

Grammatical Analysis of Pakistani Online Newspapers' Representation: Comparison through Transitivity Analysis

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify ideological bias behind two newspapers' representation of the official visit to the US of former Prime Minister Imran Khan (21st to 24th July 2019), a visit which aimed to revive bilateral relations between the US and Pakistan. Data was collected from a mainstream newspaper, *The News*, and from an alternative one, *Dawn*. 11,734 words from eleven (11) news reports were analyzed in terms of transitivity (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014) to interrogate the 'context of culture' and the 'context of situation' (Fairclough, 1995). The analysis of the data revealed that Imran Khan was chosen as a 'doer' in the 'Sayer' role under the 'Verbiage' participant role (van Leeuwen, 2005). *Dawn* portrayed Khan as the actor 53% of the time, while *The News* did so 44 % of the time, which can be said to communicate the newspapers' ideological perspectives.

Keywords: Online Hard News, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Semiotic Analysis, Transitivity Analysis

Resumen

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo identificar el sesgo ideológico detrás de la representación de dos periódicos de la visita oficial a los EE. UU. del ex primer ministro Imran Khan (del 21 al 24 de julio de 2019), una visita que tenía como objetivo reactivar las relaciones bilaterales entre EE. UU. y Pakistán. Los datos se recopilaron de un periódico principal, *The News*, y de uno alternativo, *Dawn*. Se analizaron 11.734 palabras de once (11) noticias en términos de transitividad (Halliday y Matthiessen, 2014) para interrogar el "contexto de la cultura" y el "contexto de la situación" (Fairclough, 1995). El análisis de los datos reveló que Imran Khan fue elegido como 'hacedor' en el rol de 'Sayer' bajo el rol de participante de 'Verbiage' (van Leeuwen, 2005). *Dawn* interpretó a Khan como actor el 53 % de las veces, mientras que *The News* lo hizo el 44 % de las veces, lo que puede decirse que comunica las perspectivas ideológicas de los periódicos.

Palabras clave: Online Hard News, Análisis Crítico del Discurso (CDA), Lingüística Funcional Sistémica (SFL), Análisis Semiótico, Análisis de Transitividad.

Introduction

This article presents the grammatical analysis of the textual media representation of the official visit of Imran Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan, to the United States of America (USA) in 2019. Due to its important strategic positioning in South Asia, Pakistan has always tried to keep a friendly bilateral relationship with the USA. Therefore, the official visits of both heads of State are always a media coverage priority. The coverage of sensitive issues has always been under censorship, but despite various restrictions imposed by the ruling governments, especially in issues concerning Pakistan's national security, the judiciary and the armed forces, Pakistan's press has always been a powerful force. In this study, the Pakistani alternative newspaper *Dawn* and the mainstream newspaper *The News* were textually analyzed to determine the inclination or ideology of each newspaper as shown in the news coverage of this visit.

Dawn has always been openly liberal. It belongs to Herald Publication, a private media company. *Dawn* is famous for its representation of controversial and leftist social agendas (Malik & Iqbal, 2011). An example of this positioning is the publication of stories like 'For Nawaz, it's not over till it's over' (Almeida, 2018). In this interview, deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's statements are quoted verbatim, although he accuses Pakistan of being involved in the terrorist attack on India in 2008. This was indeed a sensitive issue and his words were quoted uncensored.

On the other hand, *The News* is publicly famous for aligning with centre-right and liberal conservative Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), allied to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (*Pakistan Movement for Justice*, PTI), a "third way" party founded in 1996 and chaired since then by Imran Khan. *The News* always played a complicated social role. For example, it leaned towards the *Lawyers' Movement* in 2007-2009 and showed resistance against the military government under the leadership of General Pervez Musharraf, as well as support towards PML-N. It belongs to the largest publishing company in the country, Jang Publications, established in 1991 with a huge readership of 140,000 copies per day. It has been contended that *The News* received many paid advertisements to speak in favor of PML-N (Ahmed, 2012).

The coverage of Imran Khan's three-day visit to the US was grammatically analyzed to interrogate the ideological positioning of both newspapers, bearing in mind their decisions in the past. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was employed as a theoretical framework. CDA sees language use as a social practice—and therefore as attached to a specific context of history—and analyzes how current social relations are contested or reproduced and how different social interests in society are served (Janks, 1997).

Nowadays, media organizations act as 'political actors' speaking up through their persuasive actions (Page, 1996). As the media has a vital political role in disseminating information, discourse representations in media texts show the process of ideology construction in an existing culture (Fairclough, 1995). Online newspapers have affected the whole structure of the media environment, and their popularity reflects the demand for new media services (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013). Online news reports have added a socio-technical element to the sociocultural perspective in journalism studies, revealing new insights into human, text, organization, and audience relationships (Lewis & Westlund, 2015).

Online newspapers have emerged as an interactive source (Ksiazek, 2016) and are shaped not so much by the Internet but by institutional norms (Jóhannsdóttir, 2018). Studying the emerging online newspapers in their existing political culture and their different renderings of the same news or of the same issue may give us an insight into the reasons for different representations. Textual analysis through the process of 'transitivity' is one of the means to discover the ideology of news institutions.

In this regard, Asad et al. (2019) studied online hard news by employing CDA & SFL theoretical and analytical frameworks. Their findings suggest the alternative newspaper *Dawn* had an uncensored, liberal, democratic voice, while *The News*, as a mainstream newspaper, was more

inclined towards its existing political private interest. Rizwan (2019) studied Pakistani social media discussions through SFL and CDA and found that legitimation strategies were interpersonally charged through lexicogrammatical choices which embodied people's theistic integrated worldviews. Noor (2017) studied hard news from online newspapers using this same framework. The study, which centered on articles about Malaysian graduate employability, showed, among other findings, that mainstream newspapers used direct quotes with the government's representations instead of the voice of the newspaper alone, compared to the alternative newspaper, which showed their liberal stances through the journalists' voices.

Research over five years (2015-2019) has found that the Internet is linked to the process of democratization of news production and distribution (Heer et al., 2019). A decline has been seen in the hard copy readership of newspapers in recent years in Pakistan. The online space has generated an avenue for growth to reach new audiences (Yousuf, 2013). However, pressure groups use various tactics to influence the press –such as the placing of paid ads–, a practice which continues to influence journalists in the provision of independent commentary (Jan et al., 2013). The media treatment of candidates, political parties, campaigns, and views has generally been politically biased in Pakistan. Even after General Pervez Musharraf's repressive measures were lifted following the 2008 election, much of the media was still being pressured by military and political factions –and the Internet was also under this move (“Pakistan-Media and Telecoms Landscape Guide”, 2012). In addition, Article 19 of Pakistan's Constitution –on Freedom of Expression– states that every citizen of Pakistan has a right to free speech and expression, and that this right can only be abrogated in the interest of security, relations, Islam, and defense, through reasonable and fair restrictions imposed by the law of Pakistan (Constitution of Pakistan, 1973).

The review of the literature indicates that there is no research on Imran Khan's maiden visit to the US after taking oath as Prime Minister, nor were the reports on the three days of the official visit analyzed by employing CDA transitivity and socio-semiotic analysis on news reports. The current study is bridging a gap by analyzing the first visit of Imran Khan to the US, considered crucial from a geopolitical point of view. Additionally, this study shows the ideological representation of newspapers by considering this important visit from political and strategic points of view. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), specifically the 'Transitivity analysis' tool proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), was employed to analyze the corpus in terms of processes, participant roles, and circumstances. The leading social actor 'Imran Khan' was additionally analyzed following van Leeuwen's categories of activation and passivation under the socio-semiotic framework (2005) to determine the role given to the social actor in the newspapers. The corpus was built with 'hard news', i.e. with news based on 'neutral' and 'facts' reporting, texts which follow the 'inverted pyramid' in which the most critical information comes from the top position (Thomson et al., 2008). According to Santosa (2009), hard news is straight news, categorized into facts, based on actions, and quoted news.

The study aimed to determine the different linguistic stances between alternative and mainstream online newspapers (*Dawn* and *The News*) of Pakistan on Prime Minister Imran Khan's maiden visit to the United States of America. Secondly, it is also aimed to analyze the rendering of the same event by the two Pakistani newspapers to find “hidden” meanings and the linguistic choices which highlight the participant's role and ideology of both newspapers via Transitivity analysis. The study can open further dimensions for future studies which may opt for the same theoretical and analytical framework for the analysis of 'hard news'.

Background of the Study

Imran Khan became the 22nd Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on 18th August, 2018 representing Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) political party. The party's main agenda was to eradicate corruption and stabilize the falling economy of the country, which were the main immediate issues required to be addressed. After becoming head of government, Imran Khan visited 9 countries within the first year of government by going on a total of 14 official trips; Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Qatar,

Turkey, China (2 visits), Saudi Arabia (2 visits), United Arab Emirates (2 visits) and to the United States of America (US) in July 2019.

Pakistan has always had a keen interest in bilateral relations with the US, as it is the second-largest supplier to Pakistan of military equipment after China and the largest donor to Pakistan of foreign assistance. Moreover, Pakistan also has a particularly strategic position in the interest of the US in Central and South Asia. In this regard, Prime Minister Imran Khan visited the US for three days from the 21st until the 23rd of July, 2019.

During his three-day official visit, he addressed Pakistani Americans, gave interviews, met businessmen, met former President Trump and his cabinet members, and discussed the opportunities for economic development back in the country, as the US is a significant source of foreign investment and the largest export market in Pakistan (BBC News, 2019). 'Dawn' (Kugelman, 2019) stated that the Prime Minister's visit to the US was perceived as a strategic success.

This visit was a push for amending the relations between the two countries which the conflict in Afghanistan had strained in terms of a common border with Pakistan. Former President Trump reduced the aid to Pakistan early in 2018 by accusing Pakistan of not working that much in the war against terror, lying and deceiving, and helping militants (BBC News, 2019). In an interview with 'Fox News Sunday', former President Trump defended his decision to withdraw aid to Pakistan of hundreds of millions of dollars by accusing Pakistan of not doing anything for America (Masood, 2018).

Imran Khan always denied all false accusations against Pakistan and stressed the need for a relationship of mutual respect. In his defense statement, he stated that Pakistan suffered 75,000 casualties and experienced more than \$123 billion in economic losses compared to the US' \$20 billion aid (Masood, 2018). It is seen that the relations between the United States and Pakistan were cordial from September 11, 2001, until 2008, in the era of Pakistan's military ruler General Pervez Musharraf. However, the relationship worsened in 2011 when Americans raided Osama Bin Laden's (Al-Qaeda's leader) compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan. Moreover, the US invasion of Afghanistan with its allies i.e. British forces and many Afghan fighters from a group known as 'Northern Alliance' started after the 9/11 attack late in 2001. War aimed to dismantle Al-Qaeda and bring back a democratic government by removing the Taliban power, in the country since 1996.

On the issue of Afghanistan, Imran Khan believed that Pakistan continued to provide US-free ground lines and air communication, and that no other ally had made so many sacrifices until then (Masood, 2018). On the other hand, Pakistan's front-line position in the war against terror after the 9/11 attack raised serious questions about the foreign policy regarding Afghanistan, as Pakistan had a massive loss in the war on behalf of the US administration (Akhtar, 2008). US presence in Afghanistan until August 2021 was known as *Operation Enduring Freedom* and it was said to help Afghanistan to gain stability. However, Afghanistan struggled to revive its economy under the new governments of Hamid Karzai (2002-2004), and Ashraf Ghani (2014-2021). In this regard, the visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan ignited the hope of reviving the relations between the two countries. By looking at the past political relations between Pakistan and the US, Pakistan's foreign office stated that Mr. Khan's visit would help renew and reinvigorate the long-standing ties between both nations (BBC News, 2019).

The contextualization discussed above highlights the importance of the visit to mend bilateral ties by looking at the past relations between the US and Pakistan. Such contextualization is a necessary step before the textual analysis of the representation of the visit in the media.

Theoretical Framework - Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis examines ideologies and power relations in discourse. A Dialectical Relational Approach (DRA) to CDA establishes a link between language, ideology, and power, and examines ideologies and power relations in discourse to show the relationship among discursive events and social structure (Wodak, 2006).

According to Foucault's (1980) concept of power, humanity resists force to achieve power. Struggling for power, according to Foucault, includes: struggling against the producing subjects, resisting the dividing practices, and self-subjectivizing (Daldal, 2014). Norman Fairclough's (1995) CDA framework was employed in this study. Fairclough (1995) stated that CDA is a textual-orientated theory that concerns text production and descriptions grammatically by viewing language as a social semiotic through incorporating the relationship between the texts and existing social structures.

Socio-Semiotic Framework - van Leeuwen (2005)

The researchers employ *social actor* as an analytical category of discourse. Social actors are models of textual instantiations of particular roles. The social actor in the present study is 'Imran Khan', then Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. According to van Leeuwen's (2005) socio-semiotic approach, the social actor can be *included* or *excluded*; the role of the actor can be *rearranged*; it can be used as a *substitution* or *be substituted*. In this regard, the roles played by Imran Khan as a social actor in news reports were classified based on their 'activation' (active doer) and 'passivation' (beneficiary) characteristics.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

Michael Halliday introduced Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) in 1978. SFL is an effective analytical tool for differentiating each word in a clause lexically and grammatically. The combination of SFL with CDA is employed in the work of Kress, Hodge, and Trew (1979), van Dijk (1985), Wodak (1989), Fairclough (1989), and Fowler (1996) in the early years of its introduction. Several works explore the connection between SFL and CDA, such as Martin (2000) and Young & Harrison (2004); Halliday & Matthiessen (2004, 2014); Eggins & Unsworth (2004); van Leeuwen (2005), Halliday & Greeves (2007), and Martin & Rose (2007).

SFL is a functional textual explanation based on the context's social-semiotic interpretation of meanings (Halliday, 1999). Thompson (1999) stated about SFL that the primary concern of text analysis is explaining the textual relation between the lexico-grammar and its context. SFL focuses on the clausal level by attending to the grammar structure in a clause. Text analysis occurs in four ways in SFL i.e. context, semantics, lexico-grammar, and phonology. The context of language is further categorized into two parts i.e. the *context of culture* and the *context of situation*. The situation type is further characterized by *field*, *tenor*, and *mode* (Figure 2). In 'Field,' a situation for text creation emerges; 'Tenor' describes the role of language in socio-semiotic activity whereas 'Mode' identifies the role of language in a situation (Matthiessen & Halliday, 2014). Language performs three meta-functions in context as proposed by Halliday i.e.

- Interpersonal functions enact patterns of social relations – tenor.
- Textual functions enact ideation and interpersonal functions - mode.
- Ideational functions serve the social construction patterns of the activity – field.

Transitivity Analysis – Ideational Function of Language

The present study employed the lexicogrammar stratum under the *ideational language function*. In this function, lexicogrammar describes the process of continuity between lexis and grammar, which are two different poles of a single continuum representing systems of the same features. Thus, in order to study ideational functions text analysis will concentrate on a *clause*. The clause is known as a representation of experience, and *transitivity* constitutes a resource for construing our experience in terms of configurations of a *process*, *participants* and *circumstances*. According to Eggins (2004), then, the semantic clause representation is analyzed in the following terms (Figure 1):

- Participants (the roles can be: goal, actor, verbiage, scope, sensor, sayer, addressee, etc.) - nominal group
- Processes (material, mental, verbal, behavioral, relational, and existential) - verbal group
- Circumstances (manner, location, place, etc.) – adverbial group or prepositional phrase

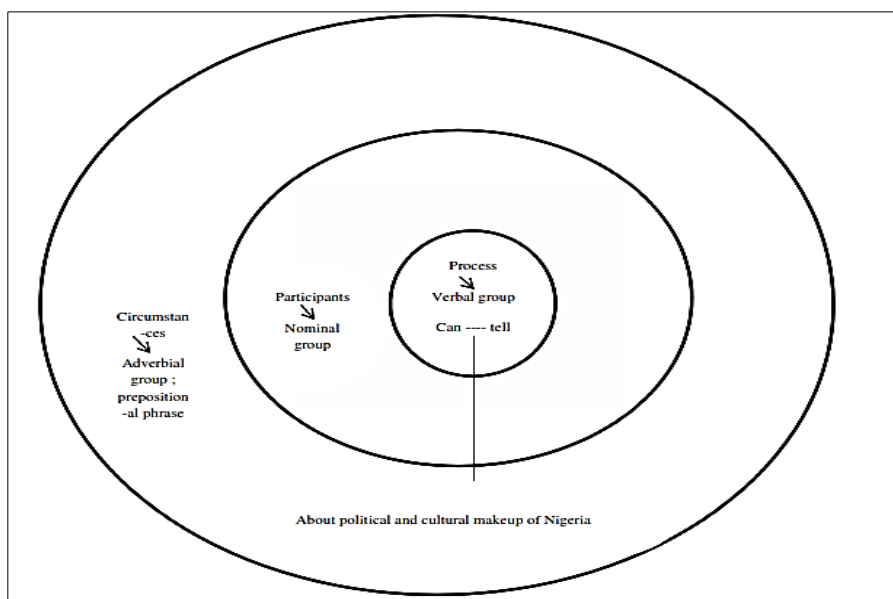


Figure 1: Clause as representation (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p.222)

The role of an actor is associated with different processes in the area of transitivity, i.e. material, verbal, relational, mental, behavioural, and existential (Figure 2).

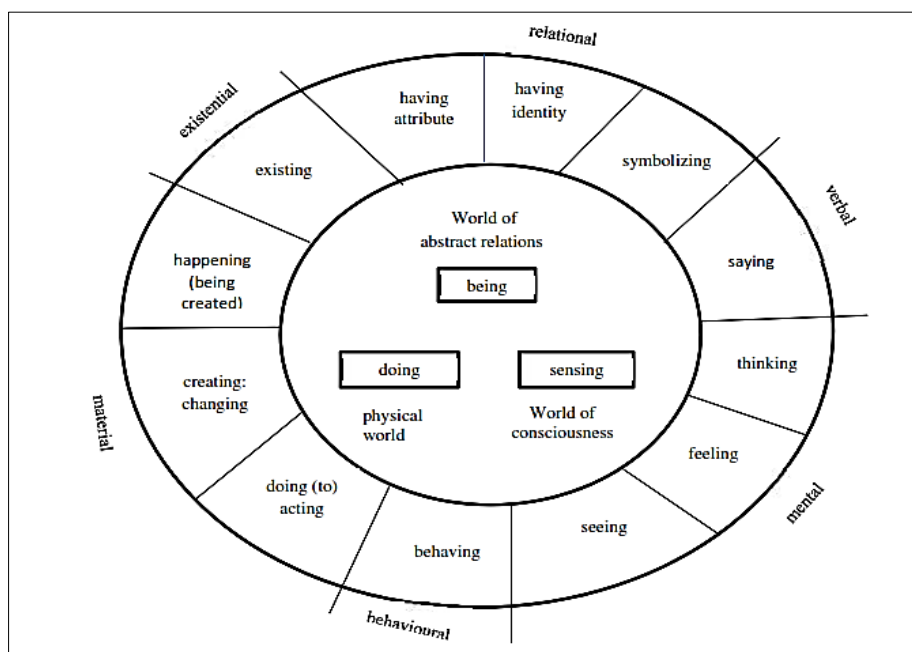


Figure 2: The process types in Transitivity (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 216)

Material clauses construe a change in the event by the ‘action’ of a participant – the Actor (Matthiessen & Halliday, 2014). The other roles of an ‘Actor’ in this process can be *Scope*, *Client*, *Recipient*, and *Attribute*. However, the *verbal process* construes the dialogic passages as a *Sayer* (Matthiessen & Halliday, 2014). The verbal process is categorized into three functions of participants i.e. *receiver*, *verbiage*, and *target*. The *receiver* is the person who receives the message, *verbiage* is what has been said by the actor, and *target* refers to the purpose of communication. In the case of the *mental clause*, it construes a change in the event of our consciousness (Matthiessen & Halliday, 2014). The roles associated with the mental process are *sensor* and *phenomena*.

Whereas in *relational clauses* ‘be’ and ‘have’ perform as main verbs with words of sensing that construe change in a clause (Matthiessen & Halliday, 2014), the relational clause structure can be

either *Possessor/Token/Identified* or *Attribute/Value/Identifier*. It can either be *attributive* or *identifying*. *Behavioral clauses* change the participant’s behavior (Matthiessen & Halliday, 2014). In the *existent process*, the *Theme* is the primary feature of the text, which gives information about its existence (Matthiessen & Halliday, 2014).

Methodology

The study opted for a qualitative and quantitative research method to explain the participant’s role. In the qualitative method, detailed access is given to the mechanism of textual analysis by which the social contradictions that evolve in it are lived out, whereas quantitative method emphasized objective participation in per centages (Fairclough, 1995). The newspapers’ data selected because the usage of words in a context depicts the meaning and ideology of news institutions, stated Anam and Nirmala (2019).

For analyzing the ideology behind the reporting of the same news in *Dawn* online edition (alternative newspaper) and in *The News* (mainstream newspaper), Norman Fairclough’s (1995) theory of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was employed together with Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) analytical tools by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). Van Leeuwen’s approach (2005) to social semiotics was employed to analyze the performance of the social actor in the news reports.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

The three-day visit (21st-23th July, 2019) to the US of the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, was the primary concern for the data collection. *Dawn* and *The News* news reports from 21st to 24th July, 2019 where Imran Khan was a *doer* (van Leeuwen 2005) were selected. They amounted to 11 news reports, comprising 11,734 words in total. Five (5) news reports (5,704 words) were chosen from *Dawn* and six (6) were taken from *The News* (6,030 words).

Manually downloaded news reports from the newspapers’ websites pasted onto a Word file. In the second stage of analysis, the data was pasted again onto an Excel spreadsheet in the form of clauses and analyzed in terms of *transitivity*. The clauses were categorized into six *processes* (material, mental, verbal, relational, behavioral, and existential) into different columns. Under the mentioned six processes, there are various participant roles of doer, as explained in Table 1.

Table 1: Participant roles of social actor in a clause (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014)

Function of Material process	Scope	Limitations	Participant roles
Construing the material world of action / doing	Outside activities/doing something	Nothing done / Thing can do	Actor = doer Goal =affected Range = not affected Beneficiary= for/to initiator
E.g. The group of girls (Actors) have already completed (Process) their training of karate (Goal).			
Function of Mental process	Scope	Limitations	Participant roles
To construe the inner world of consciousness	Inside activities like wanting, knowing, perceiving etc.	Human consciousness/ characteristics required	Sensor Phenomenon = known thing, wanted, perceived etc.
Function of Verbal process	Scope	Limitations	Participant Roles
To construe saying	To say some	Anything can be said by	Sayer=doer

	thing	any participant in a clause	Receiver= said to Verbiage=what is said Target= what is said
Relational process	Scope	Limitations	Participant role
Attributive function	To characterize the class	None	Carrier=who is receiving Attribute=description of quality
Identifying function	Decoding and encoding new meanings	None	Token=Form Value=Role Both represent each other.
Processes	Inner	Inner - Outer	Outer
Material			She was walking (into the dining room)
Behavioral		She's laughing	
Mental	She rejoices		
Relational	She's happy		She's in the dining room

Existential process contains the circumstantial element of time and event is labeled as 'Existent'. 'Existent' can be any phenomenon in form of object, person, action, situation, etc. For example:

- a) There was (Process) a huge dust storm (Existent-event).
- b) On the roof (Circumstance) of a house there (Process) are many birds (Existent-entity).
- c) There is (Process) a parcel delivery man (Existent-entity) at the door (Circumstance).

The *social actor* was analyzed according to his action and marked under the specific process and participant role. In the analysis, the socio-semiotic approach rule of *lexicon* and *grammar* was followed. The social actor's performance was calculated in each *activation* and *passivation* process. In the end, the calculation was performed in each process and role, and percentages were drawn. Thus, process of transitivity analysis is widely used tool for representation because it not only recognizes the lexical choices but also help in uncovering the ideology and naturalized distribution of actions and roles of social actors in text.

Results and Analysis

The two newspapers represent Imran Khan as a primary social actor concerning his actions as a 'doer'. First, news reports were chosen which considered him as the most active doer (activation role) in a clause, and secondly, in the role of passivation, as the most benefited actor from the context of situation (Excerpts 1 & 2).

- (1) **The News 236** [{"The US could play a big part, President Trump certainly can play a big part. We're talking about 1.3 billion people on this Earth. Imagine the dividends of peace if somehow that issue could be resolved," he **said.**}]-Activation role of Imran Khan
- (2) **Dawn 294** [[Dr. Aafia Siddiqui, a neurologist, has been languishing in a United States jail on charges of trying to kill US agents and military officers in Afghanistan.]]-passivation role of Imran Khan

Statement 1 represents the social actor in the activation role. Imran Khan believed the US could perform a significant role in peace by playing a powerful role in Afghanistan. If the war had not been initiated, it would have shown a different picture. Imran Khan quoted Dr. Aafia, a Pakistani-born neurologist, who was wrongly charged for trying to kill US soldiers in Afghanistan. The estranged relations between the two countries started to develop with this case and the victim is still suffering in the US jail. Imran Khan is represented showing the background of the relations between the two countries. The newspaper has used the social actors' words in explaining the case instead of its own voice.

In this study, through transitivity analysis, we have identified different representational roles for the social actor. First, Imran Khan's representation was analyzed through process types. Secondly, against the participant role which has been given to him in a particular clause according to his actions

e.g. sayer (social actor's role as a doer) , goal, verbiage (what has been said by the social actor), actor, token, beneficiary, affected, receiver, phenomena, scope, target, etc.

By considering the doer's role in *activation* and *passivation* in selected data, it is found that both newspapers have shown equal representation. *Dawn* has given Imran Khan 133 occurrences with 50% representation; while *The News*, represents him in one additional occurrence by achieving 134 occurrences with 50% role representation in the activation role. Then, only *Dawn* has shown the actor in a passivation role by giving him one occurrence and by doing so, 100% passivation role goes to Imran Khan as 'The News' has not portrayed him in any passivation role (Table 2).

Table 2: Role Allocation of Social Actor in 'Dawn & 'The News'

Imran Khan	Role Allocation	Dawn
	Activation	133
	Passivation	1
Imran Khan	Role Allocation	The News
	Activation	134
	Passivation	0

In the first phase of the analysis of the social actor' role, it is found that Imran Khan has been quoted by *Dawn* widely and given mainly the *verbiage participant* role (Table 1) under *verbal* process. He was represented on 72 occurrences in the *verbiage* role (53%) under *verbal* process, and on 40 occurrences in the *sayer* role in the selected data (30%). *The News*, on the other hand, has given Imran Khan the *verbiage* role 44% of the times (59 occurrences) under *verbal* process. *The News* represents him as *actor* more than *Dawn*: 29 occurrences (21%) in the *actor* role against 29 (Table 3 & Figures 3-4).

Table 3: Occurrences of participant role of the social actor in 'Dawn & 'The News'

Participant Role (Imran Khan)	Dawn	The News
Sayer	40	41
Verbiage	72	59
Actor	20	29
Phenomena	1	1
Scope	1	0
Identified	0	1
Token	0	1
Behavior	0	1
Affected	0	1

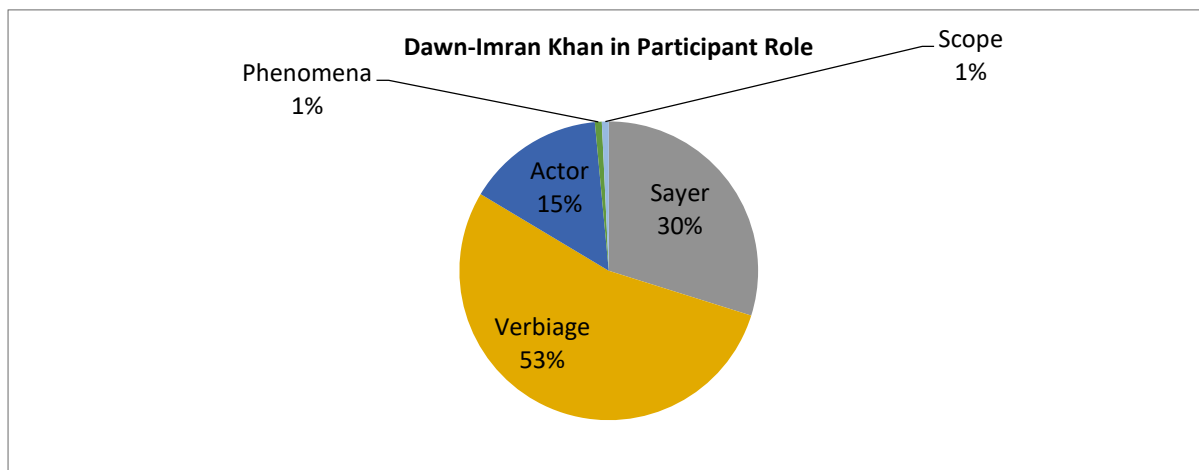


Figure 3: Participant Role of Social Actor in *Dawn*

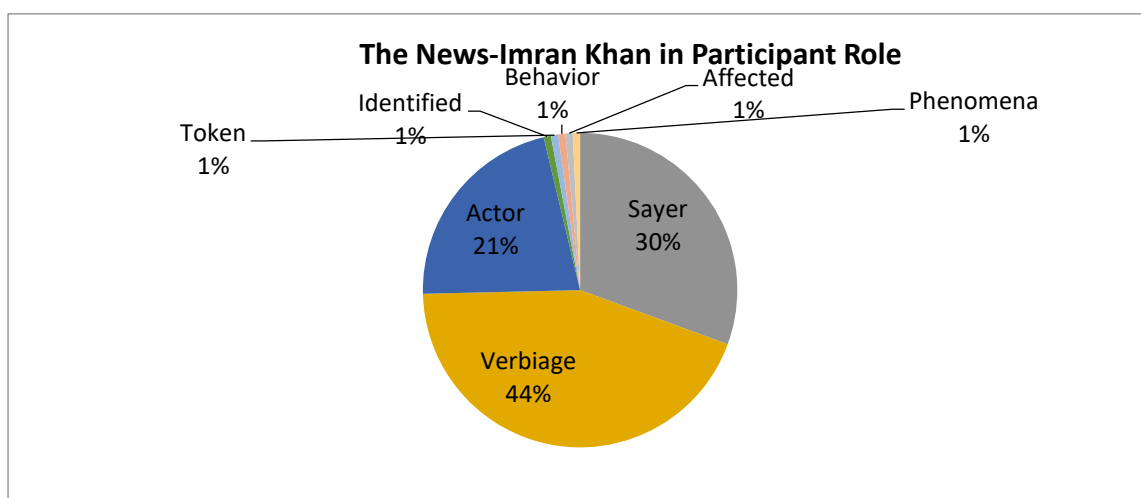


Figure 4: Participant role of Imran Khan in *The News*

In the second phase of data analysis, the social actor again is mostly represented in the *verbal* process, with 111 occurrences (83%) in *Dawn* and 100 occurrences in *The News* (74%). (Table 4 & Figures 5-6).

Table 4: Occurrences of Transitivity Process in *Dawn* and *The News*

Participant Role	Dawn	The News
Material	22	31
Verbal	111	100
Mental	1	1
Relational	0	1
Behavioral	0	1

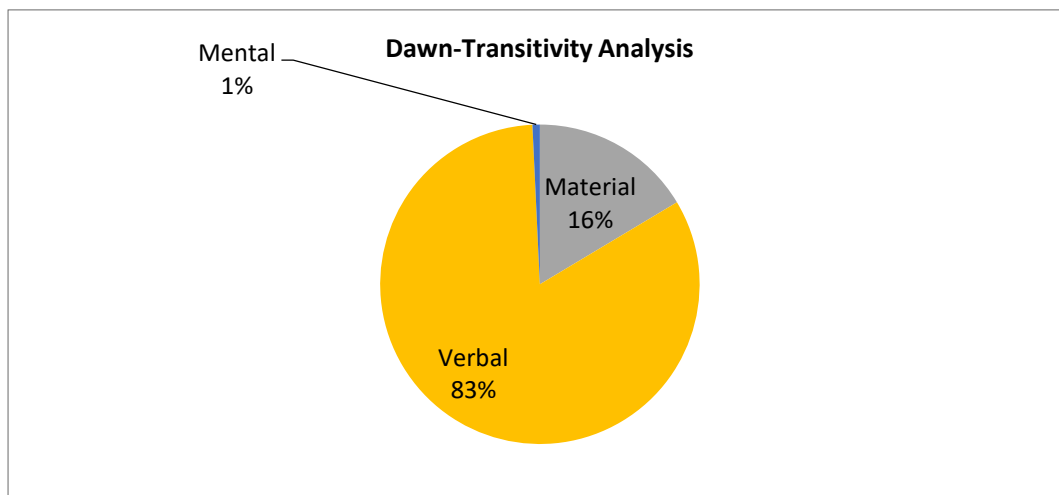


Figure 5: Role of the social actor in the Transitivity Process of *Dawn*

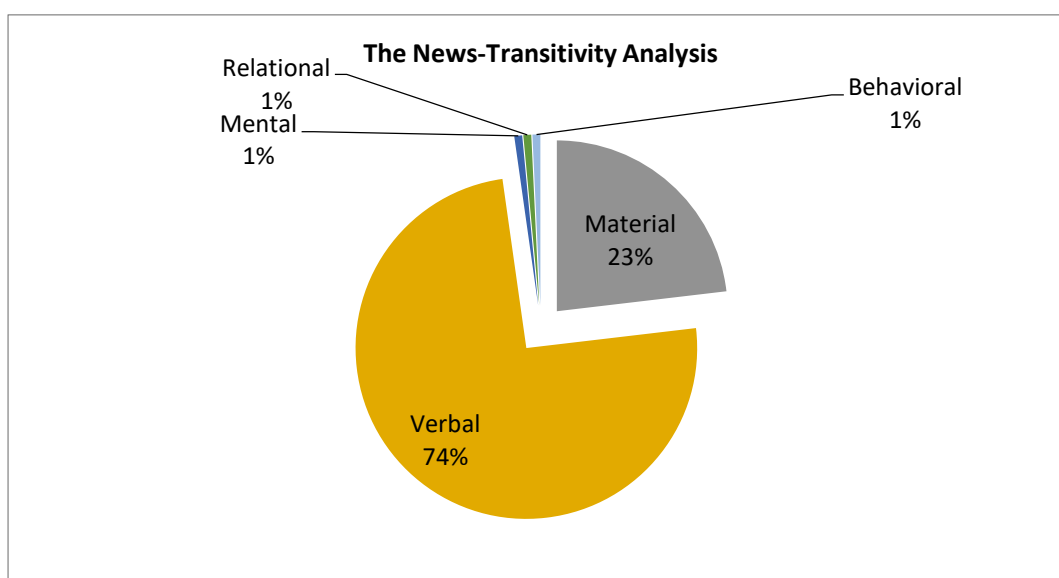


Figure 6: Role of the social actor in the Transitivity process in *The News*

In the selected data of newspapers, the social actor was found quoted directly. The newspapers quoted and reported clauses, bestowing authority on the speaker instead of on the news organization. Excerpt 3 explains the representation of Afghanistan in *The News*.

(3) **The News 312** The secretary had called on the prime minister on Tuesday, where the prime minister said that a peaceful and stable Afghanistan was vital for Pakistan. Khan, in his meeting, emphasized the importance of close collaboration between Pakistan and US to advance that objective.

There are three clauses, which are analyzed as follows:

Table 5: Clausal analysis of The News

1. *The secretary had called on the prime minister on Tuesday,*

The secretary	had called on	the prime minister	on Tuesday
Sayer	Verbal Process	Receiver	Circumstance: Location: Time

2. *where the prime minister said that a peaceful and stable Afghanistan was vital for Pakistan.*

where	the prime minister	said	that a peaceful and stable Afghanistan was vital for Pakistan
	Sayer	Verbal Process	Verbiage

that	a peaceful and stable Afghanistan	was	vital for Pakistan
	Carrier	Attributive Relational Process	Attribute

3. Khan, in his meeting, emphasized the importance of close collaboration between Pakistan and US [[to advance that objective]].

Khan	in his meeting	emphasized	the importance of close collaboration between Pakistan and US [[to advance that objective]].
Sayer	Circumstance: Location: Place	Verbal process	Verbiage

The News represented the views of Prime Minister Imran Khan on Afghanistan by giving the entire clause the *verbiage* participant role. The newspaper has associated the spoken words with the social actor, thus the social actor is taken as sayer as represented by the newspaper. The analysis of the texts indicates that Imran Khan’s visit was represented fairly by *Dawn* and *The News*. The visit was shown as significant from an economic, political, and strategic point of view not only for Pakistan but also for its neighboring countries with whom borders are shared, and especially concerning relations with Afghanistan. The newspaper communicated a clear message from the then prime minister to emphasize the main issues why Pakistan was looking for US collaboration in the case of Afghanistan, its neighboring Muslim country. The 18-year-long war in Afghanistan had also affected other countries, and he looked forward to stability for their neighbor in order to also achieve stability in the whole region.

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), a whole clause can be taken in one participant category when the words are quoted. The clausal analysis explains, on the other hand, the different processes and roles of actors. Other than this, the social actor also emphasized Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf’s (PTI) vision. Imran Khan stated that PTI is on the path to making a new Pakistan, as explained in excerpt 8 in *Dawn*.

(4) **Dawn 8** "People ask 'Where is Naya Pakistan?' — it is being created in front of your eyes," the premier said.

Table 6: Clausal analysis of Dawn

“People ask ‘Where is Naya Pakistan?’ —it is being created in front of your eyes,”	the premier	said
	Sayer	Verbal Process

The clauses are analyzed as follows:

1.

People	ask	‘Where is Naya Pakistan’
Sayer	Verbal Process	Verbiage

2.

it is being created in front of your eyes,”	the premier	said
Verbiage	Sayer	Verbal Process

In excerpt 4, Imran Khan is represented as briefing people regarding his efforts toward building a new government. While in office, he named his country ‘Naya Pakistan’ (New Pakistan), since he and his team made efforts to introduce new practices the previous government had ignored. In excerpt 5, he explained,

- (5) **The News 96** “The PTI is the first party where no relative or friend of Imran Khan is on any post. This is the first party which works on merit,” he said.

Table 7: Imran Khan in Sayer role

“The PTI is the first party where no relative or friend of Imran Khan is on any post. This is the first party which works on merit,”	he	said
Verbiage	Sayer	Verbal Process

Further, the clauses are analyzed as follows:

1.

The PTI	Is	the first party [[where no relative or friend of Imran Khan is on any post.]]
Token	Identifying Relational Process	Value

Where	No relative or friend of Imran Khan	is	On any post
(Conjunction)	Carrier	Attributive Relational Process	Attribute

2.

This	is	the first party which works on merit
Token	Attributive Relational Process	Value

Imran Khan is shown representing and praising his political party. PTI represented a merit-based party and ensured people their honesty in delivering merit-based performances. The whole clause is taken under the *verbiage* category in clausal analysis. In comparison, *Dawn* also represented his views as follows,

- (6) **Dawn 56** *The premier added that a merit-based system was required in the country.*

Table 8: Imran Khan in Sayer role

The premier	Added	that a merit-based system was required in the country
Sayer	Verbal Process	Verbiage

Further, the clause is analyzed as follows:

That	a merit-based system	was required	in the country
Conjunction	Phenomenon	Mental Process	The Circumstance of Location: Place

Excerpt 6 explains Imran Khan's views in the same way as in *The News*, emphasizing that PTI had implemented measures with certainty and effectiveness. Imran Khan was represented as a *sayer* in this reported clause, and as a straightforward and honest person, especially in the way he conveys his role, thoughts and vision to the people in the government. He was also shown strict on corruption as explained in excerpt 7.

(7) **The News 110** “Return the money and we will take you out of prison,” he said.

Table 9: Imran Khan in Sayer role

“Return the money and we will take you out of prison,”	he	said
Verbiage	Sayer	Verbal Process

Further, the Sayer role is analyzed as follows:

1.

Return	the money
Material Process	Goal

2.

And	we	will take	you	out of prison
Conjunction	Actor	Material Process	Goal	Circumstance: Location: Place

The News represented Imran Khan targeting politicians Nawaz Sharif and Asif Ali Zardari, the former heads of government, for their corrupt practices. He has been portrayed as determined to take them to prison for not providing stolen official money. Imran Khan is taken as a *sayer* in this clause (reported speech). Both newspapers have quoted the social actor Imran Khan and placed the responsibility for his views on him in the form of quoted and reported representation.

Therefore, it could be said that by mentioning and quoting him in both newspapers the social actor is represented as holding a powerful position. Direct quoting is extensively used in both newspapers, which gives authorial status to a social actor and disowns the journalist from the stated statement (Bell, 1991). Both newspapers seem to support PM Imran’s statements and movements, including his support to the US. This is represented by the linguistic choices made by *Dawn* –such as ‘Premier said’, ‘Premier added’, ‘PM Imran explained’, ‘PM Imran said’, ‘The Prime Minister’, ‘Prime Minister Imran Khan’, ‘He said’, ‘He went on to explain’, ‘replied the Premier’, ‘Reiterated the Prime Minister’-- and by *The News* –such as ‘Prime Minister Imran Khan’, ‘Khan said’, ‘He said’, ‘Prime Minister laid out’, ‘Prime Minister addressed’, ‘According to the Prime Minister’, ‘Prime Minister stressed’, ‘He warned’, ‘He added’, ‘Prime Minister expressed’, ‘Premier reiterated’, ‘He maintained’, ‘Prime Minister replied’, ‘Imran Khan mentioned’, etc.

However, *Dawn’s* portrayal of the social actor hints at their agenda. It indicates that *Dawn* tries to present PM Imran as a contributor to the US instead of as a contributor to his own country. Furthermore, *The News* has covered the voice of the opposition with the publication of separate criticism by prominent political figures of the PM’s speech delivered to Pakistani-Americans a day earlier in the meeting with President Trump. Such criticism is not found in *Dawn* on these four selected days. *The News* also gave coverage of Indian political views, which always remained in strained relations with Pakistan over the Kashmir issue. The reader is getting fair and reasonable coverage by *The News* but also being reminded of other disturbances or news from leaders of other countries as well as homeland political leaders, who are directly or indirectly quoted negatively in the statements of Imran Khan and then President Trump.

Discussion

The findings are similar to the research of Ahmed (2016), which showed that the newspapers portrayed the head of the government positively, but also negatively by quoting other political figures of the country. Therefore, in Pakistani culture the role of *The News* is generally considered controversial in terms of political inclination. However, its inclination towards the existing government can be seen fairly presented by the visit of social actor considering news with international significance.

The findings are similar to those of the study done by Asad et al. (2019), where *The News* took a safe way in dealing with the issue under study because of its political private interest. It portrayed the social actor positively, also covering news concerning critical political figures. On the other hand, in *Dawn* the social actor's performance is described as a current happening, and no news criticizing him is found. Both newspapers are found to use rhetorical markers as an external supporting voice in winning the readership (Asad et al., 2021).

It has been found that Imran Khan is fairly presented as a social actor in *Dawn*. The newspaper approached his visit from the angle of its strategic and economic importance. The linguistic choices and the coverage of both newspapers enhanced the ideology and the figure of the social actor as head of government. Both newspapers were found to represent the visit as a priority from the national point of view. Personal differences were shunned and both newspapers were found to be standing on the same ideological side with the social actor's representation. This supports the research objective of the current study. The findings are also similar to those of Lee and Lin's (2006) study, where the storyline is sketched on the factual happenings without biased representation. Both newspapers have observed fairly represented social actor as well as the issue.

It is seen that both news institutions chose to represent the social actor through his actions and widely took him in 'verbiage' and 'sayer' roles. The authority is given to a social actor by a journalist presenting him in quoted and reported speech, which creates a bias in news reporting. From the semiotic perspective, in the context of culture, the interpretations are biased, where people are positioned. The findings suggest some positioning from an ideological point of view. Furthermore, by the adoption of the 'verbal' process, the newspapers observed representing speaker's opinions, actions, and suggestions rather than focusing on the news institution's voice.

Therefore, for future studies, the same methodological and theoretical framework can be employed in alternative and mainstream newspapers of Western and Asian countries with the combination of Critical Discourse Analysis and SFL. Surely, it would help in finding the inclination and ideology of newspapers. Additionally, the role and influence of the government on the press can be determined. From a theoretical implication view, the framework has not been applied before on this issue. Regarding contextual implication, the ideological standing of newspapers is highlighted. Moreover, media and political studies have given insight into the practical implication.

Conclusion

Then Prime Minister, Imran Khan's three-day visit to the United States of America was a push for amending and reviving the bilateral relations between the two countries. After the episode of 9/11, Pakistan supported the US in war but also suffered the consequences economically and physically in response from the Taliban. The visit was widely perceived as fruitful after the meeting. During this visit, Imran Khan emphasized the corruption eradication processes, where previous governments' affiliates were convicted. Regarding developing a '*Naya Pakistan*-New Pakistan', Imran Khan was determined to maintain the introduced merit-based system. Additionally, Afghanistan was also the main issue of discussion. He was on the point of an amicable solution in Afghanistan for peace and stability in the region.

In this regard, both newspapers represented this visit prominently. It is concluded that they have chosen to act on behalf of a voice of a democratic country on the representation of this visit, but their voice is hidden behind the social actor. Both newspapers have chosen to directly quote (quoted

speech) the actor. The ‘verbiage’ participant role under ‘verbal process’ is used extensively by both newspapers to distance themselves from the said statements. *The News* also represented other political figures’ criticism of the actor, but *Dawn* ignored that criticism and handled the news as an important current happening within two states.

Both newspapers have portrayed a democratic voice informing their readers about current happenings of the political world in hard news form by giving an equal share of representation to the social actor. The mainstream newspaper *The News* is also observed defending its private political interests. As in the past, *The News* and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had strained relations. PTI has always opposed *The News* on its positive inclination towards the previous government, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

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