

## PAKISTAN'S SMOG CRISIS IN BRITISH MEDIA: THE ROLE OF VISUALS

**Dr.Fatima Zafar Baig**

Assistant Professor, Department of English  
The Women University Multan  
[fatimabaig\\_84@wum.edu.pk](mailto:fatimabaig_84@wum.edu.pk)

**Rabia Hussain**

Ph.D scholar, Department of English  
The women university Multan  
[rabiagayyaum84@gmail.com](mailto:rabiagayyaum84@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT:

*The present research has studied the semiotics of the two western media outlets i.e BBC and The New York Times related to Pakistan's recent Smog crisis. These semiotics have been studied with the intention of deciphering their embedded messages/ideologies, along with decoding the semiotic tools that have used to represent these images in certain manner. Critical Discourse Analysis has been done to evaluate the selected images through the theoretical framework of Multi Modal Critical Discourse Analysis by Machin (2007). This methodology gives an elaborate toolkit to study the selected images. The findings of the research revealed their ideological messages and the differences in the representational styles of both media outlets. In BBC images, more focus has been imparted towards highlighting the general plight of the public and the images have shown generalized groups as well individuals from poor classes. They want to foreground the misery of poor sections overall. The New York Times has presented a more grimmer and darker picture of Pakistan's smog crisis. They compared the smog crisis and lockdown measures to that of COVID-19. The semiotics chosen by them portrayed the same intensity and horrifying scenarios as during Covid-19. The images were highly modulated with dark saturated colors and tones to indicate deeper moods and tones. The dark tones are connotative of depression and hopelessness. Another significant difference is the usage of Children and women images. They are depicted to show more vulnerability and innocence. Their ideology has more negative portrayal as compared to that of BBC.*

### 1. Introduction:

The present research intends to investigate the visual images adopted by the western media in order to represent the ongoing smog crisis of Pakistan. In today's age of media there is a heavy reliance on images or semiotics in order to spread any information, to propagate ideologies or to evoke any kind of emotion for perception shaping among masses. The data for the present research has been selected from the BBC official website and The New York Times from the month of November, when smog is at its peak. The study of these images would primarily be performed in order to analyze what semiotic choices have been employed by the selected media house to portray the crisis in hand, and through these choices what important ideologies or messages are arising regarding our country's critical climatic situation. On secondary level, the linguistic choices in the captions and taglines of the images would also be studied to find the contextual meanings in-depth, through a Multi-modal Critical Discourse Analysis method. The differences in the representations of both media outlets would also be studied to find out differences in their ideologies regarding crisis in hand.

The study would widen the scope of arising literature with respect to climate change representations in media through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis.

### 2. Background of the Study:

Northwestern and northeastern regions of Pakistan like Lahore and Multan are currently engulfed with pollution-induced smog, which has triggered various health problems along with forcing government to take urgent measures in terms of lockdown, shutting down of schools and other public avenues. It's a crisis situation and if immediate measures aren't taken there are warnings about further deterioration in air quality in future, hence the dire need for sustainable steps. Pakistan's one of the major city Lahore along with other districts of Punjab have been listed as world's most polluted cities with their air quality levels crossing dangerous levels of

toxins. New Delhi, the capital of India also comes under this list. Recently released NASA images, showed Lahore cloaked in toxic haze that also covers India's northern regions. Lahore's air quality index has been recorded as above 1900 earlier this month, which is a record high. Anything above 300 is hazardous. People are facing severe respiratory issues, sore throat and itchy eyes. As per data of non-governmental body working on climate change in Pakistan, Air pollution causes 128,000 deaths every year in Pakistan. UNICEF has also issued a warning for Pakistan related to smog crisis stating more than 11 million children under age 5 are exposed to hazardous effects of smog. According to environmentalists Pakistan isn't ready to face all humanitarian crisis emerging out of rapid climatic changes.

This smog crisis has attracted a lot of international attention towards Pakistan. Pakistan is blaming the smog on the winds due to stubble burning by framers in Punjab's province of India which are travelling to our side. Pakistan is stressing the need for joint and collaborative approach and strategies in this regard.

### **2.1: Photojournalism:**

Media Photography is an important component in today's age of social media. It has a significant role in moulding the general perceptions of the masses regarding current geo-political scenarios. The visual discourses just like linguistic ones employ mental and cognitive processes and these are based on proper visual grammar. These images engage the viewers in a meaning making process and they read the image "as a text" (Clark, 1997). These images have its own grammar, lexicon and syntax (Burgin, 1928) and readers generate their own meanings in minds just like they do in textual discourses. In order to decipher the images properly, in this case the images of Pakistan's Smog Crisis it is important to explore their implicit visual ideologies and to decipher what messages they want to convey to the audiences.

### **3. Literature Review:**

Multi Modal Analysis offers a wide range of tools for both linguistic and semiotic analysis within Critical Discourse Analysis hence its application its being widely found within various researches as nowadays more is visual and less is verbal due to increased usage of media and social media outlets. Research on Climate change discourse within linguistics and every other field is the most relevant and critical area of inquiry. Effective communication regarding climate change is vital to raising awareness, motivating individuals and in decision making and climate change communication encompasses a wide range of activities ranging from public education campaigns, press media releases, briefings, community engagement activities and research. These communication persuade, educate and inspire the public to recognize the gravity of the situation, to reduce emissions, to adapt lock down changing policies and to support laws and policies in favor of climate change measures. Media Coverage of Climate change often emphasizes scientific uncertainty, political conflict, personal attitudes and depictions leading to public confusion and dissatisfaction (Painter, 2013; Hansen, 2011). Media has an important role in influencing public opinion and behaviors regarding climate change. Newspaper documentaries, videos, and social media identify climate change issues and setting of policy agendas (Boykoff, 2007; Carvalho, 2007).

Nasir, H. (2022) studied the "Clean Green Policy" of Pakistan from Eco-linguistic perspective through Multimodal analysis. They studied the ecologically constructed discourse of the selected advertisement and studied their metaphorical constructions and language. Musttaq, Amen & Baloach (2024) studied the role of media in shaping the perception of public regarding smog crisis. They studied the new clips from major channels through framing theory. Their finding revealed that media lack realistic representation and its coverage of smog is biased and lacks depth. Kausar & Hussain (2024) studied the news headlines on climate change in Pakistan through the methodology of CDA in order to find out how climate change is framed in media and how does it affect public perception. The findings reveal the messaging and

rhetorical strategies that influence media coverage of climate change in Pakistan and highlight the complexity and sophistication of communicating this critical issue

#### **4. Significance**

Media representation of Pakistan's Climatic catastrophe and especially the recent alarming smog condition is quite relevant and critical area of speculation. Its study will lay bare the role of international media in the portrayal of Pakistan's climate crisis management, current alarming conditions and its relevant dangers in future. It is also significant as the study of semiotic choices through critical discourse inquiry would reveal the impression these visuals have on international audience; their general cognition; and their understanding regarding Pakistan's climate emergency. Photojournalism has great impact on the perceptions of the masses and it also inherent the ideologies of the media houses regarding any issue in hand.

#### **5. Research Question:**

**Q1:** What semiotic choices have been employed by the selected western media houses *BBC* and *The New York Times* to portray Pakistan's Smog crisis?

**Q2:** What ideologies/messages are being conveyed through these semiotic choices regarding Pakistan's smog crisis?

**Q3:** What are the difference between the semiotic representations of the selected media outlets ?

#### **6. Data Collection:**

For the present study data has been selected from the official website of BBC and The New York Times. The articles have been selected from the time period of 1-11.24 till 20-11-2024. The images from the articles would be selected and analyzed through purposive sampling.

#### **7. Methodology:**

The present research is qualitative in nature which intends to study the semiotics used in British Broadcast Media (BBC) media house and The New York Times to represent Pakistan's smog crisis through the methods of Critical Discourse Analysis.

##### **7.1 Theoretical Framework:**

For the present study Multi-modal **Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA)** would be adopted to critically evaluate the semiotic choices along with linguistics to study meanings in contextual settings. (MCDA) is a social semiotic theory which provides a detailed framework for analyzing the visuals like photographs, advertisement or any kind of media images. Kress and Leeuwan (1996) have defined the term "Multi-modality" to explain the idea that communication isn't performed through language only or through single mode of communication, rather it is a combination of various modes of communications like language, sounds and images. Through Multi-modal analysis images are broken down into their basic components firstly, and then they are evaluated that how these components work in combination to create meanings through images within certain context. According to this approach, signs never have fixed meanings rather they have "potential" meanings which are always studies within a system of visual grammar.

David Machin's (2007) model would be used to study the selected images. Machin (2007) defines "Multimodality" as,

"the grammar of visual communication that is sued by image designers. It is an analysis of the rules and principles that allows viewers to understand the meaning potential of relative placement of elements, framing, color, angles, proximity, style, etc."

MCDA doesn't merely try to discover the connotations of the visuals rather it also implores the communicative function of these images for instance how do they create certain moods, impressions, saturation, colors or tone to convey any specific idea just like language does in texts.

## 7.2 Visual Semiotic Choices:

Machin (2007) opinions that “Visual communication semiotic resources are used to communicate things that may be more difficult to express through language, since images don not tend to have such fixed meaning or at least the producer can always claim that it is more suggestive and open to various interpretations”

MCDA calls images as social semiotic discourses as through these practices social actors are represented in a certain way, or the meaning (connotations) of the images are represented through certain choices and through these ideologies are propagated.

For the present study the following tools from the Multi modal Critical Discourse Analysis (Machin 2007) have been selected through which images would be broken down and studied for their components with the aim of deciphering their embedded meanings and hidden social realities. The selected categories are as follows:

**1: Iconography / Connotations:** Images are never free of connotations (Barthes 1977) . Here we one one level ahead by analyzing that through images ‘what’ is connoted but rather ‘how’ it is connoted. Secondly the meaning of the image also depends on the context in which it is used.

### Carriers of Connotations:

- i. **Poses:** Poses have different effect on our minds and we attach different meanings to them. e.g., the images of playing and jumping children represent freedom and lack of restrain.
- ii. **Objects/Attributes:** These also carry meanings within images as Machin gives examples of war photography in which the faces of starving children are chosen to transport certain meaning to the viewers and distract their attention to the actual political conflict involved at the back.
- iii. **Setting:** Settings is quite crucial in advertisement and photography. For instance, many images are decontextualized to remove real depiction of reality and to convey rather abstract ideas. E.g. The violence free images of war.

- iv. **Participants:** They are crucial carriers of meanings. E.g., Children and women in images always depict vulnerability and innocence and an appeal for help. These images have universal value.

**2. Salience:** Salience is how certain features are made to stand out or certain ideas are either foregrounded or backgrounded to draw or distract our attention in images. This done through no of means.

- i. **Potent Cultural Symbols:** certain objects have more cultural symbolic value over others.
- ii. **Size:** It is used to indicate ranking of importance from largest to smallest .Some participants or objects are shown bigger in size than others
- iii. **Color:** This means usage of striking,contrastive or brightening colors to impart salience to certain things
- iv. **Focus:** Different level of focus can be used to give salience to an element. Focus can be either exaggerated or reduced.

### 3. Representation of Social Actor’s Attitudes through Visual Semiotic Resources:

Machin (2007) has given an evaluative criteria of how positioning of viewers of images in relation to the participants in the image impact interpretation.

- i. **Gaze:** An important part of poses is the gaze of the participants ,whether they look out at the viewer ,or they downward or upward. Kress and Leeuvan (1996) thought “images could fulfil two of these “Offer” and “Demand” So images can be seen by viewers as referencing acts of interaction in talk”.



- ii. **Offer/ Demand Image:** Demand image asks something of the viewer in an imaginary relationship” so that their presence is acknowledged and response if required, just as in real settings. However, Offer Image just offer some information for some scrutiny and reflection and no response is asked for init.
- iii. **Angle of Representation:** It is the angle through which viewers see the images and get involve in the photo accordingly. Horizontal, long and Oblique shots reduce the involvement of the viewers and they interact in detached manner. Vertical angles create the relation of power or the dynamics of superiority or inferiority. Close-shot asks us to focus closely
- iv. **Distance:** Distance signifies social relationships and intimacy. Distance is observed through “size of frame” either they are long,short,close or medium.In long shots we cannot connote intimacy ,but loneliness and isolation. Close shots ask viewers to feel inner feelings and vulnerability. Close proximity with viewers means more intimate and personalized relation with the participants. If participants are placed on a middle distance this means they are made to be appear as generic participants rather than individuals.

**3.1: Kinds of Participants:** This deals with observing semiotic resources chosen for the representing participants either as groups or individuals ,generic or specific.

- i. **Individuals and Groups:** If they are represented as group they are ‘Homogenized” I.e they are act to look like,they are all same.Machin (2007) says that “mass immigrants” are often shown in this way. Women are however are often depicted as acting alone in magazines. Machin and Leeuvan (2007) says that “ in these magazines there is no collection and no society”.
- ii. **Generic and Specific Depictions:** People are stereotypically depicted by exaggerating their certain features dress, hairstyle or physical features, to make the individuality of people disappear behind the elements that categorize them. E.g depiction of Jewish or Muslim people.
- iii. **Non representation:** In images some agents or actors aren’t represented on purpose even within the contexts where they are present. In war imagery for instance only victims are shown and perpetrators are absent ,so this is a degree of exclusion.

**4. Agency and Action:** Agency and Action analyze the social actors in terms of who does what (Agency) and what are they doing (Action). Halliday defined these terms as, Actors, Goals, Process and Circumstance. There are different kinds of processes as actors are not always active agents. These processes have different impacts and appeals to the audiences.

- i. **Material:** These actions have material consequences e.g during war imageries soldiers’ killings the civilians.
- ii. **Behavioral:** These actions involved behaviors and doesn’t have any material consequences e.g., jumping.
- iii. **Mental:** All kinds of thinking, sensory and perceptive or evaluation actions are mental actions.
- iv. **Verbal:** Talking and conversational actions, e.g. he talked about war.
- v. **Relational:** comparative actions in which people are compared or discussed in relation with each other.
- vi. **Existential:** representation of actors simply in state of existing.

**I. Modality:** Machin (2007) defines modality as “the term modality refers to the way we communicate as how true it as how real a representation should be taken i.e not how true or how real it real is”. Images with “high Modality” are more real and truthfully represented whereas “low modality” images are often manipulated through certain angles of focuses that

they only depict certain version of events. This modality helps to find the ideology behind the representation. Kress and Leeuwan (1996) have offered a list of modality markers for visual communication. Machin (2007) have utilized have same in his model.

- i. Degree of the articulation of detail: this is the scale from the simplest line drawing to the sharpest and most finely grained photograph. More enhanced detailing of image as if we are actually there means increased modality. Lower modality images through reduced articulation have more symbolic meaning.
- ii. Degree of articulation of the background: it ranges from a blank, lightly sketched, out of focus backgrounds to highly detailed and maximally sharpened backgrounds. Often images are decontextualized e.g., of politician or of soldiers and they have low naturalistic settings. Such images have symbolic value.
- iii. Degree of Depth Articulation: It could be absence of any depth to maximum deep perspective. Through lowered articulation of details of background and diminished depth, the images lose their origin in time and space. They are more symbolic. Such images discourages viewers to place them in real socio-economic-political contexts.
- iv. Degree of articulation of Light and Shadow: This could range from reduced articulation to the maximum degree of depth of shade. We could find unnatural patterns of shade and light whereas in natural settings we often don't see such bright shades. This also suggests sensory affect or positive affect. Darker shades denote less optimism.
- v. Degree of articulation of Tone: range from just two shades of tonal gradation, black and white (or a light and dark version of another color ) to maximum tonal gradation. Darkness has association with concealment ,lack of clarity and the unknown. Dark tone also show extreme emotions.
- vi. Degree of Color Modulation. It ranges from flat, unmodulated color to all fine nuances of a given color. Full modulation is used by photographers to connote realism.
- vii. Degree of Color saturation: It ranges from black and white to maximally saturate colors. Saturated colors signify emotional intensity whereas subtle colors suggest something more measured. More intensity of emotions and sensory response is elicited through such images.

## 8. Analysis:

The following section analyze the selected images for their semiotic choices in order to comprehend that how they are created ; through what components they consist of ; what actions do the connote; and what ideologies do they convey.

### 1) Image 1:



(Commuters make their way through a busy street amid smoggy conditions in Lahore)

This image depicts the busy and hustling life of Lahore which is home to 13 million residents. On one hand it connotes the grave climate conditions of the country, but at the same time sets the implications towards the population exodus of the city, which has put the life of thousands at stake. It is a horizontal shot with contextualized setting. Such settings are chosen to portray real picture and often to show real intensity of the problem in hand. The commuters are the participants in this shot, which aren't directly involved with the audience but the image of general public along with public transport images not only exhibit the plight of lower-class economic reality, but also their increased vulnerability in the wake of smog crisis. Such classes have to survive at any cost and any weather conditions can't limit them to their homes, hence they are more susceptible to the hazards of crisis. The size is rather increased horizontally to cover the maximum area and such images have detached participants not directly involved with the audience. They show detached attitude. It is an Offer Image with the purpose of simple offering the information about the current crisis situation and asks the audience in return for some reflection and scrutiny. It calls for the immediate attention of the all stakeholders involved

to alleviate the plight of a common man who is using public transport and is forced to go out of home to make a living in this weather. Another important semiotic component is that the people for lower class or from poor socio-economic background have been shown as homogenized or collectivized group. The long-standing line at the metro station reveals their collective identity. It also connotes that how such people are all equally affected and their misery is similar. There is also a category of Exclusion or Non-representation here. The actual stakeholder who are responsible for mitigating the problems of a common man or provide relief in such emergency situations like provincial government or other local bodies are absent here. Their exclusion also has a symbolic value as their absence connotes lack of action or seriousness. On the level of processes, all the participants in the image are involved in two processes i.e. Behavior and Existential. On behavioral level they all just waiting for their transport and rest are just busy commuting. Their existential reality is also depicted through this image. They are not only just existing but this crisis is indirectly linked to their existential reality because they are most vulnerable ones, directly hit by the gravity of the situation. Their

existence and health are at stake the most under such terrific climatic conditions yet authorities are least bothered. They are often left on their own. The Modality markers are another important semiotic tool to be noticed here. In this image reduced modality is reflected through the overall hazy effect of the picture. There is no clear articulation of background nor of participants. Although, image shows the smoggy weather, but overall it depicts more blurred darker tones. Such degree of articulation of darker tones is associated with lack of clarity, unknown circumstances, extreme emotion and in this case desperation of general public.

2) **Image 2 and 3:**



Image 2: Many people, like this vegetable vendor, have no option but to go out and earn their living in smog





Image 3: Visibility remains poor due to very thick smog

Image 2 and 3 from BBC website present a similar semiotic choice. They both foreground the plight and misery of a poor seller who runs their sustenance on daily wages and can't afford to sit at home no matter how harsh climatic conditions get. The salience has been given to the poor vendor in Image 2. It is a close shot which has the purpose of often involving the audience with the emotions and inner feelings of the participant involved. Although the participant is looking off-frame but it is inviting the viewer to feel the misery of a common poor man, who is helpless and putting health at risk to earn his livelihood. It is also a mockery on the Greenlock-down. Here BBC has called it "so-called" green lock-down because nobody is following it in its full spirit as poor people can't stay at home. On the level of Setting, they are "De-contextualized" images. They are symbolic of the anguishes of poor sellers. In Image 2 the background is hazy and out of focus due to smog but it is also done on purpose, however the vendor on the front is fully focused with sharp articulation of modality. It is a close shot and the vegetable basket is especially zoomed out with clear resolution, which otherwise should also be blurry in smog. The focus on vegetable basket is on one hand imparting light on the restrictions imposed on farmers, whose activities like burning of crops are blamed for smog crisis, and on the other hand it is reflecting that how farmers and these vendors are the most affected lot amidst the crisis whose sole sustenance depends on selling these food items. It is important to note that BBC has repeatedly reiterated within the article followed by these images that Pakistan is blaming the Indian side of farmers for burning crops with this as the reason for smog.

Vendor is looking off-frame which again shows his powerless position, vulnerability, desperation and appeal for help. Size is enhanced to increase the impact on audience. It is a Demand Image with closed distance between viewer and an individual participant. Both material and mental processes involved in this shot, as the agony of these vendors of shone through their darker faces. Modality markers are also quite significant here. The degree of articulation of detail is increased here as vegetables are sharply focused but participant's identity is reduced. Here participant is serving more of a symbolic entity. Background articulation is reduced or blurred and so as depth so connote darker shades and tone. The darker

tone of vendor faces us exhibiting his utter desperation and lack of hope. No other participants are shown nor any other stakeholders which are involved with climate committees or regulatory authorities. Such exclusion isn't realistic representation but has a purpose to draw audience's attention towards inner feelings and vulnerabilities of weaker groups.

Similarly in the Image 3, the blurry hazy close shot of a vendor is Close and Vertical Shot asking the audience for immediate attention. The slightly tilted position of the vendor due the load on the bicycle offers audience a glimpse of poor man's day to day struggles. Against the blurry and out of focused, decontextualized and smoggy background, vendor is the center of attention and is focused upon. Poor Visibility and Poor man are both synonymous with each other. Similarly, Modality is reduced and saturation is also reduced to represent burliness of the smog but also the uncertainty in the lives of the poor man. Under extreme look down situation they are unaware from where they are going to have earning and they have no support from authoritative bodies either. The have forced to put their health at stake to earn livelihood.

### 3) Image 4:



Image 4: Sumaira, 25, at a Lahore hospital with her baby, who had been struggling to breathe

This is an image from New York's Times. It is medium to close shot with participants depicting woman and a sick child. In photojournalism this is a technique of Infantilizing the images and such images have the purpose of invoking sympathy and response from the audience. Salience is imparted to the worried mother on a hospital bed which depicts innocence, helplessness or generally appeal for help. Setting shows hospital however there are no other participants involved which indicates Decontextualized imagery which is more symbolic in nature and has universal appeal. Such images are bit farther from realistic depiction but rather their purpose is to invoke emotional response from the audience. The Gaze of the grieving mother is downwards, which portrays a powerless position and questions the role of authority. The angle of representation also invites audience to look at the innocent face of the baby who is struggling to breathe. It is a Demand Image which is asking for immediate response and help. Distance is reduced and such shots exhibit intimacy with the viewer but also loneliness and isolation on the part of participant. This is an Individualized semiotic imagery where sole focus on the mother and her sick child. It is connotative of all the vulnerable children susceptible to huge risk due to drastic climatic crisis in Pakistan and especially enhanced risks

due to smog in Punjab. UNICEF has also issued a warning for Pakistan related to smog crisis stating more than 11 million children under age 5 are exposed to hazardous effects of smog. This image depicts the mental and existential process of the participant. She is engrossed in her misery and her child's existence is at risk at the moment. Modality of the present image present overall a grim picture. Firstly hospitals details are clearly and deeply articulated, but the gradation, saturation and color tone is towards darker or grey hues which overall indicate pessimistic mood. Colors are also saturated towards dark tone with fine modulation to indicate depressive mode of the hospital. Overall such semiotic are representatives of the most vulnerable and innocent groups during any crisis. Simultaneously the poor economic conditions of Pakistan are adding further fuel to their misery.

4) **Image 5 and Image 6:**



Image 5 : Schools across Lahore were closed because of the hazardous air



Image 6 : Smog hanging over the Ravi River in Lahore

Image 5 and Image 6, both are from New York Times article. Both of these images present more horrifying depiction of Pakistan's smog crisis. The New York Times has called restrictions and lockdown measures as "reminiscent of COVID-19 restrictions". The images they have chosen to illustrate what they called "Suffocating Smog" are of similar intensity as of Covid-19. The intensity with which they have presented the medical emergency due to smog crisis on linguistic level are also suggestive of Covid-19 days. For instance, it says,

"provincial government declared smog a health crisis, saying that nearly two million people had already been sickened. Hospital hours have been extended, medicines for respiratory illnesses have been supplied and ambulances have been equipped with breathing equipment," it further says,

“Lahore’s emergency rooms are filled with patients — many of them children — suffering from ailments such as breathing difficulties, throat infections, persistent coughing and eye irritation.”

Both of the images, exhibit semiotic choices which are intended to exacerbate the intensity of the crisis in hand. Image 5 is a horizontal shot with almost no participants excepts two children. The empty school setting connotes the barrenness of the school, the extreme lockdown measures and ultimately negative impact on the education of children due to prolonged lockdowns. The salience has been directed towards the inactivity, emptiness and loss within educational setting. Other actors like teachers have been excluded from the setting. It is an Offer Image and offers information about the gravity of the situation. The usage of words like “Brutal presence” of smog simultaneously intensify the representation. This shot is of increased distance which again depicts loneliness, barrenness, hopelessness or depression. Children are most vulnerable and innocent groups and their usage as participants has number of symbolic meanings. Here, it not only conveys the health risks towards children as it quotes UNICEF warning as, “UNICEF recently issued a stark warning about the extreme vulnerability of the more than 11 million children under the age of 5 in the province, citing their smaller lungs and lack of immunities.”

It also reflects upon the poor educational policies and infrastructure of our country which get even worst during lock downs. Our children who are already out of school in great numbers are worst hit groups during smog crisis both in terms of health and education. There is an immediate need of attention by the concerned authorities in this regard. The overall Modality of the background has been reduced and focus is solely imparted on the basketball field here. The dark greyish tone and decreased saturation and depth of details are connotative of negativity, pessimism and lack of activity.

Image 6 of Ravi River again depicts barrenness, inactivity, pessimism and emptiness. Empty boats are connotative of shutting down of fishing business. It is a horizontal shot in which participants aren't focused. The distance is increased from the audience which doesn't show any vulnerability but only Offers information about the hanging smog over Punjab. This Offer image offers a haunting picture of Pakistan’s climatic catastrophe and asks for further reflection. The hazy blurry background which is out of focus, is indicative of smog, but such color modalities and grimmer tones overall portray the gloomy scenario.

## 9. Conclusion and Findings :

The images from BBC and New York Times both are western media houses. Their semiotic representation of Pakistan’s smog crisis within these media outlets is an important inquiry to find out their ideological position with respect to crisis in hand. Through Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis or through the methods of Grammar of visual semiotics as Machin (2007) calls it, slight differences in their representational strategies have been find out . In BBC images, more focus has been imparted towards highlighting the general plight of the public and the images have shown generalized groups as well individuals both from poor classes. They want to foreground the misery of poor sections overall who are forced to make ends meet putting their health at risk .Pakistan is mostly depicted to be shifting the focus towards India and lack of action on the part of higher authorities and climate regulatory bodies which are although excluded from semiotic representations have been highlighted. The images were less modulated and presented overall realistic settings and background, offering and demanding response from the audience.

The New York Times Images ,as compared to BBC images presented a more grimmer and darker picture of Pakistan’s climatic and Smog;s crisis.They compared the smog crisis and lockdown measures to that of COVID-19. The semiotics chosen portrayed the same intensity



and horrifying scenario as during Covid. The images were highly modulated with dark saturated color and tones to indicate deeper mode and tone. The dark tones are connotative of depression and hopelessness. Another significant difference is the usage of Children and women images. They are depicted to show more vulnerability and innocence. Close and Individualized shots of barren schools and sick babies demand the viewers to connect on a deeper level and to sympathize with them. They have given more salience to the health risk children are prone to during smog crisis and the negative impact on children educational needs due to lockdown. Linguistically vocabulary is also intense to match the message they want to convey. Their ideology has more negative portrayal as compared to that of BBC.

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