



Recognized by: Higher Education Commission (HEC), Government of Pakistan

Language, Song and Ideology: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Shehzad Roy's Apney Ulloo

Hadiqa Malik

Visiting Lecturer, Department of English, University of Education, Lahore & COMSATS University Islamabad (Attock Campus)

Haseeb Iqbal

BS English, University of Education, Lahore (Attock Campus)

Muhammad Zain ul Hassan

MPhil Scholar in English Literature and Linguistics, Air University Islamabad

ABSTRACT

Songs have been widely used to express social injustice, authoritarianism, religious and political prejudices, and other issues. Investigating how Shehzad Roy's song "Apney Ulloo" functions as an ideological critique in Pakistani society is the main objective of the current study. The research methodology employed in this study is critical discourse analysis (CDA) in which the lyrics are analyzed using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework, examining three levels to investigate the intended meaning of this song. Fairclough (1992) argues that the critical discourse analysis of a text should proceed through three levels of analysis: description, interpretation, and explanation of the inter-relationship interaction and the social context. Furthermore, the symbolic cues employed in the selected song are interpreted using a semiotic framework of Berger (1998) and Van Leeuwen's semiotic approach (2005). Findings of the study reveal that the song discusses many deep-rooted problems in Pakistan's political hypocrisy, systematic bribery and corruption, authoritarianism, and entrenched class-based discrimination.

Keywords: Shehzad Roy, Apney Ulloo, Fairclough, Critical Discourse Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Songs and music have long been used to express disapproval of social injustice, religious and political prejudices, and other issues (Rasul, 2017). As a mirror of societal values, music has been seen as a potent vehicle for social critique and cultural representation (Lee, 2025). The emergence of social media and the internet has greatly expanded the possibilities for this type of protest, increasing its pace and potential even further. Another worldwide trend that is starting to emerge

in Pakistan is the use of musical platforms for protest. Many bands and young musicians are making protest music to express their disapproval of the social and political circumstances that Pakistani people are currently facing (Rasul, 2017).

One of the most well-known pop singers from Karachi, Pakistan, is Shehzad Roy. When he made his debut in 1995 with a loud and innovative take on Pakistani pop, he immediately became a tremendous hit. He rose to prominence as one of South Asia's most well-known vocalists in the late 1990s. Roy's socio-political rebellious album, *Qismat Apnay Haat Mein* (Fate Lies in One's Own Hands), has been released in July 2008 at the Karachi Juvenile Prison at Central Jail, and it was a huge hit. He emphasized the necessity of reforming Pakistan's legal system, which disregards the appalling conditions of many inmates, the majority of whom have been detained for years merely awaiting their court appearance. Pop singer Shehzad Roy became a critic of the government in the twenty-first century. In order to alert the public and get them to consider their inadequacies, he also composed songs (Khalil, 2023). Shehzad Roy, however, has chosen to write an album of songs that contain more than their share of jabs against the current ruling class after the raucous "Saali". He was the youngest person and only pop singer to ever receive the "Tamgha-i-Imtiaz" award, which is given by the President (Khalil, 2023). Even the prime minister of Pakistan thought Roy's effort was admirable.

In 2011, Shehzad Roy's mother-in-law showed him a four-minute YouTube video in which a Balochi man summarizes Pakistan's political history (InpaperMagazine, 2012). He began to think about it, and before you knew it, he was trying to find Wassu and get him to join him for a song. This fascinating voyage was chronicled from the beginning and will soon be shown on television as "Vasu Aur Mein" (InpaperMagazine, 2012). The official song "Apney Ulloo" has been uploaded on YouTube by Shehzad Roy on Dec 25, 2011.



Figure 1.1. Shehzad Roy and Wassu

In one of his interviews, Shehzad Roy states that "I recently met an elderly man at a concert in a remote area who mentioned that his grandchildren enjoy the song whenever they hear it but he feels sad because he has personally witnessed the events mentioned in the lyrics" (InpaperMagazine, 2012). Additionally, he claims that because individuals must listen to, comprehend, and then feel a message, its influence takes time. In his opinion, we have partially succeeded in our goal of demonstrating the depth of a rural man's political knowledge. In his opinion, Wassu's narrative in the song has been recorded in a way that would lead any child to inquire about these facts from their instructor (InpaperMagazine, 2012). That's what he hopes this song does.

Research Objective and Question

The present research aims to investigate the way Shehzad Roy's song "Apney Ulloo" operates as a form of ideological critique in Pakistani society. The focus is on how one can analyze the lyrics and the satirical genre to see how the song critiques the political narratives attributed to the dominant political parties, points out social injustices, and reflects on the relationships between power, media, and authority. It also examines how the song serves as a means of disseminating social awareness and contributes to a broader discussion of how popular culture contributes to ideological insight.

- Following is the main objective of the current study:

□To inspect how Shehzad Roy critiques political hypocrisy, societal corruption, authoritarianism, and class-based inequalities in Pakistani society in his song "Apney Ulloo"

- Following is the main question of the present study:

How does Shehzad Roy critique political hypocrisy, societal corruption, authoritarianism, and class-based inequalities in Pakistani society in his song "Apney Ulloo"?

Delimitations of the Study

This study is restricted to a critical discourse analysis of the song "Apney Ulloo" by Shehzad Roy. His other songs, however, are not included in this study, and alternative analysis perspectives have been disregarded.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Different meanings of "discourse" exist, especially in the field of language research, where it refers to dialects, speech patterns, and language usage (Oseni & Ishola, 2024). Analysis, which is the process of assessing something by dissecting it, is essential to comprehending speech. Therefore, discourse analysis is the linguistic examination of both written and spoken language, with a primary emphasis on language use in social settings. Within discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis is a specialized study methodology that specifically aims to comprehend, reveal, and combat social inequity (Oseni & Ishola, 2024). By analyzing language used in political and institutional discourses, CDA reveals hidden or overt social inequality (Oseni & Ishola, 2024).

Music is a sophisticated and universal social behavior that expresses human thoughts and ideas that carry a powerful message (Fathoni et al., 2023). Songs and music typically transmit messages or ideas that are related to historical context. The value of songs in improving language acquisition has been recognized by numerous educational scholars and language instructors (Alek et. al., 2020). According to Razak and Yunus (2016), mnemonic devices like song rhymes may assist our brains retain a lot of information. A more thorough examination based on the artist's marketing strategy revealed that every amusing element in the video clip worked to further the artist's marketing plan in addition to conveying the intended messages (Alek et al., 2020). Since it has been demonstrated that songs can effectively aid students in internalizing the vocabulary found in lyrics, along with how it is pronounced, providing intonation, and the structure of the new language, which is aided by the

rhymes and melody, the majority of teachers have chosen to use songs, either delivered visually or audio-only, to engage students with their instructions (Shin, 2017).

Numerous studies (Oseni & Ishola, 2024; Alek et al., 2020; Shin, 2017; Fathoni et al., 2023; Igwebuiké & Eburuaja, 2020) have been carried out to examine socio-cultural phenomena that occur in society by exposing the motivations behind a song's lyrics, which primarily reflect the singer's ideas, opinions, and emotions and have a powerful ability to influence listeners' cultural and psychological well-being. Remarkably, the composer was able to subtly convey their meaning through catchy repeats and straightforward word choices in the lyrics (Arif & Triyono, 2018).

Using a sociological method, the social and political values of Iwan Fals's song were examined. The study's findings revealed the composer's ideas and awareness of Indonesia's social, political, educational, and nationalistic circumstances and problems (Firmansyah, 2016). Iwan Fals' song "Polisi dan Bajingan" is a social critique that highlights the shortcomings of the Indonesian police force and its role in drug trafficking, corruption, and criminal cooperation. The study of multi-perspective genres within musical discourse involves integrating textual and contextual analysis because genre's role is to mediate between social situations and the texts that respond strategically to the exigencies of those situations (Swales 2009: 14). Musical discourse is a complex, multifaceted, and multi-perspective phenomenon. Both text-internal and exterior qualities of musical discourse are determined by semiosis, social context, social agents, and social interactions in their various aspects work together (Aleshinskaya, 2013). These factors also serve as criteria for differentiating musical discourse into different genres. In social linguistic research, non-linguistic communication methods are becoming more and more important (Bezemer & Jewitt 2010).

The song's lyrics depict a somber reality in which innocent families suffer and the system loses their trust as the distinction between law enforcement and criminals grows hazy (Fathoni et al., 2023). The song also addresses issues of responsibility as well as social issues like drug addiction that impact Indonesia and the rest of the world. The lyrics emphasize the ease with which people can elude (Fathoni et al., 2023). As a social practice, language use in music creates a dialectical relationship between discursive events and the social structures, institutions, and circumstances that surround them. Furthermore, by exploring not only what language is but also why it exists, Critical Discourse Analysis exposes the relationship between ideology and power. The fundamental principles of CDA are briefly summarized by Fairclough and Wodak (1997), who address social issues, recognize the discursive character of power dynamics, and highlight the formative function of discourse in society and culture. Discourses have a big impact because they portray problems like hypocrisy, poor leadership, and unfair social relations.

Particularly in Nigeria, songs play a variety of roles in the hip-hop genre. It is a powerful instrument for expressing feelings, worries, and social criticism (Oseni & Ishola, 2024). Beyond only providing amusement, songs have played a crucial role in articulating sociocultural ideals and bringing attention to societal issues (Cross &

Woodruff, 2009). The three songs, i.e., Talk, E no finish, and Brothers' Keeper were subjected to a critical analysis of Falz's ideology and his intention using a dialectical relational techniques framework. Falz's rise to prominence in Nigerian hip-hop represents a new generation of musical activism that engages with current issues and addresses important societal concerns (Igwebuiké & Eburuaja, 2020). However, the results revealed the musician's ideology on leadership failure and the attitude of Nigerian leaders toward the citizens, including selfishness, corruption, self-centeredness, and incompetence (Oseni & Ishola, 2024). The power dynamics and lack of dedication of Nigerian leaders to the national cause are also projected in the study (Oseni & Ishola, 2024).

Investigating how Shehzad Roy's song "Apney Ulloo" functions as an ideological critique in Pakistani society is the goal of the current study. The emphasis is on how the song examines the political narratives ascribed to the major political parties, highlights societal inequities, and considers the connections between authority, media, and power through an analysis of the lyrics and the satirical genre. Additionally, it looks at how the song spreads social awareness and adds to a larger conversation about how popular culture fosters ideological understanding.

METHODOLOGY

The present study uses a qualitative content analysis approach to comprehensively analyze the selected song "Apney Ulloo" by Shehzad Roy. The rationale for selecting "Apney Ulloo" is that it provides a vibrant site of academic inquiry because of its incisive social commentary, satiric style, and reflections of current socio-political concerns in Pakistan. The song that has been chosen for this study is uploaded on Youtube on 25 Dec, 2011 with 1,334,819 views (Figure 3.1.). It juxtaposes modern musical genres with lyrics that engage with and interrogate authoritarianism, class-based inequalities, political hypocrisy, and corruption in society. These aspects make "Apney Ulloo" especially appropriate for investigating how popular music operates as a critique on Pakistani society.

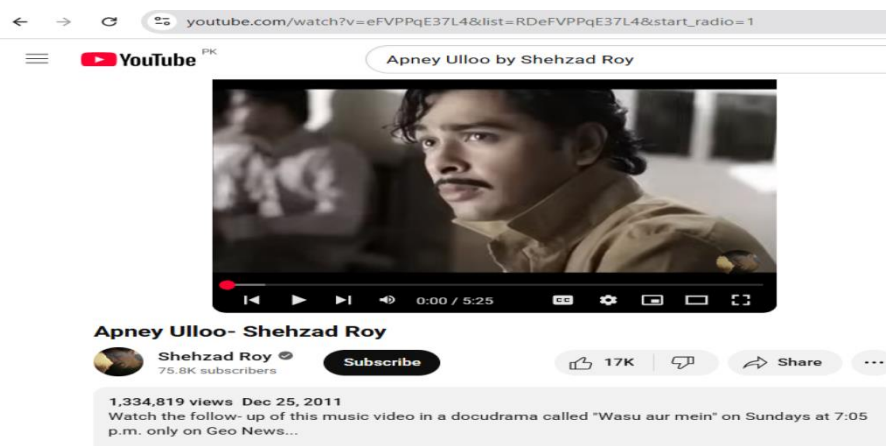


Figure 3.1. Screenshot of history of Apney Ulloo Song

The research methodology employed in this study is critical discourse analysis (CDA) in which the lyrics are analyzed using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (Figure 3.2.) of three levels to inspect the intended meaning of the song. Fairclough (1992) argues that the critical discourse analysis of a text should go through three levels of analysis: description, interpretation of the text and interaction, and explanation of the inter-relationship interaction and the social context. In addition to this, Fairclough claims that language is a social practice and society & language are internalized and linked. Then, he advocates that language should be interpreted and analyzed as a social practice, because it is a part of society. Fairclough (1989) states that text may encompass a hidden agenda and the qualitative in-depth analysis of a discourse seeks to reveal the hidden determinant of social systems and the hidden effect they carry.

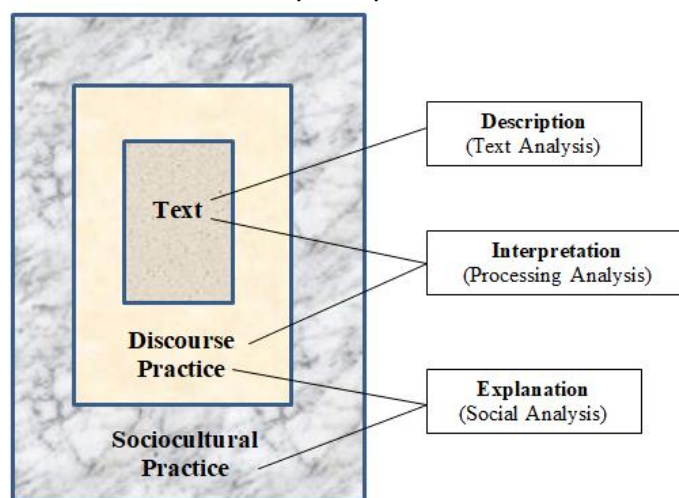


Figure 3.2. Fairclough's CDA Model

Furthermore, the symbolic cues employed in the selected song are interpreted using a semiotic framework of Berger (1998) and Van Leeuwen's semiotic approach (2005). The system of signs that comprise a text is the main focus of semiotic analysis, which arbitrarily and momentarily separates form from content. According to Berger, "a meal, to stray from television for a moment, is not seen as steak, salad, baked potato, and apple pie, but rather as a sign system conveying meanings related to matters such as status, taste, sophistication, and nationality" (Berger: 1998, p. 4).

DATA ANALYSIS

The selected song "Apney Ulloo" is unique due to its free-form construction, which deviates from customary poetic formats. It features no rhyme scheme, which conveys an experimental attempt to blend rap-style vocals and guitar riffs, which is very rare in the Pakistani music industry. The division between stanzas offers a voice of representation pop culture, because the verses present urban and rural messages, which adds a sense of contrast to the sociopolitical vision. However, it represents a momentous occasion in Roy's artistic evolution where he transformed from traditional mainstream pop music to sociopolitical music where he embraced his

artistic space for the chance to raise issues of his country, and injustices while creating thought-provoking moments for his audience against a notion of the trajectory of their country.

Title of the selected song

On a textual level, "Ulloo" denotes a specialized predator with particular traits that let them to fly silently and hunt at night, as well as eyes and hearing made to locate victims with ease. The phrase "Apney Ulloo" is used twelve times throughout the song. Bad luck, individual needs, interests, and advantages are implied by the discursive meaning. "Apney Ulloo" alludes to the tendency of leaders to utilize their position of authority for personal gain. The term "Apney Ulloo" has multiple social meanings. For example, "Apney Ulloo kitne taire ap tak na hue yeh seedhe" can refer to Pakistani leaders. The statement "Quaid-e-Azam ke baad baba jo bhi aata hai`apna ulloo seedha karta hai" may allude to the fact that Pakistani leaders serve their own interests. Leaders and government workers promote corruption and violate citizens' rights. The phrase "Apney Ulloo korey korey woh yehi pe hai korey korey" alludes to the fact that Pakistani leaders are influenced by the surroundings.

Setting of the selected song

The framing of "Apney Ulloo" is intriguingly ambiguous, effectively straddling the line between a conventional talk show and a court hearing (Figure 4.1.), creating a hybrid setting that symbolizes the public trial faced by public figures and societal issues. The talk show elements of the song represent the sensationalism found in contemporary media, where political arena is often reduced to a type of performance rather than a real exchange of ideas. The courtroom seems much more connected to the possibility of actual accountability. This duality of the setting enhances the satirical essence of the song, creating a more public interrogation of those in power, while simultaneously commenting on the media, political, and justice lines in present-day Pakistan.



Figure 4.1. Setting of the song “Apney Ulloo”

Analysis of the selected Song at Three Levels

Stanza 1:

Wassu
Quaid-e-Azam aya angrezo ko bhagaya
Pakistan banaya teera maah chalaya
Ziarat ke dourey par aya maut ne isko bulaya
Dunya aakhir fani chor dya usko
Jani sachha tha Pakistani
Karachi mein dafnaya poora dunya aya
phoolon ka chadar chadaya
phir noton par photo aya
goro ko tune bhagya
Quaid-e-Azam ke baad baba jo bhi aata hai
apna ulloo seedha karta hai

Shehzad Roy
Apne Ulloo kitne taire ap tak na hue yeh seedhe
Apne Ulloo korey korey woh yehi pe hai korey korey
Apne Ulloo kitne taire ap tak na hue yeh seedhe
Apne Ulloo korey korey woh yehi pe hai korey korey

Stanza 1 – Textual Meaning

In this stanza, the poet extols Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, detailing him as the architect of Pakistan and recognizing all of his successes in ousting the British and continuing to serve Pakistan, until his death in Ziarat. The poet describes his funeral in Karachi as the "whole world" attended it to pay their respects. The poet reflects on the national pride each of all of the currency notes bearing a likeness of his face. But then, the tone shifts from one of glorification to one of derision as the poet states that every leader since Quaid-e-Azam has acted out of self-interest: "apna ulloo seedha karta hai," implying that each leader has taken advantage both personally and politically of his position. The stanza uses the model of a story about a hero juxtaposed with a story about a downfall to show a disjunction between the great, legacy of the founder and the actions of his successors. At least in literal terms, the stanza is a narrative autobiography, and commentary blended together. The text contains underlying humor, along with rhyming couplets read in simple conversational Urdu, which makes it readable to a wide spectrum of readers.

Stanza 1 – Discursive Meaning

This stanza creates a clear dichotomy between idealism and opportunism in Pakistan's leadership narratives. The name of Quaid-e-Azam is not just invoked to recount history, but it is cast as a signifier of selflessness, integrity, and real national-building. The discursive move here is to idealize the founding leader to mark the moral degradation that followed. Terms like "angrezo ko bhagaya" and "poora dunya aya" juxtapose the mythical grandeur of Jinnah with the irreverent "apna ulloo seedha karta hai" which works as a punch line, shattering the myth of where we could have been with sarcasm. The juxtaposition is heightened by the bluntness and

commonality of the vernacular. The idiom "apna ulloo seedha karna" carries considerable weight, and it means to use an advantage of power, widespread in the day-to-day talk of a Pakistani, it represents nothing less than corruption. By opening with the reverent description of Jinnah and then following it with idiomatic expression, the stanza implies that those who came after Jinnah have criminally squandered the ideals with which Pakistan was built.

Stanza 1 – Social Meaning

Socially, this stanza lashes out at the prevailing sense of disillusionment in Pakistan. It compares Quaid-e-Azam and other leaders and links this to a broader social comment: Pakistan started with good intentions but was lost because of opportunistic leaders. The term "apna ulloo seedha karta hai" reflects how political elites have come to annoy people, given that they should be serving in a nation-state capacity, as opposed to merely looking to fill their own or their party's coffers. This is a powerful statement because of the extent by which the sentiment reverberates in Pakistan; people often feel let down by politicians. The stanza highlights how we have come to recognize national icons, and then turns them into a commodifiable concept, such as the image of Jinnah on a currency bill. Everything involved in the recognition of Jinnah highlights the hypocrisy that exists in respect to the legacy of late leaders, a figure who is celebrated, yet never practiced what they preach. The social criticism demonstrates the discrepancies of what the state purports to represent, and the level of governance being executed. The opening lines of global recognition or more appropriately noted by historians, the honor that was once Pakistan at the time of Jinnah's funeral bespeaks the respect that must be located within a memory.

Stanza 2:

Wassu

**Liaquat Ali Khan aya usko aamro ne marwaya
Iskandar Mirza aya usne nahin chalaya
General Ayub Khan aya marital law lagaya
Mirza ko bahadur banaya
1965 ka jang laraya Shastri ko maar bhagaya
Aisa sabak seekha moo tod jawab dilaya
[Nehr] bhi banwaya isne bhi nahin chalaya
Sir baad mein aya Yahya Khan adha Pakistan ganwaya
Fauj ko qaid karwaya Bangladesh chinaya
Isne bhi nahin chalaya**

Shehzad Roy

**Taale, waadey, signal, dil sabkuch toda kuch nahin choda
kuch nahin choda
Do number kaamon mein bhi hum number two
hum number two
Kar Allah hoo
Apne Ulloo kitne taire ap tak na hue yeh seedhe
Apne Ulloo korey korey woh yehi pe hai korey korey**

Stanza 2 – Textual Meaning

This stanza continues the story of leadership in Pakistan after Jinnah, beginning with Liaquat Ali Khan, the first Prime Minister. It confirms the worthless death of his assassination ("usko aamro ne marwaya"), and then cuts to the next leader and event: Iskandar Mirza's incompetence, Ayub Khan's martial law, the war of 1965 with India, the dam ("nehr banwaya"), and lastly Yahya Khan's reign before losing of East Pakistan. This stanza follows a narrative structure and chronology of events indeed but does so in crude rhyme and in a much-simplified way. It summarizes each significant political event with the same repetitive, lowbrow evaluation of "isne bhi nahin chalaya" ("he too didn't make it work"). The vocabulary is simple and conveys names, events, phrases the general public will be familiar with as Pakistanis. In fact, despite the rhyme and rhythmic elements required to maintain a poem, the events are quite serious in their content. But the effect here is of piled up failure: each of these men is simply allowed to fail followed immediately with that stark bluntness of "isne bhi nahin chalaya". While it does not offer detailed analysis of these personalities, it moves quickly through history which ultimately builds the argument that every single leader has failed one after the other to govern effectively.

Stanza 2 – Discursive Meaning

In a discursive sense, this stanza reaffirms the central proposition of the song: a repetition of failures of leadership. The repetition of the phrase "isne bhi nahin chalaya" has a refrain-like quality, bringing home an experience of monotony and inevitability, as no matter who came to power, stability or progress could not be delivered. The stanza purposefully flattens historical complexity, with a very quick and labored tone of historical events in the decades of governments, wars, and national crises, can certainly be diminished with short judgments of ineptitude. This rhetorical form is satirical and ironic. By situating the mention of events like the 1965 war or loss of East Pakistan in the same breath as leadership changes, these lyrics imply that leaders' egos and shortsightedness were the central contributors of Pakistan's tragedies. The tone teeters on the border of mockery and exhausted resignation. There are no heroes presented here; every character becomes equivalent in their failures. So, the stanza constructs a discursive-rhetoric narrative of repetition, entailing that there are no idea creation, no learning, and no changes.

Stanza 2 – Social Meaning

Socially, this stanza encapsulates the extended Pakistani public's ongoing distrust at political leaders throughout history. It embodies the prevailing social logic which suggests that since the passing of Jinnah, no leader has worked in the interest of the people. The persistent failures outlined assassinations, martial law, the loss of East Pakistan, and failing instruments are not merely dots on the tragic history of Pakistan, but wounds in the collective nerve endings of the national psyche. The context, tone, and even the irreverent yet acerbic narration of the sequence of events reflect the fact that the public is both resigned to and cynical of these failures. The refrain of "isne bhi nahin chalaya" beseeches an element of resignation with the notion that the public expect every new leader, president, general, or principled political consciousness to ultimately fail them in the end. Meanwhile, the stanza

draws attention to the reoccurring role of leadership in governance. The social criticisms do not only include people, but institutions that never mature. It expresses a general sense of public alienation from different facets of power structures, as the public become observers of political theatre in society, but are rarely the beneficiaries of it. These comments suggest a repetitive social story about helplessness, where any collective knowledge or positive engagement rather becomes an instance of enervating bitterness.

Stanza 3:

Wassu

Bhutto sahab jab aya aisa nizam chalaya
 Pehle qaidy chudaya zameen takseem karwaya
 Haari aur mazdooro ko dilwaya
 Miloo ko taala lagwaya one unit toodwaya
 Sarkari khatam karaya roti kapre ka nara lagaya
 Sarmayadaro ne socha isse kabhi na hoga
 mansooba banaya Zia-ul-Haq mangwaya bhutto ko qaid karwaya
 Kasuri ka case chalaya sulhi par latqaya
 Sir Marshal Law lagaya Junejo ko mangwaya Wazeer-e-Azam banaya
 Usko mazool karwaya referendum karaya Khud ko bhi chunwaya
 Bhutto ko bhi bhagaya court mein tune lagaya jailon mein bandh karwaya
 11 saal chalaya

Shehzad Roy

koi rule nahin hai rule yehi yeh baat sahi taariq ne ki
 taariq ne ki
 Apne Ulloo kitne taire ap tak na hue yeh seedhe
 Apne Ulloo korey korey woh yehi pe hai korey korey

Stanza 3 – Textual Meaning

The stanzas here summarize both the political moments of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Haq. It opens with a sympathetic portrayal of Bhutto's attempts at popular reform: freeing political prisoners, distributing land, augmenting power to farmers and laborers, closing down mill's owned by elites, and abolishing the One Unit system. It also quotes his well-known slogan: "roti, kapra aur makaan" (bread, clothing, and housing). But the transformation to the tragic is quick, and we arrive at Bhutto's downfall. The stanzas start discussing the capitalist forces that have worked against Bhutto, and lay out the invitation for Zia-ul-Haq to step in. Zia arrests Bhutto, tries him in a preposterous trial (the "Kasuri case"), and executes him. The stanza finishes off a description of Zia's dictatorship, including martial law, appointing and dismissing Prime Minister Junejo, a referendum contest to enforce Zia's rule, and of course, further derailment of Bhutto's legacies. Each moment is quilted as a memory in rhymed lines. While it is very basic and plain language, it captures the truncated storytelling style of lyrics in ballad traditions and the rhythmic framing of folk poetry.

Stanza 3 – Discursive Meaning

The tenor of the stanza also contrasts hope with betrayal. It presents Z.A. Bhutto as a reformer with populist policies who was trying to empower people. He is portrayed in terms indicating empowerment - releasing prisoners, redistributing

land, dismantling the structures of elitism etc. His action was narrated as revolutionary reform by use of phrases such as, “zameen takseem karwaya,” “Haari aur mazdoor ko dilwaya,” suggesting he was a champion among the oppressed. However, the singer moves toward his removal and execution the tone changes dramatically. It details the elite and capitalist classes conspiring against him suggesting his reforms were a threat. Zia-ul-Haq is introduced as the agent of the conspirators and not the legitimate leader. The phrases “mansooba banaya,” “Bhutto ko qaid karwaya,” imply there was an underlying political rationale for the public justification of Bhutto's demise. The legal process (“Kasuri ka case”), and Zia's actions are presented as schemes rather than democratic or legal processes. Framing the use of rhyming satire indicates how the machinery of the state was commandeered to serve personal and class interests.

Stanza 3 – Social Meaning

In social terms, this stanza articulates a moment in Pakistan's collective history marking the end of Bhutto's populism and the beginning of Zia's dictatorship. Bhutto's reforms were indeed attempts to redistribute power and wealth from elites to the working class. Land reform policies such as the housing-to-land ratio for tenants and the nationalization of industries such as brick making (as these reforms can be implemented immediately) had the support of the poor landless, the tenants of landlords, the workers of big industries, and the families of ordinary men and women. The line “Haari aur mazdooro ko dilwaya” signifies these previously ignored voices, organization, and at least temporary empowerment. The establishment of General Zia and the twisting of laws to support Bhutto's execution represent the return of the past order through authoritarian means. The impact for social change was tremendous: Bhutto's execution crushed the hopes of millions, setting into motion a decade dominated by Islamization, and oppression of political dissent. This stanza captures and suggests how justice was diverted, and how the political will of public institutions was manipulated to eliminate enemies of entrenched power. It critiques not just the individual actors, but the social structure that creates the conditions for such reversals.

Stanza 4:

Wassu

Rangeene ne Rang dikhaya Jaahaz uska giraya Islamabad dafnaya
Ghulam Ishaq Khan aya mehangingayi ko bharhaya 500rs bori aate ka bharhaya
Ghareebo ko bhokh maraya aik saal PPP ko diya usko mazool kya
Nawaz Sharif ko mangaya wazeer-e-azam banwaya uksko mazool karwaya
Moin Qureshi aya emandari nibhaya vote jald karwaya
Fauj ko bulwaya dhandhali se bachaya jeet gya hai PPP
Benazir jab aya bijli aur gas dilwaya thoda tankha barhaya
Farooq ko sadar banaya siyasi chakar aya farooq ko gussa aya
Assemblies khatam karwaya nigras wazeer bhitaya
Nishan tha jiska cheeta Nawaz Sharif ne jeeta
Aane mein aaya 300 tankha barhaya
Bhai logo ko danda chadhaya aathwi tarmeem khatam karaya
Aate ki kilat karwaya Aik peice PAKISTAN ka America se atta karwaya
Soobha Baluchistan ke zilah Chagi mein aitamy dhamaka karwaya
Pervez Musharaff aya Nawaz Sharif ko hataya aghwah ka kais chalwaya
100 takhwa barhaya karzay wapis karwaya Nawaz Sharif ko qaid sunwaya
mulk badar bhi karwaya aisa kaam karwaya ke tarar ko tune bhagaya
khud ko tune sadar banaya referendum karwaya khud ko jeetaya
intekhabad karwaya Jamali sahab ko wazeer-e-azam banwaya
Jamali ne jurat aur bahaduri yehi dikhaya ke apna mohallah azad karwaya

Shehzad Roy

Sab hazm kiya sab khatam kya hum phir denge woh kaahe ge
Hum peeche hai hat jaye to backing to gayi voting bhi gayi
voting bhi gayi
Apne Ulloo kitne taire ap tak na hue yeh seedhe
Apne Ulloo korey korey woh yehi pe hai korey korey
Apne Ulloo kitne taire ap tak na hue yeh seedhe
Apne Ulloo korey korey woh yehi pe hai korey korey

Stanza 4 – Textual Meaning

This stanza zips through a lengthy list of political leaders and events from the late 1980s until the early 2000s. It begins with General Zia-ul-Haq's crash ("Rangeene ne rang dikhaya, jaahaz uska giraya") and then moves to Ghulam Ishaq Khan's presidency, when inflation skyrocketed ("mehangingayi ko bharhaya"). The song lists political instability of Prime Ministers and dismissals "khel tha" (game of power between institutions). Each line points to an event such as the nuclear tests in Chaga. The lines do not elaborate; they simply heave events upon more events in a way that foreshadows eventual dislocation. Next to telling the story of political instability, there are references to the poor economy ("aate ki kilat karwaya") with grand symbolic acts like a nuclear explosion. The stanza concludes on a sarcastic note, belittling the meager accomplishment of Prime Minister Jamali, "apna mohallah azad karwaya", and rendering his leadership inconsequential.

Stanza 4 – Discursive Meaning

Discursively, this stanza presents Pakistan's recent political history as an absurd relay of incompetence, greed, and institutional ineptitude. It highlights the ridiculousness of how the nation's leaders come and go at a rapid pace, creating the illusion of leadership through 'public will'. But instead of 'public' will, it is also informed by things like backdoor deals, political maneuvering etc. The tone and diction are satirical and caustic. The quick listing of political leaders starting with Ghulam Ishaq Khan and ending with Musharraf, with all of the chaotic episodes of

inflation and crises evoke a cyclical constellation of sentiments based on inaction. The way the song represents the political history of Pakistan implies that change involves either the body or face, but ultimately the motives are still the same, namely, the pecking order of power for power's sake. The use of sarcasm shocks the audience's sensibilities everyday indignities of an impetuous political history, especially with the final line referencing Jamali "azad karwaya apna mohallah" was a ridiculous expounding of insignificance. It implies that political power in the country only furthers narrow interests as opposed to national development. Discursively, this passage flattens the concept of leadership into self-preservation and performativity while exposing how public narratives often mask a putrid baseness.

Stanza 4 – Social Meaning

Socially, this stanza depicts a picture of a society ensnared in cycles of political turmoil, economic distress, and institutional decay. Each event that occurs the demise of Zia-ul-Haq, rising inflation under the leadership of Ghulam Ishaq Khan, and the constant dismissal of elected governments by Musharraf suggests a greater structural fragility of the Pakistani state. The reality is the public's daily life appears to be dictated not by the course of governance, but by sudden political upheaval, economic mismanagement, and machinations of elites. The plight of the poor similarly illustrated in the stanza as recurrent aspects of public life, the inflation ("500 rs bori aate ka"), energy shortages, poor salary below living standards, and food crises have echoed through each of these stages for the poor, but noted as trivial or difficult to address and to alter priority given to leaders personal benefits (establishing power), or greater symbolic measure (nuclear testing) consciously ignoring these conditions. The levels of social frustration deepened when ridiculing figures like that of Jamali who were said to have done nothing to benefit, other than possibly benefit their locality. By highlighting this as a ridicule of leadership, reflects how the stature of public leadership loses credence and a semblance of public unity dissolves in front of narrow approaches of personal, regional, or institutional interests. The stanza implies a society that is, as it were, not socially whole, for every leadership trajectory offers yet a ceaseless disillusionment masked as a promise for progress.

Stanza 5:

Wassu

Shehzad Roy ne gaana banaya kisi ko samaj na aya

Angelina Jolie aya baba sab ko samaj aaya

Stanza 5 – Textual Meaning

The final stanza is ironic conclusion to the song. In the first few lines, it references that Shehzad Roy made this song ("gaana banaya"), but it was largely ignored or appreciated ("kisi ko samaj na aya"). As far as rhetorical considerations go, the lines have a very straightforward, direct, and uncomplicated meaning with very simple and straightforward vocabulary. There is a contrast of serious political commentary (Roy's song) and celebrity culture (Jolie's visit). The literal meaning suggests a public and media discourse that is skewed. There is a neglect altogether

the serious, impactful messages about their own country and be excited about the arrival of a foreign celebrity. The form of the stanza is short, conclusive, and sarcastic. It also references back to the title of the song and its message, and indicates that everyone is hidden away looking after their own interest, or personal issues, in doing so, ignoring all things important. While the form of meaning makes an ironic statement, the tone here is one of resignation and regret, and it closes the loop on the political history given in previous stanzas.

Stanza 5 – Discursive Meaning

Discursively, this stanza is a commentary on the same song in which it appears. Shehzad Roy acknowledges the futility of his critical, informative message when faced with spectacles in a superficial society. The line “Shehzad Roy ne gaana banaya, kisi ko samajh na aaya” implies his intent to provoke political awareness amongst audiences through art was of little or no consequence. This line illustrates a deeper cultural issue: the lack of criticality by the populace. In contrast to “Angelina Jolie aya, sab ko samajh aya”, Roy uses irony to say people care more about celebrity culture than civic or political culture. Interestingly, Jolie's name stands for glamour, Western attention, and media hype, and is treated as more significant and/or more credible than local figures speaking truths. In contrast, Roy's social commentary comes before a stark absurdity: a disjuncture between substance and superficiality. The song itself is self-aware, acknowledging, in its own way, that it won't have any impact or reach or penetrate the public consciousness whatsoever. In this stanza, the artist is both a commentator and cannot help but a frustrated member of the very system he criticizes as Roy concludes the concept of public examination is likely formed less through national concern and involves global media influencers and entertainment value. Therefore, despite the song's urgent and perceptive message, it gets lost in a culture that values glitter above reality.

Stanza 5 – Social Meaning

In a social sense, this stanza critiques public awareness in contemporary Pakistan. It shows the disjunction between substantive socio-political commentary and public attention. The difference between Roy's politically charged song and the excursions of a public figure like Angelina Jolie illustrates a public more interested in celebrity than substance. When Roy writes, "kisi ko samajh na aaya", he is not only lamenting a personal disappointment, but he is highlighting a pervasive social apathy, while the spectacle of an American celebrity's transitory trip engendered the kind of excitement that overlooks citizenship. Roy provides an indictment of an entertainment and celebrity addicted society, where public consciousness is not stimulated by issues of governance and the ensuring justice and accountability, but by spectacle and fame. The juxtaposition between civil awareness and celebrity culture also reveals a type of cultural inferiority complex that elevates terror by foreign actors in preference for local truths. Moreover, "kisi ko samajh na aaya" indicates public awareness is predicated on a selective social consciousness; unaware of its superficiality and distracted by triviality, social awareness is often dictated by emotional resonance or the novelty factor rather than the critical engagement associated with durable projects.

DISCUSSION & FINDINGS

"Apney Ulloo" by Shehzad Roy and Wassu functions as an incisive and multi-layered critique of the socio-political context of Pakistan. The song discusses many deep-rooted problems in Pakistan's political hypocrisy, systematic bribery and corruption, authoritarianism, and entrenched class-based discrimination. This is not a straightforward retelling of events from history, but once again a musical protest, highlighting decades of alienation and failed leadership.

Political hypocrisy is perhaps the clearest theme throughout the song. Political leaders are not presented as nobles' servants of the people, but rather as individuals continuously coming into power touted as champions of reform and social justice, however once in the political system they use it to improve their personal circumstances. The chorus "apna ulloo seedha karta hai," could not resonate better that every political leader using the entire system for their self-serving purposes. Once again, the most telling statement is the juxtaposition of when the quintessential image of the nation's founding might and virtue is invoked at the beginning of the song, versus what appears to be the basis point of all political realities; that there is a systemic gap between the ideals of the nation and that of the political characters and their conduct. Such notions of patriotism, democracy, and reform become the cultural phraseology of nations and individuals to warp perceptions of personal and systematic exploitation of an entire populace.

The depiction of societal corruption, both at the institutional and moral levels, is again not only presented as a manifestation of our structural politics, but as a respective feature of the politics. The swift ascents and rapid descents of the stable leadership, explicated as through some form of economic calamity, treasonous acts or manipulation are indicative of how corruption is more than an individual corruptibility; it is an issue embedded in state institutions. The question of political corruption is delivered in parody; systemic inflation, rigged elections, betrayal politics, are examples of parallels to new and re-invoked varieties of corruption embedded features of the system. In this respect, reform is nothing but raisin pudding in sodium pentothal; fledgling or even embryonic attempts by at reform are not just quickly extinguished; rather future governments can subsequently imbue much worse legislation to simply makes previous efforts impotent, even mockers.

The critique of authoritarian measures is also stark and unflinching. This demonstrates that there is no sense of democracy, only a non-denomination type of space that is not even a semblance of democracy, in which these generations of the un-exacting were happiness with authority, control and even manipulation of public institutions superseded for assimilation rather through credible self-legitimizing structures. This authority becomes the governing method that exists through national stability and even Islamization.

Finally, the song critiques class inequalities in terms of the policies affecting the common man through rising prices, gas shortages, high unemployment, and low wages. The singer appreciates the early socialist policies provided by Bhutto, only to have them reversed in short order via the elites. Jamali is mocked for freeing his own neighborhood, emphasizing that leadership means serving tribal or local loyalties

rather than national needs. The common man, laborers, farmers, and poor city dwellers are frequently sidelined, their needs merely slogans not policy. The juxtaposition between the nation's infatuation with Angelina Jolie and the artist's message being ignored more than ever illuminates the separation: public consciousness is created through spectacle, while real issues, are buried.

In conclusion, then, "Apney Ulloo" is not just a song; it is a scathing indictment of socio-political politics. In a humorous, rhythmic and razor sharp critique, it demands Pakistan confront that which is often ignored.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the current study investigates how Shehzad Roy's song "Apney Ulloo" functions as an ideological critique in Pakistani society. Examining how Shehzad Roy criticizes authoritarianism, social corruption, political hypocrisy, and class-based inequality in Pakistani society is the primary concern of this song. This study uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) as its research methodology, analyzing the lyrics utilizing Van Leeuwen's semiotic approach (2005), Berger's (1998) semiotic framework, and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (1992). The emphasis is on how the song examines the political narratives ascribed to the major political parties, highlights societal inequities, and considers the connections between authority, media, and power through an analysis of the lyrics and the satirical genre. Additionally, it looks at how the song spreads social awareness and adds to a broad conversation about how popular culture fosters ideological understanding.

REFERENCES

- Alek, A., Marzuki, A. G., Hidayat, D., & Sari, E. N. A. (2020). A Critical Discourse Analysis of song "Look What You Made Me Do" by Taylor Swift. *Eralingua Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Asing dan Sastra* 4(2):154 doi:10.26858/eralingua.v4i2.11199
- Aleshinskaya, E. (2013). Key Components of Musical Discourse Analysis. *Research in Language*. 11(4). Pp. 423-444. doi:10.2478/rela-2013-0007
- Arif, M., & Triyono, S. (2018). What lies beneath baby shark song?: A critical analysis on Korean society. *PAROLE: Journal of Linguistics and Education*, 7(1).
- Berger (1998). Checklist for Semiotic Analysis. http://www.sagepub.com/upmdata/5171_Berger
- Cross, I., & Woodruff, G. E. (2009). Music as a communicative medium. In R. Botha & C. Knight (Eds.), *The prehistory of language*. Oxford University Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London and New York: Longman
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London and New York: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. and Wodak, R. (1997) *Critical discourse analysis*. In T. A. van Dijk (ed.) *Introduction to Discourse Analysis*. Sage.
- Firmansyah, M. B. (2016). *Social and political values in Iwan Fals's song collections*.

- IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) 21(2). Pp. 97-101.
www.iosrjournals.org
- Igwebuike, E. & Eburuaja, C. (2020). Impoliteness Strategy in Falz“ Satirical Song ‘This Is Nigeria’. In: Applied Linguistics, Linguistic Variations and English Usage in the Nigerian Context: A Festschrift For Moses Alo. Ibadan University Press PLC. Pp. 335 – 346
- Inpaper Magazine, F. (2012, January 14). Owing apnay Ullo. DAWN.COM. <https://www.dawn.com/news/688303/spotlight-owning-apnay-ullo>
- Khalil, F. (2023). Warriors of Lyari: Karachi's Hip Hop Movement and its Impact on Society and Education. University of Washington. <https://www.proquest.com/openview/66fa43eb38dbdc0c60c5b54cbf6f8b42/1?q-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>
- Lee, Z. (2025). APT: The Intersection of Music, Culture, and Societal Resistance in a Globalized World. Open Journal of Economics and Commerce. 6(1). Pp. 1-11. doi: 10.22259/2638-549X.0601001
- Oseni, A. B. & Ishola, A. T., (2024). A Critical Discourse Analysis of Selected Songs of Folarin Falana (Falz) HP. Journal of African Resilience & Adv. Research. 3(2). Pp. 142-153. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/378857492_A_Critical_Discourse_Analysis_of_Selected_Songs_of_Folarin_Falana_Falz_HP
- Rasul, S. (2017). Recent trends in Pakistani protest songs: A Critical Discourse analysis of ‘Alu Anday.’ Kashmir Journal of Language Research. 20(1). Pp. 233-247. <https://kjlr.pk/index.php/kjlr/article/view/237>
- Razak, N. A. N. A., & Yunus, M. M. (2016). Using Action Songs in Teaching Action Words to Young ESL Learners. International Journal of Language Education and Applied Linguistics, 4
- Shin, J. K. (2017). Get up and sing! Get up and move! Using songs and movement with young learners of English. In English Teaching Forum. 55 (2). Pp. 14-25.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2005). Introducing Social Semiotics. New York: Routledge.