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## Когнитивно-прагматические аспекты репрезентации концепта «Террор» в пакистанском медиадискурсе

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В исследовании анализируются языковые средства репрезентации концепта «ТЕРРОР» в рамках медиадискурса Пакистана. Авторы рассматривают языковые единицы, используемые для представления когнитивных моделей, связанных с концептом «ТЕРРОР». Материалом исследования послужили медиатексты, опубликованные на веб-сайтах пакистанских СМИ, включая Daily Dawn, The Nation, The News и The Express Tribune. В исследовании использовались методы анализа дискурса, семиотического анализа и лексического определения. Результаты исследования указывают на то, что пакистанские СМИ освещали террористические атаки. Кроме того, пакистанские СМИ используют определенные лингвистические методы для описания когнитивных моделей обстоятельств.

**Ключевые слова:** концепт «ТЕРРОР», ситуативная когнитивная модель, медиадискурс, заголовки новостей.

### Introduction

You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean: if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.

*Mahatma Gandhi*

It is crucial to maintain trust in the intrinsic compassion of humanity. Humanity resembles an expansive ocean, where the contamination from a limited number of drops cannot taint the entire body of water. The twenty-first century has observed numerous new

and emerging phenomena. The conveyance of information has progressed regarding both the substance conveyed and the methods utilized. Since the 17th century, newspapers have served as a medium for conveying events and occurrences; however, they remained largely inactive until the early 20th century with the emergence of motion pictures. Individuals demonstrated heightened interest and increased attentiveness to the presented material. The media's role, beyond entertainment, is a powerful conduit for communication and the dissemination of knowledge [1]. The media has served as a channel for information dissemination and has significantly influenced public opinion and society as a whole. The media has shaped the public's understanding of both genuine and distorted events [2]. As a result, individuals get a varied and thorough perspective on the same news.

The media has profoundly influenced the emotions and thoughts of individuals in modern culture. The media has evolved into a conduit for disseminating and exchanging information, possessing the capacity to influence news in a manner that eventually affects political agendas and incites public disputes and dialogues. Research indicates that individuals value the chance to express their opinions and are more likely to be persuaded by discussions that are transparent and inclusive, as they consider them as representative of the collective sentiment [3].

Extremism is associated with a specific portion of the worldwide populace that possesses well defined political objectives, and the media has facilitated this phenomenon [4]. Extremism refers to the rigid and unwavering adherence to beliefs directed towards a certain group, religion, or political institution. It is an aberrant cognitive and behavioral habit that contravenes established social norms. Extremism is frequently associated with violence; yet, its evolving forms and classifications are enhancing our comprehension of it. Religion, particularly Islam, is being criticized for exhibiting extreme tendencies. Linking extremism to a particular religion undermines the cultural, social, and interpersonal bonds among that religious community and its followers. The injustice was exacerbated when the media contributed to disseminating the association between extremism and a specific religion, namely Islam [5].

Terrorism has emerged as a profoundly polarizing issue worldwide over the past few decades, with events such as 9/11 intensifying the discourse. The media has amplified and sensationalized the concept of liberalism while disregarding journalistic ethics by associating terrorism and extremism solely with Muslims and Islam. The narratives were propagated with a calculated and misleading interpretation, causing considerable damage to the religious integrity of Islam [6]. The media has exploited its autonomy by disseminating the perspectives and objectives of a certain party to a global audience, necessitating a thorough evaluation. The media characterized these attacks as acts of terrorism, asserting that they were endorsed by Muslim extremist groups.

Terrorism, despite the absence of a universally accepted definition, can be broadly characterized as a tactic that utilizes violence (or threat of violence) to induce fear and attain political or ideological goals. The steadfast opposition of the Iberian Peninsula to Napoleon's incursion resulted in the emergence of a new type of combatant known as the "guerrilla", derived from the Spanish word *guerra*, meaning "little war" [7, p. 52]. It is essential to acknowledge that every individual possesses innate destructive tendencies that conflict with societal norms and cultural values. Moreover, these tendencies can significantly influence the behavior of a considerable segment of the population in human society [8]. Terrorism has been employed across several historical epochs. Presently, acts of violence utilizing terrorism as a tactic include not just repressive governments that propagate fear but also a kind of terrorism grounded in religious ideology, aimed at safeguarding and maintaining sacred lands, along with religious and cultural traditions.

The 9/11 tragedy, a contemporary example of ideologically motivated terrorism, resulted in both state-sponsored and non-state terrorist activities, inciting worldwide reflection on the nature, importance, and understanding of terrorism. Following the events of 9/11, prominent nations and marginalized groups experienced significant alterations in their political agendas. Terrorism is characterized as the "illicit application of force or violence". This definition, however, excludes state-sponsored terrorism, which is deemed "lawful". These factors enable authoritarian regimes to categorize actions that challenge their authority as "terrorist". By portraying terrorism as a worldwide issue similar to hijacking, any critique of governmental bodies is easily dismissed as they assert their dominance in addressing security matters.

Defining terrorism poses a dilemma for numerous researchers. The term is ambiguous and can signify various meanings and interpretations, including actions by members of opposition groups or left-wing extremists who oppose the prevailing authority, exemplified by the adage "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." The current increase in terrorist actions has prompted the media to include the public in reporting such events. Terrorists, in an effort to execute their nefarious purpose, exploit media activities for self-aggrandizement. It is a form of persuasion employed in spoken, written, and various visual discourses to shape audiences' perceptions and attitudes. Rhetoric, as a persuasive art, cultivates style and enables a writer, speaker, visual artist, or photographer to adopt a style that enhances their intended purpose. Effective advertisements or product boosters typically utilize compelling images and visuals that the audience may interpret and extract meaning from. The use of language, both linguistic and non-linguistic, is crucial for the reader; any negligence in language usage, whether in news stories or advertorials, can destabilize a nation and mislead society.

### Literature review

The question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be.

*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Contemporary terrorism has, until recently, employed analogous tactical methodologies and strategies as nations in their internal military engagements. Some contend that a century ago the criteria utilized by terrorists for target selection were analogous to those adopted by the military. A distinct distinction was made between military members, government officials, and innocent non-combatants. An example of this occurrence is the intentional and targeted On June 28, 1914, Austria's Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated [9, p. 197–234].

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the advancement of industrialized weaponry enabled the elimination of adversaries without the necessity for accurate targeting, resulting in an increase in indiscriminate and lethally effective warfare. The utilization of mechanized and indiscriminate tactics in warfare during the two “total wars” of the twentieth century, disregarding the principle of distinguishing between combatants and non-combatants, effectively radicalized individuals who later became revolutionary terrorists post-conflict. These individuals also used unconventional weaponry and tactics, including urban guerrilla warfare.

The contemporary world often observes the extensive dissemination of armaments, encompassing advanced bombing technologies and weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Technological advancements in the mid- and late-eighteenth centuries significantly influenced the rise of terrorism. The widespread availability of dynamite allowed terrorists to efficiently carry out and propagate their lethal deeds as a means of propaganda. The advent of improved communication technology facilitated the swift dissemination of news, information, ideas, and events over vast distances, resulting in a significant era of communication and migration that profoundly impacted various societies.

The evolution into terrorism is seldom characterized by rapid and abrupt changes. Based on our understanding of contemporary terrorists, it is uncommon for an individual to deliberately choose to become a terrorist. Horgan & Taylor assert that the majority of those who participate in terrorism are progressively influenced and socialized into embracing extreme behaviors [10]. Luckabaugh et al. contend that there is a consensus in terrorism studies that individuals do not suddenly become terrorists overnight [11].

Terrorist attacks can be categorized into two primary types: targeted and indiscriminate. Terrorism has historically been mostly associated with the former faction. Terrorist activities were utilized as a method of politically motivated action, aimed explicitly at government officials or political leaders to attain certain political objectives [12, p. 3; 13, p. 55]. These actions encompass varying degrees of engagement in the conflict, whether direct or indirect, between the terrorist organization and its adversary.

Modern terrorism is characterized by an increasing frequency and severity of indiscriminate violence. Individuals who fall victim to terrorist attacks are generally not intentionally selected based on their characteristics; instead, they are arbitrary targets present

in an unfortunate location at a tragic time. The victims are utilized to exert control over external entities [14, p. 20]. The element of unpredictability and randomness in victim selection is a critical characteristic that enhances the present efficacy of terrorism.

The media's incessant reporting and reiteration of victimization amplify this influence. The evolution of terrorism is seen in the transition from isolated attacks to a widespread phenomena marked by mass executions and psychological manipulation [12, p. 9]. Terrorism aims to dominate a populace and its authorities by instilling fear and anxiety about possible threats [13, p. 21]. In cases of suicide terrorism, ideology significantly influences the selection of targets by terrorists. Drake asserts that it serves as a preliminary stimulant for their actions and shapes their perspectives on events and the behavior of others [15]. Although suicide strikes have occurred in various conflicts throughout history.

The 1983 suicide bombing of the U.S. embassy in Beirut is recognized by contemporary experts as the impetus for a new era of suicide terrorism. Since then, there have been a minimum of 188 distinct instances of suicide terrorist attacks globally, occurring in countries such as Lebanon, Israel, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Turkey, Russia, and the United States. The rate has steadily risen from 31 in the 1980's to 104 in the 1990's, and subsequently declining to 53 over the period of 2000–2001 [16]. Notwithstanding the general decrease in terrorist incidents, there has been a significant increase in the prevalence of suicide terrorism. United States Senator John Warner agreed with numerous observers of this tendency, asserting: "Individuals who commit acts of self-destruction while assaulting the democratic world are irrational and cannot be swayed by logical arguments". Merely possessing an ideology is insufficient to persuade an individual to commit acts of terrorism.

The linguistic message is defined by the linguistic signs represented as captions and labels that accompany news articles, comic strips, film dialogue, and similar media. The linguistic message serves either as an anchor (subject to many interpretations; guides the reader to the signified of the image) or as a relay (texts that enhance one another; frequently observed in press images and films). Discerning readers focus on the images within any text, recognizing their substantial influence on interpretation and response.

### **Cognitive and pragmatic characteristics of media discourse**

Language is a crucial tool in the creation, interpretation, and perception of media. It also helps define the authenticity of different communities. Each community, culture, and group of people values their own authenticity, which includes a unique set of values, habits, and norms that they believe are important to pass on. As an illustration, Kecskes observes that British society values maximum creativity more highly than maximum kindness [17]. In Mediterranean civilizations, there is a preference for exhibiting utmost generosity rather than emphasizing extreme delicacy. Therefore, it is crucial to conduct

research on organizing courses and programs that specifically address the practical and cognitive components of producing media texts, with a particular emphasis on digital media as distinct genres within the realm of new media.

The linguists in the domains of linguistics, social communications, and journalism are always searching for new ideas to enhance the most challenging subjects and areas of study in science and to use them effectively. These encompass the challenges of pragmatics in organizing text, as well as the cognitive-pragmatic method of interpreting and modifying media texts across different cultures and perception types and mental representations. Media texts facilitate effective interactive communication among individuals. The author must consider the audience's interests, comprehend their cultural and psychological traits, and accurately convey them in the media realm. Pragmatics and cognitive science play important roles in linguistics and are also utilized by modern technology tools in the digital realm. These are the environmental circumstances and linguistic aspects that interact to interpret the statement. Each of these works enables the audience to comprehend not only the objectives and intents of the author, but also their emotional sensitivity and purpose. The significance of the cognitive-pragmatic aspect extends beyond the basic interpersonal contact. Transmitting new meanings to the community's traditions and ways of thinking is crucial. Expanding the audience through diverse representatives from many cultures and social groups is crucial.

Research in cognitive linguistics has investigated how elements of broader cognitive processes can facilitate the acquisition and comprehension of language [18–21]. As a result, the identification of principles of conceptual structure has enabled individuals to effectively represent or interpret the objects, occurrences, and conditions that we desire to discuss. These principles also enable individuals to effectively expand upon such representations in innovative and articulate manners. They offer resources that facilitate the creation of conceptual connections, usually between the ideas to be communicated (target concepts) and the ideas used to transmit them (source concepts). The principles encompass several cognitive tools such as analogy, metaphor, metonymy, gestalt thinking, picture schemas, conceptual blends, idealized cognitive models, and others.

The primary function of pragmatics is to extract any components of implicit meaning that could potentially complicate the semantics and disrupt the desired alignment between logic and natural language.

The ideational function of language examines the representation of reality, in conjunction with the interpersonal function, which illustrates the relationship between a text and its reader, and the textual function, which addresses the internal mechanisms of the text regarding coherence, reference to the real world, and other rhetorical practices within the text. The primary emphasis is on the ideational function, which pertains to the depiction of reality inside the text – specifically, how readers can comprehend or

connect with a text through a shared background knowledge (SBK) or shared background information (SBI), as applicable. These two phrases are occasionally employed interchangeably to denote the same idea; wherein an individual is cognisant of or acquainted with occurrences inside the text (context) with conclusions derived from supplementary texts (co-text).

The emergence of cognitive pragmatics, particularly the relevance-theoretic approach, has introduced a distinct perspective. In this context, 'pragmatics' refers to a mental ability, a form of information-processing system that enables the interpretation of human communicative behavior within a specific phenomenon in the world [22]. The subject should be regarded as a distinct area of study, rather than being considered just as a supplement to natural language semantics. Within a cognitive-scientific paradigm, this type of pragmatic theorizing is accountable to distinct sources of evidence and standards of sufficiency compared to philosophical analytical investigations. Additionally, knowledge about the functioning and structure of other cognitive abilities that interact with the comprehension of speech, such as language processing and the 'theory of mind' mechanism for understanding people's behavior based on their mental states (beliefs, desires, intentions), can also be relevant.

There are at least three potential perspectives about the scope of pragmatics and the nature of its cognitive system. The positions can be categorized in increasing specificity as follows:

1. It is a system that interprets human actions and behavior based on the underlying mental states such as beliefs and intentions. This system is essentially the same as the general 'theory of mind' system.
2. It is a system that focuses on understanding communicative behavior and determining the intended message behind the ostensive behavior.

It is a system specifically dedicated to understanding linguistic communicative behavior. Regardless of the chosen domain of pragmatics, linguistic communication is always included, necessitating an interface with natural language semantics.

However, in this cognitively-oriented approach to pragmatics, natural language semantics is not considered the starting point of investigation. The relevance-theoretic account supports the idea that pragmatics is concerned with a specific group of environmental phenomena, namely ostensive stimuli that are used for communication. Verbal utterances are the primary example of such stimuli, but they are not the only ones. In fact, verbal utterances are often accompanied by other communicative gestures involving the face, hands, voice, and so on. To accurately understand the intended communication, all of these elements need to be interpreted together. Primarily, this research will concentrate on linguistic ostensive stimuli, specifically utterances.

Grice's research acknowledges that information decoded through language is often lacking in completeness, and that pragmatic inference is crucial in deriving the notion that is clearly expressed [23]. Conversely, the output of the pragmatic processor, which is what is conveyed, typically consists of completely propositional thoughts or assumptions. These thoughts or assumptions can be evaluated as either true or untrue in relation to the external state of affairs in the world. There are two types of statements that are communicated: explicit propositions and implicit propositions. There is ongoing discussion on the exact definition of the explicit/implicit distinction, how it should be delineated, and whether a binary distinction can adequately capture the various levels and types of meaning involved in interpreting speech. Nevertheless, there is a consensus that implicatures are completely separate from the linguistic meaning and are formed based on the semantic structure provided by the language utilized. There is widespread agreement that the processes of disambiguation and indexical reference assignment are essential in determining the meaning of an utterance. However, there is some debate regarding how these processes occur and what factors influence them. In particular, there is disagreement about whether the speaker's communicative intention plays a role, and whether pragmatic maxims or principles are involved.

In communication, a comparable approach for a listener involves emulating the speaker's decision-making process by analyzing how an interconnected array of factors—intention, context, and knowledge—culminates in the selection of a speech. A listener is suggested to emulate speaker behavior using a reasonable, goal-oriented choice paradigm. Speakers are anticipated to evaluate potential expressions to select the most effective one for aiding the audience in discerning the intended meaning within a specific setting. Furthermore, listeners must oversee the knowledge and beliefs exchanged with the speaker (common ground) to emulate speaker behavior based on shared knowledge, rather than relying on the listener's private knowledge. Nonetheless, there is no empirical evidence indicating that comprehending implicit meaning in communication necessitates logical, context-specific imitation of speakers. It is particularly uncertain if the alleged mental simulation signals are represented in the listener's brain and adaptively aid in the interpretation of utterances across different settings. It is yet to be determined whether the listener's brain actively analyses received utterances through automatically generated simulations of speakers, or if it generates internal estimations solely when required, such as in situations of communicative ambiguity, due to the cognitive expense of mental modelling. A third unresolved question pertains to the internal representation of mental simulation—specifically, whether various facets of information (e.g., utterance, context, and common ground) directly facilitate or influence the presumed simulation signal in the listener's brain, or if certain information is abstracted during the simulation process.



## Methodology, data and results

The headlines are taken for the analysis from various daily newspapers of Pakistan published in English. These headlines were taken from publications from January 2024 to the March 2024. During this period, many terrorist attacks and a huge number of casualties of civilians and armed personnel were reported in the Pakistani media. This issue has provided the subject matter for this study. The choice of selecting the data is justified as below:

1. It provides good examples of the language for the cognitive and pragmatic study.
2. It covers the data for the analysis which are representing concept of Terror and Terrorist attacks in the particular context.

Our main focus is method of analysis of cognitive and pragmatic aspects in the discourse and possible links between pragmatic and cognitive aspects, and the language modes which cognitively and pragmatically represent terrorism or terrorist attacks.

The headlines of the following leading English newspapers of Pakistan have been included in this study:

1. **The Nation.**
2. **The Daily Dawn.**
3. **The Express Tribune.**

One of the Pakistan's leading newspapers, "The Daily Dawn", represents a terrorist attack situation in the following headline: *Moscow concert hall that killed more than 130 people has raised fresh security fears for the Paris Olympics*. As it can be seen in the front-page news report of "The Daily Dawn", the journalist mentions the results of the terror event. In this headline the "TERROR" concept is represented via the *terrorist attack* situational cognitive model. The PARTICIPANT component is represented by the lexical unit *people*. This model also comprises such constituents as CHARACTERISTICS of the PARTICIPANT (*terrorist*), PARTICIPANTS' ACTIONS (*attack, killed 130 people*) and PLACE (*Moscow concert hall, Russia*). The language units that are used to represent the situational cognitive model have the following semantic peculiarities: *attack – violent action; killed – deprived somebody of his/her life*, etc. The journalist uses specific words denoting violent, aggressive, and murderous actions of the participants, because the referent situation is chilling and the journalist wants to form the highly negative attitude of the reader towards these kinds of terror events and also towards terrorism and terrorists.

"The Nation" newspaper in another headline represents terror/terrorism situational cognitive model in the following headline: *The Kremlin refused to comment Monday on the IS group's claims that it was behind the deadliest attack in Russia in two decades*,

*as rescuers searched for bodies amid the rubble of the burnt-out Moscow concert hall.* The journalists mention the results of the terror event in the front-page news report. In this headline “TERROR” concept is represented via the phrase *the deadliest attack in Russia in two decades*, which actualizes *terrorist attack* situational cognitive model. The PARTICIPANTS component is represented by the lexical units *the Kremlin and IS*. Regarding the PARTICIPANT component, the group’s name, *IS*, refers to a group of butchers and inhuman actors who spread chaos and fear around the world in an attempt to garner attention and support. The CHARACTERISTICS of the PARTICIPANTS include the IS group’s assertion of being responsible for the deadliest attack in Russia, and the participant’s decision that the Russian government believes either directly or indirectly that Western powers or Ukrainians carried out the attack on the Moscow concert hall under the cover of IS terrorist group. The journalist employs specific terms, such as *severity of act* to convey the severity of the action and the brutality inflicted upon innocent people enjoying music in the concert hall. The terror situation in the Moscow concert hall is also described by using the adjective *deadliest* in its superlative form to show the intensity of the attack, which caused heavy pain for both individuals and society at large.

The “TERROR” concept is also represented in the following headline (The Daily Dawn, Pakistan): *The government upgraded the country’s terror threat level to its maximum on Sunday, with France a frequent target of the Islamic State (IS) group which has claimed responsibility for Friday’s bloodshed in the Russian capital.* The lexical units *terror, threat, and bloodshed* serve as representations of the “TERROR” concept. The PARTICIPANT component is indicated by the nouns *government, France, and IS*. Such components as CHARACTERISTICS of the PARTICIPANT (*terrorists*), PARTICIPANTS’ ACTIONS (*improving the country’s security, causing bloodshed*), and the PLACE (*France*) all play a crucial role in representing the “TERROR” concept and the corresponding situational cognitive models. The semantic structure of the noun *bloodshed* illustrates the brutal killing of innocent people in the concert hall. The journalist employs precise language to depict a faction of ruthless individuals seeking dominance over peaceful global citizens, without assigning blame to any specific nationality or group of supporters. The media narrative warns readers about individuals (PARTICIPANTS) participating in specific activities (ACTIONS), which pose a risk to both individuals and society as a whole.

“The Daily Dawn” newspaper also represents the “TERROR” concept in the following headline: *2 officers among 7 soldiers martyred in terrorist attack on post in North Waziristan.* As it can be seen in the front-page news report of “The Daily Dawn”, the journalists mention the results of the terror event: the terrorist attack on a post in North Waziristan resulted in the martyrdom of 2 officers and 7 soldiers. In this headline the “TERROR” concept is represented via the *terrorist attack* situational cognitive model.

The PARTICIPANTS component is represented by the *two officers, 7 soldiers, terrorists* lexical units. The represented cognitive model also includes the following components: CHARACTERISTICS of the PARTICIPANTS (*martyred*), ACTION of the PARTICIPANTS (*terrorist attack*) and the PLACE (*North Waziristan*). The journalist uses the adjective *martyred*, showing religious tone, influence, and sympathies with the army and relatives of deceased soldiers. The word combination *terrorist attack* shows that terrorists cruelly attacked the checkpoint of the army and blew up it, and the attack was strong and deliberate. Regarding the PARTICIPANT component, the designation of certain individuals as terrorists does not hold any religious or ethnic community accountable.

“The Nation” newspaper represents terror/terrorism situation in the following headline: *Six terrorists were also neutralized in clearance operation*. The journalist mentions the results of the terror event. In this headline the “TERROR” concept is represented via the terrorists’ neutralization situational cognitive model. The PARTICIPANTS component is indicated by the *clearance operation (forces)* and *terrorists* lexical units. The represented cognitive model also includes the following components: PARTICIPANTS’ ACTION (*neutralized, clearance operation*), PLACE of ACTION (*North Waziristan*). The language units that are used to represent the situational cognitive model have the following semantic peculiarities: *neutralized – killed, clearance operation – eliminating potential threat*. The verb *neutralized (killed or defused the threat)* signifies that the law and enforcement agencies pursued and eliminated the offenders and the word combination *clearance operation* also has a similar meaning.

Another headline of “The Nation” also represents terror/terrorism situation: *As own troops foiled the initial attempt of intrusion, the terrorists rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into the post, followed by multiple suicide bombing attacks, which led to the collapse of a portion of a building, resulting into shahadat (martyrdom) of five brave sons of the soil*. The journalist states the results of the terror event. In the headline “TERROR” concept is represented via phrase *terrorists rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into the post* which actualizes *terrorist attack* situational cognitive model. The PARTICIPANTS component is indicated by the lexical units such as *troops and terrorists*. This model also comprises such constituents as PARTICIPANTS’ ACTIONS (*foiled and rammed an explosive, multiple suicide bombing attacks, the collapse of a portion of a building, martyrdom*), PLACE of ACTION (*North Waziristan*). The language units which are used to represent the situational cognitive model have the following semantic peculiarities: *troops – group of soldiers, intrusion – invasion, collapse – damage, shahadat – death for righteous cause (martyrdom), explosive – inflammable*. The journalist portrays the terror situation in a frightening and religious tone, expressing sympathies with the forces and fostering patriotism through the use of praising words as *sons of the soil*. The journalist uses specific words denoting brutal, destructive, and lethal actions of the participants, be-

cause the referent situation is frightening and the journalist wants to form the highly negative attitude of the reader towards these kinds of terrorists and terror events.

In another headline of “The Nation” a terror/terrorism situation is also represented: *At least 11 people including nine passengers were shot dead in Balochistan’s Noshki district after terrorists opened fire on a bus, police and local officials said Saturday.*

The journalists mention the results of the terror event in the front-page news report: *At least 11 people including nine passengers were shot dead.* The PARTICIPANTS component is represented by the *people* lexical unit. This model also comprises such constituents as the CHARACTERISTICS of the PARTICIPANTS (*passengers*), the PARTICIPANTS’ ACTION (*opened fire on a bus*), PLACE (*Balochistan’s Noshki district*). The language units which are used have the following semantic peculiarities: *shot dead* – killed or deprived from life, *opened fire* – starting shooting or killing without warning. The journalist describes the situation by using such phrase as *shot dead and opened fire* which conveys a sense of brutality, as it refers to the brutal act of opening fire on a bus of civilian people resulting in the death of passengers. The word combination *terrorist attack* illustrates the deliberate and cruel attack on civilians. The author uses specific phrases denoting brutality and deadly actions of the participants, because the referent situation is terrifying and the journalist wants to form the highly depressing attitude of the reader towards the terrorist activities and terrorists.

In another headline of “The Nation” a terror/terrorism situation is also represented: *Lt Colonel, Captain among 7 soldiers martyred in Mir Ali attack. President, PM strongly condemn terrorist attack on security forces’ post in North Waziristan and All six terrorists killed during clearance operation: ISPR.* The journalist narrates the results of the terror event in the front-page news report of the daily “The Nation”, citing the martyrdom of a Lieutenant Colonel and a Captain among seven soldiers in the Mir Ali attack. The lexical units *Lt Colonel, Captain among 7 soldiers martyred in attack* serve as representations of the “TERROR” concept and the corresponding situational cognitive models. The PARTICIPANT component is represented by lexical units *security forces* and *terrorists*. This model also comprises such constituents as the CHARACTERISTICS of the PARTICIPANT (*martyred in attack*), PARTICIPANTS’ ACTION (*clearance operation*). The language units that are used have the following semantic peculiarities: *terrorist attack* – deliberate action which indicates brutality, *terrorists* – enemies of civilized people, *neutralized* – killed, and *clearance operation* – an action to make cleaning an area from the enemy. The media narrative warns readers about terrorist activities and consequences.

As it can be seen in the front-page news report of “The Nation”, the journalists mention the results of the terror event: *Five Chinese engineers killed in Shangla suicide attack.* In this headline the “TERROR” concept is represented via a *suicide attack* situational cognitive model. The PARTICIPANT component is represented by the *Chinese engineers*

word combination. This model also comprises such constituents as CHARACTERISTICS of the PARTICIPANTS (*suicide attack*); ACTION of the PARTICIPANT (*killed*); PLACE (*Shangla's Besham city*).

The journalist uses specific words denoting violent, aggressive, and murderous actions of the participants, because the referent situation *suicide attack* shows the brutality of terrorists who killed civilian Chinese engineers working on a hydropower project; and the suicide attack was a severe kind of attack on foreign engineers to spread the threat as other foreign companies should avoid coming and working within the areas; through the attack, terrorists want to demonstrate to the foreigners that Pakistan is an unsafe state to work or visit. By using referent brutal situation the journalist wants to form the negative attitude of the reader towards the terrorists.

“The Express Tribune” highlights numbers of attacks and fatalities: *Pakistan witnessed a total of 432 violence-related fatalities and 370 injuries during the first quarter of 2024, stemming from 245 incidents of terror attacks and counter-terror operations, as revealed in a report released by the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS).*

The PARTICIPANT component is represented via *the third-party report* word combination. The text also represents such constituents of the situational cognitive model as RESULTS of the ACTIONS (*fatalities and 370 injuries in 245 incidents*) and PLACE (*Pakistan/K.P., Balochistan*). The *terrorist attack* word combination shows brutality. The journalist uses simple language to depict a faction of ruthless individuals who attacked the check post of the army and other private and public places, blown up with explosions, and caused the deaths of many people, including innocent civilians, foreign workers, and armed personnel. The media narrative warns the readers about individual people who participate in such activities, which pretend a threat to both individuals and society as well.

“The Express Tribune” gives the following headline: *The CRSS report highlights the disproportionate impact of violence on civilians and security forces personnel. Civilians and security officials suffered over 65% of all fatalities in nearly 200 terror attacks, compared to outlaws who suffered only 35% in around 48 counter-terror operations.*

The “TERROR” concept is represented via CRSS report on violence. Among other constituents the author foregrounds ACTION of the PARTICIPANTS component (*48 counter-terror operations*). One of the language units indicates the name of an organization (CRSS) because one of the pragmatic goals of the journalist is to present all the details of the represented situation in order to persuade the recipient. The journalist uses specific words which have such semes (elements of meaning) as *disproportionate impact, violent actions towards civilians and security forces*; the verb *suffered* indicates the necessity to stop terror and fatal attacks.

As it can be seen in the front-page news report of “The Express Tribune”, the journalists mention the results of the terror event: *Two soldiers of Pakistan Army were martyred in IBO*. In this headline the “TERROR” concept is represented via the *martyred in IBO* situational cognitive model. The represented cognitive model includes the following components: CHARACTERISTICS of the PARTICIPANTS (*2 soldiers martyred*), ACTIONS of the PARTICIPANTS (*IBO*) and PLACE (*Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa*). The journalist uses the adjective *martyred* showing religious tone and influence, sympathies with the army and relatives of deceased soldiers. The journalist also uses specific words that have such semes (elements of meaning) as *martyred – righteous cause, intelligence-based operation (IBO)* to show readiness of the Pakistan army to eliminate terrorists and terrorism.

### Conclusion

Pakistani newspapers report terror events by representing stories about fights and clashes between terrorists and armed forces, narrated differently, portraying the good positive image of armed forces who are fighting against terrorism and disgusting and bad image of terrorists and terrorism by using such words as *terrorist attacks, killing foreigners, shot dead civilian passengers, explosions, blown up, suicide attack*. They also use religious and patriotism tone to gain sympathies for armed personnel. The ACTIONS component of the cognitive models is represented by the verbs and nouns rendering murderous actions of one of the PARTICIPANTS. However, the publications portray armed forces and civilians as victims of waging war against terrorists and terrorism. The use of the nouns *civilian passengers, foreign engineers* referring to PARTICIPANTS component of the cognitive model demonstrates the sympathy to the attacked people and their vulnerability.

This study implies that newspapers used discourse or language to narrate terrorist as enemy of peace and evil-minded individuals and forces as peacekeepers and good people to maintain law and order. The pragmatic goal of the journalist is to present all the details of the referent situation in order to warn and keep aware the readers about the terrorists and terrorism.

It has been possible to use cognitive models, pragmatic and discourse analysis to build a framework that gives a useful and logical explanation of the idea of terrorism through some newspaper headlines. Verbal modes facilitate the formation of a certain conceptualization of terrorism using cognitive instruments. The majority of the selected news articles focus on the linguistic expressions of cognitive models. Cognitive tools are predominantly expressed verbally. Terror attacks cognitively represent the “TERROR” concept. The undertaken analysis highlights the significant persuasive and rhetorical efficacy of these cognitive skills and their capacity to convey messages and influence readers.

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## Cognitive-pragmatic aspects of representation of the concept “Terror” in Pakistani media discourse

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The study analyzes the linguistic means of representing the concept “TERROR” in the media discourse of Pakistan. The authors consider the linguistic units used to represent cognitive models associated with the concept of “TERROR”. The material for the study was media texts published on the websites of Pakistani media, including “The Daily Dawn”, “The Nation”, and “The Express Tribune”. The study used the methods of discourse analysis, semiotic analysis, and lexical definition. The results of the study indicate that the Pakistani media covered terrorist attacks. In addition, Pakistani media use certain linguistic methods to describe cognitive models of circumstances.

**Keywords:** concept of “TERROR”, situational cognitive model, media discourse, news headlines.