The Process of Othering in Pakistani English Newspapers

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Abstract
Language is not merely a means of expressing ourselves but is a tool of doing things also. Othering is one of such things that are done through language. We construct and propagate our identities and also assign and construe the identities of other people through language. Media, as an example of language in use, plays a crucial role in producing and establishing the reality. The study aims to document the othering process in Pakistani print media and in Pakistani society in general. The data for the study was gathered from columns of English newspaper i.e *Dawn*. The results and findings contribute to the literature regarding the process of Othering in Pakistani print media and also provide an insight to the trends in media and attitude of public through content analysis of two hundred and fifty-two (252) columns of one of the most leading English language newspapers of Pakistan. The main findings of the paper suggest that the process of othering occurs in the columns of Pakistani English newspaper to a great extent and is always deliberate and purposeful.
Keywords: identity, othering, representation, print media, Pakistan

1.   Introduction

Power of language to shape ideas and construct realities is a well-researched area. By labelling our life experiences and assigning different identities to people, language constructs reality not only about ourselves but of each other which results in the partition of the society along the imaginary boundary of us and them. Thus, by choosing an identity for oneself and also assigning a different identity to others, people consciously or unconsciously do othering through language. The present research is a study of this process of othering in Pakistani English newspapers.

Othering is an on-going and persistent process that takes place not only in everyday life but in media too. Media being a significant part of society reveals the societal trends and also affects the society by constructing, shaping, or sustaining social and political discourses. The media discourses thoroughly mediated form the individual's concept of the surrounding world by constructing positive or negative, good or bad. Thus, these media representations produce a specific image of the outer world that shapes our lives, but as Deuze (2011:137) proclaims that pervasiveness of media makes it "invisible".

Newspapers are the most significant part of print media and play an evident role in media discourse (Burak: 2018). Along with being a major source of information, newspapers reflect and influence the society also. Shahzad, et.al. (2015) signify the role of newspapers in creation of images of people. Columns are a significant part of any newspaper. The themes of columns highlight the current issues and mirror the attitude and mind set of society as columnists

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being a part of society get influenced by society. Similarly, as Shahzad, et.al. (2015) attest that due to their religious and political inclinations, the journalists have an influence on the content. Furthermore, these newspapers have a secret power over minds of people. Coppock, et.al (2018) after referring to various studies assert that that op-ed or columns of leading newspapers set the agenda for the public and also for the people in authority. As it has been established earlier that language is used to construct reality, so, these columns, being a form of media, create realities and so competently to make it look normal and common sense. Keeping in view the fact that the language used in these newspapers is always selected carefully to construct, shape or sustain certain ideologies and world views, the language of these columns was analyzed to understand the patterns and trends in society.

2.   Purpose Statement

The purpose of the study was to document othering discourse in Pakistani English newspaper.

3.   Research Question

The study aimed to answer the following two research questions:
1.   Does othering occur in the columns of Pakistani English newspaper?
2.   Who are constructed as 'others' in the discourse of Pakistani English newspaper columns?

4.   Literature Review

Media is a kind of social practice with its specific norms and structures. It does not only mirror the society but affects it too. Allen (2014) confirming the power of media, recognizes its role even to bring harm to someone.

Similarly, print media performs a significant role in the society by producing, publicizing, or at least, questioning any idea, images, and information. Media even crafts the outside world, especially for females. As Huong (2012), who studied the coverage of rape in print media of Vietnam, concluded that by repeating and publicizing the social structures that restrict women to home and men to external world, the print media in Vietnam actually preserves or sustains the traditional image of gender. After understanding the power of media, it is important to realize that information presented in media is never selected randomly. Rather it presents a biased picture by selecting something to show and deciding to make some other invisible (Bail, 2012). Moreover, the language used in media to present that information is always a matter of choice, not a chance. By analyzing the vocabulary and sentence structures used in the editorials of two different newspapers, and concluding that even a single incident like APS Peshawar attack was reported differently in both newspapers, Mahmood, et.al (2018), confirmed that newspapers present certain information according to their own ideology and policy and use language accordingly. Similarly, Fornkwa (2015) analyzed the linguistic and argumentative structures in articles of four different newspapers in Cameron and reached the conclusion that presentation of state budget in different newspapers was bound to ideological preferences. Thus the power of newspaper to construct reality is an established fact. And this construction of reality comprises the formation of identity too, not only for oneself but for others too. Moreover, newspapers influence public opinion.

Allen (2014) recognizes the major role of press to form public opinion and figured out a connection between public perception and media. Media presents a specific image of something or someone by fabricating negative or positive perception of it. This is what van Dijk (1998b) cited in Mahmood, et.al. (2018) has long ago stated that the editorials of newspaper craft a difference between two groups as us and them and then devastate them by presenting them as right or wrong.

Being one of the important sections of newspaper, the discourse of columns have its particular norms and features. Along with providing information and documenting the existing age, columns influence the readers also by providing a commentary on different issues. It enables the columnists to persuade their readers to a particular opinion. It implies that the columnists construct reality and make it appear normal and legitimate and thus acceptable.

Furthermore, power of media to create and regulate reality and then make it publicize enables it to construct identity. Identities are taken as normal and impersonal but in fact they are not. Identity is a social construction, so, is always purposeful having specific consequences and comparative with some assumed 'others'. It links the identities with the notion of power. Othering is a process that allows powerful groups in the society to define themselves and also the 'others', even when 'the targeted' ones are not aware of it. As different groups in society have power, so, they contest these identities and consequently, opposing discourses of othering are produced. And media, according to Jeyapal (2013: 563) is a forum "where conflicting narratives of identity, belonging and nationalism were constructed and negotiated". Media do not only construct or publicize the identities of 'others' but it also have a role in influencing and shaping the attitude and perception of the people towards supposed 'others'. Thus media has a role in construction of a discourse of othering. The result of this discourse may come in the form of hostility, oppression and even massacre but like identities, depending on the point of view, otherness also is relative and reversible.

Karahasan (2015) investigated the role of print media in defining identities and constructing images of 'others'. After analyzing 39 columns of six different Turkish newspapers to examine how these newspapers represented and constructed Kurdish people. He explored the perception of Turkey about Scottish referendum and also the variation in Kurdish and Scottish cases and revealed that Scottish referendum was presented negatively.

The process of othering is not limited to print media. Being a social practice, it happens in many places. Whitaker (2014) studied it on social media and revealed that there are gendered attack on women on social media. She called these attacks painful because they result in embarrassment and humiliation and not only represent but help to sustain the social condition and norms.

Media represent certain group (s) as 'other' and thus delegitimize their activities and even existence. Jeyapal (2013) analyzed 153 columns of various prominent newspapers from 2009 to 2011, covering the protest made by Tamil community in Canada in 2009 against violence in northern Sri Lanka and discovered that media constructed the identity of Tamil community as 'other', 'outsider' and 'outlaw'. Thus, by giving a negative coverage to Tamil community, Canadian print media delegitimized the Tamil protests.

By investigating the discourse of radicalization, Silva (2017) affirms the role of media in constructing Muslims as an alien 'other' to the west. He compared the news articles of *New*

York Times with official documents and communications and explored that the word radicalization, that was once used to highlight political or economic differences, is now attached to Islam by the media to create a clash between West and East.

Othering is a social practice that results in the construction of identities. Media do not only assign the role of 'other' to different groups but construct identities of these assumed 'others' in a particular way. Ooi and D'Arcangelis (2018), explored the construction of China as 'other' in media discourse of the US. They highlighted that China is represented not only as 'other' but 'a potential enemy'.

Othering is a way to create identities of others and construction of identity in media discourse as Kakenmaster (2016), suggests internalize, institutionalize and legitimize hegemonic image of social actors. He analyzed the representation of Latin American immigrants in seven different prominent newspapers of America and reached the conclusion that the practice of othering in media discourse does not only reflect the sense of dominance but may turn into real-life domination.

Moreover, once an 'other' always remain an 'other', because it seldom happens that an 'other', deviates from its position and turn into an in-group member. Lams (2017) focused on two international incidents: the diplomatic deadlock with US in 2001 after drone crash; and conflict with Japan in 2010 after collision of Chinese fishing boat by Japanese coastal guard, in the Chinese print media and explored continuity and consistency in the media discourse on issues like sovereignty. He employed the theories of pragmatics, CDA and positioning theory, and detected same practices of othering and glorification.

5.   Methodology

The purpose of the study was to examine othering discourse in Pakistani print media, and the newspaper columns were thought to be a good source to confirm the trends in media discourse and approach of the society towards different groups or sections of society. So, the sample of this study was two hundred and fifty-two (252) columns of all issues of *Dawn* of two months dated from 1st March to 30th April, 2017. Every issue of *Dawn* have four columns each and once in a week, a column from its correspondents in abroad. It makes a total of 252 columns in two months. *Dawn* is a leading Pakistani newspaper of English language and was found to have highest circulation among English language newspapers, credibility among readers and the greater fan following of the columnists. Measurement of frequency is one of the ways to study trends and attitudes. The measurement of frequency reveals the significance of various phenomena (Williman, 2011). The content analysis is considered more apt to measure the frequencies by applying coding and categorization to the data. So, to obtain objective and reliable data, the method of content analysis was used.

6.   Analysis and Findings

The research was intended to study the othering discourses in Pakistani English newspapers. For the purpose, all the columns of *Dawn* of two months were analyzed by using the method of content analysis that gave the following findings.

The content analysis of the data revealed that the process of othering occurs to a great extent in Pakistani English newspapers. The analysis explored that in one hundred and sixty two (162) columns different assumed 'others' were constructed. While rest of the ninety (90)

columns were written from a collective standpoint and entailed of a sense of wholeness as a society or nation.

The analysis of these one hundred and sixty-two (162) columns validated that in *Dawn* one hundred and thirty-eight (138) different 'others' were constructed four hundred and twenty-one (421) times. Out of these, fifty-eight (58) were repeated more than one time while eighty (80) were constructed only one time each as 'other' in the columns of *Dawn.* Among these constructed 'others', eleven (11) were repeated ten (10) or more than ten times in the data. The most repeated entity was India that was used forty (40) times. America was the second most repeated entity with twenty-nine (29) times occurrence. China and the Islamic State Group (IS) both were third and were repeated seventeen (17) times in the data. The constructed 'others' and their frequencies and percentages are summed up in the table given below. (Source: unpublished Ph.D thesis)

Sr.No	Represented 'others' in *Dawn*	Frequency and percentage in *Dawn*
1	Countries	215 (51.1%)
2	Political Leaders	51 (12.11%)
3	Militant Groups	49 (11.6%)
4	Social Groups	25 (5.9%)
5	Ethnic Groups	22 (5.2%)
6	Armed Forces/　Security agencies	23 (5.5%)
7	Political Parties	12 (2.8%)
8	Miscellaneous Group	05 (1.2%)
9	Minorities	09 (2.13%)
10	Govt. of Pak/ State	08 (1.9%)
11	Foreign Media	02 (0.5%)
	Total	421 (100%)

　Table1: Demographic detail of all the entities constructed as 'others' in *Dawn*.

The table displays that 'Other Countries' was the most dominant category. In one hundred and sixty-two (162) columns of *Dawn*, thirty-six (36) different countries were constructed two hundred and fifteen (215) times as 'other'. It makes more than half of the total percentage of the othering in *Dawn*, i.e. 51.1%. The construction of countries as 'other' implies that the columns were written from the viewpoint of the Pakistani nation. By relating to a collective national identity, the columnists constructed the identity of everyone who was not Pakistani as 'other'. Out of these thirty-six (36) different countries, only eight (08) were repeated more than ten (10) times in the data. India due to shared borders, common history, and conflicting relationship with Pakistan was the most repeated country. Due to its dominant and influential status in the world, America was the second most repeated country and was constructed twenty-nine (29) times as 'other'. Serving as a source of information and a document of existing situation, many columns were written to discuss the pros and cons of the Chinese that time new venture of CPEC. Consequently, China was the third most repeated entity that was constructed seventeen (17) times as 'other'. Along with them, Iran (15), Russia (13), Saudi Arabia (12), Afghanistan (14), and Britain (12) were the other countries that were discussed more than ten times in the data.

It was also noticeable that though Pakistan is a Muslim state but other Muslim countries were

also constructed as 'other'. It was also worth-noticing that the ratio of Muslim countries was much less as compared to the ratio of construction of non-Muslim countries as 'other'. The Muslim countries were constructed sixty-two (62) times 28.8% as 'other', while non-Muslim countries were constructed one hundred and fifty-three (153) times 71.2% as 'other' in the columns of two months. It can be interpreted as; an effort to inculcate a sense of Muslim brotherhood or an indicator of the role of non-Muslim countries like India, America and China in Pakistan. Analyzing from another angle, the grouping of the countries on a geographical basis reflected the concerns of the columnists and ultimately of the Pakistani society.

 'Political Leaders' was the second most repeated category. Different political leaders were constructed fifty-one (51) times as 'other' which makes 11.6 % of the total. The third most dominant category was 'Militant Groups', with forty-nine (49) times repetition 11.6%. 'Foreign Media' was constructed only twice (02) as 'other' (0.5%) in the columns of two months.

The analysis demonstrated that 'Asian countries' were constructed eighty-seven (87) times as 'other', 40.5% of the total representations of the countries. The 'Middle Eastern countries' was the second most repeated group of countries and was constructed forty-seven (47) times 21.8% as 'other'. It implies that by negating the shared region or belief, the columnists constructed an identity of we/us on the basis of country or nation only. European countries (16.7%), American countries (15.3), North African countries (0.9%) and Australian countries (4.6%) were some other devised groups of the countries to categories the data on geographical basis. It exhibits a far more interest of the columnists in regional issue as compared to international ones.

The second most dominant category for the assumed 'other' was 'political / world leaders'. The twenty-three (23) different Pakistani and the world leaders were constructed fifty-one (51) times (12.11%) as 'other' in the data. It implies that the columnists relate themselves to the masses and construct the identity of politicians or people in power as different from the common people and thus an 'other' for we/us group. The analysis revealed that the frequencies of the Pakistani and the world leaders were almost the same in the data. The eleven (11) Pakistani leaders were constructed twenty-six (26) times (50.98%) as 'other' while twelve (12) foreign or world leaders were constructed twenty-five (25) times as 'other' with 49.02%. It implies that in these columns, the columnists transgressed the concept of national identity and constructed a boundary of we/they between the people in power or without power.

Another category constructed as 'other' in *Dawn* was 'militant groups'. The construction of the militant groups as 'other' was perhaps to signify the role of Pakistan as an ally in the war against terrorism. Thirteen different militant groups from all over the world were constructed forty-nine (49) times (11.6%) as 'other'. It implies that in these columns, the concept of national identity was again trespassed and a new identity was constructed for we/us group, including the whole world in it, based on the theme of pro or anti-terrorism. The Islamic State group (IS) was the most discussed entity in the group and the third most repeated entity in the whole data. It was constructed seventeen (17) times (34.6%) as 'other'. It was noteworthy that along with the terrorist organizations like Islamic State Group that have no purpose except annihilation, some freedom fighters like Hezbollah were also given the identity as terrorists. Along with some general titles like militants, extremists, the Afghan

Taliban (08), the Threek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) (06), Jamatul-Ahrar (04), Hamas (02), Al-Qaida (03), Hezbollah (01), Tamil Tigers (01), and Chechnyan (01), were some other groups that were constructed as 'other' in the data.

The content analysis of the data revealed that depending on the individuality of the columnist, some columns were written from a personal point of view. Relating themselves to a specific social identity, the columnist assumed a different 'other'. Consequently, a total of twenty (20) various social identities were constructed twenty-five (25) times (5.93%) as 'other' against various presumed 'we/us' in the data as there was almost no repetition in this category. Broadly speaking, a Pakistani, middle class, healthy, liberal male was constructed as the norm.

It was also found that along with the Pakistan army, a total of nine (09) security agencies/ armed forces of various countries, were constructed twenty three (23) times (5.5%) as 'other'. The frequency of the Pakistan army was the highest in the category. It was constructed (12) times (52.2%) as 'other'. It implies that taking the civilians as a norm and recognizing a difference between the civilian and the military, the columnists constructed the identity of the Pakistan army as different from rest of the Pakistanis. Moreover, the forces and agencies of some other countries like the Russian USSR, the American CIA, the Indian agents, the Afghan forces, the British security agencies, the Arab armies, the US and the UK troops and the American commandos were also represented one time each as 'other' in data except the Afghan forces (03) and the American CIA (02). Their construction as 'other' can be inferred as an extension to the concept of national identity.

As discussed above that most of the columns were written from the stand point of the Pakistani nation, so, not only the other countries, but fifteen different ethnic groups were also constructed twenty-two times (5.2) as 'other'. The columnists, constructing their identity as Pakistanis, viewed every other ethnic group as deviant from the norm and thus different 'other'. Along with the non-Muslim ethnic groups like Europeans (01), Americans (01), Hindu (03), Latinos (01), Black (01), and British (02), construction of some Muslim ethnic groups like Afghans (02), Palestinians (03), Kashmiris (02), and Syrians (01) as 'other' implies that despite the Islamic message of brotherhood, the columnists stressed on the national identity. It was also worth noticing that though only in one column, but constructing the Punjabis as norm and relating himself to it, the columnist constructed the 'Baloch' and 'Pathan' as 'other'. Though 'Baloch' and 'Pathan' are as much Pakistanis as the 'Punjabi' itself but the reason for constructing them as 'other' might be that the referred incident happened in Lahore, the capital of Punjab province or that specific issues of *Dawn* were published from Lahore.

Along with political leaders, various political parties were also constructed as 'other' in the data. Relating themselves to the masses, the columnists constructed Eight (08) different political parties twelve (12) times 2.8 % as 'other'. The construction of PML(N) (02), MQM (01), Baloch Liberation Front (01), Jamiat Ulma e Islam (F) (01), Jamiat Ulma e Islam (India) (01), BJP and other Indian political parties (03), and some European and British political parties (02) as 'other' can be interpreted as the columnists viewed them as groups of powerful people, having similar political beliefs, who did not belong to the masses and thus were different from we/us. There is no need to say that it was largely dependent on the political preferences of the columnists

The content analysis of the data exhibited also that six (06) various ethnic and religious

minorities living in Pakistan were constructed nine (09) times (2.13%) as 'other'. Broadly speaking, the Pakistani sunni Muslim was assumed as norm and made the group identity. While rest of all, whether being Ahmadis (01), Shia (02), French Muslims (01) or Afghan refugees (01), immigrants (01), and some other general terms like Pakistani minorities (03) that were deviant from the norm, were given the identity as out-group 'others'.

The Pakistani government or state was also constructed eight (08) times (1.9%) as 'other'. It implies that relating themselves to the masses, the columnists willfully constructed the state as 'other' that did not belong to the masses.

Moreover, a mining company (TLC), an Indian Spy (Kalbhushan Jadhav), an English pop-singer (Chuck Berry) and a student union (IJT) were also constructed five (05) times (1.18%) as 'other', while Pakistani nation as a whole was grouped in we/us group.

It was also interesting to note that the Western and British media was also constructed two times (0.47%) as 'other' in the Pakistani media, and whole Pakistani nation was grouped in we/us group. It implies that here too, the boundary was drawn on an ethnic basis.

7.   Conclusion

To conclude the study, it can be said that the process of othering occurs in the columns of Pakistani English newspaper to a great extent and is always purposeful. The analysis revealed that majority of the columns were written from a nationalistic stand point. The columnists deliberately constructed the Pakistani, Sunni Muslim, civilian, common man as norm and anyone that differs from this standard were positioned as 'other' and thus different from we/us group. Moreover, the study affirms the role of language in constructing the identity, not only for oneself but for others too. The fact that media representations are always ideologically loaded reach us to the conclusion that discourse of Pakistani English newspaper columns constructs or reproduces or strengthens the dominant narrative of the society.

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