



EXPLORING LINGUISTIC STRATEGIES IN THE PAKISTANI ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS' EDITORIALS ON PALESTINE ISSUE: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This study investigates the linguistic strategies employed in Pakistani English newspaper editorials to represent the Palestine issue, with specific reference to Dawn and The News during the period 2024–2025. Grounded in Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the research examines how language operates at textual, discursive, and social levels to construct political meanings, reflect ideological positions, and influence public opinion. At the textual level, the study analyses lexico-grammatical features such as evaluative vocabulary, transitivity patterns, modality, and rhetorical devices. At the discursive practice level, it explores processes of intertextuality, sourcing, and framing, while the social practice dimension situates the editorials within broader geopolitical, ideological, and power structures. Adopting a qualitative research design, twelve editorials are purposively selected based on their explicit focus on the Palestine issue and analyzed in detail to uncover recurring discursive patterns. The findings reveal that both newspapers consistently foreground Palestinian suffering, construct Israel as an active agent responsible for violence, and employ moral and legal discourses to challenge dominant Western media representations of the conflict. Rather than presenting the issue as a neutral geopolitical struggle, the editorials frame it as a humanitarian and ethical crisis rooted in systemic injustice. The study concludes that Pakistani English newspaper editorials are ideologically charged texts that play a crucial role in reproducing power relations, resisting hegemonic narratives, and shaping readers' political consciousness regarding the Palestine issue.

Keywords/Phrases: *Critical Discourse Analysis; Rhetorical Devices; Transitivity Pattern; Intertextuality; Geopolitical Struggle.*

Introduction

Language is first and foremost a medium of communication. As language is used one of the main tools for conveying ideas, feelings and emotions by means of employing numerous agreed signs, sounds, gestures, or signs which contain comprehension of meanings in various contexts (Meylani, 2024). It implies that language has numerous functions as propounded by Halliday in his seminal work Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) such as the ideational, interpersonal, and textual, depending upon the context of situation, namely field, tenor, and



mode, respectively. The ideational meta-function relates to field, showing “what is going on” in the process of communication; the interpersonal meta-function associated with tenor, representing “who is involved and how they relate”; and the textual meta-function connected with mode, concerning the role of language in the situation and how the message is structured (Gebhard & Accurso, 2020).

Additionally, linguistic strategies are used to convey thoughts and ideas in order to formulate messages in various sociocultural contexts. Linguistic strategies are defined as the deliberate and goal-oriented use of language to attain communicative purposes in different contexts such as conversation, writing, translation, persuasion, or learning (He et al., 2021). The linguistic strategies are, it means that linguistic strategies play a significant role in different branches of applied linguistics like educational linguistics, multimodality and critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Jha & Tsai, 2025).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a social activity moulded and influenced by the context, institution, and social structures that surround it (Wodak, 2015). Therefore, this study is based on Norman Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which is significant for understanding how editorial texts construct social realities, represent power relationships, and shape public perception about socio-political issues such as the Palestine conflict (Alassiri, 2024). The model consists of three dimensions including Text, Discursive practice and social practice. According to Fairclough “language is dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life.” Text analysis is seen as not only linguistic analysis; it also includes what I have called ‘interdiscursive analysis’, that is, seeing texts in terms of the different discourses, genres and styles they draw upon and articulate together. The term discourse (in what is widely called ‘discourse analysis’) signals the particular view of language in use I have referred to above as an element of social life which is closely interconnected with other elements. My own approach to discourse analysis has been to try to transcend the division between work inspired by social theory which tends not to analyse 2 Introduction texts, and work which focuses upon the language of texts but tends not to engage with social theoretical issues.

Thus, the present study intends to critically analyse the usage of linguistic strategies that play a significant role in newspapers’ editorials to highlight the Palestine issue through the usage of language during the year 2024-2025.

Statement of the Problem

Linguistic strategies are employed as useful tool for analysing various socio-cultural and political issues depicted through the usage of language in different scenarios (Jha & Tsai, 2025). As newspapers’ editors have been publishing editorials and news articles regarding the Palestine issue. In this regard, numerous studies have applied Critical Discourse Analysis models while analysing various issues depicting through media for instance, Critical Discourse Analysis of Pakistani Newspapers Editorials on various socio-political issues in different contexts (Tahir et al., 2021).

Likewise, the Palestine issue is regularly discussed in editorials in Pakistani Media especially in English newspaper such as *Dawn* and *The News*. However, there is a lack of linguistic inquiry into how these editorials construct narrative linguistically regarding the Palestine conflict. The ways in which linguistic strategies remain under-explored such as lexical choices,



modality, transitivity, nominalization, intertextuality, and rhetorical structures are used to position actors, assign blame or victims, and convey political ideologies are particularly poorly understood (Jha & Tsai, 2025; Gul et al., 2023; Hassan et al., 2026; Sajjad et al., 2023).

From a linguistic perspective, the above-mentioned gap indicates, the requirement of in-depth study how newspaper editorials employ words and expressions. In the same vein, the Palestine issue is framed in Pakistani English newspapers through linguistic choices that uncover various underpinned ideas, thoughts and views. However, these discursive strategies come from wider social and political views from Pakistan. Owing to this, there is a need to comprehend how media, language and ideology are associated in the Pakistani context.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to critically examine the linguistic strategies which are employed in the Pakistani English newspaper editorial (*Dawn* and *The News*) regarding the Palestine issue while using Norman Fairclough three-dimensional model. In this research, the researcher will find out the hidden meanings and ideas in newspapers' editorials and how language is used in media and political discussions.

Research Questions

- What linguistic strategies are employed in the Pakistani English Newspapers' (*Dawn & The News*) editorials to highlight the Palestine issue during the year 2024 – 2025?
- How do these linguistic strategies reflect different ideologies while constructing political narratives and shaping public opinion?

Research Objectives

- To identify linguistic strategies employed in the Pakistani English Newspapers' (*Dawn & The News*) editorials to highlight the Palestine issue during the year 2024 – 2025.
- To analyse these linguistic strategies, reflect different ideologies while constructing political narratives and shaping public opinion.

Significance of the Research

This research explores how Pakistani newspapers, specifically *Dawn* and *The News*, uses Fairclough 3Ds model and document analysis technique in their editorial's language to uncover linguistic strategies and hidden ideologies which shapes public opinion on the Palestine issue. By focusing on editorials, which represent the institutional voice of newspapers, the study emphasizes how opinion-making texts function as powerful sites of ideological production. Editorials are not merely informative texts; rather, they actively interpret events and guide readers' understanding of complex political conflicts. Correspondingly, this study has a great contribution for identifying how power structures are covered through discourse. It highlights the role of language as a social practice through which dominance, resistance, and solidarity are constructed and maintained. In the context of international conflicts, such discursive practices often reflect broader political alignments and national interests. This study challenges the notion that media discourse is objective in nature or neutral. Therefore, by applying Fairclough 3Ds model, this study will reveal the ways editors deliberately or unintentionally use language to build a stance, create underlying meanings, and convey information. The analysis will consider textual features such as lexical choices, modality, and framing strategies, alongside discursive and social practices. Likewise, this research is significant because it will provide insights into how Pakistani newspaper's editors represent this issue and the linguistic



choices they make in their editorials. Such insights are valuable for readers, researchers, and media practitioners seeking to understand the persuasive power of media language. Ultimately, this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between media, language, and public opinion, particularly in the context of the Palestine issue, which has been a longstanding point of conflict.

Contribution of the Research

The present study makes several important theoretical, methodological, and contextual contributions to the field of linguistics, particularly Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and media discourse studies. First, at a theoretical level, this research contributes to the growing body of CDA literature by applying Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model to the analysis of Pakistani English newspaper editorials on the Palestine issue.

Third, at a contextual level, the research contributes to understanding how Pakistani English print media constructs narratives around the Palestine issue. Given that Dawn and The News are influential among educated readers, policymakers, and opinion leaders, this study sheds light on how editorial discourse shapes public opinion, legitimizes certain ideological positions, and marginalizes others. By uncovering hidden ideologies and power relations, the research challenges the assumption of media neutrality and highlights the persuasive role of editorial language.

Finally, the study contributes practically by raising critical awareness among readers, journalists, and media practitioners regarding the ideological implications of language use in editorials. It encourages more responsible media consumption and production by emphasizing the role of discourse in shaping political consciousness. Overall, this research enriches scholarly debates on media, ideology, and language, while offering valuable insights into the discursive construction of political realities in Pakistan.

Literature Review

Any oral or written communication that can be employed to express or analyse a variety of concepts is referred to as discourse (Baxter et al., 2015; Gul et al., 2024). It is the language that is utilised in regular contexts, including group interactions or informal conversations. According to Hashmi et al., (2025) discourse can be understood as a form of social activity that constructs, maintains, and reinforces ideas and meanings.

What individuals express through speech and writing often reflects their underlying thoughts and beliefs. According to Teubert (2010), discourse plays a crucial role in understanding the processes involved in the development of both thought and society. Teubert conceptualizes discourse as a set of social practices enacted through various forms of interaction such as conversations realized through utterances or sentences. Power issues are also intrinsically linked to discourse. Discourse is a powerful instrument that uses lexical words, gestures, semiotic features, and all types of spoken or written material to give meaning to the circumstances around a social actor (Van Dijk, 2020).

It is challenging to describe ideology precisely because it is such a vast and vague idea. The way ideology functions in social, political, historical, and cognitive contexts as well as how it is communicated through language should be the focus rather than a rigid definition. According to Van Dijk (1998), its definition remains unclear and confusing; hence there is still no definitive, accepted definition of ideology.

Media and discourse are inextricably linked since media is the major medium used to promote discourses in society. According to Brussel et al. (2019), theorists and practitioners of discourse



studies have overlooked the role of media in modern politics and society. However, scholars argue that traditional discourse theories have often underestimated the central role of media and communication institutions in shaping discourse. Recent studies emphasize that discourse analysis must engage more directly with media structures, practices, and technologies in order to fully explain how meaning and ideology are produced and circulated in society (Wodak, 2024). In this regard, discourse studies can benefit substantially from insights in media and communication research, while media studies, in turn, gain analytical depth through critical discourse analysis.

Several researchers argue that newspaper editorials serve as significant weapons of ideological influence, rather than just informing readers. According to recent research, editorials primarily function as platforms for opinion expression, with readers often placing more credence in the opinions of perceived experts or authoritative speakers (Corner et al., 2021). As editorial writers consistently engage with readers' pre-existing views and emotional sensibility, they progressively gain credibility and influence, making audiences more open to their ideas. Well-known editorialists can attract and maintain readers by continuously reinforcing familiar storylines, which can affect readers' perceptions and judgements over time (Bennett & Livingston, 2018).

A researcher who specializes in critical discourse analysis (CDA) does not only describe or analyse discourse; rather, they actively expose and examine the social inequalities that are entrenched within it. The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework is considered to be an important framework in critical social research since, as stated by Asghar (2013), it also attempts to bring about social change. In his argument, he claims that recent research demonstrates that language and discourse play a key role in shaping social acts, social practices, the allocation of resources, and broader social structures.

In a similar vein, Asghar (2013), emphasizes that although there are numerous approaches to conduct research on socioeconomic disparities, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) explicitly explores these inequalities via the prism of language and discourse. The use of discourse as a vehicle for the reproduction or resistance of power is a potent weapon that frequently results in the formation of social inequality. A significant amount of the power that is possessed by dominant groups in society is a significant factor in determining whether discourse challenges or maintains dominance. When this occurs, critical discourse analysis (CDA) becomes an indispensable tool because it conducts an in-depth analysis of the subtle language characteristics that either help to the reproduction of dominant social systems or to resistance against oppressive forms of power.

The historical dimension of discourse is a principle that is stated in the fifth principle. Because of this, any analysis of speech needs to take into account the historical context in which the text is generated and perceived. The reciprocal rather than deterministic nature of the link between discourse and society is explained by the sixth principle. Rather of being a straightforward cause and effect relationship, Fairclough (1993) describes this relationship as one of mediation. His explanation of this link is further elaborated upon by the concept of "orders of discourse," which describes the manner in which social structures and textual practices interact with one another (Fairclough, 2003).

The fact that CDA is both interpretative and explanatory is yet another fundamental premise of the field. Textual analysis (CDA) seeks to understand texts and explain them within the context of their social settings, as opposed to merely documenting the characteristics of texts. In accordance with Fairclough et al., (2013), these interpretations are not set in stone; rather, they continue to be



adaptable and open to adjustment when new contextual information becomes available. Discourse is seen as a type of social activity, according to the last guiding principle of CDA philosophy. Rather than passively employing language as a neutral instrument, language users actively conduct acts through discourse, according to the critical discourse analysis perspective. According to Fairclough et al., (2013) the purpose of critical discourse analysis (CDA) is to unearth and bring to light the subtly concealed goals, power dynamics, and ideological presumptions that are inherent within discourse.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The current research study adopts qualitative research methods as it facilitates a deeper understanding of the underlying nature of a problem, especially when it cannot be easily quantified or represented through statistical methods (Lim, 2024). Furthermore, the current research study aims to investigate the linguistic strategies through the lens of Fairclough's three-dimensional model consisting of three dimensions.

This study adopts a critical stance toward media texts by recognizing that language both reflects and reproduces social power relations. By employing Critical Discourse Analysis, the research moves beyond surface-level textual interpretation and situates discourse within broader socio-political structures. Qualitative design also enables flexibility in analysis, allowing themes and patterns to emerge organically from the data. Therefore, the nature of the proposed study aligns with the objectives of identifying ideology, power, and persuasion in editorial discourse.

Sampling Technique of the Study

The materials of the proposed study have taken from the Pakistani English newspapers namely, DAWN and The NEWS which have been published in the years 2024 to 2025. For this purpose, in the current study purposive sampling technique is adopted to recognize accessible editorials. Correspondingly, to ensure representativeness and diversity, this current study utilizes purposive sampling method to select editorials from the selected newspaper on Palestine issue including six from last half of 2024 and six editorials from first half of 2025.

Data Collection and Procedures

The data collected from the online archives of the selected newspapers, which has been published in the year of 2024 to 2025. Qualitative research method employed by using a revised version of Norman Fairclough three-dimensional model for the analysis of underlying linguistic strategies and document analysis technique will be used to uncover different ideologies underpinned in the discourse of selected editorials of Pakistani English newspapers' (*Dawn and The News*).

Moreover, the data collection process follows a systematic and organized procedure to ensure consistency and transparency. Editorials are first identified through keyword searches related to the Palestine issue within the digital archives of the selected newspapers. After initial selection, the texts are carefully reviewed to confirm their relevance to the research objectives. The collected data are then organized chronologically to observe patterns in discourse across time. During analysis, each editorial is examined according to the three stages of Fairclough's model: textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice. Notes and coding categories are developed to track recurring linguistic features and ideological themes. This structured procedure helps maintain analytical rigor and reduces interpretive bias. Consequently, the data



collection and analytical process supports a coherent and reliable critical discourse analysis.

Theoretical Framework

The present study is grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), with particular emphasis on Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of discourse analysis. CDA views language not merely as a means of communication but as a form of social practice through which power relations, ideologies, and social identities are constructed and maintained (Zotzmann & O'Regan, 2016). This theoretical perspective is particularly relevant for analyzing media discourse, as newspapers play a significant role in shaping public opinion and reproducing dominant ideological narratives.

Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model provides a comprehensive analytical framework by integrating three interrelated levels of analysis: textual analysis (description), discursive practice (interpretation), and social practice (explanation). At the textual level, the model focuses on linguistic features such as vocabulary, grammar, modality, transitivity, and rhetorical devices used in editorial discourse. This level enables the identification of linguistic strategies through which meanings are produced and ideological positions are embedded.

The second dimension, discursive practice, examines the processes of text production, distribution, and consumption. In the context of newspaper editorials, this dimension highlights how editorial policies, institutional ideologies, and intertextual references influence the construction of discourse (Bonyadi & Samuel, 2013; Gul et al., 2022). It also considers how readers interpret and internalize these representations within a given socio-political context.

The third dimension, social practice, situates discourse within broader social, political, and ideological structures (Martín Rojo, 2001; Gul et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2026). This level allows the study to explore how editorial discourse on the Palestine issue reflects and reinforces power relations, political alignments, and ideological stances within Pakistani society. By employing Fairclough's model, the study systematically connects linguistic choices to social realities, thereby providing a critical understanding of how media discourse shapes public perception and political consciousness.

Discussion and Analysis

Editorial 1: "Never Again" (Dawn, January 17, 2025)

Linguistic Strategies Used to Highlight the Palestine Issue

The editorial "Never Again" utilizes several complex linguistic techniques that amplify the portrayal of Palestinian suffering while undermining the legitimacy of Israeli operations.

Extreme evaluative lexicalization

A prominent strategy is extreme evaluative lexicalization, wherein the conflict is articulated using morally absolute terminology such as "genocide," "killing spree," "monstrous crimes," "murderous ways," and "barbaric onslaughts." These lexical selections not only depict events but also evaluate them. The recurrent use of these terms in the editorial establishes a semantic prosody that invariably links Israel with criminality and ethical violations, therefore precluding impartiality and steering readers towards judgment.

Transitivity selections

The editorial predominantly used transitivity selections that clearly allocate responsibility. Israel is consistently identified as the grammatical subject of violent actions: "Israel's genocide in Gaza," "Israel continued its killing spree," and "Israel must vacate all occupied territories." These active



formulations starkly contrast with the passive forms prevalent in international media (e.g., “people were killed”), which frequently mask agency. By maintaining Israel in the subject position, the editorial guarantees that culpability is clear and consistently emphasized throughout the text.

Ideological Construction, Political Narratives, and Public Opinion Formation

In much greater detail, the linguistic techniques that are highlighted in "Never Again" clearly reflect an ideology that is anti-hegemonic, postcolonial, and based on human rights. The editorial borrows the rhetoric of international humanitarian law by continuously describing Israeli activities as "genocide" and "war crimes." This allows the editorial to situate itself inside a framework that is based on global justice. As a result of this ideological approach, the Palestine question is transformed from a territorial or security dispute into a moral and legal crisis, which in turn shape public opinion toward accountability rather than compromise.

The editorial distinctly embodies an anti-imperialist Ideology, especially in its portrayal of global power dynamics. The assertion that Israel is “shielded by its close friends in Washington” depicts the United States as engaged in violence rather than as an impartial mediator for peace. This framing establishes a political narrative wherein global injustice is perpetuated by imbalanced power dynamics and the selective enforcement of human rights standards. Readers are therefore urged to approach Western diplomacy with suspicion and to scrutinize the credibility of US-led peace proposals. A recurrent ideological theme is the legitimization of Palestinian resistance. The editorial underscores that even the most sophisticated military globally “cannot break the will of an occupied people. This framework utilizes postcolonial resistance narrative, portraying resistance as an unavoidable and ethically justifiable reaction to occupation. The editorial reframes public understanding of resistance, emphasizing sacrifice, tenacity, and an unwavering commitment to land, transforming the narrative from radicalism to survival and dignity.

Editorial 2: Palestine’s Plight (Dawn, June 17, 2024)

Linguistic Strategies Used to Highlight the Palestine Issue

The editorial “Palestine’s Plight” employs a range of linguistic strategies that foreground the humanitarian and moral dimensions of the Gaza crisis.

Emotive lexicalization

One prominent strategy is emotive lexicalization, achieved through the use of strongly evaluative terms such as “continuing massacre,” “brutalised inhabitants,” “Israeli aggressors,” “atrocious campaign of death,” and “blood-soaked campaign.” These lexical choices construct the events in Gaza as deliberate and violent acts rather than neutral military operations. By repeatedly emphasizing suffering, death, and brutality, the editorial intensifies the emotional impact of the discourse and draws readers’ attention to the severity of the Palestinian plight.

Foregrounding of vulnerable social actors

Another significant linguistic strategy is the foregrounding of vulnerable social actors, particularly children and orphans. Phrases such as “thousands of Palestinian children have either been orphaned, or themselves been killed” personalize the conflict and humanize its consequences. This strategy shifts the focus from abstract geopolitics to individual suffering, thereby strengthening the humanitarian appeal of the text. The contrast between global Muslim celebrations during Eid and the suffering of Palestinians further amplifies this effect by juxtaposing joy and festivity with grief and loss.



Ideologies in the Editorial

In response to the second research question, the linguistic strategies used in “Palestine’s Plight” clearly reflect a moral-humanitarian and accountability-based ideology. The editorial frames the Palestine issue as not merely a political conflict but a moral crisis that demands action from the global community, particularly the Muslim world. By criticizing Muslim countries for their “feebleness” and failure to use their “economic and geopolitical clout,” the editorial constructs a political narrative of missed responsibility and collective moral failure. This discourse challenges the dominant narrative of helplessness and instead emphasizes agency and accountability.

Editorial 3: “Stop the Genocide” (The News, Ahmer Bilal Soofi, June 2, 2024)

The article “Stop the Genocide” presents a legalistic and morally charged critique of Israel’s military actions in Gaza, situating them within the framework of international law, genocide conventions, and United Nations resolutions. Unlike emotionally driven editorials, this text relies heavily on legal discourse, institutional authority, and historical documentation to construct its argument. The author positions Israel’s actions as violations of binding international norms while framing Palestinian resistance as legally permissible under international law. By invoking courts, treaties, and resolutions, the article seeks to transform moral outrage into a juridical claim for accountability.

Linguistic Strategies used in Editorial

Lexical Choices and Legal Register

The article's official legal registry is one of its distinguishing characteristics. The discourse is dominated by terms like "genocide," "apartheid," "illegal occupation," "provisional measures," "war crimes," "crimes against humanity," and "customary international law." These intentional word choices serve to legitimize the Gaza conflict.

The phrase "genocide" is used frequently, which is very noteworthy. In contrast to sentimental editorials, this article clearly cites the Genocide Convention (1948) and establishes the word in legal terminology. As a result, the accusation becomes a legal claim supported by international law rather than only a rhetorical censure.

Quantification and Evidentiary Language

The article strengthens its factual credibility by using dates and numerical data, such as "casualties... crossed 35,000," "December 29, 2023," and "75 years of apartheid." By connecting the content with judicial reasoning rather than opinion journalism, this tactic improves the sense of objectivity and seriousness. The legal tone is further reinforced by lists of ICJ reliefs (nine numbered points). Linguistically, enumeration communicates institutional legitimacy and procedural seriousness.

Transitivity and Attribution of Agency

The text uses active constructions to assign responsibility clearly:

- “Israel continues to kill Palestinians”
- “Israel refused to abide by the clear directions of the ICJ”
- “Israel is occupying Palestinian territories illegally”

These interpretations highlight Israel as the main perpetrator of crime and bloodshed. In contrast, Palestinians are portrayed as either legitimate resisters under international law or victims of occupation. A distinct moral and legal hierarchy between oppressor and oppressed is created by this unequal transitivity.



Modality and Certainty

The essay presents arguments as legal facts rather than opinions using the high-certainty modality. There is minimal opportunity for interpretation when statements like "the principle of armed resistance have now become part of customary international law" and "the permissibility of armed resistance... is acknowledged in international law" are made. The discourse's authority is strengthened by this strong epistemic certainty, which also places it in line with judicial standards rather than journalistic ones.

Editorial 4: “Calling a Genocide a Genocide” (The News; Dr Ejaz Hussain, Dawn, November 17, 2024)

The editorial “Calling a Genocide a Genocide” discusses the Riyadh summit held by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Arab League on November 12, 2024, which addressed the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and Lebanon. The text highlights collective condemnation of Israel’s actions and frames the attacks as genocidal, emphasizing moral, legal, and political accountability. Unlike neutral reporting, the editorial is evaluative and persuasive, presenting Saudi Arabia, the OIC, and other Muslim-majority states as authoritative voices while framing Israel and Western powers as morally responsible for continuing human suffering. The editorial combines political analysis with human rights discourse to shape public opinion and reinforce Islamic solidarity around the Palestine issue.

Linguistic Strategies Highlighting the Palestine Issue

Evaluative Lexical Choices

The editorial features language that is highly judgmental and morally charged in order to define the conduct of the Israeli government. Words and words such as "horrific situation," "collective genocide," "dehumanizing actions," and "violative of international law and humanitarian principles" aim to condemn Israel on a moral level and bring attention to the critical need for humanitarian assistance. The usage of the word "genocide" multiple times serves the purpose of elevating the conversation from a politically critical stance to one that is morally and legally condemning. As a result of the editorial's framing of the strikes as crimes against humanity rather than as regular military activities, the reader is directed toward making ethical and political judgments.

Modality and Moral Imperatives

The editorial utilizes deontic modality to express obligation and urgency. Statements like “calling for immediate international intervention to terminate the conflict and rehabilitate displaced individuals” and “urged the international community to impose sanctions on Israel” serve as prescriptive directions. The language selections establish the OIC and Arab League as moral authority, prompting readers to conform to humanitarian standards and international law.

Contrastive Framing

The moral obligation of states with a predominantly Muslim population is contrasted with the support of Israel by Western nations. Contradictions in Western diplomacy are brought to light by phrases such as "OIC-Arab League criticism of Washington's unwavering support for Israel" and "Despite being a close ally of the United States, the Kingdom has recently pursued an assertive foreign policy." By employing this linguistic method, moral double standards are brought to light, which in turn reinforces the editorial's ideological perspective.



Discussion

Using Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis, this study looked at how Pakistani English-language editorials talk about the Palestine–Israel conflict using certain language choices and ideological frames. The results show that the chosen editorials consistently use evaluative phrasing, clear agency assignment, moral modality, historical framing, and intertextuality to highlight Palestinian suffering call Israeli military actions into question and counter dominant Western narratives. These findings align closely with the objectives of Critical Discourse Analysis, which views language as a social practice deeply embedded in power relations and ideology (Fairclough, 1993; van Dijk, 1998; Nigar et al., 2025; Ahmed et al., 2025; Habib et al., 2024).

Linguistic Strategies and Ideological Positioning

A prominent finding of the current study is the pervasive use of severe evaluative language to morally denounce Israeli activities in Gaza. Lexical terms including genocide, ethnic cleansing, mass murder, extermination, and barbaric violence frequently appear in various editorials and further, this supports earlier CDA research which argues that lexical choice is a powerful ideological tool used by media institutions to guide reader interpretation and moral judgment (Fowler, 2013). Recent research on media discourse regarding Gaza indicates that non-Western media frequently employ overtly moral and humanitarian language to challenge Western security-oriented narratives (Kareem & Najm, 2024).

This study advances the existing scholarship by demonstrating that Dawn and The News do not simply report events; they actively recontextualize the conflict as a moral and legal dilemma, rather than a bilateral military struggle. This aligns with Wodak's (2020) assertion that modern political discourse increasingly employs moralization to validate ideological positions, particularly in conflicts characterized by uneven power dynamics.

Agency, Transitivity, and Accountability

Another important conclusion is that active transitivity structures are always used to assign responsibility. Israel is repeatedly positioned as the grammatical subject of violent actions ("Israel has killed...", "Israel is carrying out ethnic cleansing..."), while Palestinians are represented primarily as victims or as legitimate resisters. This pattern is very different from the passive constructions that are common in Western international media, where agency is often hidden (for example, "people were killed") (Van Dijk, 1998). These results support recent CDA research that contends agency suppression is a principal tactic employed by dominant media to shield influential figures from accountability. By keeping clear agency attribution, Pakistani editorials fight against dominant rhetoric and support a story based on accountability. This aligns with Fairclough (1993) assertion that grammatical choices are never neutral but are ideologically motivated and socially consequential.

Summary of the Findings

This study analysed a collection of editorials from Dawn and The News to investigate the linguistic construction and ideological framing of the Palestine–Gaza conflict in Pakistani English-language print media. Employing Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis, the results demonstrate consistent and systematic linguistic patterns that influence ideological meanings, political narratives, and public perceptions concerning the Gaza situation. The analysis reveals a significant employment of evaluative and emotionally potent vocabulary at



the textual level. Terms like genocide, ethnic cleansing, mass murder, occupation, and war crimes are frequently utilized to characterize Israeli operations, thus presenting the fight as a moral and humanitarian disaster instead of a standard military confrontation. Quantification techniques, frequently associated with women, children, and civilians, humanize statistical data and enhance emotional engagement. Moreover, metaphorical terms (e.g., graveyard, war machine, genocide) and sarcasm are employed to intensify the portrayal of violence and undermine official narratives. A significant discovery pertains to transitivity and the allocation of agency. In the editorials, Israel and its Western allies especially the United States are consistently portrayed as active perpetrators of violence, whilst Palestinians are predominantly seen as victims of aggression or as legitimate agents of resistance. The regular avoidance of passive constructs guarantees plain attribution of responsibility, in contrast to international media practices that frequently conceal agency. This language structure supports a distinct oppressor–oppressed dichotomy.

Conclusion

This study aimed to critically analyse the linguistic methods utilized in Pakistani English newspaper editorials, notably Dawn and The News, regarding the representation of the Palestine issue during the years 2024–2025. Utilizing Norman Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis, the study examined the role of language at textual, discursive, and social levels in the construction of political narratives, the reproduction of ideological stances, and the influence on public opinion.

The findings reveal that the linguistic tactics highlighted are intricately connected to Pakistan's socio-political setting, ideological orientations, and collective perspectives on the Palestine issue. The editorials illustrate fundamental power dynamics and ideological conflicts by crafting narratives of victimization, accountability, defiance, and ethical duty. By employing recurrent discursive patterns, these works facilitate the normalization of specific political stances while indirectly challenging others. Thus, editorial discourse not only mirrors social realities but also plays a significant role in their formation.

This study substantiates the primary assertion of Critical Discourse Analysis that language functions as a social practice through which power and ideology are generated, sustained, and contested. The use of Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Model demonstrates the interconnection between micro-level language choices and macro-level social structures and ideological developments. The study challenges the presumption of media neutrality and underscores the significant impact of editorial language on popular perception of foreign wars.

The findings indicate that Pakistani English-language editorials do not simply report on the Gaza crisis; they actively formulate a counter-hegemonic discourse that contests Western media hegemony, undermines Israeli state narratives, and redefines public perception of Palestine as a global moral, legal, and historical concern. The editorials serve as potent tools for shaping opinions through consistent language and ideological techniques, promoting justice, resistance, and global accountability.

Implication of the Study

The results of this study have substantial consequences for several stakeholders, including academics, media professionals, and politicians, especially in the fields of linguistics, media studies, and political communication. This study critically analyzes the linguistic methods utilized



in Pakistani English newspaper editorials regarding the Palestine issue, emphasizing the complex interplay between language, ideology, and the shaping of public opinion.

Theoretical Implication

This research enhances the domain of Critical conversation Analysis (CDA) by illustrating the relevance of Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model to media conversation within the Pakistani context. It highlights the intersection of textual, discursive, and social activities in generating ideological meanings, providing a refined comprehension of how editorial language operates not just as a means of information distribution but also as a medium for ideological positioning. The research further advances CDA literature by offering empirical data about how linguistic strategies such as lexical selection, modality, transitivity, nominalization, and intertextuality influence public perception in the realm of international conflicts.

Policy and Public Discourse Implications:

The study possesses significant societal relevance, illustrating that media discourse is crucial in influencing political awareness and public perceptions of global concerns. Policymakers and civil society actors can gain from these findings by critically assessing media portrayals and acknowledging the impact of editorial framing on public perception. The findings highlight the significance of media literacy, urging readers to engage with editorial content while critically recognizing the underlying ideologies and power dynamics.

Recommendations

Fairclough's Three Dimensions of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) suggest that this study offers a comprehensive qualitative examination of the linguistic strategies utilized in editorial content concerning the political context in Palestine inside Pakistani media. The results offer extensive insights into the impact of language on public opinion and its reflection of ideological positions, along with several opportunities for more study. Future research should expand the analytical framework of this study to include a range of newspapers, particularly those published in Urdu and regional languages, which presumably deploy distinct linguistic tactics and target varied audiences.

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