

**FEAR CREATION: PSYCHOLINGUISTIC AND LEGAL ANALYSIS OF  
THE HEADLINES CORPORA OF PAKISTANI ELECTRONIC MEDIA  
ON COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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**Abstract**

A new global health crisis, 21<sup>st</sup> century's technological jammer, Corona virus which started in the mid of January in Wuhan Province of China by killing thousands of infected people in days and soon after went up catching and killing the people in different regions of the world including Iran, Italy, Spain, USA, Denmark, Germany, UK, India and Pakistan etc. has been represented by international media differently. The current study endeavours to investigate the discourses of fear, broadcasted during the Covid-19. In this respect, data has been collected from GEO News, Dunya News, 92 News, DAWN News, GEO News, ARY News and PTV Home News channels of Pakistan April and May 2020 by using simple random

sampling technique. Collected data was in the form of headlines which was transcribed and translated in English language. The data has been analysed through constructionist approach of emotion which envisage that psychological compounds such as anger, disgust, fear, etc. arise at the moment when more rudimentary psychological elements, for instance, representation of sensations from inside the body, exteroceptive sensations (visual sensations, auditory sensations) and concept knowledge of emotion categories are combined. Emotions are more than the sum of representations of the body, exteroceptive sensations, and concept knowledge. A person experiences an emotion when concept knowledge or knowledge about fear and exteroceptive sensations (the sights and sounds of being in a dark alley) are used to make meaning of body states (a beating heart, sweaty palms, and feelings of startle) in a given instance. (Barrett, 2006a, 2009, 2012; Wilson-Mendenhall et al., 2011; Lindquist and Barrett, 2012; Lindquist, 2013) explicitly expect a role for language in this process, insofar as language supports the acquisition and use of concept knowledge that is used to make sensations meaningful as emotions. The study finds that Pakistani electronic media used such language which triggered the emotion of fear whereas the discourse produced by command and control system was encouraging and optimistic.

### **Background of Covid-19**

The last day of 2019, 31st December in Republic of China is proved to be the commencement of corona disease when Wuhan health commission in the Hubei notified the National Health Commission, WHO and China CDC of a collection of 27 cases of pneumonia of unknown aetiology (Lu H, 2020). Constellation of symptoms were found in these patients like, fever, dyspnoea, dry cough, and radiological findings which indicated two-sided lung slick opaqueness. Besides, public health office outlined these 27 cases to Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market. This market trades live species of numerous animals such as bats, snakes, pangolins, and badgers (Lu H, 2020). Several inherent variables caused speedy initial transmission undercurrents, that made Wuhan the flashpoint of the pandemic. The seriousness of situation lies in its population which in the year 2018, documented 11.08 million, this showed that Wuhan was one of the top five most populated cities in China (Xu X et al, 2020). Its huge population bulk and proximity of the marketplace that was selling live creatures made it the epicentre for the human-animal interface. In addition, due to the lack of understanding to precisely identify the antiquity of acquaintance in the primary patient cases subsidised to the swift rate of spread there. It ultimately precipitated into World Health Organization announcing the current viral pneumonia as an epidemic on 30th January 2020. Therefore, due to the international logarithmic enlargement of the cases, the (COVID-19) was professed as a pandemic on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

### **Introduction**

Pandemic Covid-19 has affected the public at large in the world and millions of people have been infected while thousands of people have lost their lives. A moderate number of people have recovered as well. However, those who did not come in direct hit of corona virus have faced various problems like lockdown and loss of jobs. Stress and fear have also targeted very large number of people in every country which would get academic and research approval when survey studies would be conducted in future. However, it is presupposed that due to information dissemination through electronic media, fear has been created in the minds of the people. Constructive act theory predicts that language plays a key role in emotion as it helps an individual to primarily acquire and then support representations which comprise emotion concept knowledge (Lindquist, 2013). Now the emotion concepts are embodied and cognitive science gives growing evidence that knowledge is represented through

sensorimotor simulations of previous sensory practises and actions (Glenberg and Gallese, 2012).

According to Barret (2006a), basic elements contributing to emotions are the representations of sensations from inside the body, the other emotion is from outside the body known as exteroceptive sensations and third is concept knowledge used to make these emotions meaningful. Internal body sensation is body's ever-changing internal state that can be experienced as having some degree of valence an activation (Cacioppo et al, 2000). There are exteroceptive sensations which deliver an organism with an illustration of data from the external world outside of the body (e.g., vision, audition, taste, olfaction, and proprioception which contribute to one's experiences of emotions in their body and deliver information about physical context which is used to support disambiguate the meaning of interoceptive sensations. Constructive act theory predicts the above-mentioned sensations are made meaningful as an example of particular emotional perceptions using concept knowledge about emotion categories for other psychological constructionist views. (Clore and Ortony, 2013). This concept knowledge refers to the postulate what someone knows about different categories which have been acquired through a combination of instrumental learning via other individuals, for example, semantic knowledge and personal experience, means episodic knowledge (Viglicco et al, 2009).

Moreover, other investigation validates that cataloguing one's own unfriendly feelings with emotion words causes an understanding of a specific distinct emotion to transpire. Entities who are wide-open to markers for the category "fear" previous to listening to disagreeable music are successively more probable to engross in comportments typical of fear (i.e., risk aversion) than personages who were unprotected to labels for the category "anger" or those not visible to emotion category labels at all preceding to listening to unpleasant music (Lindquist and Barrett, 2008a). Cataloguing one's emotional state as an emotion also modifies cardiac responses throughout sentimental events and persuasive expressions are embedded in the discourses produced on the formal forums (Tamkeen Zahra's, 2017). In this respect, those individuals who labelled their emotions whereas finalising a demanding mental arithmetic task presented physiological responses consistent with an experience of threat (i.e., increased total peripheral resistance or TPR; relatively reduced cardiac output), while accomplices who did not label their emotions practiced a physiological contour more reliable with active coping (i.e., decreased TPR, increased cardiac output; (Kassam and Mendes, 2013). Findings of these studies indicate that labelling an unpleasant state as one type of emotional experience vs. another can outline how it is consequently experienced.

### **Research Objective**

- To investigate fear creating discourse produced by electronic media of Pakistan during Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Research Question**

- How fear creating discourse has been produced by electronic media of Pakistan during Covid-19 pandemic?

### **Research Methodology**

The present study is qualitative in nature which examines the collected data from the selected Pakistani electronic channels, GEO News, Dunya News, 92 News, DAWN News, GEO News, ARY News and PTV Home News channels of Pakistan April and May 2020 to

investigate fear creating discourses. For this purpose, the data was collected by using simple random sampling technique. The collected data was recorded, transcribed and translated into English from the Urdu language. The data has been analysed through constructionist act theory of Barrett (2006) which envisage that psychological compounds such as anger, disgust, fear, etc. arise due to some other rudimentary psychological elements. In this concern, the theory introduced three sensations including internal body sensation, extroceptive sensation which crates images in the minds of the audience, and concept knowledge. According to analytical theory for this study, fear gets created with the combination of these three elements. Thus, this theory was applied as an analytical mode to investigate fear creating discourses in current pandemic situation by electronic media of Pakistan.

### Data Presentation and Analysis of Corona-related Headlines

Translated Headlines	Reference
Corona virus took another life.	92News 29April 2020
America, the next target of corona.	Dunya News 10April
UK, USA's best health systems collapsed, our health system will not cope with current corona wave.	92News10/04/2020
When Corona will end? It is difficult to say.	DAWN News12April 2020
There is great fear of corona spread.	DAWN News 13April2020
Increase in corona cases will exert more pressure on our hospitals.	DAWN News15April2020
Corona engulfed the world economy too.	DAWN09April2020
One who is limited, is safe.	DAWN News10April2020
Every passing day is presenting a dangerous picture.	GEO News 31May2020
Record deaths with corona virus in Pakistan.	GEO 31 May 2020
Corona uncontrolled with relaxation in lock down.	ARY 31 May 2020
Gigantic devastation with relaxation in lockdown.	Dunya news 31 May 2020

### Data Analysis

Pakistani electronic media covered numerous topics like corona impact on economy, efforts of other countries to control corona, deaths in the world, affected people in Pakistan, health conditions in Pakistan etc. in their broadcast throughout the current pandemic in the year 2020. However, the current study only focuses on those discourses which create anger and fear especially when large population of a country faces continuous lockdown.

- **Corona virus took another life.**

The headline is simple which begins with the name of fear creating, an invisible creature. The action taken by this creature positions it as a killer of human life. The phrase 'another life' is alarming which refers back to some other killings by it and now it has taken new life. This creates sense of continuity of the act of killing of human beings. This structure of discourse combines (Barret, 2009) the three elements of constructionist approach as it creates internal sensations of fear, extroceptive sensations (visuals of corona are shown) and concept knowledge (corona's attacks have continuity and it is taking lives one after other which means the listener's turn is rapidly approaching).

- **America, the next target of Corona.**

This headline implicates the similar inherent sense such as the above headline carried up. It commences with America, the superpower in today's unipolar world that is the next target of corona. It creates internal body sensations in the listener's mind because he/she is already acquainted with the powerful status of the said country. The phrase 'the next target' is sensational related to extroceptive sensations (Wilson-Mendenhall et al., 2011) that builds up a sense that already corona targeted scores of other developing and developed countries, further it strengthens concept knowledge which creates fear in the audience.

- **UK, USA's best health systems collapsed, our health system will not cope with current corona wave.**

This headline commences with the world's developed countries possessing very good health systems. But the adverbial phrase 'current corona wave' and connecting it with adjective phrase 'best health system collapsed' creates high degree of fear by stimulating concept knowledge through internal body sensations, and extroceptive sensations. The audience of this statement, especially of the developing country (ies) is triggered to visualize that what will happen when he/she gets suffered with corona disease because in these counties, the health system is very poor.

- **When Corona will end? It is difficult to say.**

This headline is different is its syntactic pattern commences with a question having interrogation sign which follows an impossible answer of the question. It questions about the end of corona and creates curiosity in the mind of the audience. However, the answer creates internal body sensations in a negative way. The word corona creates extroceptive sensations as it is very dangerous and invisible enemy which has no treatment. The audience gets fearing by visualizing that there is no end of ending this danger.

- **There is great fear of corona spread.**

The headline above embodies already presupposed stance of the creator of this statement which speculates that fear is spreading. This triggers the body sensations in the mind of the audience that not he/she is fearing this peril rather it is something which should be feared as everyone else is also fearing. Concept knowledge brings extroceptive sensations together with body sensations visualizing that everyone is under threat and cannot get rid of it because this menace is invisible and cannot be retaliated in the current scenario.

- **Increase in corona cases will exert more pressure on our hospitals.**

The headline highlights the poor health facilities of the developing countries like Pakistan. The beginning lexical items 'increase in corona cases' stimulates both body sensations and extroceptive sensations because these items create a discouraging image in the minds of audience that the pandemic is in continuous increase which has certain consequences. The later part of the headline is resultant part which entails pressure on our hospitals and creates fear because concept knowledge of the listeners persuades them that in case of their own suffering, they will not be able to have proper treatment which can result in their ultimate death.

- **Corona engulfed the world economy too.**

Corona has been portrayed as a giant which, not only is killing the human beings, it also has engulfed the world's economy as well. This stimulates body sensations and extroceptive sensations very seriously, building concept knowledge of the audience that another danger of his/her devastation of basic human needs is working with full might. In other words, this

pandemic is attacking from both sides, for instance, body health and economy which means that one day or the other, it will also bring death for the audience and there will be no one to rescue the humanity from this pandemic.

- **One who is limited, is safe.**

This type of headline has been a hashtag of every channel since the beginning of current pandemic situation up till now. This creates body sensations of restricting and avoiding the worst enemy that results in fear. The reason is that when somebody is challenged by an enemy, naturally, most of the people attempt to face the challenge, attack the challenge or fight with the challenge for which a battlefield outside the shelter is required. But here the situation is totally opposite because the government agencies and the medical health experts are advising to be limited to home which creates discouraging and disappointing feelings in the minds of the audience.

- **Every passing day is presenting a dangerous picture.**

Internal body sensation and the concept knowledge of the discourse producers of this statement emerges from the implied meaning embedded. This indicates increasing scale of the danger of pandemic Covid-19. This creates fear in the audience by stimulating their extroceptive sensation indicating that there is no solution available to stop it because instead of decreasing this danger, it is increasing with every passing day. Therefore, it creates darkness and disappointment in the minds of audience.

- **Record deaths with corona virus in Pakistan.**

This headline is entirely about Pakistan, which is developing country, entangled in its dismantled economic conditions and does not have proper and appropriate health system. The phrase 'record deaths' stirs up body sensations of the audience whereas the phrase 'corona virus' stimulates extroceptive sensations, and when it is visualized together with the word, 'Pakistan' it together creates a combined effect of the three elements. In other words, this headline creates fear in Pakistanis because this pandemic is killing the people and now there are record deaths which are increasing.

- **Corona uncontrolled with relaxation in lockdown.**

The headline indicates a correlation between relaxation in lockdown and uncontrolled corona. In the current scenario, everyone expects reduction in corona pandemic which may relax their tense feelings. This creates disappointment by stirring up body sensation of the audience as the people are sick of unlimited lockdown. Uncontrolled corona and relaxation in lockdown stimulate both the extroceptive sensation and concept knowledge as well. This triggers people to think that they would have to live with the elongated and persistent lockdown which will create disappointment and fear.

- **Gigantic devastation with relaxation in lockdown.**

Both semantically and pragmatically, the headline is similar to the above headline with talks of relaxation in lockdown and gigantic devastation. The headline begins with adjective phrase, 'gigantic devastation' which is presupposed as having its connections with current pandemic Covid-19 which stimulates body sensation and extroceptive sensation as well to build up concept knowledge. This creates fear in the minds of the audience when they think that there is no relaxation possible in lockdown and they would have to stay at home without having any business and no entertainment. Such type of perception is responsible for creating fear in the minds of the audience.

### Preventive discourses

Translated Statements	Reference
i) Advise devotees not to come to mosques: Administration.	DAWN News 03 April 2020
ii) Don't be fearful, be careful.	DAWN News 03 April 2020
iii) Don't be afraid of corona, fight with it.	DAWN News 03 April 2020
iv) Abstain from going to bazars, malls, hospitals.	DAWN News 03 April 2020
v) Avoid unnecessary travel.	DAWN News 03 April 2020
vi) From 12am to 03 pm, there will be strict lockdown, no activity will be allowed.	92News 03April2020
vii) Only 05 people will be allowed for Juma prayer.	92News 13April2020
viii) Play your role at time of crisis.	PTV News 02April2020
ix) Keep 3 feet distance from the patients of flue and cough.	PTV News 02April2020
x) Let's adopt precautionary measures together.	PTV News 02April2020
xi) Don't shake hand nor embrace.	PTV News 02April2020
xii) Wash your hands again and again with soap for at least 30 seconds.	PTV News 02April2020
xiii) Be at home, be safe.	PTV News 02April2020
xiv) My home, my paradise.	PTV News 02April2020
xv) Don't be away from your home unnecessarily.	PTV News 02April2020
xvi) Be limited and safe to defeat corona.	PTV News 02April2020
xvii) Get quick check-up, if you have dry cough, flue or suffocation.	PTV News 02April2020
xviii) War against corona: Say your Juma prayer at home: Islamic Ideological Council.	PTV News 02April2020
xix) Be away from those whose health is already bad.	DAWN 05April2020
xx) Use tissue paper or elbow in case of cough and flue.	DAWN News 09April2020
xxi) Get check-up if temperature increases.	DAWN News 09April2020
xxii) Ensure instant consultation of doctor in case of temperature, cough.	DAWN News 09April2020

xxiii) Avoid going to crowds in case of temperature and cough.	DAWN News 09April2020
xiv) Take care of your dears, be at home.	DAWN News 09April2020

Preventive discourses in a particular scenario create an atmosphere where the people have to live with fear, especially when they are in a trouble and disappointing situation. They actually need hopeful expressions to reduce their fears, otherwise in case of instructing them with do's and dont's, they would get such impressions which can create internal sensation, extroceptive sensation and concept knowledge of fear. In this respect, we see that first five instructions, and instruction eight and nine are in imperative mode and instruct the public to adopt certain relevant things and avoid numerous others, including desisting visits to mosques for religious duties, avoiding fears, abstaining from visiting bazars, malls and markets, avoiding unnecessary travels, playing serious and responsible role, and maintaining social distance as well. These instructions inculcate internal body sensation and create an image in the minds of audience which strengthen concept image of fear in public. Only instruction three is encouraging which negates fearing corona and inflames emotions to fight against it. Instruction six is not structured in imperative mode and gives indirect warning of lockdown along with certain time limits whereas instruction seven is restrictively directional and instruction ten is collectively inspirational.

Similarly, more instructions between eleven and twenty are in imperative mode and instruct to avoid certain things and do certain other things including desisting hand shake, hand washing again and again, staying at home, avoiding unnecessary outing, getting quick check-up in case of flue and cough, avoiding to meet people with already bad health, and using tissue papers. These instructions are productive but make people careful which is a sign of fear. Only instruction fourteen is in a slogan form while instruction eighteen is ideological and instructional. Last four instructions are in imperative manner and advise certain measures to take, including getting check-up in case of temperature, ensuring medical consultation, avoiding visiting crowds, and taking care of dear ones. These instructions are also helpful and supportive to avoid suffering from corona virus but at the same time, they stimulate internal body sensation, extroceptive sensation and develop concept knowledge of fear.

### Expert opinion

Heat will not have any effect on corona, it is mere a theory.	Dr. Zafar Mirza
We are trying to overcome corona.	Dr. Zafar Mirza
Patients and deaths from corona are less than our expectations.	Dr. Zafar Mirza
It will take long time to prepare vaccine for corona.	WHO
The world will have to live with corona.	WHO

- **Heat will not have any effect on corona, it is mere a theory.**

This statement was given by Dr. Zafar Mirza against the prevailing theory that in coming days pandemic will decrease because of increasing temperature of summer. It can simulate internal sensation and extroceptive sensation building up concept knowledge that corona is going nowhere. It creates more fearful sensations in the case when there is no treatment of this pandemic.



- **We are trying to overcome corona.**

This is a satisfactory statement of Dr. Zafar Mirza to relax the public that efforts to overcome corona are going on and the responsible people are not passive they are struggling to address the situation. Use of pronoun ‘we’ is referred to the government agencies, therefore, three psychological sensations are not stirred up to create fear.

- **Patients and deaths from corona are less than our expectations.**

This statement is also an encouraging one like the previous statement. The lexical items ‘patients’ and ‘deaths’ can create fear but the latter part of the statement ‘are less than our expectations’ reduce and even remove the internal and extroceptive sensations of fear. It gives positive sense to the public that possibilities of corona devastation in Pakistan are less than the rest of the world.

- **It will take long time to prepare vaccine for corona.**

It often happens that people suffering in a difficult situation wish to know about any slight ray of hope while this statement puts water on such hopeful desires of people to get rid of the current pandemic.

- **The world will have to live with corona.**

This statement of World Health Organization, like the previous statement creates disappointment and fear among the people. The reason is that there looks no remedy to come out of the present situation where the people are facing severe lockdown with great job and business loss. It stirs up internal body sensation, extroceptive sensation and builds up concept knowledge of fear.

### **Command and Control System**

Corona virus is dangerous, not deadly.
Thanks God, corona epidemic is shrinking in Pakistan.
Corona patients have decreased, not increased in recent days
This is not the time to remove lockdown completely.
Don’t reduce prevention, maintain social distancing.
Total number of corona tests in the country is 42160, negative 38,000, completely recovered 467
We are increasing corona testing; cases are adequately decreasing.
Required social distancing is still necessary.
Wash your hands with tissue paper than towel.

Discourse produced by command and control system contradicts with discourse produced in the form of headlines by electronic media of Pakistan. Following is the application of constructionist approach of emotion (Barett et al, 2009) broadcasted on the electronic media of Pakistan during the current corona pandemic.

- **Corona virus is dangerous, not deadly.**

This statement reduces internal body sensation of fear and entails that corona virus is dangerous only, it cannot take the lives of the people. Therefore, the audience who read/listen about non-deadly nature of corona can have concept knowledge in different way and creates relaxation instead of fear in the minds of the people.

- **Thanks God, corona epidemic is shrinking in Pakistan.**

Everybody likes to know that the current pandemic situation is increasing or decreasing because everyone loves with his/her life. This statement is encouraging and starts with religious discourse 'thank God' which strengthens the belief of the people that now Almighty Allah has blessed them with reduction of this pandemic. Thus, it does not affect the internal sensation nor extroceptive sensation and builds up cool and calm concept knowledge.

- **Corona patients have decreased, not increased in recent days.**

Since the test kits were available, more people were tested, and mainstream media was reporting increase in number of patients but command and control system of Pakistan was supporting people with good news. This report does not stimulate internal body sensation. Likewise, it does not build up extroceptive sensation in the minds of people which could result in concept knowledge of fear.

- **This is not the time to remove lockdown completely.**

This statement is preventive as it says that the government agencies should be careful. The people have the knowledge that least precautionary measures are necessary, so this report does not create internal body sensation nor extroceptive sensation and has inability to enhance concept knowledge of fear.

- **Don't reduce prevention, maintain social distancing.**

It addresses public as an advice to be patient for some more time which is an understandable fact. Therefore, internal body sensation and extroceptive sensation both are not stirred up to create fear.

- **Total number of corona tests in the country is 42160, negative 38,000, completely recovered 467.**

Fact based statement gives the exact number of tests done, negative tests and recovered patients. This is very much encouraging statement because out of 42160 patients' tests, both negative and recovered number is 38467 and this is not an alarming situation as compared to world's other developed countries. This statement reduces the internal body sensation and extroceptive sensation as well which cannot create fear in the minds of the people.

- **We are increasing corona testing; cases are adequately decreasing.**

This reduces the effect of fear in the form of internal sensation as well as extroceptive sensation. This is an encouraging news for the people under strict lockdown especially listening about the corona destruction in the developed countries like USA, UK, Italy and others which creates disappointment and fear in the minds of the people.

- **Required social distancing is still necessary.**

As it had been continuously advised by the health centres through electronic and print media of the world that this pandemic affects others through touch, and it was advised that social distancing is highly desirable. Thus, this statement advises the same thing. The word 'still' is meaningful which refers back to the previous stance of control and command system of Pakistan that pandemic is decreasing but it does men to be careless. So, still it is necessary to maintain social distancing. This reduces internal sensation and extroceptive sensation of fear in the minds of people.

- **Wash your hands with tissue paper than towel.**

This statement, although is funny which is a joke with the people who have lost their jobs and business but still it is preventive. It is in imperative mode instructing that disposable things should be used to avoid the pandemic. It is neutral with respect to create fear or not, simply it is preventive and talks of precautions to avoid the things which can spread the disease.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that media manipulates the reality in a certain dimension to create hype by making certain linguistic choices which in the current scenario creates fear in the minds of the people. Moreover, from the analysis of collected data, it has been examined that media attempted to show increase in corona cases more than the actual figures. Similarly, discouraging and disappointing statements were produced by electronic media of Pakistan which may be responsible for fear creation. References of health collapse in advanced countries have also been detected which are constructed by media persons to highlight the discourse about corona in a negative manner. Corona has been portrayed as an invisible enemy who is taking lives continuously and has also been projected like a figure responsible for deciding and hitting the countries like America and others. As, we applied Barret's (2006) construction act theory, we arrived at the point that these discourses which substantiate already fear creating discourses within certain societies, they empower and strengthen the concept of fear by creating internal body sensation when the public commence thinking that next may be his/her turn to die in current situation. Additionally, spread of corona and news stories about it also enhances fear by stimulating extroceptive sensation. Similarly, building concept knowledge, headlines found have been structured in a manner to create fear in the minds of public. In this concern, it has been observed that linguistic choices such as gigantic devastation, prevailing havoc, uncontrolled situation, continuous and record deaths have been used in the selected headlines which obviously create disappointment and design a dark picture in people's minds. Unlike the discourse produced by the media persons which is fear creating, discourse produced by command and control system of Pakistan is encouraging and can decrease fear. The significant factor involved is that the former discourse is widely produced and even on daily basis which creates larger impact on the minds of the audience. On the other hand, latter discourse produced by command and control system is produced in a limited scale which, obviously has smaller impact to reduce the fear of the audience. Finally, it is recommended that electronic media should play its role constructively and produce the discourse as it has been produced by command and control system of Pakistan.

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