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Semiotic Representation of Gender in Pakistani TV Drama Posters
Syeda Ayesha Riaz

MPhil Applied Linguistics, The University of Lahore, Sargodha Campus

syedaayesha1403@gmail.com
Syed Tahir Hussain Shah

MPhil Applied Linguistics, The University of Lahore, Sargodha Campus

tahirshah109sb@gmail.com
Abstract

This study aims to investigate the representation of gender in Pakistani TV drama posters and titles. The posters are always symbolic. Every sign has double layers of meanings, denotative and connotative. Connotative meanings unearth the hidden dimensions of ideologies prevalent in society. This study investigates the semiotic presentation of gender existing in selected Pakistani TV drama posters to expose the ideological basis of gender portrayal. This study also analyzes how far gender presentation in the drama posters subverts the traditional gender depiction. The researcher has chosen the semiotics model of analysis formulated by Gillian Dyer (1982) for this research. This research is qualitative and descriptive as it deals with the semiotic analysis of TV drama posters. It decodes the signs used by the producers to instigate different ideologies. This research is multi-model as it analyzes both verbal and visual signs. The researcher has taken a convenience sampling technique and selected 3 posters of dramas. These posters are specifically those are female-oriented, containing a male as the main character. The drama posters taken as a sample for the analysis of gender representative status in the Pakistani context do not seem to subvert the orthodox gender power narratives. This concludes that Pakistani TV drama posters contribute to stereotypical gender structures where males/females are conventionally presented while executing their traditional roles within their socially assigned domains. Drama posters, being an influential source, make such representation appear natural, thus stimulating the patriarchal ideological system.

Keywords: *Semiotics, Gender, Posters, Ideology, Connotation, Denomination, Subversion, Analysis*

Introduction

This study aims to investigate the representation of gender in Pakistani TV drama posters and titles. This research is qualitative and descriptive as it deals with the semiotic analysis of TV drama posters. It explores the gender depiction in drama posters and pinpoints the principal representational mechanisms like stereotypical gender roles, power relations among society members, and dominance. Media discourse in its different forms constructs the belief systems of the people. Media plays a dynamic role in signifying the social roles allotted to gender. The present study observes the way Pakistani dramas are illustrative of the traditional perspective of females as well as males. The gender concerning their role, identity, activity, and representation has been evaluated in the drama posters being broadcast on several Pakistani channels. The researcher has chosen the theoretical Model given by Dyer for this analysis. The study focuses on semiotic analyses of visual and verbal signs that highlight patent ideological expectations about gender.

Fatima (2019) described that digital media represents a similar stereotypical image of women despite her education and designation in TV dramas. It portrays the challenges that they have to deal with in their routine life, like finding suitable life partners, seeking employment, etc. They are also coping with domestic violence. Sometimes they are impelled by family to hide events of sexual abuse.

Posters of different dramas are taken as specimens of social text, including human subjects for the endorsement of the presented ideologies. These posters integrate gender symbolically like a cultural text that indicates the predominant power structures of society. As Simon Beaufoy defined drama, *“Real life is messy, and drama is a shaped version of real life.”* Drama posters personify cultural practices that are considered major agents for the reinforcement of social concepts through visual signs.

Drama posters are just like promotional advertisements. Advertising has a growing market that has attained rapid fame due to its persuasiveness. It not only maximizes consumerism through urging people but also depicts socially fabricated gender identities (Cook, 1992). The commercials do not construct meaning but rather invite audiences to draw perceptions about the product being advertised and possible methods for decoding meanings constructed via semiotic codes as an emblem of socio-cultural scope (Williamson, 1978). Similarly, Dyer (1982) claims that the advertisements connote socially assembled meanings as well as develop ideology by social praxis as exhibited in the advertisements.

(Ullah, 2014) stated that Pakistan is the 2nd country in the world where approximately 67% of the population is Muslim. Television Corporation was founded in 1964, and at that time, it was directly controlled by the government. Later on, in the administration of General Zia-ul-Haq, stringent rules about gender portrayal were implemented. Nevertheless, females were only allowed to perform on television if they followed the proper cultural dress code, with a 'Dupatta' to cover their heads. Later on, in the 1990s, two more private TV channels were established for promotional purposes to lessen the load of the Pakistan Television Broadcasting Organization. Later on, in the twenty-first-century media's movement of liberalization came to the surface and led to the eradication of PTV's hegemonic attitude with the arrival of eighty-seven new private T.V channels. PEMRA was established in 2009 for monitoring the ethical as well as moral standards of private channels. The instructions issued by PEMRA (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority's report) noticeably specify and sustain the collective ethical and Islamic standards. PEMRA (2009) indicated that the criteria of ethics and morals in Pakistan are driven by Islamic tenets and social norms.

Although several studies conducted on media previously have described the interconnection of gender and media, there still exists a gap. Furnham & Bitar (1993) stated that the studies conducted in the past had only focused on developed countries. So, there is a need to explore the gender structures that exist in developing or underdeveloped countries.

1.3 Objectives of Research

- 1) To investigate the semiotic presentation of gender existing in selected Pakistani TV drama posters.
- 2) To exposé Pakistani ideological basis of gender portrayal in selected drama posters.
- 3) To analyze whether gender presentation in the selected T.V drama posters subverts the traditional gender depiction.

1.4 Research Questions

- 1) How is gender symbolically projected in Pakistani-selected TV drama posters?
- 2) What is the Pakistani ideological basis of gender portrayal in selected drama posters?

- 3) How far does gender presentation in the selected TV drama posters subvert the traditional gender depiction?

Literature Review

As opposed to a few previous studies, (Bretl & Cantor, 1988) claim that modern television advertisements represent relatively less sexist components and are more inclined towards equal representation of gender in society. (Lovdal, 1989) negated the notion of equality and proposed that conservative gender illustration in media has been normalized.

Similarly, (Signorielli, N., & Lears, M., 1992) explored the representation of gender in TV adverts and resolved that the advertisements give us a picture of gender treatment and portrayal both at social and cultural levels. Few commonalities have been found in the results of these studies. Gender stereotype comprises psychological as well as social beliefs normally described based on the rate of actions considered to be committed by males and females. Most commonly, they are derived from negative beliefs resulting in few differences in gender treatment. The term stereotype is normally perceived negatively. This statement is similarly validated in a study carried out by (Steele & Aronson, 2004). They pointed out that individuals feel threatened by the undesirable stereotypes associated with them. They used the term 'stereotype threat' for this concept, and he further stated that people's actions are hindered whether they admit or refuse stereotypes. People always feel scared of being associated with any negative stereotypical image.

Gooden & Gooden (2001) carried out their research on the depiction of men/women characters in children's literature like books. They found out that the kids' literature exemplified the frequency of the masculine characters twice as much as their opposite, female characters. Davis (2003) examined the advertisements and found a higher frequency of males depicted in the public sphere, while females were portrayed as occupied in private or household tasks.

Sultana (2011) stated that patriarchal structures restrict women to traditional roles like serving and pleasing their husbands and in-laws. They are said to hide the facts of domestic violence. A similar study was conducted by Ul Haq (2012) in which he highlighted the unequal depiction of gender in media, specifically in advertisements. He concluded that this scenario can never be altered until people stop the blind observation of traditional myths. Highlighting the problem of stereotypical portrayals of women in the media is the first step towards exterminating such practices from society.

Pakistan is a patriarchal country. It has been observed in recent decades that Pakistani people are blind followers of unfair gender patterns of patriarchy. This society has defined a few gender-specific functional attributes associated with men, like they are presented as financially independent, physically strong, and emotionally stable. Conversely, females have been portrayed as managers of domestic matters. The three waves of feminism began in the West but influenced the traditional portrayal of women. It has raised awareness among women about self-identity and career building. Now they are moving toward their professional development (Ullah, Khan, Khan, & Ibrahim, 2016).

(Nasir, 2017) analyzed 32 advertisements, which were objectifying women and presenting a traditional view of women in a binary relation with men. This research utilized Dyer's model of analysis for analyzing the meaning of advertisements. Similarly, in this study under consideration, the researcher has employed Gillian Dyer's model given in her book "Advertising as Communication". Dyer says that image is an effective means of communicating different ideologies to the audience.

Rasul (2017) highlighted the objectification of female models in advertising the product. These types of commercials are broadcast daily on television. This business is not limited to only electronic and print media; rather, it exists in every field of life.

Ullah & Ali (2018) in their research described that although women are advancing in different fields, the media is rigidly depicting the same stereotypical or suppressed image of women. Hastuti (2018) employed the triadic model proposed by Pierce (1931) for examining the political cartoons made for the representation of Trump’s presidency’s 1st hundred days. In this analysis, three typologies of the sign were analyzed. He found the 38 signs, including 17 icons, 9 indices, and 12 symbols.

Data Collection

In this study, data is collected from the official websites of the selected TV channels. The data collected for the present study encompass television drama posters broadcast on several Pakistani TV channels. The networks nominated for the collection of data include HUM, A-PLUS, and ARY Digital. The reason behind the selection of the aforementioned television networks is their heavy viewership. The dramas broadcast on these channels also cater to diverse subject matters. The researcher keenly observed the drama posters of the aforementioned channels during the data collection time for the selection of suitable data.

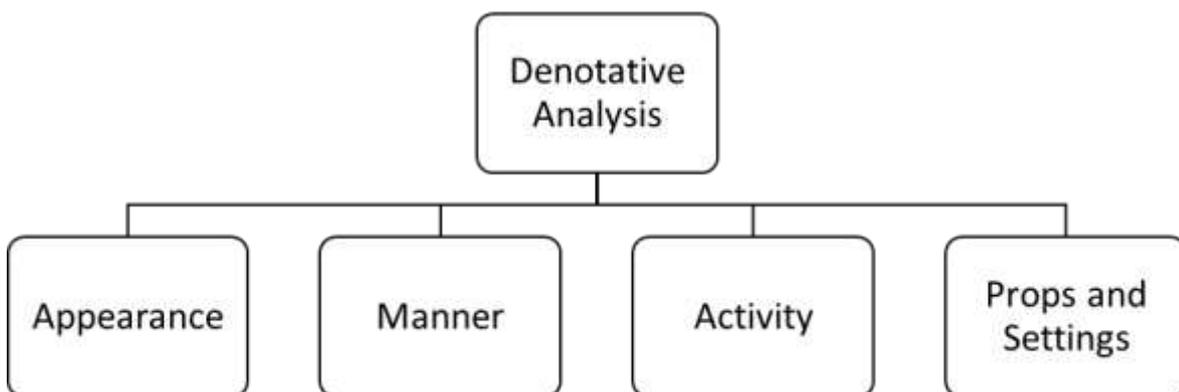
Pakistan Television is a government television network that promotes the policies and ideology designed by the government. The other nominated networks are private. The owners of private channels focus on the interests of people. The drama posters have been classified into two diverse groups, including female-oriented dramas and male-oriented dramas. Female-centric dramas are further divided into three categories, ranging from the treatment of women as slaves, the Use of negative adjectives for women, females as damsels in distress, and females as commodities of men. Cumulatively, three posters have been selected for the current research which have been analyzed according to the researcher’s standpoint.

Dyer’s Model

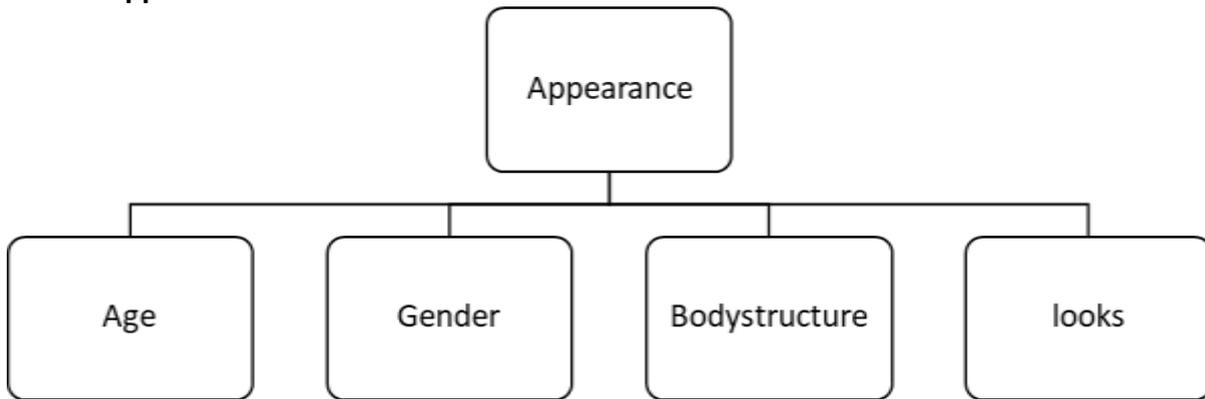
Denotative Analysis:

According to Dyer (1982), some non-verbal features like facial expression, contextualized body movement, visual image, color, gender, manner, and activity convey social constructs within a particular socio-cultural context. The deconstruction of signs incorporated in the advertisements varies from society to society and relies on cultural values.

To comprehend the meanings of posters of dramas containing human subjects, three main principles are devised, namely appearance, manner, activity, props, and settings. The parameters for the analysis of images are described as follows.

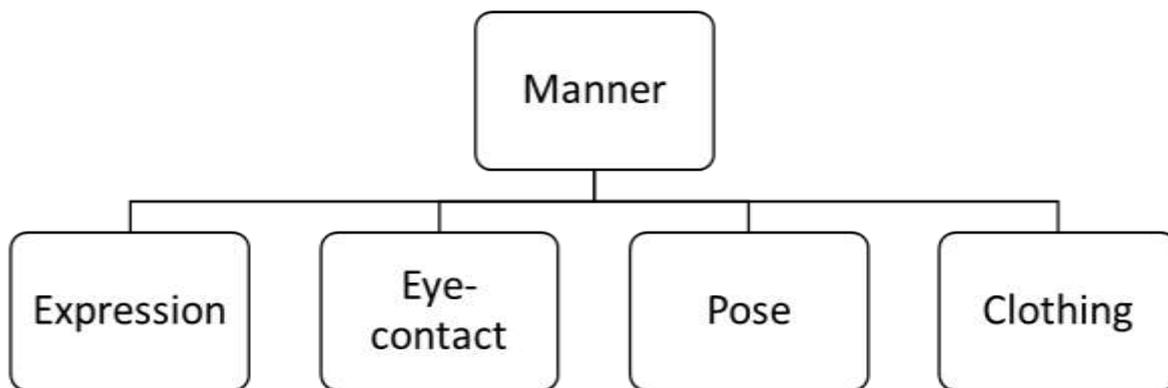


3.6.1.2 Appearance

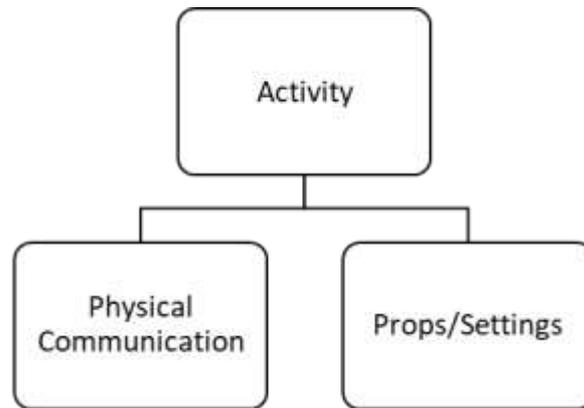


The telecast dramas convey different concepts and ideologies. Age identifies the character with a specific age group, which gains primary focus in the poster. Gender helps to explore the prevalent gender narratives of society. National and racial assistance to detect any racism present in the content. Hair is considered the most significant factor of communication. Its colour, texture, and length convey different meanings. Body refers to the form of the human subject. It indicates the different views about different body shapes and sizes. Looks represent the human subject carrying him/herself. Size refers to the size of human subjects present in the posters, carrying different meanings.

Manner:



Manner refers to the behavior, emotions, and way of carrying themselves of human subjects in the posters. The emotion of either contentment or discontentment is exposed through the expressions of the face and the emotional association between the human subjects. Eye contact locates the statuses of characters in their gender relations. Television drama posters depict males/females acting out several roles in various settings where eye contact between women and men symbolizes their social status in any society. Pose portrays the character performing a role in drama as passive or active. Lastly, clothing is considered a reflection of the person identifies the person's cultural, financial, and living standards.

Activity:

Activity refers to the action performed by the characters in the drama posters. Activities advocate deep social analyses about the roles assigned to human subjects in multiple realms (private/public). In this model, body movement refers to the type of actions performed by the character related to a specific social setting.

Props and Setting:

Props as well as settings are purposefully incorporated in the posters to intensify the effects of the presented message or ideology. Props carry functional and symbolic significance in constructing meanings, and a few props are associated with gender according to their sphere of activity, reflecting the roles of males and females. Setting gives a complete context to the visual ads, which do bring specific meanings with them. The depiction of males and females in diverse settings provides an insight into their socially fabricated roles.

Connotative and Ideological Analysis

The current model of analysis has been derived from the pioneering theory offered by (Ferdinand de Saussure, 1983), concentrating on the sign system. The idea of semiotics has been taken from structural linguistics that analyzes the internal correlation within linguistic structures like syntagmatic and paradigmatic. (Dyer, 1982) states that semiotics has evolved from just inferring the meanings of visual signs towards examining the process of the formation of meanings and their naturalization within any society. (Dyer, 1982) says denotations, as well as connotations, are 2 analytical parameters; these parameters help the analyst to critically investigate any poster according to the sociocultural boundaries. Denotation denotes the description that a poster offers to the masses. Denotation provides the basis for the connotation stage. A researcher needs historical, cultural, social, and contextual knowledge to reveal culturally rooted signs incorporated by the producer in a poster at the connotation stage because it is a little bit complicated level of analysis.

Television posters are considered a source of social as well as ideological depiction of gender via a visual signification system. An analyst analyzes a poster in the following way: Firstly, he/she identifies signs (denotative) and then moves towards creating a relation between those signs and prevalent socio-cultural norms, which constructs the ideologies (connotation). Barthes & Heath 1977) stated that the concept of ideological neutrality does not exist in the posters. Every telecasted poster or commercial constructs ideology through signs. These ideologies are different in different cultures. Ideologies are always driven by cultural belief systems and culturally embedded traditions as well as values. Hence, the 2nd step of analysis (connotative) relates the signs with the cultural values contained by a society to build an ideology, which is what (Dyer, 1982) declares the 3rd step of analysis.

Code carries essential value in the creation and understanding of a poster. Analysis of the codes generates our comprehension of the prevailing gender binary ideologies within society.

The semiotic model also emphasizes the linguistic signs that are employed to smoothly convey concepts, thoughts, and feelings. These verbal variables may contain titles of dramas, taglines, and names of central characters.

Verbal expressions are very important because they incorporate lexical items as well as phrases that explain the visual signs encoded in the posters. The linguistic items are practically employed as signs indicating a specific 'system of signification', indicating implicit meanings.

Words do convey some meaning, but also communicate specific feelings associated with them. For example, in the case of dramas, their producers use certain titles that give a gist of the upcoming dramas.

Stage 1

Stage 1 comprises the visual descriptive (denotative) analysis of the posters. At first, a visual and verbal description of the posters has been done, which supports finding the presence of various semiotic codes or signifiers incorporated in the posters. Besides the description of posters, the subsequent aspects help to develop an overall imprint of the poster, which contains: activity, appearance, and manner.

The abovementioned variables are additionally subdivided into several semiotic codes as subject to analysis. At the denotative stage, these semiotic codes are recognized, and later they are interpreted in the second stage, presenting how these semiotic codes construct an ideology in any culture.

Stage 2

This stage carries out the interpretation of the pre-mentioned semiotic codes and pursues their meanings through analyses that they create by taking into account the prevalent cultural norms. (Barthes & Heath, 1977) considers cultural knowledge a prerequisite for an analyst to analyze any cultural text, as he described in his special essay "Rhetoric of Image". (Dyer, 1982) reinforced the same idea in his book "Advertising as Communication". Televised content is just like a mirror that reflects the gender binary relations existing in any society. The analysis intends to explore the existing gender narratives and ideologies constructed out of semiotic signs and their relationship with media representation.

Besides visual or non-verbal examination of the drama posters, a few linguistic features have also been analyzed and interpreted. These linguistic variables include drama titles, taglines, and names of central characters. The linguistic features that are associated with gender representation have been examined.

DATA ANALYSIS

Men as Beasts

Drama Poster: Haiwan(Beast)



Figure 1 Source:(Magick, 2018)

This drama was flawlessly directed by Mazhar Moin. The famous Pakistani writer Sara Saadain wrote it. It was broadcast in 2018 on ARY DIGITAL.

Denotation:

Verbal signs:	
Drama title	Haiwan (Beast) The word Haiwan taken here is a masculine word and a noun. It has been used for the men of society who commit inhuman acts.
Tagline:	My Child, My responsibility The tagline of this drama consists of two nouns and two possessive pronouns. Normally, only nouns are included in the taglines to emphasize the main subjects. Here, 'my' has been used twice to represent ownership. In this line, 'my' has been used twice to emphasize the importance of parents taking care of their child. Commonly, people just rely on other relatives and neighbours to protect their children. This drama targets this wrong practice and makes people realize that the child is yours. So, only you are responsible for the protection of your child from any evil eye.
Visual Signs:	
Appearance	Only three characters are present in the picture. Two are females, and one is male. The male character Hameed has grey hair on his head, which shows him as a middle-aged man. Of the females, one is Azra, who is a middle-aged woman, and the other is Momaina, a young girl of eighteen. The middle-aged woman is wearing a dupatta, which is covering her hair and showing her as an honourable woman. The man has grey hair, revealing his old age. The young girl is without a dupatta, which indicates her safety is at stake. Hameed has been presented with a heavy, muscular body. Azra has a healthy body, and Momaina is displayed as a skinny girl.
Manner	The poster is organized in a way that the man is sitting with his giant body behind a young girl who is looking too weak to save herself, and a woman is standing next to the girl, looking lower in height than the man. The man is giving a fierce and angry look with tensed jaws. Frowning forehead and wide-open eyes behind goggles. The young girl is showing a scared look with teary eyes. The woman, having wide-open eyes, is holding her dupatta from her neck with a straight look.

Activity	The expression is considered a reflection of inner feelings. Hameed, with dense hair and a rough hairstyle, looks more dangerous due to his black hooded eyes and lifted eyebrows. It seems that the girl in a white dress is scared, as her eyes are wet with tears, representing her misery. The woman has wide-open eyes as she is ready to confront the culprit.
Props And Settings	In the poster, different props have been utilized by the producers, like the black dress of two characters, the white dress of the girl, the girl holding a book, the broken window in the background, and the drama title written in red colour. The drama builds on the background of two neighboring families. The social issue of child abuse has been targeted.

Connotation and Ideology:

The tagline of Haiwan is *My Child My Responsibility*. The drama looks intriguing and interesting, with multiple characters having distinctive shades. From the look of it, this drama has something substantial to offer to its viewers with a good cast and a remarkable script.

The male character Hameed has grey hair on his head, which shows him as a middle-aged man. The middle-aged woman is wearing a dupatta, which is covering her hair and showing her as an honourable woman. The young girl is without a dupatta, which indicates her safety is at stake. The picture is organized in a way that a giant beast-like man is sitting with his hand in his hair, showing his guilt over some crime, with his dangerous, wide-open eyes, and his forehead replete with wrinkles showing his rude and angry look. The woman has a fierce expression. The girl is looking too little in front of the man holding a book in her hands, which represents her as his victim. The giant body of Hameed in the poster directly indicates the referent of the word "Haiwaan". The action of the woman holding her black dupatta from her neck implies that she is insecure. In Pakistani society dupatta is considered an essential part of a dignified woman. So, she is afraid of her dupatta being snatched, which means her honour is at stake.

In the poster, no other colour can be observed except black, white, and red. Black implies two different concepts, one of which is sad. White indicates purity and innocence. Red indicates danger, crime, and blood. The man is wearing a black dress representing his black acts, and the light shadow of red on his dress represents him as dangerous and criminal. The woman in the black dress shows his sadness over her loss. The girl in a white dress shows her as an innocent person. The man in the poster is fiercely touching his forehead, and his hair represents his worry about getting caught. The girl is tightly holding the book shows her fear of getting victimized. The picture is organized in a way that a young girl is standing, holding a book, just behind her is a giant man in search of prey, and right beside him is the mother of the girl as a savior.

Drama Poster: Wehshi(Beast, animalistic)

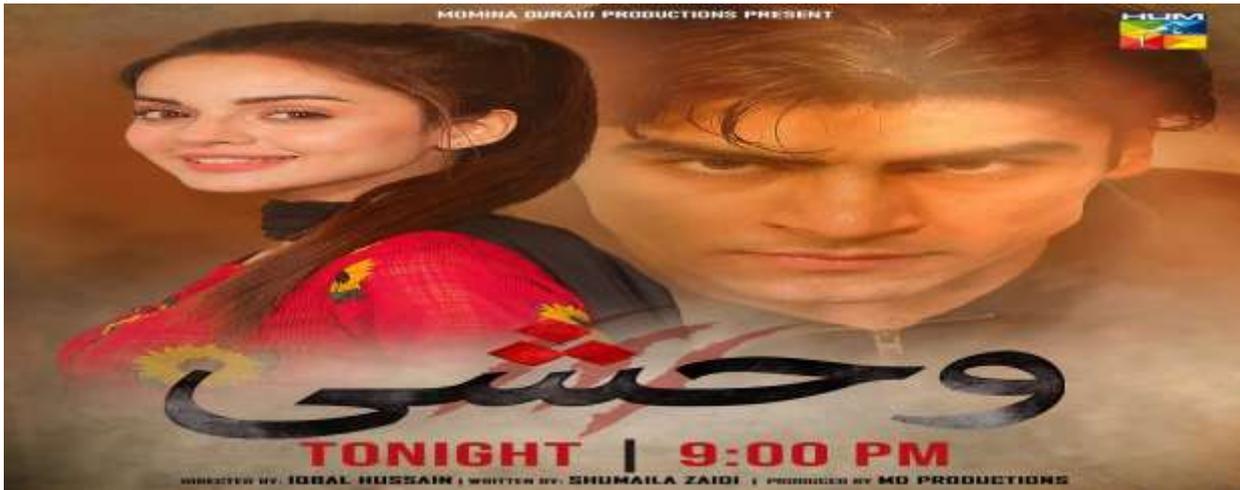


Figure 2 Source: (TV, 2022)

This drama was flawlessly directed by Iqbal Hussain. Pakistani famous writer Shumaila Zaidi wrote and dramatized it. It was broadcast in 2022 on HUM T.V.

Verbal Signs:	
Drama title	Wehshi(Beast) The word Wehshi taken here is a masculine word and a noun. It has been used for the men of society who commit inhuman acts. It highlights that a human being acts like an animal because he/she is being treated like an animal by the honourable human beings of society.
Visual signs:	
Appearance	Only two characters are present in the picture. One is female, and the other is male. Both the girl and the boy belong to the same age group, the twenties. The girl is having her hair bound in a ponytail, and the boy's hair is scattered. The man has been shown with a heavy, muscular body. The girl is represented as having a slim, trim body. The poster is organized in a way that the man is shown with his giant body behind the girl, who is looking too weak to save herself, and is also looking lower in height than the man. The man is giving an exasperated and enraged look. The girl is showing a beautiful and innocent look.
Manner	The expression is considered the reflection of inner feelings. The man has furrowed brows, tense jaws and lips, flared nostrils, and clenched fists. The picture is organized in a way that a giant beast-like man is standing behind a nice-looking girl. His tensed jaws represent him as rude and angry. The girl is standing in a stylish way, having an attractive smile on her face and folding a black dupatta around her neck. The man is wearing a black dress. The girl in a shocking pink dress with a dupatta folded around her neck makes her look full of life. She loves to live in the present moment and does not dwell on the past.
Activity	Both characters are lost in their worlds. All the characters are still displayed in their world. The girl is smiling while looking at the audience. The boy, with all his rage, is looking towards the audience. The picture is organized in a way that a young girl is standing happily, and just behind her is a giant man in search of prey.
Props and Setting	In the poster, different props have been utilized by the producers, like

	the black dress of the man, the shocking pink colour of the girl's dress.
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Connotation and Ideology:

The drama deals with the social issue of the ill-treatment of kids in their childhood, which brings about worse consequences, like the distortion of their personality.

The poster portrays the stereotypical bifurcation between the two genders, male and female. The male, traditionally considered rough and tough, always with a bossy look, has similarly been represented here. The female, thought to be always innocent, decent, and fragile, with an organized personality, has likewise been presented here. A contrast has been presented here between the two characters who went through painful experiences but both of them became different as a result. The girl became sacrificing and remains happy. The boy became inhuman and learned to forcefully achieve the things being devoid of. It seems that the girl in a dark pink dress with floral print having a nice smile shows her personality as a happy person even being devoid of deserving love from the loved ones.

The man is wearing a black dress representing his black acts, and the light shadow of red on his dress represents him as dangerous and criminal. The pink colour is typically associated with girls. The girl in a shocking pink dress with a dupatta folded around her neck makes her look full of life. She loves to live in the present moment and does not dwell on the past.

Men as Oppressors of Women

Drama Poster: Piya Bedardi (Ruthless Lover)



Figure 3 Source:(Entertainment, 2016)

This drama was aired in 2016 on A-PLUS and written by Imran Nazir. It was directed by a renowned director, Sohail Irfan.

Denotation

Verbal signs:	
Drama Title	<p>'Piya Bedardi'(Ruthless Lover)</p> <p>The title of the drama consists of two words jointly making a meaningful expression. The first word 'Piya' means 'lover or sweetheart', whereas the second word 'Bedardi' means 'Ruthless' or 'Pitiless'. It is a paradox if a person is a lover, how can he be ruthless or pitiless towards his beloved? So this drama is highlighting the trauma of Pakistani culture, where numerous people claim to be the lover of someone but treat their beloved very badly. The term 'love, lover, and beloved' has been manipulated and exploited in Pakistani culture a lot.</p>
Visual Signs	
Appearance	<p>There are two characters shown in the picture: a girl and a man. The girl is about 20, but the man is middle-aged. The texture, grey hair colour, and dress style shown in the picture indicate that he is a rich middle-aged man. The girl is present in a traditional bridal dress, identifying her as a bride.</p>
Manner	<p>In the first poster, the girl is afraid while running. In the second poster, her husband is torturing her. So, she is having painful expressions. In the first poster, the girl is running and turning back. In the second poster, the girl is lying on the floor, and the man is bending down to pull her hair. The third poster reveals the painful expression of the girl as the man is pulling her hair.</p>
Activity	<p>The boy is violently pulling the bride's hair. In the first picture, the girl is running on a path surrounded by bushes. In the second picture, a man is pulling her hair. As the boy is vigorously holding the hair of the girl, she is slightly lifted upward. The kind of activity presented in the poster shows that the girl has married a merciless man. So, to avoid her dreadful end, she is running to avoid her fate, but is caught again.</p>
Props and	<p>In the poster, different props have been utilized by the producers, like the red</p>

Setting	dress of the girl, heavy jewelry, make-up, the Man's act of pulling the girl's hair, and the girl running on a path surrounded by bushes.
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Connotations and Ideology:

The drama is set on the occasion of an abusive marriage. To portray this, he has implied different props like the red dress of a girl, heavy jewelry, and make-up, the Man's act of pulling the girl's hair, and the girl running on a path surrounded by bushes.

An age gap has been observed between the girl and the man present in the poster. The girl's helplessness shows that she is from a middle-class family, and the kind of force the male is exercising on the girl represents his rich background. The texture, grey hair colour, and dress style shown in the picture indicate that he is a rich middle-aged man. The girl's traditional bridal look with open, rough hair indicates that she is in danger. In the posters, two characters have been shown. The girl in the wedding dress without a dupatta is running on a path surrounded by bushes. She is turning her head back to see someone approaching her, indicating that she is afraid of some upcoming danger. In the second poster, a man is pulling a girl's hair as she falls on the path. The man in the poster is exercising power and force on a girl, which shows his magnanimous height in society over the girl. The girl's dress is showing her identity as a bride. But the man holding her hair is dressed up gracefully in western 3 pieces identify him as a rich bridegroom so it seems she being tortured by her husband.

In Pakistani culture, the red dress is the symbol of happiness and beauty. Most brides wear this on their wedding day. The girl shown in the picture is wearing a red dress fully decorated with wedding accessories like heavy jewelry and bangles, but she is without a dupatta. The man is dressed up in a navy blue pants coat, a three-piece suit. The kind of touch the boy and girl are having in the poster is very fierce.

Conclusion

The current study analyzed the semiotic codes regarding gender depiction in Pakistani televised drama posters with a distinctive focus on existing gender roles, gender biases present in society, gender identity, and prevailing masculine/feminine standards, taking into account the sociocultural context. The findings of this analysis, as elucidated above, verified that women in this era are still mostly displayed in conventional roles like mother, beloved maid, or housewife, having the responsibilities of domesticity. Contrary to that, males are represented in commanding, ruling over the private as well as public contexts. Usually, the dramas displayed males and females in two separate spheres, inferring the role of dramas to fabricate a prejudiced practice of gender socialization.

The findings have also set forth the 'modern image of single females, enjoying a specific level of gender liberty, which is followed by their marital and domestic life. Modernity in the sense of appearance denotes their desire to find a perfect match as depicted in the dramas. Their liberty would be snatched away by the predominant patriarchal marriage system. The conjugal system in evolving countries like Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan hampers the due freedom of females by encumbering them with domestic duties. Such representation of men/women characters in the dramas serves to endorse the male chauvinistic ideology, where the ultimate goal of women is marriage and domesticity.

Therefore, the findings of previous and present studies serve to suggest that 'liberty/ freedom' is just a verbal rhetoric of the media, while the reality is still painful. Modern values could not yet detach people from stereotypical dogmas, and still, we hold our established socio-cultural norms. Media, through stereotypical dramas, nurtures women in an environment where they willingly accept the role of the submissive woman. Thus, any peculiar or marital issue faced by females is credited to their failure to match the conventional standards of feminine conduct.

Consequently, the conventional concepts of femininity and masculinity have been internalized by the public, so that it now seems that the roles are predefined and identity clashes do not exist.

The media portrayal of gender not only manipulates the ideology of viewers as an influential medium but also obliges people to follow the represented gender roles, status, and level of authority. The depiction of masculine and feminine narratives in the dramas reinforces our ideological belief systems about ourselves as masculine or feminine. The drama posters taken as a sample for the analysis of gender representative worth in the Pakistani context do not seem to subvert the orthodox gender power narratives. This concludes that Pakistani TV drama posters contribute to stereotypical gender structures where males/females are conventionally presented while executing their traditional roles within their socially assigned domains. Drama posters, being an influential source, make such representation appear natural, thus stimulating the patriarchal ideological system.

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