

Original Article

A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Newspaper Articles in the Pakistani Context

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses multiple modes used by two different newspapers in reporting the same news of the wedding ceremony of a daughter of one of the famous political leaders. The two news articles of the same event from two different online newspapers, namely *The News and The Express Tribune*, were analysed by looking into visual and verbal modes of communication. The news article of Bakhtawar Bhutto Zardari's Nikah Ceremony in two different newspapers was taken for data analysis. Articles were analysed by looking into their pictorial design that was complemented with text, narrative structure of broadcast article and core system of values/beliefs which contour each report. This frame structure demonstrates the in-depth affiliation between the varieties of language patterns, i.e. grammar and vocabulary and the societal and interactional aspects that strengthen these choices. This study is limited to articles from two newspapers reporting news of the daughter's wedding ceremony of a political leader. This research suggests that multiple modes used in text are really helpful in disseminating information with symbolic resources, which engages more readers with the newspaper.

Keywords: *Multimodal discourse, Multimodal discourse analysis, Newspaper articles, Wedding ceremony*

INTRODUCTION

The twenty first century has been marked as an emerging era for new domains. The multimodal representation from mono modal was also observed as social semiotic practice which was a distinct change in communication (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2020). Multimodality is a concept based on communication practices whether oral, written, visual or special (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2020, p. 20). It is applied in many modes of communication, as available in many social media platforms and print media. The modes may be in the form of images, layout or writing. All the different modes have meanings, drawn to make meanings more powerful and clearer. These modes are semiotic resources, which are helpful in social practice of communication. Semiotic resources can be artifacts, actions and material used for communication purpose. If it is raining is portrayed through an image, its idea will be conveyed through visual mode, so it is also a resource for communication.

Semiotic resources use multiple modes for communication purposes which need to be analysed with meaning and knowledge conveyed to audience. Multimodal texts and corpus need to be analysed with wide range of semiotic resources and skills so that its meaning and knowledge could be drawn through its practices, as if we have to analyse a film its every aspect like spoken, written, musical and visuals must be analysed in order to get its social meanings which may be conveyed to the audience. Aazam et al. (2020) added that cartoons were used to depict the whole scenario of Covid-19 for awareness purposes in Pakistani newspapers for audience so that they can prevent themselves from pandemic situation. She further outlined the importance of multimodal language to

convey a whole story through cartoons and images which are quite common in newspapers in Pakistan. The study suggested that sometimes political cartoons spread fear and can cause mental illness to the readers (Aazam et al., 2020).

In Pakistan, television talk shows and newspaper are widely followed by the people in order to get political and social news. Both resources are taken for granted, as these are the resources on which people beliefs are made upon. This study analytically explores two news articles talking the same episode how their language and societal and intellectual interpretations are used while being a portrait of the society and how they use facts and their comprehensive dogmas (Mahfouz, 2013; Reah, 2002). The communication of broadcasting is different from print but their functions are the same, as broadcasting is closer to audience in multiple ways. Broadcasting is a term that is used for the act of transmission of sound, images, videos or speech maybe through radio or TV. In broadcasting speech or talk is live communication so it is more comprehensible.

Webster and Ksiazek (2012) are in view that in broadcast discourse's chief significance is accomplished when the narrative and the audience occur in the similar cultural and dialectal domain. News Broadcasting is becoming gradually focused on appealing narratives and fascinating images, which is changing the way viewers, consume and comprehend news. This alteration has significant consequences for the way we value the integrity and truthfulness of the information we get (Montgomery, 2007). This study reflects the moral values that inform each news article, the underlying motives for the newspapers' editorial choices in the background of the story and how both newspapers are linguistically comprehended. It analyses the pictorial and text representations in

online news articles of Bakhtawar Bhutto Zardari's Nikah ceremony.

This study analysed different modes of communication used by newspapers for disseminating same news. The online newspapers are selected as these papers have been popular among online learners and young learners specially read through these newspapers for daily news. These newspapers are selected for data collection as they are relatively not analysed. The news selected for this research is a report on wedding ceremony of one of the widely renowned political couple names, Muhtarma Benazir Bhutto and Asif Ali Zardari.

Research Objective

The objectives of this study are following:

- To explore the grammar and vocabulary patterns of the article on Bakhtawar Bhutto Zardari's Nikah ceremony in Pakistan's online newspaper.
- To investigate the societal and interactional aspects symbolized with text in online news articles of Express Tribune and The News used in Bakhtawar Bhutto Zardari's Nikah ceremony.

Research Questions

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

- What are the grammar and vocabulary patterns of the article on Bakhtawar Bhutto Zardari's Nikah ceremony in Pakistan's online newspapers?
- How societal and interactional aspects are symbolized with text in online news articles of Express Tribune and the News used in Bakhtawar Bhutto Zardari's Nikah ceremony?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Snyder (2012) defines multimodal discourse analysis as interdependence and intersection of multiple modes of communication within an explicit situation. Painter and Hodges (2010) added that in no time, online newspapers have established important role in the negotiation of information. In Pakistan, now online newspapers have emerged as source of information for the young learners. For this reason, two online newspapers are taken for analysing multiple modes of communication. Aazam et al. (2020) investigated the language of fear used in Pakistani newspapers in Covid-19 through visual communication. For this cartoon were used to express a specific meaning behind pictorial features. The study revealed that these types of images broadcast mental sickness and fear among

the readers. Khalid and Ahmed (2014) revealed that advertisers use any semiotic resources in their ads to grab more customers. The study highlights that multiple modes of communication as pictures, images of local/international architectural signs and modes of living were portrayed using visual imagery to trap their consumers. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2020) consider the image as a social symbol which could be described and analysed by Halliday's social Multimodality is a concept based on communication practices whether oral, written, visual or special. It is basically use of many modes in communication, as we do in many platforms of social media and media. Therefore, when we talk about the multimodal representation from mono modal, it was also observed in twentieth century as social semiotic practices which was a distinct change (Van, 2015). Kress & Van Leeuwen (2020) added that there are two types of processes that link the visual participants, narrative and conceptual in discourse.

O'Toole (1994) also offered a "bottom-up" grammatical approach where he applied system function mode by Halliday for symbolic analysis of exhibition art, paintings and sculpture. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2020) proposed theory of multimodality which focuses on image and pictorial design and bottom-up contextual analysis method. Multimodal discourse analyses have been new vision in the field of discourse analysis for more than ten years. For this study Kress and Van Leeuwen's theoretical framework is used. This study has analysed different modes of communication used by newspapers for disseminating same news. The online newspapers are selected as these papers have been popular among online learners and young learners specially read through these newspapers for daily news. These newspapers are selected for data collection as they are relatively not analysed. The news selected for this research is a report on wedding ceremony of one of the widely renowned political couple names, Muhtarma Benazir Bhutto and Asif Ali Zardari.

Theoretical Framework

Multimodal discourse analysis disperses the study of language which is combined with other branches of acquaintance, such as, images, symbols, actions, gestures etc. These modes of communication are also stated as semiotic resources (O'Halloran, 2011). Nowadays newspaper, television, books and social media handles use different modes to represent meanings of the whole scenarios. Text and pictures are combined together to give contextual meanings. The word social semiotics was proposed by Halliday

(1978) for social semiotic theory. According to Halliday (1978), language and society needs to be explored as a unified concept because the way people interact with each other must be considered in a societal context. In his perspective language is considered to be semiotic systems that consist of culture. Further this theory was developed by Hodge and Kress (1988); their emphasis was on the usages of semiotic system in language as social practice. They further stated that social semiotic theory studies all types of human semiotic systems as they being social in condition and content (Hodge & Kress, 1988).

When we talk about communication several modes come in our mind, as we can say that in our daily communication via social platforms occur through different emojis, which is again visual modes used in communications, even though this communication took place easily but its idea is clearer and comprehensible. The multimodality model suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2020) was based on Halliday's theory of meta functions which proposes that language performs different functions such as ideational, textual and interpersonal. The function of language as ideational is talks about ones' experiences, people and events occurred or observed. Language used as textual is link multifaceted notions in a systematized way to convey the knowledge and language as an interpersonal is endorse social relationships. This theory was further extended by Kress & Van Leeuwen with visual social semiotics resources to highlight the multiple modes of language (Stoian, 2015). The relation between image and written text is analysed using multimodal analysis. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2020) added that multimodal analysis is the analysis of different semantic codes used in communication purpose.

Kress and van Leeuwen's model of multimodal discourse used as the theoretical framework of the study to analyse the multimodal representation in Pakistani print media (online newspaper). They have given the concept of multimodal discourse and constructed visual grammar method. The concept of modality into image and its focus on meaning along with pictures, colour, layout and grammar is further extended by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2020). The concept of modality in relation with media is initially made by them. Many forms of multimodal discourse can be seen in TV commercials, magazines, newspaper and in television scenes with pictures and sounds. In this research Kress and Van Leeuwen's model was used for discourse analysis of Newspapers. Addressees relate with news texts on diverse spans.

METHODOLOGY

Two renowned newspapers of Pakistani's print media have been chosen for the analysis namely; *the Express Tribune and the News*. An article from each newspaper which reported the same event i.e. the Nikah ceremony of Bakhtawar Bhutto Zardari (daughter of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed) and Ex-president Asif Ali Zardari are analysed in detail. The first article "Bakhtawar Bhutto-Zardari ties the knot with Mahmood Chaudhry" is from *the News* dated 30 January 2021 whereas the second article entitled "Bakhtawar Bhutto's Nikah ceremony" is from Express Tribune online newspaper, aired on the same date.

Both articles were analysed using content analysis for its language, grammatical and lexical aspects looking into its visual aspects. How pictorial visual aspects are accompanied with the text to convey meanings to the news. Visual or pictorial aspects express ideas, information visually. In newspapers especially pictorial representation is accompanied with the text to show the audience/ readers information with both the modes of communication. Therefore, some news standards can be selected in order to frame and spread beliefs and to create norms that endure unimpeded by its audience (Caple et al., 2020).

Data Analysis

Kress and van Leeuwen's model of multimodal discourse was applied in analysing the multimodal representation in both articles. The data is analysed at verbal and visual representation of the event; how graphic designing and text were used in conveying the news that drives the attention of the readers. This study is qualitative in nature, because this study suggests the subterranean understanding into the movements of how visual aspects are accompanied with the grammatical and lexical aspects to convey news to the audiences.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

Grammar and Vocabulary

Joye (2018) added that there is no specific audience of newspapers in terms of gender, class, age, profession, political partisanship and region. Hence newspaper publishers follow a common pattern in the selection of lexical and grammatical aspects to fascinate and enforce the readership.

Headings and the Leads

In both newspapers, headlines are used distinctively

implementing melodramatic and rationalist points through their particular captions. Headlines used in both newspapers are catching reader’s attention and is used in simple commonality language. The News’s headline begins with the bride’s name ‘Bakhtawar

Bhutto Zardari ties the knot with Mahmood Chaudhry’ and proceeds to uses persuasive writing to engage readers’ attention. This statement is basically considered to be formal writing which is used for the journalisms. As in shown in picture below:



Photograph. 1. Headlines from The News online Newspaper

Heading is conveyed through the ancient phrases of medieval era using ‘ties the knots’ instead of wedding ceremony. This statement is used for the wedding announcement as well as evokes the feeling of joy and happiness. However, it also indicates a sense of occasion in celebrity contexts. While in the Express

Tribune news article heading is started with name of bride in a very simple language ‘Bakhtawar Bhutto’s Nikah ceremony’. This is also a mix of reporting as well as celebrity coverage where English is infused with the local touch as ‘Nikah’ is mentioned to encumbrance readers’ attention.



Photograph. 2. Headlines from The Express Tribune Online Newspaper

In both newspapers, the words were chosen authorized and formal which otherwise would be taken by audience as influential and authoritative. The wedding news displayed by both newspapers was meticulous and comprehensive covering every moment with the appropriate vocabulary that makes it more striking to the viewers. The lead goes on the news newspaper as it orients the audience with fulfilling the expectations that what follows in the news which is of audience’s interest. The lead goes

on to mention the wedding news and amusing reader with detail information of bride and groom. These spectacles a sense of sureness in an attitude that creates the warp of the token of the article. The Express Tribune newspaper is widely read in the Pakistan and it’s impactful. Especially the young learners read this newspaper daily in order to get the knowledge about current affairs and to improve English. The news and the Express Tribune are recommended for reading by the Pakistani audience including male and female both.

Table 1

Comparing the headlines in both articles

	The News	The Express Tribune
Title of headline	Use of an idiom “tie the knot”	Simple language
Pictorial representation	Picture of groom was shown	Picture of Bride and Groom was shown

Representation

By looking into both the articles addressing same news event, there is divergence in the ways of the author's linguistic representation. The wedding event is stated in a different way by the two articles looking into its minute detail and word usage. *The News* reports the wedding event with the detail of bride and groom and by giving their political backgrounds. It also discusses the venue, guests and the Nikah rituals and customs followed by. It also discusses the social handles messages share by political leaders on the occasion of Nikah ceremony. On the other hand, in the *Express Tribune* reported every detail of the bride, reporting her outfit detail, makeup and décor of the venue. This indicates that the *Express Tribune* has collected all the information about event (Nikah ceremony), wedding planner, outfit, its colour and other preparations.

As claimed by Feng (2020) and Bell (2012) that foregrounding such evidences impressively enriches the pragmatic statements of the story, with its reliability and worth as news. The use of vocabulary describing the event in both the articles is quite different too. The articles have pre-modifying of nouns and phrases in general which displays spiralling impact of Nikah event produced by both the editors.

The Use of Vocabulary by The *Express Tribune*:

Bakhtawar, the eldest daughter of the late Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and Asif Ali Zardari, married son of a US-based businessman named Mahmood Choudhry in a daytime ceremony at Bilawal House in Karachi on Friday.

In a shimmering gold speckle ensemble, Bakhtawar looked like a real-life princess.

The embellished champagne floor length lehenga was complimented by a stone-coloured clutch, diamond and emerald jewellery and sleek hair. It was a Wardah Saleem ensemble, which the youngster chose with the motive of helping fellow Sindhi Saleem's fashion brand.

High-end event planners from Lahore had arranged a Sheesh Mahal-like set up that they are known for. Ayra Events' theme incorporated tradition into the big event by adding Sindhi woodwork benches complimented by a rilli quilt, where the groom can be seen seated on in his ivory sherwani and a flower veil.

The use of Vocabulary by The *News*:

It was a traditional affair at the wedding of Bakhtawar Bhutto with the UAE-based businessman Mahmood Choudhry, pictures of the event shared on social media showed.

Bakhtwar was wearing a beige and gold embellished traditional dress with subtle touch of contemporary.

She also held on to a contrasting clutch (purse) with gold work too.

The Rukhsati was traditionally set with Bilawal holding Holy Quran over his sister. It was a blend of tradition and ritual. The ceremony was an intimate friends and family affair.

In the *Express Tribune*, the event was described in detail with pre modifying nouns and phrases in particular. However, in *The News* newspaper, specific information was given like bride, it's noting of outfit, grooms' info and social media handle tweets about the occasion. Articles were talking about similar event yet they preferred diverse lexis to empower and influence readers with the detailing.

Social Actors and Quotation

The viewpoints of social actors and quotations are considered as lending credence in news world (Castello, 2013; Vasu et al., 2018). Bednarek (2016) stated that reporters report only information and views that are significant for the readers. Hence the voices and quotations which can be interpreted more powerful for readers are transformed in the newspapers. The practice of communal actors and direct or indirect quotations are considered as means of offering authority to the words of a newsmaker (Teo, 2000). An already supported view can be established and manipulated with the opinions aired in the newspapers. The style of *The Express Tribune* newspaper was declarative in terms of describing the event and traditions as it quoted many of the findings without reported speech verbs without quoting in direct speech they quoted wishes in indirect form also. This style of using direct quotations is considered as 'Dramatization of expression' as discussed by Castello (2013). The authors stated that credited speaker quotation can be widely used to make thoughts that can be hard to challenge. In this article produced by the *Express Tribune*, one of the dramatizations of expression is shared below:

Her brother, PPP chairperson Bilawal, shared some pictures and a sweet message for his newly-wedded sister on Instagram. "Happiest moment in many years to see my sister Bakhtawar getting married. Felt like our mother was watching over us in this moment of joy. Wishing them both all the best of for their new life together," he wrote.

The *Express Tribune* quoted direct speeches and share on news article, as it shows sense of authenticity for the readers. Another direct quotation from Instagram

available in the Express Tribune is presented below:

Aseefa, the youngest Bhutto sibling, also wished the couple “a lifetime of happiness and joy” on their new journey. “I love you, my dear sister. I wish you a happy married life,” she wrote.

The utterance “said” is the illocutionary verb, providing the exact words of the bride’s sibling. Not only that, the exact data of venue, guests, wedding planner and minute details of the event provide validity to the statements. The News’ article was more concerned with social actors and quotation from the event; it employs information in simple language and covers precise information. The wedding event was generously covered via the beautiful wedding photos and indicating the details without making it specific in terms of wedding planner, outfits and tweets made on wedding. Somehow The News newspaper editor also used direct speech narrative by adding the names of the guests and adding Instagram post of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari as given by the Express Tribune.

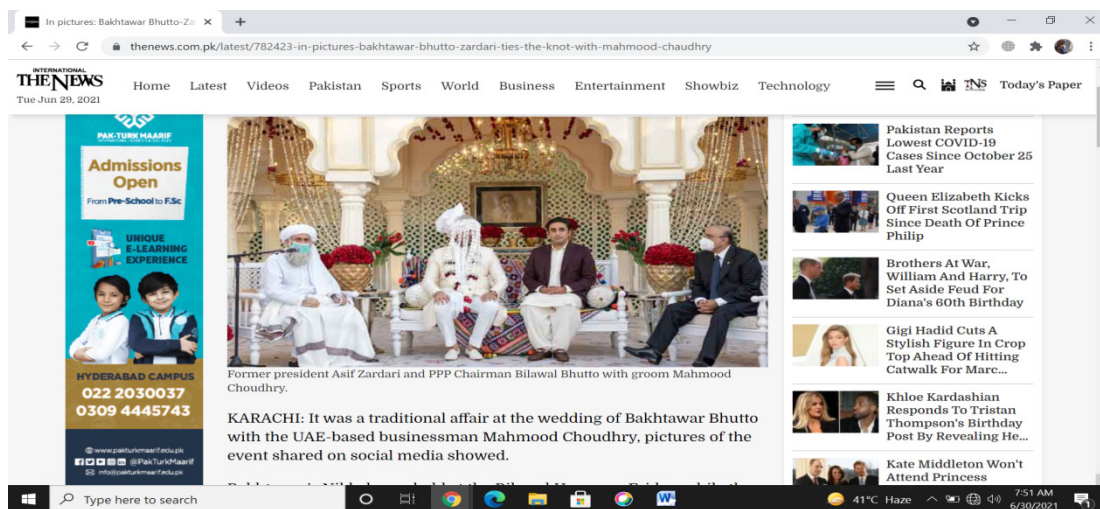
Some of the noteworthy participants of the event included Aunts Sanam Bhutto, Faryal Talpur, Dr Asim Hussain, Anwer Majeed, Sherry Rehman,

Shazia Marri. The dinner comprised delectable and aromatic Chicken Tikka, succulent Malai Boti, smoky Dhaga Kebab, intense and spicy Kata kat, and other tantalizing items. Bilawal Bhutto and Aseefa Bhutto received the guests.

On the contrary, the article in The News did not provide specific details such as the name of the wedding planner, the designer of the wedding and other specific details associated with the event. They provided information regarding bride and groom outfit ideas and discussed tweets and Instagram posts made by siblings of bride.

Multimodal Discourse

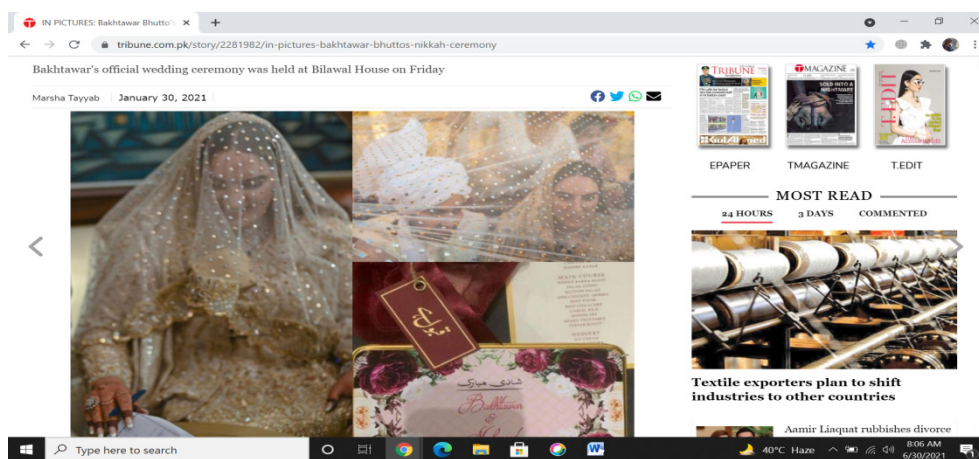
Texts cannot be investigated without taking into consideration the blend of semiotic resources such as modes; layout, images text and other modes (Caldas & Coulthard, 1995). The article in The News highlighted four photos accompanied by the text. The first photo captured the groom, Nikah Khuwan, Former President Asif Ali Zardari (the bride’s father) and Bilawal Bhutto (the bride’s brother) on the stage where the Nikah was solemnized.



Photograph. 3. Former President Asif Ali Zardari and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto with Groom Mahmood Choudhry

The second photograph the bride signing the Nikah document whereas the third photograph shows the bride’s brother holding the Holy Quran over his sister. This act is known as Rukhsati, a traditional performance to wedding event at Pakistan in Islamic religion. The final photograph pictures the bride and the groom with a rasm of Moun Dikhai, which symbolizes that blend

of ritual and traditions in the wedding event. In the Express Tribune, photos were shown side by side with the text, showing the Rasms and event with visual and verbal mode. Four photographs accompanied the text. The first image of the bride and the groom is shown below:



Photograph. 4. Bride Bakhtawar Bhutto Zardari with Groom Mahmood Choudhry

The second image showed the wedding outfit of the bride. Further explanations were also given about the detailing of outfit, its design as well as the designer. The third photograph was about the detailing of the bride's makeup and last photograph was of the bride's brother and father sitting with the groom, where the décor of the event was discussed. Both articles applied the multimodal modes, visual and verbal. Four pictures of the event were highlighted along with text in discussing the theme and presenting readers with explicit account of the event. Both articles use the visual mode to establish their focus and illustrated the wedding event with eye-catching pictures and details.

Discussion

This study analysed the use of multimodality in newspapers and social and interactional aspects with grammar and vocabulary used by the authors. As multimodality is latest trend in the field of linguistics and rarely explored here in Pakistan. Here the newspapers are mostly read in print forms but there is now growing trend among youths for online newspapers readings. For these two newspapers were analysed using Kress and van Leeuwen's model of multimodal discourse (1996, 2001). The amalgam of information with pictures of the Nikah event was highlighted in both the articles of The News and The Express Tribune. Both the newspapers used melodramatic and rationalist approach in the headings and leads.

The News conveyed lead into ancient phrase "ties the knots" instead of wedding ceremony to show it more attractive to the audience while the Express Tribune presented lead in the simple straightforward language. Two of these newspapers displayed news comprehensively and meticulous covering every detail that mesmerize the viewers. The representation of wedding event and its details was exemplified differently in terms of style and linguistic representation

in both the newspapers, such as *the Express Tribune*, conveyed the event in detail with pre modifying nouns and phrases. Khalid and Ahmed (2014) added that readers may be specific in reading news with aura of objectivity; this shows how news content can serve interest of the audience with visual and verbal news. News article serves as a social vehicle aimed to be fulfilling different purposes and appealing audience of every age, gender, class and profession.

CONCLUSION

The divergence between the discourses shows the choices made by authors depending on the level of using multiple modes to influence and authorize the text. Both the authors used modifiers, adjective phrases and pre-modifiers of noun to convey the occasion. Images were accompanied with text shows detailing that were discussed about the event, guests, décor, traditions and rituals practiced at the event. The News and The Express Tribune newspapers use the pictorial mode to create their emphasis and illustrated the wedding event with noticeable photographs and details. As far as details are concerned The Express Tribune reported details of the event such as event planner, dress designers, décor and backgrounds information about bride and groom. This shows that The Express Tribune newspaper collected every piece of information to deliver to the readers following diverse modes to show news article more impressive.

Competing Interest

The authors had no competing interests.

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