War or Peace Journalism: Comparative analysis of Pakistan's English and Urdu media coverage of Kashmir conflict

Lubna Zaheer
University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the media coverage of Kashmir issue in the wake of assassination of Burhan Wani - a young Kashmiri freedom fighter. For this purpose, four widely circulated Pakistani newspapers of English and Urdu language (i.e. Dawn, the News, Jang and Nawa-i-Waqt) have been selected and their reportage for three continuous months has been examined. This examination is conducted within the theoretical approach of peace journalism (Galtung, 1985; 2003) and framing (Goffman, 1974). Findings indicate that media remained inclined towards war-oriented journalism and war-frames dominated the coverage as compared to peace-frames. In comparison between English and Urdu media coverage, the contents of Urdu media were carrying more war-frames as compared to English media. The study concludes that increased war-oriented coverage might be attributed to the historical background and state policy towards Kashmir issue, which seem difficult to be disregarded in reporting. Furthermore, since the "objectivity" or "detachment" is considered to be foremost prerequisite of good journalism, Pakistani media could not have avoided reporting violence and human rights violations that took place in Kashmir.
Key Words: peace journalism, war journalism, war-frames, peace frames, Kashmir issue, conflict reporting

Introduction

Peace Journalism

Norwegian sociologist Johan Gatlung proposed the approach of peace journalism, which is considered a remedial approach for the treatment of conventional conflict coverage. Whereas on the other hand according to Galtung, conflict coverage falls into two categories i.e. war journalism and peace journalism. His model presents an intentional choice for media organizations and/or media persons to make for readers and/or viewers whilst reporting from conflict situations.

Insofar as peace journalism is concerned, it offers a people oriented, solution-oriented, and truth-oriented approach, which consequently translates into reporting focusing on probable suggestions/options for peace. These options may be hidden due to the conflicting parties' behavior. Galtung (2003) has argued that peace journalism is people oriented as it focuses on victims and in a way gives voice to

the voiceless. This type of journalism reveals the hidden truth or untruth on all sides and considers propaganda as a tool to enhancing or continuing war. He further elaborates that, "Peace Journalism stands for truth as opposed to propaganda and lies".

According to Galtung, peace journalism is not tilted to any side rather holds good for all and gives voice to all. Probably for this very reason, Hanitzsch (2004) has termed peace journalism approach as a "special mode of socially responsible journalism" and a frame of media coverage that contributes to peace. Shinar (2007) calls it "responsible and conscientious media coverage" of any conflict with the aim to contribute to peacemaking and peacekeeping. In addition to this, Shinar has identified it as an effort to change the approach of media professionals, owners, advertisers and audiences towards war and peace.

War journalism is part of approach/model, focuses on coverage that is propaganda-oriented, violence-oriented, elite-oriented and victory-oriented. This approach is considered stern and harsh, which is often linked with zero-sum game where almost all the benefits of victory go to the winner. Ottosen (2007) elaborated that this is a kind of "traditional mainstream war coverage" in which media persons are often considered to contribute to conflict escalation by producing or reproducing the propaganda materials developed by the opponents according to their media and PR strategies. In such journalism, coverage is engrossed in home side of the conflict, victory-oriented language and superficial background of the issue (Knightley, 2000 as cited Lee & Maslog, 2005). This approach is not people oriented and according to Lynch and Galtung (2010 as cited in Aslam, 2014) it is identified as a matter only of states and statesmen.

Galtung's peace journalism approach has been appreciated but it is also not without criticism. Hanitzsch (2007) has opined that extreme cases have been used to elaborate the war journalism, which is not appropriate. He further argues that media's influence is limited but this approach often exaggerates the influence of mass media towards persuading the policy makers and authorities and goes on to undermine the role of viewers and readers being "critical consumers".

In addition, one of the most serious and important objections that peace journalism has to face is the issue of objectivity, which is considered as a major element of good journalism. Hackett (2007) has argued that this approach tends to dilute the journalistic objectivity because it advises "attachment" instead of "detachment". Lee (2005) also draws attention to the very issue and opined that a journalist has to report the facts as it occurred instead of twisting them.

Mass Media Coverage of Conflicts/Wars

It is largely held that media has the potential to influence the consumers (Andre, 2009; Gerbner & Gross 1976; Roy, 2013; Soulliere, 2003; Stephanie, 2008; Weimann, 2000), in drawing their attention and making the perception of the public on what is acceptable and/or what is unacceptable. Considering this notion, it is believed that, during conflict situations, media can play an important role in

easing tensions amongst people as well as between governments. However, to the contrary, media has been found tilted towards aggressions, violence and disagreements during conflict coverage. Results of various research studies (Fawcett, 2002; Fong, 2009; Lee, 2005; Lee & Maslog, 2005; Ogenga, 2012; Rehman & Eijaz, 2015; Siraj, 2008; Wolfsfeld, 2004) endorsed the thought that during coverage of conflict(s), "war frames" were observed much dominant and leading compared to "peace-frames". Wolfsfeld (2004) justifies this behavior of media and claims that it is the default mode of the media to cover "tension, conflict and violence"; because these frames are considered more attractive (Fawcett, 2002) and therefore media prefer to highlight war frames (Shinar, 2004). As a matter of fact, "Notion of conflict" is considered as "news value" in war reporting, therefore, such coverage carries sensationalism and is meant to boost circulation and ratings of the media (Lee & Maslog, 2005). Though, few examples are also cited when media coverage of conflicts is found with dominant peace frames (Reza et al., 2012; Shendurnikar, 2011) or both frames (i.e. war and peace) (Hallgren, 2012; Hussain, 2015). Therefore, it is fervently held that media has the potential to boost or diffuse tensions in conflict situations (IMS, 2006) depending upon its style of reporting.

Considering the aforementioned discourse, this study intends to examine the role of Pakistani media in conflict situations. For the purpose, media coverage of Kashmir issue, in the wake of Burhan Wani's assassination, has been examined. This study has been conducted within the theoretical framework of peace journalism (Galtung, 1985; 2003) and framing (Goffman, 1974).

Research Question

Q1. Whether peace or war journalism frames were dominated in the media coverage of Kashmir conflict?
Q2. In what manner was the coverage of English and Urdu language media different in terms of war/peace journalism frames, size and placement?

Methodology

In this study, four national dailies of Pakistan have been selected and content analysis of their news reports has been conducted. Insofar as time-period is related, three months coverage after Burhan Muzaffer Wani's death (i.e. 8th July 2016) has been chosen to examine the reporting on Kashmir issue. Rationale of selecting time-period is that the issue of Kashmir was discussed extensively in Pakistani media during the chosen period. Justification of selecting the newspapers is that these are widely circulated English and Urdu language newspapers of the country; and all the four dailies are very influential and persuasive, carrying divergent editorial and/or ideological tilt towards issues.

Since, front-page is considered showcase of any newspaper and most important news items are placed on it (Andrews & Caren, 2010; Buckler & Travis,

2005; Pape & Featherstone, 2005), front-page coverage of selected newspapers has been analyzed in the study. The content categories were framed relying on Galtung's (1985; 2003) classification of war/peace journalism (see Table 1). After initial examination of the data in pilot study, selected categories were chosen from Galtung's categories according to the need of current study. Besides content-wise categorization of the news items (war journalism/peace journalism/neutral), placement (i.e. upper or lower half) and size (ordinary/prominent/extraordinary) of the news reports were also examined.

Table 1. Content Categories

War journalism	Peace Journalism
Visible effects: Deaths, injuries, violent activities of Indian armed forces in Kashmir valley (i.e. shooting, pallets, shelling, thrashings, arrests etc.)	**Invisible effects:** Emotional trauma and disturbance, losses to infrastructure, society, culture, environment
Difference-oriented: predicting war, statements against the opponent party, depiction of strains between both countries, rule-out the dialogue process, undermine the diplomatic efforts	**Solution-oriented:** predicting the peace and harmony, agreements on the talk, importance of cease fire, seek third party's involvement (of P-5, UNO etc.), benefits of peaceful society, areas of agreement between both countries and their people
Here and Now: focus on apparent situation or happenings in the Kashmir, seeming conditions of Kashmiris	**Causes and consequences:** Discourse the reason and back ground of Kashmir issue and recent unrest, focus the results and consequences of prevalent situation of Kashmir and its potential impact on Kashmiris and non-Kashmiris
Good and bad guys labeling: Portray Kashmiris as only sufferers and Indians villain, brutal and ruthless.	**Avoid Good and bad guys labeling:** avoid labeling of good and bad guys
Two party orientation: one party wins and one party losses,	**Multi-party orientation:** talk about and give voice to many parties, not to be limited to both countries or pro and anti Kahmiris
Partisan: biased and Prejudiced for one side of the conflict, have stern inclination towards certain party or stance of the Kashmir issue	**Non-partisan:** take the side of all involved parties of Kashmir without be partial, be moderate in terms of stance and use language or certain terms

Findings

Overall and newspaper-wise coverage

In the time-period of three months (i.e. from 9th July to 9th October 2016) all the four newspapers published 379 news reports on their front pages regarding the issue of Kashmir. In overall coverage, war frames were found more dominant in

reporting and around 63 percent of the total news items were characterized as war journalism. Remaining 30.8 percent reports carried peace frames and only 6.1 percent reports were neutral. (see Table 2).

Likewise, in newspaper-wise coverage, it was noticed that all the selected newspapers published more number of news reports tilted towards war frames compared to peace frames. It is relevant to mention that, amongst all newspapers, daily Nawa-i-Waqt produced highest number of news reports on Kashmir Conflict and published 181(47.8%) reports compared to 198 (52.2%) published by other three newspapers. Furthermore, daily Nawa-i-Waqt remained obviously tilted towards war journalism frames and 124 (68.5%) out of 181(100 %) news items carried war frames.

In order to examine the information statistically, Chi-square test was applied to data, which showed significant difference (chi-square= 11.179[a], df= 6, p= .05) amongst the newspapers in terms of framing of news items (see Table 2).

Table 2. Newspaper-wise coverage of Kashmir conflict

Newspapers	War journalism	Peace journalism	Neutral	Total
The News	47 (58.0%)	32 (39.5%)	2 (2.5%)	81(21.4%)
Dawn	16 (47.1%)	14 (41.2%)	4 (11.8%)	34 (8.9%)
Jang	52 (62.7%)	25 (30.1%)	6 (7.2%)	83 (21.9%)
Nawa-i-Waqt	124 (68.5%)	46 (25.4%)	11 (6.1%)	181(47.8%)
Overall coverage	239 (63.1%)	117 (30.8%)	23(6.1%)	379(100.0%)
Chi-Square	(chi-square= 11.179[a], df= 6, p= .05)			

Placement-wise Coverage

In media coverage, placement of news item is always important to determine prominence (Ader, 1995; Shoemaker, 1984; Vliegenthart et al., 2005) and subsequent priority given to the issue. In this study, the front-page coverage was divided into upper and lower halves to examine the priorities of the media organizations towards Kashmir issue.

Results exposed that major chunk of the overall news coverage (62.3 %) was placed on upper halves of the newspapers and remaining 37.7 percent was placed on the lower halves. Predictably, daily Nawa-i-waqt placed considerable amount of its total news items (i.e. 67.4%) on upper-half. Contrarily, daily the News positioned more stories (50.6 %) on lower section of newspaper. In statistical analysis, significant difference (chi-square= 8.910[a], df= 3, p= .031) was found amongst the newspapers in terms of placement of news reports (see Table 3).

Table 3. Coverage of Kashmir issue in terms of placement

Newspapers	Placement		Total
	Upper half	Lower half	
The News	40 (49.4%)	41(50.6%)	81 (100.0%)
Dawn	19 (55.9%)	15 (44.1%)	34 (100.0%)
Jang	55 (66.3%)	28 (33.7%)	83 (100.0%)
Nawa-i-waqt	122 (67.4%)	59 (32.6%)	181 (100.0%)
Total	236 (62.3%)	143 (37.7%)	379 (100.0%)
Chi-square	(Chi-square= 8.910[a], df= 3, p= .031)		

Length-Wise Coverage

In overall coverage, it was learnt that highest number of news reports (48.3%) were published in ordinary size followed by prominent news items (32.7 %).

Newspaper-wise analysis exposed that daily Nawa-i-Waqt published lowest quantity of ordinary news reports of its whole coverage compared to the percentages of other newspapers.

Statistical analysis endorsed that a significant difference (chi-square= 39.187[a], df= 6, p= .000) was found amongst selected newspapers in terms of placement of reports (see Table 4).

Table 4. Coverage of Kashmir issue in terms of length

Newspapers	Length			Total
	Ordinary (3-18)	Prominent (19-33)	Extraordinary (34-58)	
The News	32 (39.5%)	31 (38.3%)	18 (22.2%)	81 (100.0%)
Dawn	15 (44.1%)	11 (32.4%)	8 (23.5%)	34 (100.0%)
Jang	65 (78.3%)	13 (15.7%)	5 (6.0%)	83 (100.0%)
Nawa-i-Waqt	71 (39.2%)	69 (38.1%)	41(22.7%)	181 (100.0%)
Total	183 (48.3%)	124 (32.7%)	72 (19.0%)	379 (100.0%)
Chi-square	(Chi-square= 39.187[a], df= 6, p= .000)			

Comparison of Urdu and English Media Coverage

In comparison between Urdu and English media coverage, it was found that Urdu media gave much coverage to Kashmir issue and published 264 news reports as compared to English media, which published only 115 news reports in three months' time-period. In order to examine the difference of coverage statistically, Chi-square test was applied to data. Results of the test revealed statistical difference (Chi square value = 6.448[a], df= 2, p= .04) between English and Urdu media coverage, which means that the coverage patterns of both language newspapers were different.

Table 5. English and Urdu media coverage of Kashmir conflict

Newspapers	War-oriented	Peace-oriented	Neutral	Total
English	63 (54.8%)	46 (40.0%)	6 (5.2%)	115 (100.0%)
Urdu	176 (66.7%)	71 (26.9%)	17(6.4%)	264(100.0%)
Chi-square	(Chi-square= 6.448[a], df= 2, p= .04)			

Length and Placement

It was found that both language media (i.e. Urdu and English) published highest number of stories in ordinary size followed by prominent news reports. However, English media printed more percentage of news reports (i.e. 22.6 %) in extraordinary size compared to 17.4 percent of Urdu media. Statistical analysis also revealed that in terms of length, no significant difference (Chi square value = 3.744[a], df = 2, p= .154) existed in news coverage of both language media.

Table 6. Size wise coverage of Kashmir issue in Elite and Urdu media

Newspapers	Length			Total
	Ordinary	Prominent	Extra-ordinary	
English	47 (40.9%)	42 (36.5%)	26 (22.6%)	115 (100%)
Urdu	136 (51.5%)	82 (31.1%)	46 (17.4%)	264 (100%)
Chi-square	(Chi square value = 3.744[a], df = 2, p= .154)			

Insofar as placement is related, Urdu media placed much percentage of its news reports on upper half compared to English media, which placed almost equal percentage of news reports on upper and lower half. Insofar as statistical analysis is concerned, result of Chai-square test indicated significant difference (Chi square value = 8.448[a], df = 1, p= 0.004) in terms of placement of news reports. In other words, both language media remained dissimilar in terms of placement of news reports.

Table 7. Placement wise coverage of Kashmir issue in Elite and Urdu media

Newspapers	Placement		Total
	Upper half	Lower half	
English	59 (51.3%)	56 (48.7%)	115 (100%)
Urdu	177(67.0%)	87(33.0%)	264 (100%)
Chi-square	(Chi square value = 8.448[a], df = 1, p= 0.004)		

Conclusion

The study examined the coverage of Kashmir issue in four top-ranked newspapers of Pakistan and concluded that major chunk of media coverage was found to be war-oriented journalism with dominant war frames coverage. Since both language newspapers were examined, it was noted that Urdu language media was much more inclined towards war-oriented coverage compared to English language media. Insofar as newspaper-wise coverage is concerned, all the selected newspapers published more war-oriented news items and less peace-oriented items; amongst all newspapers, daily Nawa-i-Waqt published the highest number of news reports on the issue of Kashmir and remained more war-oriented journalistically. The reason may be its ideological and editorial tilt, which is known for being anti-India and pro-Pakistan. Therefore, the newspaper has always been supporting Kashmir issue with a stern stance.

In view of findings, obvious inclination of media coverage towards war-frames may be attributed to the historical perspective of the matter and subsequent state policy. Actually, Kashmir has been an issue of conflict between India and

Pakistan right from the partition of United India in 1947. The controversial accession of Kashmir, a Muslim-majority territory, to India has been a reason of discord between the two countries. It has been the state policy of Pakistan to extend complete moral, political and humanitarian support to people of Kashmir at all forums. Therefore, Pakistan has been raising the Indian atrocities and brutalities in Kashmir at the international level. Also, human rights organizations have repeatedly been raising the issues of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings in Indian occupied Kashmir (Human rights commission, 2001). Pakistan contends that Kashmiris should be given the right of self-determination according to the resolution of United Nations. With this principled stance and state policy, it would be difficult for media to be peace-oriented by disregarding the human-rights violations and injustices being meted out to the Kashmiri people.

Moreover, unlike peace journalism approach, mass media has to be objective and report the facts as they are. During the selected time period (i.e. three months after Burhan Wani's death), freedom movement was at its peak and so were Indian atrocities/ruthlessness. In the selected time-period, more than 90 Kashmiris were killed, 13000 injured, around 1000 youngsters and children were fully or partially blinded and around 7000 detained. In addition, a complete shutdown of media and communication services was noticed (Shaukat, 2016). In such kind of situation, it is quite unreasonable for genuine media persons to avoid reporting the violence, killings, injuries, and combats happening in the valley. Moreover, in conflicting situations, state policy also matters and often influences the media organizations. Various scholars have argued that media is not likely to remain "neutral" while reporting any conflict in which its own government/state is involved (Bennett, 2003; Hiebert, 2003; Iggers, 1998; Jesperson, 2011; Knightley, 1975; Reese & Buckalew, 1995; Taylor, 1992). This is perhaps the issue with the Pakistani media, which could not remain neutral or peace-oriented whilst conversing the Kashmir issue. However, to some extent, Johan Galtung's notion may be subscribed in order to promote peace-journalism and avoid a value bias towards violence.

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Biographical Note

Lubna Zaheer, is PhD, Assistant Professor, Institute of Communication Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

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