becomes evident when Arsh appreciates Mili's mother for her social work, expressing that he is so inspired by her welfare activities “Waow Auntie! Me ap k ic social work se itna impressed ho” that is really commendable. This linguistic duality conforms with Rehman's (2005) perspective that prestige

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and power are symbolized by the use of formal Urdu and English within Pakistani context.

DIFFERENCE IN NAMING CONVENTIONS

DIALOGUE

Words or dialogue (discourse) spoken by Mili

“Come on Luci. Thora sa tu kha lo” (26:00, Ep no. 1).

Words or dialogue (discourse) spoken by Meera

“Mama Rani ko waech raha he?” (27:20, Ep no. 11).

Moreover, social divisions are also thoughtfully represented through the polarity in naming conventions among the people from contrasting socioeconomic backgrounds. Mili, who belongs to a well-off family, names her dog “Luci”. This name is inspired by Western culture and hints at modernity. However, Rasheeda names her buffalo “Rani” which symbolizes love and affection. It hints back at Rasheeda's social standing as in villages such names with cultural association are common. Through the dichotomy of naming predilection for the pets, this drama represents the dissimilarity in the thought process of people from varying class systems. The elite class feels more connected to the Western practices. On the contrary, the people with lower class backgrounds stay strongly allied to their cultural values. In this way, it becomes evident that language represents and reinforces social stratifications. This notion is also supported by Yousaf et al. (2023), who proposed that language serves as a marker of social discrepancies and cultural affiliations.

TONE AND POLITENESS STRATEGIES

DIALOGUE

Words or dialogue (discourse) spoken by Arsh to Mili's mother (Muneera)

“Auntie! Me apko pehle hi warn kar raha ho ic aurat ko milne k baad ap k sar mein shadeed dard hone wala he aur kaye ghante tak ap k kan bejte rahein ge” (6:07, Ep no. 8).

Tone and politeness strategies are also key indicators of social differences. This can be observed in Rasheeda's speech style, who talks in an extremely high pitch that feels unpleasant to the ears. Arsh warns Mili's mother when Rasheeda comes to their home for the first time. He tells her

that she will regret meeting this loud lady and will be having a severe headache for the next couple of days. This highlights the stark difference of the speech patterns and way of interaction between the rural community and urban people. Unlike rural areas, loud and highly expressive speech patterns are avoided and inferred as a sign of overconfidence in urban settings. In addition to this, politeness strategies also represent the shift in social classes. The people who belong to urban contexts practice a deliberate tone intertwined with sophisticated linguistic forms. Conversely, people from backward areas usually exhibit crude manners and direct communication patterns.

PRONUNCIATION AND ACCENT

Pronunciation and accent are also viewed as main factors that represent social structures. A clear and refined pronunciation can be observed in the speech patterns of the urban characters like Arsh and Mili, who mainly speak standard forms of Urdu and English. In contrast, the characters from underprivileged areas like Rasheeda and Meera, use a mix of Punjabi slang and colloquial Urdu, representing their regional dialect. When Meera moves from Mirpurkhas to Lahore and rehearses a song with the professional singers at first, she mispronounces multiple words. This reflects on her minimal access to standard form of Urdu and basic education. A prominent example of it is when Meera mispronounces “Zindagi” as “Jindagi” and “Dard” as “Darrad”. It emphasizes that education and surroundings have a great impact on an individual's personality. Nonetheless, after spending some time in Lahore and interacting with the people around, Meera's speech patterns transformed visibly. She begins incorporating simple English expressions such as “Select”, “Exam” and “Performance” during her interactions. While stressing that language acquisition is deeply influenced by social advancement and relevant exposure, it aligns with the idea that an individual's geographical origin and social status can be traced through their phonological patterns (Fairclough, 2013).

INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

DIALOGUE

Words or dialogue (discourse) spoken by Arsh to Meera

“Meera tumhe apne English aur Urdu p kam karna ho ga. Log ab tumhe follow karte hein. Kal hi me tumhare liye ek teacher bhejo ga, kal hi ic p kam

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shuro karna” (35:11, Ep no. 13).

The interconnection between language and social advancement is frequently presented in this drama. One prominent example of it is when keeping the account of Meera's popularity, Arsh advises Meera to work on her English and Urdu proficiency as people follow her, emphasizing the significance of being proficient in English because it is a sign of professionalism and social mobility in our society. In this way, this drama demonstrates strongly believed societal perception that proficiency in standard English and Urdu is crucial for career advancement.

DISCURSIVE PRACTICES

In the context of discursive practice, this drama creates a story in which social advancement is reflected by language changes. The dialogues of the drama serial Udaari masterfully portrayed the true picture of class-based stereotypes and power dynamics prevailing within Pakistan. The writer and the director thoughtfully catered each detail of the drama, ranging from the locations, dressing, dialogues and way of communication. They ensured that each detail clearly represents a character's social and cultural affiliations. Moreover, the audience's feedback and interpretations of the drama play a crucial role in sustaining or impeaching such ideas within the society. According to Kiani et al. (2023), media discourse holds the power to promote or demolish widely held social biases.

SOCIAL PRACTICES

ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN REINFORCING OR CHALLENGING ESTABLISHED STEREOTYPES

DIALOGUE

Words or dialogue (discourse) spoken by Sajida to Zebo

“Kal raat Jo tu ne mujhe baat batae he na, wo ab sare zindagi kabhi bhi kisi se dubara nahi bolne” (4:18, Ep no. 13).

Words or dialogue (discourse) spoken by Arsh to Zebo

“Mujhe faisla kar k batao Zebo, kia tum ek victim ban kar rehna chahte ho ya phir ek survivor ban kar? Ek fighter, ek bahadur larki ban kar” (19:15, Ep no. 21).

At the social level, this drama strongly suggests that specific language forms clearly depict class systems and power structures. It reflects that

besides a source of interaction, language can be utilized to exert power and show resilience. This drama remarkably handles growing problems like sexual misconduct and long held societal practice to suppress the voice of the victims, while considering their social responsibility. When Zebo's mother comes to know about the brutality her daughter has to face, she takes a promise that she will not share it with anyone and try to forget it. The reason behind silencing Zebo was to protect her from the preconceived stereotypes and the backlash of the society. This hints at the general practice of scapegoating the victim and muting them while siding with the oppressor. In this way, it underscores male dominance and restricted female agency, specifically in Pakistani context. However, after years of this happening when the case reopens, Arsh propels Zebo to break the silence. Those who remain silent against these inhumane activities are denoted as "Victims". Conversely, the terms like "Survivor", "Fighter" and "Bahadur" signify those who speak out to hold oppressors accountable, breaking the stigmas. This event marks a shift in Zebo's character, highlighting the power of language that can either shatter someone's confidence or re-establish the power to protest against the culprits. In this way, it emphasizes the paradoxical nature of language that can win hearts and inflict harm spontaneously.

DIALOGUE

Words or dialogues (discourse) spoken by Meera

"Haan bari ache rozi roti he. Sare san ko marasi domne kehte hein" (9:45, Ep no. 1).

Words or dialogue (discourse) spoken by Meera's fan to her

"Oh my God! Mujhe yaqeen nahi ho raha me apne favorite singer se mil rahi ho. Ap jante hein ap k ek song se me aur mere friend ap k fan ho gae hein" (12:42, Ep no. 13).

In addition to that, a strong indicator of class-based language patterns and ideological standing is the way the same occupation is linguistically labeled in varying socioeconomic circumstances. There are two titles that are used to signify the profession of singing. "Domni" is a disparaging and socially humiliating phrase used in villages, and "Singer" is a more dignified and aspirational term used in big cities like Lahore. This linguistic disparity, in particular the contrast between elaborated and restricted codes employed throughout this drama, aligns with Basil Bernstein's Code Theory.

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Initially, Meera hated the profession of singing because the rural community used to disrespect her family due to their work and calling them demeaning names. However, her perception of singing changes when she spends time in Lahore, where she is admired and honored as a singer, and the profession is regarded as a respectable, even glamorous occupation. This transformation demonstrates how language not only reflects but also influences economic status and identity, presenting the larger ideological role of language in promoting or challenging misconceptions based on class.

MERE PAS TUM HO

The drama serial “Mere Pas Tum Ho” was a blockbuster, written by Khalil-ur-Rehman Qamar in 2019. It not only gained popularity in Pakistan, but also in international countries. It raised debates on topics like gender expectations, morality and social hierarchies. Danish, a lower- middle class government employee, Mehwish, his aspirational wife, and Shehwaar, an affluent businessman, are at the core of the story. The diverse themes and characters make it an ideal choice to examine how language in the story both reflects and perpetuates gender norms and societal inequalities.

LEXICAL CHOICES AND GENDERED LANGUAGE

DIALOGUE

Words or dialogue (discourse) spoken by Danish to Shehwaar

“Dekhne sunne me bare intelligent businessman lagte hein ap lekin yaha bhao karte hoe ap ne mujhe heran kar dia. Ic do takkay ki larki k liye ap mujhe 50 million de rahe the” (35:10, Ep no. 12).

Words or dialogue (discourse) spoken by Shehwaar to Mehwish

“Ek tatpunjiye ko ese haseen larki ne apne aath saal de diye kafi he” (36:45, Ep no. 5).

At the textual level, it becomes evident that this drama incorporates a variety of directive and socially inappropriate expressions, especially slang terms like “Taporī”, “Tatpunjiye”, “Saly”, “Bewafa”, “Dalali” and the controversial “Do takkay ki aurat.” In addition to being disparaging, these phrases support moral judgments and power structures in society. The phrase “Do takkay ki aurat”, uttered by Danish to characterize Mehwish, highlights the patriarchal propensity to associate a woman's value with her devotion and modesty. These ideologically contested terms are criticized for

their overtly misogynistic and classist overtones. Furthermore, the term "Tatpunjiye" is used to demonstrate how language is used to demean and make fun of people from lower socioeconomic groups.

RELIGIOUS REFERENCES AND MORAL JUSTIFICATIONS

DIALOGUE

Words or dialogue (discourse) spoken by Danish to Aisha and Salman

"Shirk tu Khuda bhi maaf nahi karta" (40:44, Ep no. 20).

Words or dialogue (discourse) spoken by Monty to Ifra (his wife)

"Bewafae me mafi ho jae tu mard khuda na ho jae. Bas wo Khuda hone se dar rahe hein" (26:16, Ep no. 22).

Throughout the drama, religious metaphors are frequently used to support moral positions or individual acts. In order to demonstrate their sincerity or uprightness, characters commonly swear by God, using expressions like "Khuda ki kasam" (I swear to God). Furthermore, the drama is strongly dependent on references to religion. Danish links religious immorality with personal deception by asserting that even God does not forgive shirk, how can I? This claim aligns with the cultural notion of "Majazi Khuda", which places the male partner in a position of spiritual power. On the contrary, when Monty elaborates Danish's perspective to her wife, stating that divorce is an act associated with marriage. However, there is no divorce in love and if someone gets forgiveness for betrayal, the one who is forgiving might not be a God? He is afraid of being Him; the narrative becomes contradicting. This paradoxical narration calls into question the coherence of ideologies and highlights conflicts in society about divinity, forgiveness, and masculinity. These contentious statements show how ideas on morality and honor are discursively constructed.

SPEECH PATTERNS AND CLASS INDICATORS

DIALOGUE

Words or dialogue (discourse) spoken by Shehwaar to Mehwish

"Tu phir phone rakho tum aur ane do usko mere pas. Qeemat check karte hein uski aur dekhte hein kitne me bikta he" (40:32, Ep no. 10).

Words or dialogue (discourse) spoken by Danish to Mehwish

"Neend nahi a rahi mujhe. Mere auqat mujhe thenga dekha rahi he Mehwish" (9:12, Ep no. 1).

Words or dialogue (discourse) spoken by Danish to the broker

"Panch so gaz k furnished ghar ka, bohat kam he Mushtaq sahab"

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(40:55, Ep no. 16).

Class differences are also evident in the characters' speaking practices. Shehwaar initially demonstrates an authoritative and self-assured speaking style that is a symbol of the upper class and reflects Bernstein's elaborated code. Its prime example is when Sehwar says to Mehwish that let Danish be here and let me find out how much he demands for leaving you, exhibiting his financial and social dominance. This remark reinforces aristocratic disdain and the reification of relationships by objectifying Mehwish and illustrating Shehwaar's belief that everyone has a cost. On the other hand, Danish initially employs restricted code often linked with the lower-middle class, which is characterized by reluctance, being apologetic and self-questioning. When Mehwish expresses her desire to buy a very expensive necklace, Danish gets stressed and starts questioning himself and his financial position; he says to Mehwish that my fortune is teasing me. However, Danish's demeanor and language tend to be more confident after becoming wealthy. For instance, while looking for a new home, he asks the broker about the rent for the 500-square-yard furnished home. The broker asserts that it will cost one and a half lakh per month, to which Danish replies that it is very inexpensive for a 500-square-yard furnished house. This sudden shift confirms the idea that social mobility largely influences an individual's self-confidence, discourse and demeanor.

DISCURSIVE PRACTICES

This drama maintains the deeply ingrained practice of considering male as the dominant player in society, while outcasting the females. Initially, Danish employs a deliberate tone interconnected with overprotective attitudes. On the other hand, Mehwish's ambitious and highly expressive speech patterns hint at her rebellious tendencies. This dichotomy preserves the societal practices of beholding men as responsible and rational, while characterizing women as impulsive. Although this drama gained immense popularity, it was also criticized greatly for its women representation. It ignited a discussion on societal biases which give a leeway to the males for enacting such transgression. However, women are often labeled as homewreckers and immodest under similar situations. Besides Mehwish's character, this idea is reinforced through Danish's infamous dialogue "Do

takkay ki aurat”. In the response of such a gender biased portrayal, the writer has to face a backlash for standardizing such demeaning statements. The audience feedback advocates for a critical reflection on digital content and the impact of such dramas on public perceptions.

SOCIAL PRACTICES

DIALOGUE

Words or dialogue (discourse) spoken by a client (Mohabbat Ali) to Danish

“Poch gach kon kare ga? Sataar salon se ye mulk wohi log chala rahe hein jin se poch gach karne wala aj tak koi peda hi nahi hoa” (16:32, Ep no.1).

The social aspects of this drama highlights that power and money often influence the pursuit of justice. The ethical instructions of Danish's father, who acts as a voice of conscience by guiding him through his dreams, have a profound impact on his internal conflict about taking bribes. However, corruption in the system is a common practice around him. It can be observed when a client who wanted an unlawful approval for a project asserts that for 70 years this country has been driven by corrupt people, and no one has been born till date to hold them answerable for their wrongdoings, expressing a pessimistic opinion about the government. The dispensation of the upper strata is shown when Danish's crooked boss is detained by the FIA but is soon freed after bribing higher authorities.

DIALOGUE

Words or dialogue (discourse) spoken by the lawyer to Danish

“Ap adalat ko maat dekhein, ap ye dekhye k apka muqabla he kis se. Aur me sach bataon, apko mo ki khane pare gi” (32:00, Ep no. 14).

It represents the legal system distorted likewise, penalizing the weak and siding with the one having power and wealth. This can be witnessed vividly when Danish meets a lawyer for his child's custody case and the lawyer suggests to him that he should settle this issue without legal procedure. He posits that instead of relying on the judiciary, look at who your rival is. He adds, they are wealthy and resourceful; they will spend money like water to get the verdict in their favor. You will regret filing this case. This incident sheds light on the shared disappointment with the judicial system where the powerful manipulate the truth and the entitled people are oppressed.

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FINDINGS

LANGUAGE USE AND LEXICAL CHOICES

The drama serial Udaari draws attention to the pressing issues like child abuse and women autonomy. Throughout the drama, the linguistic choices remain emotionally intense and socially informed. This drama challenges the widespread conventions of muting the victims and women marginalization. It is represented through characters like Arsh, Meera and Muneera, who stand by Sajida and Zebo to fight against the injustice. On the contrary, Mere Pas Tum Ho employs direct and foul language. It largely depends on socially inappropriate and disparaging terms and phrases. It becomes evident in the drama's despicable statement "Do takkay ki aurat" uttered by Danish after getting betrayed by Mehwish. These gender biased representations that reinforce patriarchy and social prejudices contribute to strong a response from the audience.

GENDER REPRESENTATION AND AGENCY

The drama serial Udaari portrays women as effective forces, who bravely stand against repression and social biases. It is broadly represented through the character development of Meera and Sajida. As the story unfolds, Meera transforms from an indecisive singer to a professional vocalist, whereas Sajida becomes a business lady. These representations promote women's independence. Conversely, Mere Pas Tum Ho associates female ambitions and agency with negative connotations. It reinforces the preconceived notion that the women who debunk the roles they are assigned have to face severe consequences through the character of Mehwish. In this way, it sets high standards for morality and gender norms. Moreover, it also depicts women as emotional liabilities. It can be observed clearly when Roomie says to Danish that his mother is his weakness. Similar idea is reiterated when Danish on his death-bed tells Roomie that your mother has been my weakness. In this way, it underscores the idea that women participation impose negative impacts on a men's resilience and rational thinking.

SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND CODE THEORY

The code theory of Basil Bernstein enables us to identify the shift in the linguistic patterns of the characters. In drama serial Udaari, it is reflected

through the character of Meera. As she moves from Mirpurkhas to Lahore, a drastic change appears in her dressing sense, body language and linguistic patterns. It highlights the role of social mobility and education in shaping an individual's personality. On the other hand, *Mere Pas Tum Ho* suggests a strong relationship between linguistic competence and social position. Initially, Danish uses managed tones and restricted codes which hints at his lower background. However, as he becomes financially stable, his linguistic expressions reflect dominance and authority. In this way, the drama reinforces the connection between language and socioeconomic prosperity.

MORAL DISCOURSE AND IDEOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTS

The drama serial *Udaari* attempts to bring change in the society by challenging the dominant ideologies. It talks about a socially prohibited topic such as child misconduct, while highlighting the social practice of repressing the victims and protecting the wrongdoers. It aims at rejecting such cynical beliefs and encouraging the victims to speak out for justice. On the other hand, *Mere Pas Tum Ho* strengthens the established gender biases. It maintains the conventional moral binaries of honesty and dishonesty. Moreover, it strongly depends on religious references to support the decisions of the characters. It can be observed clearly when Monty meets Danish after years to convince him to meet Mehwish for the last time. He tries to soften Danish's heart for Mehwish by saying that she is praying wholeheartedly and reciting Quran so that you meet her. He asks Danish that will you stay unruly in front of the Quranic verses? In addition to this, the characters of this drama vow repeatedly, often in emotionally intense situations to validate their moral actions by swearing by God.

POWER DYNAMICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The legislation of a country determines its prosperity and success. *Udaari* reinforces that although the judicial system may have some flaws, it has the power to hold the affluents liable for their crimes. It stresses on the idea that instead of suppressing the voices of the victim, the society should become their strength and encourage them to stand for justice and equality. Contrastively, *Mere Pas Tum Ho* highlights the other side of the judicial system, where the powerful people vacate the legal rulings and get freed without facing the repercussions. Shehwaar and other dominant characters hold the power to manipulate the truth and situations and turn it into their favor. In this way, it highlights the struggle a lay man has to do to get justice

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against the people who belong to higher status ques.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights that the selected dramas focus on certain themes, such as social class structures, gender norms and ideologically charged messages. The comparative study between Udaari and Mere Pas Tum Ho concludes that social structures and dominant ideologies are not only represented and sustained by Pakistani TV dramas, but also challenged occasionally. The drama serial Udaari encompasses the topics like class distinctions, women empowerment and justice in a thought-provoking way, encouraging the audience to view them from a different lens. On the contrary, Mere Pas Tum Ho reinforces the preconceived gender identities and social biases. This research involves valuable implications for all the relevant fields. The producers are expected to portray social order and gender norms carefully, realizing their social responsibility. Rather than just perpetuating stereotypical conventions they should be promoting positive behaviors. Moreover, it advises the audience to be mindful of what they are consuming and how these dramas shape public attitudes towards entrenched traditions, social class system and moral conduct. Finally, the field professionals are suggested to explore how the specific language forms in the dramas contribute to the learner's overall understanding of 'prestigious' and 'stigmatized' forms. The future researchers are recommended to analyze the interconnection between gender and class, regional content and audience response to such media content which shapes their understanding of society on a broader level.



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