A Critical Discourse Analysis of Dawn Newspaper on Indo-Pakistan Trade Relations

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the role of discourse indicating socio-political and economic situation of bilateral relations between India and Pakistan. It gives an analysis of 37 articles published in Dawn newspaper regarding bilateral trade ties between India and Pakistan over the period of 2 years i.e. June 2011 to June 2013. This study is an overview of Dawn newspaper perspective regarding the changing ties between two nations on the basis of increasing interaction in business sector. Further, the nature of relationship is explained with help of revealed themes and characterization of the words and grammar features. The article concludes that shift in bilateral relations of two countries is visible in context of increasing trade ties on parallel basis.

Key Words: Trade relations, Indo-Pak relations, Economic factor, Discourse analysis, Dawn, Bilateral ties

Background and Literature

Since the inception of India and Pakistan as independent states, a long term confrontation has been witnessed between two nations. War of 1948, 1965, 1971 and Kargil Issue of 1999 are all results of this armed rivalry. Frequent violation at Line of Control, allegation of spying and ferocity on embassy staff at both sides are the some of the prominent evidence of antipathy between the two nations. Throughout the history, two nations remained in a continuous conflict and have limited bilateral relations (Lyon, 2008).

Similar situation is perceptible in context of trade relations between India and Pakistan. Both the countries have troubled track record due to political and armed conflicts. As a result of partition between India and Pakistan, the unified economy of sub-continent was divided. When British government devalued its
currency in 1949, India also follow the same but Pakistan refused to do this practice resultantly India got annoyed and started curbs on trade with Pakistan. By the end of 1949 and at the beginning of 1950s trade relations were suspended but after one year in 1951 India accepted worth of Pakistan’s currency and agreement of trade was revived between two nations (Bhutto 1972).

Due to war of 1965, trade relations were again suspended between two nations but later in 1966-67 the leaders of both countries by signing the Tashkent pact reopened the avenues of economic relation; though the scope of this bilateral tie was limited at that moment. Another disruption between trade relations was occurred in 1971 and was again normalized after Shimla pact, 1972. Three years later, in January 1975 a full-fledged trade agreement was signed by both nations and railway corridors were also opened. Nuclear testing of both countries in 1998 again interrupted the harmony of relations and trade relations were again suspended in 2002 when India accused Pakistan for attack on Indian parliament on December, 2001. In 2002 India withdraws its troops and again a door was opened for trade and bilateral relations (Mitra & Pahariya, 2008).

The changing dispositions were found in relations of both countries in first decade of twenty first century but international trade remains insignificant. During year 2004-08 trade dialogue was again taken place and trade was reinstated. These relations were temporarily suspended in 2006 after Mumbai attacks but this time some trade continued despite the conflict (Bhasin, 2012).

Improved trade relations were witnessed in March 2011 after revival of Pakistan India dialogue. One of the reasons could be globalization which promoted regional co-operation on economic grounds in the region. Bilateral trade was initiated by business communities at both sides in spite of the existing conflicts (Askari, 2012).

This change in dimensions of international relations has been studied by different scholars. Booth and Trood (1999) witnessed the significant ‘role of economics in constraining military capabilities and therefore strategies’ in Asia Pacific region. Gray (1999) studied the prior research and pointed out the strategic cultures were too insensitive to change. But in twentieth-century Western Europe, where markedly progress was witnessed across borders despite of earlier enmities among the countries of the region. This co-operation was on economic grounds.

Lavoy (2006) peeping into the case of Pakistan and India, mentioned Pakistan’s consideration of insecurities about India. He assumed that
Pakistan’s security managers were influenced by historical experiences regarding India; they felt insecurities, thereby accordingly, made the security policies.

Johnston (1995) argues, there is a perceptual framework of orientations, values, and beliefs that serves as a screen through which the policy makers observe the dynamics of external security environment, interpret the available information and decide about the policy options in a given situation. Sameul Huntington in his Clash of Civilization (1993) defines that, the fault lines (disputed borders based on ideology) will lead to wars which is near to the conception of political realists. But with the development of neo-liberal institutions i.e W.T.O, IMF, IBRD has changed the assumptions. The term Globalization is in vogue these days, which can efficiently alter the minds of policy makers of any country; no country can survive in isolation. Globalization is leading the trade towards vibrancy. Vibrant trade caters the economic interest of any country, which in turn weakens the policies based only on security issues (Hnát, 2008).

The same trend has been witnessed in India-Pakistan relationship. Mukherjee (2009) identified three reasons of change in the nature of relationship of both countries which are; learning from past crisis, assessment of internal and external threats by decision makers and thirdly lobbying of civil societies at both ends in order to develop trade and business linkages among nations. This shift is an outcome of “positive political externalities” as explained by international theorist with a focus on growing market economies around the world (Dixit, 2001).

When both nations are focusing to increase their trade volume then the question arises whether the defense policies of both countries will also be changed? Historical evidences suggest that both countries have a long armed conflict but in a situation when bilateral relations are flourishing either they adopt the same defense policies or a shift can be witnessed. An overview of existing strategic policies suggests that war, utility of force and the nature of threats and adversaries are three major components which shape the defense policies (Johnston, 1998).

Since independence of Pakistan, the relationship between India and Pakistan had been hostile. Though Pakistan mobilized its internal as well as external sources for procuring weapons from outside, yet the policy makers have always been justifying that the aim was not to threaten India but to let India know that Pakistan was another important player in the region not readily being subdued. Pakistan’s policy has strongly been influenced by post-independence
conflicting situations and India’s aversion and efforts to be dominant in the South Asian region (Askari, 2012).

In current scenario both countries are making a cost-benefit analysis of their policies for co-existence. The paramount importance is being given to economic situation and soon the focus is going to be shifted from military oppression to provide quality of life to the masses. This will definitely affect the defense budget of the country and extra spending on this will be restricted as well (Wenben, 2001).

Both countries have taken steps in the form of bilateral Composite Dialogue process in order to improve political and economic relations. In 2004, India and Pakistan signed SAFTA (South Asia Free Trade Agreement) and it came into force in 2006 and will be executed fully till year 2015 (Baroncelli, 2007).

By realizing the synergy of bilateral relations both countries are now at the move to improve economic relations with each other. India and Pakistan mutually decided to co-operate in customs cooperation and joint recognition of standards in 2012. In this continuum, a mutual agreement was made to flexible the business travel in order to improve economic partnership (Siddique, 2013).

Tabish and Khan (2011) proposed that these efforts would help out in the process of confidence building between the two states and will further give an impetus for free trade. This will be helpful in reducing tensions across borders. So, in this regard present study was aimed at determining the nature of economic relationship between India and Pakistan.

The research questions for present study were:

1. Are economic factors major determinant in changing the conventional tug of war/ power?
2. What is the situation of Pakistan and India as neighboring countries in trade ties?

Method and Procedure

This study specifically focused on the Pakistan-India trade relations as determinant of new strategic culture for Pakistan so in order to explore the phenomenon under study newspapers were selected as data source. Business page of Dawn newspaper from June 2011 to June 2013 regarding the trade policy/relations was selected by using purposive sampling method. The articles on trade, foreign policy and strategic alliance in these papers were studied. Total 37 articles (sample) were found. Unit of analysis in present research was
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each word, sentence and paragraph. In these articles, the kind of shift in strategic culture of Pakistan as an outcome of bilateral trade relations with India was also explored.

Methodology adopted for this research was discourse analysis. Critical Discourse analysis was applied and Norman Fairclough’s Dialectic-Relational Approach (DRA) was employed. Textual analysis at first stage includes the “inter-discursive” analysis in which word groups, grammar features, rhetorical and literary figures, direct-indirect speeches, modalities and evidentialities were seen in order to find out how these elements are articulated together to determine certain phenomenon. In second phase, relations between two elements were determined by social context (Fairclough, 1992, 1993, 2003). By systematic examination of similarities and differences in the writers view, analytical induction and constant comparison method were adopted (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

Results and Discussion

Table 01: Characterization of Pakistani policies, actions and steps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse of Word Groups</th>
<th>Adjectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbs</td>
<td>Adjectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earned the repute, Ratified the peace negotiation, Committed of free trade, Keeping the dialogue, Threaten cross the borders, Relaxing the trade, Learned lessons from history, kept their cool in the aftermath, Efforts to portray Islamabad as epicenter of terrorism, Refusal to countenance, Internal balancing efforts, Continue to play the prohibitively, Transformation of domestic politics, Revision of history, Intense media spotlighting, Drafting the budget, Sacrificing national prosperity, affirmation of new reality</td>
<td>Good will, Rare, consensus, Highly pluralized polity, Leading, Strive, significant, Intractable, stubbornness, boost, Soft power, cold peace, lowest ebb, Self-sufficient, Constructive, least, intense, Negative, sensitive, Derail, set back, Steady, beneficial, hostility, flexible, elicit, positive, impressive, futile, fractious, decline, frank, restrict, pragmatic, violent, significant trade, firmly rooted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Dawn newspaper

Verbs and adjectives found in the discourse explained the actions, steps and policies of both countries particularly Pakistani government towards trade and bilateral relations. Both verbs and adjectives evoke strong steps and action towards firm policy of trade. The purpose extracted from verbs and adjectives clearly advocates the optimistic view focused by writers towards opening trade
ties between the two nations. Further, at some places the verb also leads towards the direction of reviewing the historical issues and transformation towards a new form of strategies based on collaboration and cooperation.

Table 02: Rhetorical and literary figures explaining the trade and strategic relations in specific direction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metaphors</th>
<th>Idioms and proverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The young Pakistani princess</td>
<td>So many irons in the fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The media was agog</td>
<td>Allowing hawks and spoilers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spillover of conflict</td>
<td>Burying their hatchet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest ebb</td>
<td>To re-invent the wheel vis-à-vis the Pak India ties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right tonic to reduce strategic tension</td>
<td>A tongue in cheek reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for roaring India</td>
<td>The odds are stacked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations in quagmire</td>
<td>Into stark relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy of paranoia</td>
<td>The cleric is still a bugbear for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pak bomb land in India</td>
<td>If the hatchet between India and Pakistan is not buried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice has been broken</td>
<td>The ball in Pakistan’s court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region would become a peace mountain</td>
<td>A win-win situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good material for a class room discussion</td>
<td>Holding the olive branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pantheon of jihadi heroes</td>
<td>Rising tide that can lift all boats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade with a sharp eye</td>
<td>One step forward two step back slow dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To onion peeling</td>
<td>Hit a plateau, Like peeling an onion,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military personals as dangerous duffers</td>
<td>Talking to cutting edge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvest of a new era</td>
<td>Hewers of wood and drawers of water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cast a shadow on bilateral relations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Dawn newspaper

Table 2 explains the metaphors and proverbs and idioms used in the discourse for conjecturing a relationship. The used metaphors represented the power of action on both sides of the border. The terms used to explain the current relationship nature reinforce the thematic notions that both nations have opportunities to start a new dialogue ignoring the historical disputes. The use of metaphors such a tonic for trade relations extension, harvesting of new era and peace mountain explained the extent of powerful discourse used by writers in order to stress shifting Pakistan and India relations on trade parameters. Further proverbs and idioms used in the text described the policies of two sides as open and wide. But at the same time some proverbs
such as “cast a shadow on bilateral trade” indicated towards a fear that only trade relations are not the path for reconstruction of bilateral relations, other facts must be considered; holding an olive branch at both sides can raise tide which can lift all boats across the border.

Table 03: Modalities, evidentalities and grammar features explaining the trade and strategic relations in context with action and policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modalities</th>
<th>Evidentialities</th>
<th>Grammar features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Would get, Could be just the right, To make needed</td>
<td>Meanwhile, Therefore (2)</td>
<td>President, India(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would depend on, Should help</td>
<td>Vice versa, Because (4)</td>
<td>Political parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would have, Should have</td>
<td>Essentially, But, Certainly</td>
<td>Pakistani business men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should be fixed, To be done</td>
<td>At least, Whenever, Actually, If, rather, Being, Through, Even, Between, Despite, Rather than</td>
<td>Businessmen, Their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being looked, Would give, talks could set off, Experts would be, must help, It would be tragic, would be leaving, this could become, could now change, it would be a pity, could be generate, should not worry, there should be, should understand, India could resolve</td>
<td>Of course (3), After all, Meanwhile, outcome, Despite the fact, whether, similarly(2), in fact (2), in actual effect, ultimate analysis, will have to, instead, in all fairness, however (7)</td>
<td>Your, Both sides, those who, no one, every one, my personal, other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Dawn newspaper

Table 03 represents the existing modalities, evidentalities and some of the grammar features found in the text. Most of the modalities such as “should” and “could” present in the text indicate the urgency of the action. Most of the concluding phrases were creating a sense of exigency and a call for immediate solution of the issues. This is especially true with reference to improving the Pakistan-India relations in context of trade ties. Text also represents the phrases that lead towards factual conclusion. The words “of course”, “to conclude” and “essentially” report the facts and demonstrate actively the shift in opinions. The discourse neutralized the content and situation with help of facts and the use of words such as “in actual effect” and “certainly” When talked about use of nouns, found in text, active subjects were used to specify
the target group and it restrained the discourse from obscuring associations behind the text.

**Table 04**: Excerpts showing evolving new strategic thinking (Use of Direct and Indirect Speech)

| **Excerpt 01:** | “We have learned lessons from history but are not burdened by history. We can move forward as good, friendly neighbors who have a stake in each other’s future and who understand the responsibility that both the countries have to the region and within the region,” |
| **Excerpt 02:** | “We have realistic expectations; We should not expect quick and dramatic resolutions.” |
| **Excerpt 03:** | “Peaceful coexistence between the two neighbours is very important so that everybody can concentrate on the well-being of the people.” |
| **Excerpt 04:** | “Ultimately the security of a country is not only that you secure boundaries and borders but it is when people that live in the country feel happy, their needs are being met. Only in that case will a country be truly safe.” |
| **Excerpt 05:** | “We would like to spend less on defence” because ultimately “security doesn’t only mean secure border but the welfare of the people.” |

Source: Dawn newspaper

Table 04 represents the inclusion of quotes in the text. All of the quotes were directly quoted; not paraphrased. The context of the quotes explains the thinking towards bilateral relations of India and Pakistan. These quotes serve as an evidence to support the argument that previous approaches towards India Pakistan relations must be changed and the concept of power is more relative these days. Further, it also supports a new thinking of building friendly relations so that economy of both countries may be improved.
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Thematic representation of the text

In this section, the identified categories and themes are discussed along with the existing literature regarding Pakistan-India trade relations and development of new avenues. In the discourse of text, themes interconnect the events, policies, conditions and tendencies towards some change or transformation. These themes are emerged from the writer’s selection of relevant material for coding from the available linguistic options (Wenden, 2003). In the articles under study, themes represent the nature of Pakistan India relation that its turning points and strategic culture followed by two nations. The emergent themes emerged during data analysis are as following:

Confidence building measures as an avenue of rising trade and perceived benefits for enduring relation

Discourse of articles suggests that scholars and analysts from Pakistani side used writing patterns which are in favor of initiating some confidence building measures at both sides such as avoidance of violation of LOC from, peaceful resolution of Siachen and Kashmir issue, proper implementation of Indus Water Treaty and relaxation of travel restriction. Until or unless these measures are not taken by both countries the controversies cannot be avoided (Tabish & Khan, 2011). It is supported by the text that these confidence building measures further can raise hopes in both nations and will keep the things unruffled aftermath. Without addressing these issues the probability of change in strategic relation apparently seems difficult (Husain, 2012). It is also vindicated that a continuous threat of security may interrupt the efforts of peace and will bury the hatchet. Further, there is also a need of additional measures such proper implementation of South Asian Preferential Trade Arrangement (SAPTA) and other trade agreements and an increase in socio-cultural ties. Text stressed on good relations to be welcomed by both sides without hostility and power factor. Asymmetry in relations could disturb this balance which needs to be stable (Ranjan, 2012). And this stability can be achieved through incorporation of democratic values and consolidation of peace efforts.

Process of liberalization of trade and new dimension of stabilizing relations across borders

Process of trade liberalization has already been started in both countries (Mansoor, 2011). In this regard, as neoliberal theorists suggest that countries focus on cost-benefit analysis. This approach works on the parameters of globalization and regionalization. European Union is a good example of it. Discourse patterns explained that both countries are concentrating to
strengthen trade ties in current era and are also aware of the benefits of selling products across borders which will open a new consumer market. Further, it serves as a stabilizing force in the process by equilibrating supply and demand principle (Wenben, 2001). Discourse of articles advocates that authors feel that down this road, peace constituency will be bolstered. Though in past especially after Mumabi attacks interactive stubbornness was found across the borders, yet with touch of soft power, process of peace has been started. Now focusing on corporate solution, the competing strategies have changed its dimension. Trade can be served as a right tonic to change the relations between both countries.

Self-confidence to negotiate on solid grounds and realities

Another important dimension explored during was the way Pakistan negotiates with India to get benefits. In the historical context asymmetry was found because of unwillingness of India and Pakistan regarding transparency of relations. On the other hand, to get benefits of trade Pakistan needs to gain internal balance and have control on internal security issues so that it can take a breathing space necessary to rejuvenate its economy (Mansoor, 2011). Though, challenges are ahead but for economic stability in the region, Pakistan needs negotiation and should take advantage of rapid progress of Indian economy. Pakistan has an opportunity to avoid the costly game of playing prohibitively in the region. For the development of a welfare state, Pakistan needs to focus on its economic growth and it is feasible only if the ties with neighbors are reconciled with mutual negotiation and trust.

Relative power concept in modern world and changing dimensions of bilateral ties. The term power is no more linked only with territorial expansion. The term is more relative these days (Arora, 2008). In the context of Pakistan India relations, it has also other dimensions along with border hypes. Though, historical context of both nations cannot be ignored but, it is more open as compared to the past. Expression of the discourse emphasis on the fact that economy is one of the major indicators getting power in the world highlights the importance of focusing on economic growth and well-being of country rather than territorial expansion (Rahmat, 2011). Pakistan needs to focus on its economic relations with India (growing economy at faster pace) for balance of power in the region.

Conventional capabilities of Pakistan’s economy and potential trade relations with India

War on terror and other domestic issues has restricted Pakistan’s economy to flourish. Limited trades and instability in the domestic market has blocked the
way to economic prosperity. In this situation, Pakistan needs to focus on trade. Soft gestures from Pakistani side can facilitate the negotiation process (Noorani, 2012). Through formal peace process, the more focus on economic sector can minimize the threat of further wars. Pakistan needs to exploit economic opportunity in the region otherwise it will be transferred in a disaster. Opening of trade with India will have considerably positive effect on Pakistan’s own trade and economy (Siddique, 2013).

A visionary strategic imperative adoption on the doctrine of necessity

Contextual analysis of the discourse on the basis of research question (1. Are economic factors major determinant in changing the conventional tug of war?) leads towards the direction of change in strategic policy of both countries specifically Pakistan. Economy is considered as one of the critical factor as a determinant of foreign policy of Pakistan. Economic well-being and countries positions are interlinked with the stability of foreign policies (Ezdi, 2012). Nullifying military intervention, both countries need to recognize a mutual agreement of peace. Media and civil society can be used as an effective tool for positive propagation rather than negative as practiced earlier. India as growing world economy can benefit Pakistan. Mutual co-operation in various fields can give rise to an imaginary strategic policy based on the ground realities (Ahmad, 2012).

Diplomatic engagements with a clear framework of strategies

A unilateral approach cannot go long in this era of globalization. Pakistan is at the position of having strategic clarity based on the vision of cost-effectiveness which advocates peaceful relations with all neighbors. Policy of intimidating neighbors is not more successful especially in a situation when both nations have nuclear power. A peaceful political process for peaceful negotiation is required. Keeping in mind the benefits of bilateral trade an improved bilateral environment is necessary to be created and this can be possible with mutual co-operation (Mansoor, 2011). This can only be done through change in strategic policies putting the historical conflict aside (Hyder, 2013).

Conclusion

The aim of the study was to see the impact of trade relations in changing security policies of Pakistan and how it leads towards a change. The employed method, critical discourse analysis, is more purposeful with reference to the social, economic and political happenings. It is a helpful approach to understand the social change and social transformation (Dijik, 1993). As a retroactive, the current study was intended to find out and evaluate that how
trade ties between two countries may transform intentions towards normalization of relations across borders. This article provides the evidence of changing power structure and relations between two countries with help of discourse (articles expression).

The analysis led towards the conclusion that in characterization of events the words and language used was favorable in changing the direction of relations. Normalization of trade ties was a notion appeared in the discourse patterns which indicated the need of confidence building measures to enhance the trade volume. These measures may include the strategies to combat terrorism, mutual negotiation on Kashmir dispute, uninterrupted dialogue for resolving water disputes and civil society contact between two nations.

Discourse further highlighted the strong favor towards trade liberalization between two countries. Though, there are some evidentialities of its opposition but overall metaphors and modalities of the text show the direction of free and open market so that trade relations can be stabilized. In changing world scenario no nation can survive individually. Thereby, it makes each country bound to focus on improving relations.

Currently, Pakistan is facing a strong threat of terrorism which is badly affecting its economy. Pakistan’s conventional capabilities to address the issue of economic instability seem to be insufficient. Consequently, most important thing directed by discourse of the articles is increasing trade ties with neighboring countries especially with India; a growing economy in the region. Pakistan needs a platform for growing its economy. A visionary approach requires the cost benefit analysis and a strategic policy based on cost effective analysis for the country. Awarding the status of Most Favorite Nation (MFN) to India and free trade market are important steps. Peaceful negotiation and mutual confidence is required in order to continue trade on equity. This can be possible through the active involvement of political leaders. It also requires a neutral thinking on both parts and realistic goal of economic stability by ignoring existing prejudices and stereotypes about each other.
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References


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