

A Comparative Study of Lexical Choices and Syntactic Structures in the Editorials of *The News* and *Dawn*

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study is to discover the hidden agendas or ideologies of the newspapers, *The News* and *Dawn*, by critically analyzing their choice of lexical items and syntactic structures while drafting their editorials. For this analysis, the researchers choose thirty editorials, in total, from both of the newspapers, i.e., fifteen from each, on the same issues or subject matters. This strategy of choosing editorials on similar issues or subject matters helps the researchers to discover the choice of language by both editors on the basis of their organizational agendas. For the analysis of the language used in the editorials, the researchers use the qualitative method and van Dijk's media discourse as the guiding framework. The researchers found that *The News* used vague and unspecific forms of language making the news misleading and ambiguous for the readers, however, on the other hand, *Dawn* used a quite simple form of language to communicate its stance on the subjects in question as far as the editorials under study were concerned. The objective approach in drafting the news items especially the editorials helps the common readers to have a better understanding of the news under consideration, moreover, objectivity on the part of the editors shows their unbiased organizational ideology in mass media.

KEYWORDS

Ideology, CDA, *The News*, *Dawn*, Lexical items, Syntactic structures

JOURNAL INFO

HISTORY: Received: August 15, 2021

Accepted: September 15, 2021

Published: September 30, 2021

INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, media has gained an important status in our daily life. Our perception of the real world is formed, molded, and fixed by media (Kasho, 2016; Tsifti & Cohen, 2013). "Media [text] functions as a window through which we can view the world and live the events as real. It has the power to influence readers'...perceptions of reality." (Malkawi, 2001, p. 22). For the very purpose of perceptual construction of reality, media makes use of language according to its hidden agenda or ideology (Lemke, 2012). As far as ideology is concerned, the Longman *Dictionary of Language Teaching and Linguistics* (2010) defines it as "a set of concepts, doctrines, and beliefs that forms the basis of a political, educational or economic system" (p.269). A common reader, unconsciously, starts following the hidden ideologies of a particular newspaper as "ideologies reside in text" (Fairclough, 1995, p. 71) which are difficult to perceive with a common approach to the discovery of meaning. The use of particular "...syntactic selection undoubtedly affects interpretation, but this must be seen in relation to other contextual factors, and indeed in relation to the impact of lexical choices..." (Schiffrin, Tannen & Hamilton, 2001, p. 407). Thus, media language is deliberately modified and structured to disseminate particular meaning to the masses (Mooney & Evans, 2015.) According to Van Dijk (1988) "the accentuation and mitigation of meanings are one of the central semantic strategies of newspaper language..." (p. 195). The ideology or agenda of a newspaper is vividly visible in its editorial through the lexical and syntactic choices it makes to communicate an idea with its readers (Bakuro & Diedong, 2021; Conboy, 2003). "although...[they] have their own preferences in terms of style, stance, and substance" (Jones, 2012, p. 173). So far it has been clear that the newspapers make use of language to create a 'situation or state' according to their will as "language has a magical property" to create a context or situation based on the ideology of the speaker or writer (Gee, 1999, p. 11). Thus, the language used in newspapers contains two layers; one that is visible at the surface level and the other at its heart. This 'binary opposite' notion in the language of media discourse questions the reliability of the news. Previous research studies have explored the use of language in molding and modifying the real essence of a news item or event in the favor of the organizational stance or ideology of particular media houses, however, they have not examined editorials on the same issues reported by different newspapers differently. Thus, the present study examines thirty editorials in total, i.e., fifteen from each newspaper, *Dawn* and *The News*, mainly dealing with the same issue/subject area but reported differently. The researchers analyze the editorials for their lexical and syntactic choices to exploit the hidden agendas of these newspapers.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Newspapers, while drafting their editorials, choose specific lexical items and syntactic structures to propagate their organizational ideology or agenda. This phenomenon keeps the general masses away from accessing the reality out there in the world.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What lexical and syntactic structures are used by newspapers to propagate their ideologies?
2. How does the choice of lexical and syntactic structures propagate the hidden ideologies and agendas of a particular organization or person?
3. How do the underlying agendas or ideologies bring variation in the use of language in editorials?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are to;

1. Analyze lexical items and syntactic structures of editorials to discover how the editors propagate their ideologies or agendas through language.
2. Check whether the use of a particular form of language molds the real essence of the particular issue or subject in question.
3. Discover whether the use of a particular form of language misleads the readers.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will help the readers to read between the lines to find out the purpose of using a particular set of lexical items and syntactic structures in the editorials of newspapers. Furthermore, it will help the readers to read newspapers in general, and their editorials in particular through a critical lens to find out their pertinent implications for government, politics, education, and particularly for the immediate society. The main reason for choosing the editorials, out of a number of sections available in a newspaper, is due to their fundamental role in propagating the ideology of the “newspaper owners and managers” (Henry & Tator, 2002, p. 93), as “...the ideologies and opinions of newspapers are usually not personal, but social, institutional or political” (van Dijk, 1998, p. 22).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The mass media in the world has the capability of mobilizing millions of people with the help of the language they use to draft their news items (Afzal et al., 2021). In newspapers, different news items or sections have their own importance, however, editorials are considered the heart of a newspaper (Rust, 2018). Newspaper editorials play a central role in keeping the standards of a newspaper maintained and “shape and build the ideology of their reader” (Bilal et al. 2012, p. 746). They do it with the help of selective linguistic items in the form of ‘syntactic structures’ and ‘lexical choices’ to produce desired meanings to be publicized, thus “the editorial is intended to contribute to the opinion formation of the reader about a current news event” (van Dijk, 1988, p. 124). Therefore, different newspapers do it differently with their peculiarities as the “system of representation of an idea and thought of the newspaper editorial is different from one another and this differentiates one newspaper from other” (Bilal et al., 2012, p. 746).

The difference in the choice of language depends upon the underlying ideology of the newspaper as “...language has two roles: informing and influencing the readers with a preference to influence more” (Elyazale, 2014, p. 26). Thus, it depends upon the editor(s) of the respective newspaper(s), what they prefer to gain with the help of their news items and editorials. Croteau and Hoynes (as cited in Aslani & Salmani, 2015) found that the media propagate and represent the ideology of the institution that supports them and ‘provide their interests’. In such conditions, the media typically follow the binary opposition ‘US’ vs ‘THEM’. This particular notion has been proposed by Van Dijk as people distribute themselves in categories as ‘ingroup – outgroup polarization’. Thus, the notion of “polarization may be rhetorically enhanced when expressed as a clear contrast, that is, by attributing properties of ‘us’ and ‘them’ that are semantically each other’s opposites” (van Dijk, 1992, p.245), in doing so, the newspapers propagate their hidden ideologies among their consumers. Thus, analyzing the newspaper editorials one needs to be critical and according to O’Keeffe (2012) “the area of critical discourse analysis offers more potential as a framework for the analysis of newspapers...” (p.442). Therefore, the researchers have employed a framework from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyze the editorials under consideration as CDA helps to explore whether the language users are “...using language consciously or unconsciously to express the original minds” (Tabe & Fieze, 2018, p. 64).

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (CDA)

In Critical Discourse Analysis, one analyzes the text in hand with a critical lens. As the word ‘critical’ indicates a close observation, thus ‘critical discourse analysis’ deals with the use of language in a text analytically and systematically. Norman Fairclough (1995) defines it as,

“discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships

between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony ... (pp. 132-133).“

As far as Van Dijk is concerned, he believes that CDA deals with the notion of exploitation of language for personal gains especially in the form of ‘power abuse’, and to understand this phenomenon one has to see the factors at work and how “discourse produces social structures” (van Dijk, 2008, p. vii). Media work as the tool of news disseminator and people consider the news items to be true, but the editorial part of it is considered “...the heart of a newspaper” (Rust, 2018, p. 600). Furthermore, editorials are commonly read by an exclusive group of people who are commonly educated and knowledgeable. Most of the time the knowledgeable readers even cannot perceive the underlying meaning of the editorials as “the language of newspaper editorials is ...not easy and simple” (Bilal et al., 2012, p. 747). Thus, to understand the hidden meaning of a text one needs to be good at critical thinking or it would be appropriate to call, one should have command over Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). “CDA explores the hidden meaning in the text, as it is not easy for readers to get the real and actual meanings without the application of CDA” (Bilal et al., 2012, p. 747), as newspaper editorials provide the perspective of their respective media house(s). Thus, “in an editorial, finally, opinions are both explicit and dominant and formulated from the point of view of the newspaper or its editor” (van Dijk, 1988, p. 124). Therefore, one needs to read between the lines, keeping in view the background of the very event in question, to grasp the desired meaning of the editor(s)/editorial(s).

FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

For the present study, the researchers have selected Van Dijk’s media discourse framework from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The current framework helps the researchers to focus on the historical, political, social, and linguistic features of the editorials under observation which consequently leads the researchers to better understand the hidden ideologies of the respective media houses and draw pertinent conclusions through the data analysis accordingly.

The framework entails the following;

1. Examining the context of the discourse: historical, political, or social background of a conflict and its main participants
2. Analyzing groups, power relations, and conflicts involved
3. Identifying positive and negative opinions about Us versus Them
4. Making explicit the presupposed and the implied
5. Examining all formal structure: lexical choice and syntactic structure, in a way that helps to (de)emphasize polarized group opinions

NEWSPAPERS UNDER EXAMINATION

The researchers have chosen two Pakistani national English language newspapers, *Dawn* and *The News*, for this study. The thirty editorials, published between 2012 and 2017 by both the media houses, are analyzed, i.e., fifteen from each newspaper, mainly dealing with the same issue/subject, and to see, how far these two newspapers differ from each other in their ideologies, by analyzing the language they use. This comparison is carried out with the help of van Dijk’s media discourse framework.

ANALYSIS OF THE EDITORIALS

The analysis has been classified into two sections, i.e., the first section is devoted to ‘Lexical Analysis’ and the second section to ‘Syntactic Analysis’. The analysis of lexical choices and syntactic structures helps the researchers to find out the underlying meaning or ideology of the respective media house(s).

LEXICAL ANALYSIS

The use of specific or general nature of language or lexical items, in the title and body of the text, plays a very vital role in grabbing the attention of a reader or repel him/her. If the phrasing of a title or body is distracting or inappropriate then it usually fails to attract readers, and on the other hand, if it is specific and very much relevant to the context, it attracts a good number of readers to it. The content of an editorial contains a number of ingredients, “typically, the linguistic features of editorial states opinion, directs readers’ attention and expresses the ideologies of a news organization” (Alvi, Mehmood, Rasool, 2016, p.271). Thus, this section of the paper shall focus on the lexicon used in the editorials under observation. Words or phrases from the editorials of each newspaper have been mentioned with the name of their respective newspaper(s) to differentiate the chunks in the analysis.

The title “Unsafe workers” from *The News* is quite general and seems to cover all the kinds of workers. Furthermore, the combination of ‘unsafe’ and ‘workers’ can bring different interpretations from the readers, as the title can be interpreted in two different ways; 1. ‘the workers are vulnerable’, 2. ‘the workers are dangerous’. Thus, with the use of misleading words, the editors usually decrease the intensity of an issue or keep the readers away from the reality of the event or issue.

The title ‘Factories of death’ from *Dawn* is more specific than the title of *The News* about ‘the collapse of a factory in Lahore’. The use of lexical items in this title portrays a better picture of the factory demolition than the previous one. The use of ‘factories’ makes the title specific towards a single place of work, and the use of ‘death’ informs the readers about the main theme of the text that they would read. As far as the interpretation of this title ‘Factories of death’ is concerned, it more or less conveys a single and specific interpretation that is ‘the factories where people die’.

Thus, the title from *The News* looks quite general and seems to portray a less intense image of the incident or the newspaper may have any underlying ideology for using a general and broad form of titles. But the title from *Dawn* seems to be more specific and critical as it states the intensity of the issue to its maximum extent. Their (*Dawn's*) ideology looks different from the ideology of *The News*.

Both the editors have mentioned the age of the workers who were 'children'. *The News* reported them to be, 'as young as eight years old', but according to *Dawn*, 'some [were] as young as seven'.

The editorial from *The News* refers to television as the source of information, as the editor wrote, "Horrific scenes were witnessed on television..." , but the editorial from *Dawn* seems to have got first-hand data from the site as there is no reference of any source of the data/news or vice versa. The choice of language and lexical items by both editors have differentiated between the intensity portrayed in both the editorials.

The News used the following words and phrases: 'grief-struck, horrific scenes, cutting off the limbs, save their lives, sad reminder, terrible working conditions, no one cares, easily forgotten, little change, excuse for not prosecuting anyone and more tragedies'. This list contains more words containing general denotations and connotations except the words 'cutting off the limbs, and horrific scenes'. Thus, the use of words with less severe meanings takes away the notion of the severity of the incident. But on the other hand, *Dawn* Newspaper used, 'buried, grim, horrifying, vulnerable, lax safety standards, threat to life and limb, blind eye, beyond words, hazardous working conditions, letter of the law, singing the death warrant etc'. On the contrary to *The News*, *Dawn* has used words with the severity of meanings as 'buried, vulnerable, threat to life and limb, and singing the death warrant'. These words portray the grim situation, almost, as if it were there in person.

The use of these strong gloomy words indicates the dilapidated conditions of the factories in the country where the power circles or the age-old tradition of bribery and corruption does not let the authorities work properly and the poor lose their lives due to the corrupt system as an indirect but very relevant cause of the incident discussed above. Furthermore, the power circles do attempt to dominate the media houses to lessen the intensity of the events for the public with the manipulation of language in the news and in the editorials which seems to be dividing the masses into us vs them. The hidden 'us' in these editorials seems to be associated with the power circles and the elite and poor seem to be placed as 'them'.

The following paragraphs deal with the editorials from both the newspapers associated with the visits of the Prime Minister and ministers to foreign countries and singing of the business deals with them. The selection of words, by the editor from *The News*, seems straight and objective, but on the other hand, the editor of *Dawn* has associated emotion with the deal with Russia and the visit of the Prime Minister to the USA. As Pakistan is going through a critical condition of an energy crisis, this deal has a vital role to play to overcome the issue. Thus, the inclusion of emotion in one's language is a natural phenomenon when one sees something going good or bad with him/her or with his/her country.

The choice of words in the body of the text is also quite different in both newspapers. *The News* used the following lexical items or phrases; *another surprise, greeted us, white elephant, major risks, ...questions the wisdom behind*, and regarding the visit they have used the words *hope, expected*, etc. However, *Dawn* has phrased the visit to the US rather in a pessimistic manner keeping in view the background of the Pak-US relationship, *the Prime Minister's strategies have either failed to materialize or their implementation has stalled, increased Pakistani access to US markets seemingly having fallen off the agenda; sadly, diminished interest*, etc. The phrases or words, mentioned above, in *Dawn*, show a completely different picture as compared to *The News*. The selection of these lexical items and phrases brings a negative notion for the readers about the issue in question. The editor of *The News* has viewed this 'deal' to be something inappropriate and bad for the future, however, the visit of the Prime Minister to the USA is a positive sign to bring about positive changes in the Pak-US relationship. However, the same news, about the deal with Russia, has been portrayed by the editor of *Dawn* as a good omen and positive for the country and its future. *Dawn* has employed the following lexical items and phrases to demonstrate its stance; *welcome development, large enough, bilateral deals, partner in infrastructural growth, positive step, geopolitical interest at work, promoting stability in Afghanistan, stability in the region, elimination of extremist threats, real opportunity*. Almost all the words or phrases mentioned above contain a positive connotation except the phrase 'geopolitical interest at work', but still the intensity or severity of this phrase is suppressed by the effects of the other positive words.

The choice of lexical items for the title by *The News'* editor is completely confusing. 'Off to the US' this title may raise many questions in the mind of the readers about *who, why, when?* No one can figure out who the title is referring to, thus, this title has no relevancy with the following text in the body unless one reads the content of the text. Perhaps, the editor has used this misleading and vague title to bring suspense to the readers of this editorial. However, commonly it is advised that one should write a title that indicates the content in the body to be read.

On the other hand, *Dawn* has used a clear and much relevant title for its editorial, 'PM's visit to US'. The elements chosen for the title have a direct relationship with the content of the text in the body of the editorial, thus, seeing the title one can easily predict the subject matter of the text in the body.

The News employed the following words and phrases in its editorial for the better portrayal of the PM's visit to the US; *changed juncture strategic position of Pakistan's alliance, more balanced than ever before, upward trajectory, multifaceted manner, sympathize with Pakistan on a number of fronts, responsible nuclear state, singing of a civilian nuclear deal, unlike*

previous governments, another aid package, ceasefire violations, regional relations, steady footing. The combination of these phrases brings forth the purpose of PM's visit to the US. These elements show that the PM visited the US to have better relations with the US and bring a chance to sign a civil nuclear deal with the US similar to the one India and the US have. The editor has kept the language simple and clear for the understanding of the readers except for the inclusion of confusing elements in the title.

Dawn has used the following phrases to represent PM's visit to the US; *second visit, markedly different circumstances, four 'Es' – economy, energy, education and (combating) extremism, peripheral figure, owing to the hostility of Indian Prime Minister, conditional nature, pragmatism and shrewdness, increasingly narrow security, massive challenge, top trading partners, fallen off the agenda, counterterrorism capabilities, mere conduit on issues, a desultory ad hoc approach.* *Dawn* has seen the visit from totally a different perspective as it calls the visit to be *a desultory ad hoc approach*. Furthermore, it has placed the Prime Minister as a *peripheral figure in shaping key national security and foreign policy issues*. Thus, *Dawn* sees Nawaz's reputation decreasing and falling, and his visit may turn out to be a failure.

The following editorials regarding loans from the world's financial organization again show a completely different perspective from both the media houses. *The News* has used the phrase 'report card' making it sound like a 'progress report' or 'evaluation' of someone or an organization. The phrase 'report card' is, usually, associated with a one-way comment or represents the authority of someone over another. On the other hand, *Dawn* has used only the word 'review', which is associated with viewing something again and examining something for improvement. The word 'review' connotes that the result provided is not the final rather it has room for improvement and it can be reviewed again and again, but when one uses the phrase 'report card' which confirms that the result or decision in the report is final. The overall formation of these editorial titles, 'IMF's report card' 'Pakistan and the IMF' and 'IMF review' 'Impact on Pakistan?' contains both fear and hope on the part of the readers. Apparently, the phrases 'report card', 'Pakistan and the IMF' can either contain something 'good' or 'bad' in it, but the word 'review' brings hope in the readers. However, 'Impact on Pakistan?' by *Dawn* provides a vague scenario regarding funding by the World Bank and IMF.

The first title in *The News* is quite clear and specific because the editor has used the genitive case with 'IMF' and the use of the phrase 'report card' clearly indicates the progress report of Pakistan compiled by IMF. However, the second title by *The News* is quite vague, i.e., 'Pakistan and the IMF'. Similarly, *Dawn*, in its both titles, has made it a bit vague by avoiding the genitive case and one can predict that the editorial can be about some general annual review of the organization and may not have anything special or any form of impact on Pakistan's economy. Thus, the choice of words in the titles of these editorials shows the concern of the newspaper houses about the issue.

Both the media houses have used particular words to defend and exert their stance, thus, the editor of *Dawn* uses the following words, phrases, and sentences for the stance of his/her organization on *IMF review; the previous review, privatization, plan to reduce the circular debt, higher imports, pour a bucket of cold water on the expectation, some success, the low-hanging fruit, mammoth privatizations, successes have yet to come.* *Dawn* sees the 'review' and the 'impact' from a different perspective on the contrary to *The News*. *Dawn* has shown both positive and negative aspects of the *review* and *the impact*. However, one thing is common in both the editorials of *The News* and *Dawn* about the IMF report/review, an undesirable impact on the economic growth of Pakistan. A foreign and unusual word, (déjà vu)¹ that *Dawn* has employed in its editorial, creates a bit of ambiguity at the start of the editorial. So, the purpose of using this word, apparently, lies in the unavailability of a lexical item in the English language that could express the same feeling or meaning in the context.

The use of 'statesman' in the editorial of *The News* misleads the readers, because the combination of the words 'Nawaz, the statesman' commonly does not occur in the media or in reports for the Prime Minister of Pakistan. This combination sounds more like referring to a special Nawaz as the editor has used the article 'the' with the noun making it specific and special. Thus, this combination, in the title, may lead the readers to think about someone else, and they may not intend to read the editorial in detail.

However, *Dawn* has chosen the elements for the title carefully. 'PM's peace proposal' all the three words are very much relevant to the subject matter, however, the combination of 'peace proposal' may mislead and divert the readers a bit, but not as much as the elements of the title in *The News* were prone to confusion. In *Dawn's* editorial the editor has specified the person by using 'PM' and then has also identified what was the work that he has done. Furthermore, the use of the phrase 'peace proposal' in the title attracts readers, as the world is going through heavy violence and terrorism.

In the body of the editorial of *The News* the editor has used the following words, phrases, and sentences to establish the stance of his/her organization on the subject; *(appeared)statesman-like and professional, high on rhetoric, PM's finer moments*, these phrases were written in honor of the Prime Minister, but the choice of lexical items in the phrases demonstrate the praise in the other way. The phrase 'statesman-like' assumes that the person to whom this phrase is referring is not actually so, rather s/he looks like it. Interestingly the editor has used the verb 'appeared' before this very phrase which verifies that the quality is not meant for him/PM in real rather he appeared to be so for an occasion only. Moreover, the other phrases used in

¹ The experience of thinking that a new situation had occurred before

praise of the PM are, *high on rhetoric*, *PM's finer moments*, appear to have the intended meaning or association of these qualities with the PM for limited moments.

Furthermore, the other words, phrases that the editor used, in the body of the editorials, are related to PM's speech; *reduce tension and return matters to normalcy*, *increasingly tense relationship*, *main victim of terrorism*, *end militancy of all kinds*, *cooperation not confrontation*, *complete ceasefire*, *to use force under any circumstances*, *demilitarize Kashmir*, *unconditional mutual withdrawal*, *support nuclear disarmament*, *underlying causes*, *oppressed by foreign occupation*, *facilitate the process*, *reconciliation through dialogue*, *favorable response*, *unnecessary hostility*. The portrayal of PM's speech has been quite optimistic and positive as the editor has used words/phrases related to the theme of PM's speech. The use of these words/phrases shows that the PM's speech was full of reconciliatory elements trying to bring the age-old rivals to peace.

The editor has used a phrasal verb 'hammer in' in the editorial which contextually clarifies the meaning, but the original phrase is 'hammer into', and according to Macmillan Dictionary online (2015) 'hammer into' means; *to keep telling someone something in order to make them understand or accept it*. But the context where this phrase has been used implies the phrase to mean, *explain or make others understand*. Thus, the use of alternative preposition with a verb, other than the one that collocates with it, brings ambiguity in the meaning of the sentence in particular and text in general.

Dawn uses the following words, and phrases, in its editorial on the same subject; *stabilize the disputed region*, *revive global interest*, *Ufa debacle*, *concrete proposals to tackle Indian intransigence*, *out-of-hand dismissal*, *only underscored*, *apparent rejection*, *trump card*, *verbally agreed better part of a decade*, *positive results*, *sound offer*, *year-long violence*, *demilitarization of the disputed region*, *withdrawal of troops*, *longer-term goals*, *full-fledged peace*, *immediate and fierce Indian response*, *bilateral normalization*, *a tension-free region*, *terrorism-free region*. The selection of these words by the editor shows that the editor was not interested in his personality rather what he was to say. The editor has mostly focused on the words of the Prime Minister and his proposal for peace. Thus, the selection of lexical items and phrases shows no hidden agenda or ideology of the organization except one that is the organization wants to see the world to be a peaceful place to live in. However, the editor has used the phrase, 'Ufadebacle', in the editorial which is confusing for the common readers, because to understand the phrase one has to have a better knowledge of the events of previous years. Only the use of this word creates confusion for the readers which apparently looks like a reference to a past deal or incident. The language used in these editorials at times clearly shows the difference between us vs them, where they seem to be favoring a particular group of people over others, perhaps, based on their organizational ideology.

SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS

The researchers, keeping in mind the word limit constraints, have chosen some sample sentences from all the editorials under consideration to analyze the syntactic structures of the editorials from both of the media houses.

As far as syntactic structures are concerned both the editors have used 'Active' and 'Passive' forms of sentences. The researchers opted for the passive constructions by both the newspapers as passive sentences are, mostly, vague and provide an unclear message. According to Frantzen, (n.d) "...too often it is abused and it obscures the real subject and action of the sentence. The passive voice also becomes general and vague" (para. 19). Thus, the researchers have chosen passive sentences to explore the hidden ideologies of the particular media houses.

In the current study, the researchers found that both the newspapers have used passive voice in abundance in their editorials. But while using passive constructions, most of the time *The News* has kept either the agent or experiencer of the action general, vague and undefined or has never mentioned any as in the following, "...over 20 bodies had been recovered from the rubble...", "horrific scenes were witnessed on television..." "three journalists were killed last year..." "...details of the financing terms have also not been shared for what should be considered the largest bilateral agreement..." 'labourers were primarily targeted', "The PM is now expected to ask the US to put pressure on India over ceasefire violations on the Line of Control..."

However, on the other hand, *Dawn* has, most of the time, mentioned experiencers or agents in passive constructions, and furthermore, *Dawn* has defined, and specified the experiencers or the agents of the actions, as in the following examples; 'but the blame must also be shared by the government authorities'. "Pakistan's manufacturing sector has been subjected to some enormous strains over the years, pushing much of it into the informal sector". "the Khairpur tragedy must surely not be treated as an aberration...", "once again, the reasons will be disputed", "...Al Qaeda threat and Al Qaeda's pre-eminence has been usurped by IS,..." "given that the mechanism has already been tried and tested and produced positive results for many years, it is a sound offer", "a final verdict can only be arrived at once a proper investigation has been carried out"

Both the newspapers have made use of similar syntactic structures in phrasing their editorials, however, most of the passive constructions by *The News* appear to be elusive than the ones published by *Dawn*. The newspapers in different editorials, with varying intensity or severity, have shown their organizational ideologies with the help of linguistic manipulation. The issues discussed in the editorials show their linkages with the historical, political, and social events in the past with the help of the indexical used in drafting the editorials. They have not always vividly described the relationship of each event with their

relevant events in the past, but the use of language and the plot described in the editorials do lead the readers toward their pertinent causes lying in the past.

DISCUSSION

Language has been the most effective tool in the hands of media houses across the globe. The use of language in the news items by particular media houses depends upon their perspective regarding the particular event or incident in question. The specific ideology that each media house operates upon has pertinent implications for its operations and publications. The scope of the current study only covers the editorials of two important and famous English newspapers in Pakistan, i.e., *Dawn* and *The News*. The analysis of the thirty editorials in the current study proved that the newspapers, almost always, covertly propagate their organizational ideologies with the use of specific lexical and syntactic structures (Schiffrin, Tannen & Hamilton, 2001; Fairclough, 1995). The editors of these newspapers have divided the people into 'us' vs 'them' with the help of lexical and syntactic structures in the editorials under consideration (van Dijk, 1992).

The newspapers, especially *The News*, abundantly employed fairly vague and abstract lexical items containing general denotative or connotative meanings, which as a result made the editorials appear quite abstract and the issue under discussion, in those editorials, quite normal to the readers (Kasho, 2016; Tsfaty & Cohen, 2013). However, the language used in most of the editorials by *Dawn* has been quite objective and straightforward. In some of the editorials by *Dawn* the editor(s) employed vague terminologies especially jargon which made those particular sentences or paragraphs ambiguous for the readers, however, they were very few in number. Furthermore, under the influence of the organizational ideology, both the newspapers reported the same news, in some of the editorials, with completely opposite connotations placing the readers perplexed (Lemke, 2012). The media houses exert the ideology of their owners or managers through these editorials which seem to be preplanned for a particular audience in mind (Henry & Tator, 2002). The newspapers not only employed particular lexical items, rather they used passive constructions in abundance to navigate the readers according to their will.

The preferred syntactic structures employed in those thirty editorials may not be overtly vague or misleading, however, the use of passive voice and similar syntactic structures that allow omitting part(s) of the sentence leads the readers away from absorbing the news in hand completely. Thus, the editorials under consideration used passive constructions quite a lot which made the editorials misleading and vague to some extent (Frantzen, n.d). The analysis of the data proved that the use of a particular form of language does steer the readers towards the desired destination planned by the editors or their patrons which usually differentiate between us vs them (Afzal et al., 2021; Elyazale, 2014).

CONCLUSION

Language helps one to represent, communicate and propagate his/her perspective of the world. Thus, the choice of words and syntactic structures in the speech or writing of a person shows how s/he views the world around him/her. After going through the thirty editorials, fifteen from *Dawn* and fifteen from *The News*, the researchers to some extent, surfaced their underlying ideology or agenda about the particular issues in hand. The researchers found that the choice of language items, in the editorials under consideration, in both the newspapers on particular issues was totally different and sometimes opposing in manner.

The News mostly used vague and dubious diction throughout its editorials especially in the formation of their titles. Out of fifteen some of them were totally confusing and looked irrelevant to the subject matter in the body of the text. This characteristic of being vague and unspecific in the title formation and massive use of passive structures in the body of the texts represent the biased approach of the newspaper. Because, these vague and indirect elements, in texts, are usually prone to confusion on the part of the readers, which as a result leads the readers to misinterpret the news and form their standpoint on baseless notions. This feature of the language used in the editorial brings a chaotic representation of the real face of any issue or event.

On the other hand, *Dawn* has been quite specific and direct towards its approach to the issues at hand. *Dawn* has used clear and transparent elements for the formation of all five editorial titles. These titles are to the point and relevant to the subject matter in the body of the text, furthermore, reading these titles one can easily understand and predict the issue to be discussed in the body ahead. Thus, the use of direct, clear and precise language in the editorials help the readers to form positive and constructive notion about the issue, person, event or ideology in question.

To sum up the discussion, the researchers found that *Dawn* has been straightforward and does not use language to impose its ideology on the readers, but on the other hand, *The News* uses vague and ambiguous language which fails to communicate the real issue in a true sense as far as the editorials under consideration are concerned, thus, it imposes its ideology on the readers in a subtle way.

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