Global Educational Studies Review
GESR

Cite Us

Obfuscating Agency in Pakistani Newspaper Reporting: A Discourse-based Perspective

Tazanfal Tehseem	Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: tazanfal@ymail.com *(Corresponding Author)*
Mubina Talaat	Professor, Department of English, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan.

Abstract: *This paper investigates the use of strategies to obfuscate agency such as metonymic expressions, passive structures and nominalization as a resource for constructing knowledge in media discourses. The methodological framework of the study is inspired by Halliday's (2004) concept of grammatical metaphor. Linguistic choices play a critical role in facilitating ideological information flow, for example, nominalization structure the information in ways which allow writers' perspective on events to be conveyed to the reader (Halliday and Martin, 1993). The data for this study come from three Pakistani daily English newspapers: Dawn, the News and the Nation, selected on the basis of their wide circulation. A sample analysis has confirmed the working hypothesis that nominalizations are useful in abstracting and classifying actions and events in order to build and organize media discourses (for a fuller account see Fairclough 2010). The study explores the lexico-grammatical patterns which have been deployed to build ideological positions, maintain power relations and relate with the literature in the field that journalists use in order to inculcate particular socio-political morals in the consumers.*

Key Words: Nominalisations, Ideology, Critical Linguistics, Lexicogrammar and Media Discourses

Introduction

This paper investigates the use of strategies (non-congruent) like metonymic expressions, passive structures and nominalizations as a resource for constructing knowledge and obfuscating agency in media discourses. '*Nominalizations play a critical role in facilitating ideological information flow and structure the information in ways which allow writers' perspective on events to be conveyed to the reader*' (Halliday and Martin, 1993 p.22). Therefore, in critical linguistics, the efforts to explore the roles that journalistic discourses play in (re)producing social realities and values highly depend on the analysis of abstracted presentations of participants in their discursive socio-political roles. Kress (1983) argues that nominalizations are likely to be used by newspapers for the purpose of achieving ideological aims and objectives. The central actions are frequently presented by the use of nominalizations which thereby omit the actor and leave the readers in doubt for the purpose of manipulating the opinion.

Fowler (1991) examined the function that linguistic structures perform in order to construct the ideas in newspapers, keeping in view the very fact that language used by the media is never neutral, but is rather *a 'highly constructive mediator'*. Also, he (ibid) points out that news selection is a process complex in a mechanism which is most likely to be based on editorial stances and subjective criteria of the writing journalist. The ideology embedded in

news reporting becomes visible in the language by use of certain tools such as *'transitivity'*, which aims at exploring the designation of roles of agents to different participants and is, therefore, *'ideologically significant'* (Fowler 1991, 71–76). Also, he (ibid) indicates that the language of the newspapers constitutes *'constructed stories'* represented from a specific point of view under the influence of a certain ideology and may aim to demonize or defame the individuals such as politicians.

Review of the Related Literature

Critical discourse analysis, the way it is practised is the combination of approaches to language analysis that supports linguistic analysis of texts with their sociological interpretations. Fairclough (1988) states that CDA is based on power (re)production and its sustainability over the masses to realize a particular socio-political stance. During the last twenty-five years much of the research work has been carried out in the field of grammatical metaphor within the framework of functional grammar (e.g. Halliday 1985/94; Halliday and Matthiessen 1999, 2004/14; Ravelli 1988; Ravelli and Ellis 2004; Simon-Vandenbergen, et.al. 2003; Chen and Foley 2004, and Thompson 2009). Among these cited studies majority of the work focus on the English language and very little research has been carried out in the other languages. Previous works on this aspect are mainly concerned with developing a kind of relationship between nominalisation, register variables and metafunctions. Ravelli (1988) finds that such kind of constructions serves as a resource for deploying interpersonal metafunction and Halliday (1993) argues that nominalisation plays a key role in constructing scientific knowledge. Martin's (1993) analysis of the semantic features of language in science and history shows that

"[n]ominalisation offers different construction in different two registers. In the scientific discourse, they help in building up the knowledge focusing on events rather than entities and in the history discourse abstractions serve

construing causality and maintaining objectively logical arguments" (p.46).

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) *"grammatical metaphor serves at the two metafunctions in terms of its function i.e. ideational and interpersonal"* (p.224) but keeping in view the space and scope of the present study we will only concentrate on the non-congruent expressions used to obfuscate agency which is the construct of grammatical metaphor and serves at the ideational level.

Billing (2008) himself in spite of deploying grammatical metaphors for functions of organizing texts declares that this aspect of linguistics i.e. nominalization is quite perplexing and ambiguous. He (ibid) argues that *"just because many linguists habitually use 'nominalization' and other terms in this way – just because there are communities of scholars regularly writing in these ways – this does not make their use any more valid"* (p.10). Fairclough (2003, pp.12–13) states that this kind of non-congruent way helps to transfer a clause into a noun-like or nominal entity. Also, he (1995) further adds that print media reporting brings important elements within research on the contemporary process of socio-cultural change for highlighting the world presented in terms of entities. Hanretty and Hermann (2010) investigated the use of nominalization in Italian newspapers as a tool of radicalization. It was observed, that the use of nominalization for the purpose of signifying the religious and ethnic connotations in the Italian press increased extravagantly over time to such an extent that it became a usual habit of reporting news involving immigrants and individuals of a minority group.

Research Methodology and the Framework

Pakistan is a country of multilingual people where many local and (inter) national newspapers are published on daily basis. Among the different publication houses, three are very prominent namely Jang Group of Publications, Nawaiwaqt Group of Publications and Dawn Group are among the main groups on the basis of their daily circulation. Generally speaking, the Jang group is known as the left-

wing voice and Nawaiwaqt propagates the right-wing stance and the Dawn group is known for promoting the pro-American stance (Tehseem, 2013). But the main objective of this study is not to make any deductions regarding the different newspapers' stances but rather to build a general corpus which studies the use of patterns that the journalists construe in order to obfuscate agency. While reporting any sensitive issue journalists intentionally use devices which help them portray a particular ideology. For examples,

- *[t]he failure to bring Mukhtar Mai`s attackers to justice, even if doing so would require further investigation, is a bitter pill to swallow |Dawn| December 31, 2012|.*

The journalist has deliberately used nominalization in order to hide law enforcement agencies which had failed to bring the accused to the court of law. Journalistically, the newspaper language especially the headlines needs to be brief, punchy and packed so we should expect to find out certain patterns which allow the journalists to employ certain ideological assumptions as given in the following.

Brevity/abstraction: *Suffocation causes her death* |The News| January 03, 2007|
Foregrounding: *Internal injuries caused her death* |The Nation| September 28, 2010|
Implicit Reporting: *She died in cardiac arrest |Dawn| December 29, 2012|*

The above three examples have been taken from the portrayal of rape victims in Pakistani news reporting. All three examples show the cause of death of a victim. Also, these examples particularly serve characteristics of the journalistic language. In the example 01 and 03, the use of nominalisation serves two important purposes: firstly, it helps in creating brevity and secondly it allows the journalists to hide agency because the fuller reading of the news tells us that the perpetrator after raping the girl put the pillow on her face and caused her death. In the third example, the cause of death is reported as cardiac arrest which again

was the result of brutal rape violence. Interestingly, the second example portrays the foregrounded information. Here the cause of death is internal injuries. In fact, the victim suffered a violent gang rape that caused her severe internal injuries which resulted in her death. Conclusively, all three examples show foregrounded implicit reality which helps in interpreting a particular stance and ideology.

Data Interpretations and Findings

It remains a fact well acknowledged both by journalists and critical discourse analysts that whenever crucial decisions are made by the government and politicians they use media as a tool in order to manipulate public opinion about any particular kind of socio-political event up ahead which may be that of war, legislation, or even elections. In a study of war reporting, Richardson (2005) explores the case of US and Britain's war propaganda and what was needed to justify the invasion of Iraq and noted that like other strikes this also needed to be conformed and the masses were to be taken into confidence through an abstract use of language. Also, he (ibid) suggests that

"[d]uring wars, journalists are exposed to propaganda from all sides, most notably from organizations and institutions with a stake in the killing … unfortunately journalism becomes shaped and driven by this propaganda" [p.77].

Therefore, to convince the general public, such discourse is used which is structured upon the rhetoric pattern as suggested by Aristotle, which contains three elements i.e. *logos:* the structure of a statement and the way it draws upon good reasoning, *ethos:* the character of the person who is arguing and how much will he be influential in order to make people incline, and *pathos:* usage of themes in a statement which is emotional in nature in order to make audience emotionally inclined towards the statement due to the emotional element. Bell (1991, p.189) suggests that headlines are a *"part of news rhetoric whose function is to attract the reader".* Moreover, not only these but news headlines serve two functions. One is called a semantic function that is related to the 'referential text' while the second aims at the

reader, the addressee and is called a pragmatic function.

Metonymic expressions can be used for several purposes which include obfuscating the agency which refers to the act of referring to something by something else that is closely connected with it, for instance using the White House for the American government. Likewise, nominalizations and passive expressions find their use for the same purpose. The sole purpose of making fair use of such linguistic devices is to 'shield' the agency that is responsible for a particular kind of action and leave it to public intuition.

In addition, the techniques like coding and quantifying the proposed content of news reporting help the analysts to explore implicit agendas. Therefore, manual coding in terms of agency reporting indicates some interesting patterns of ideological meanings across the selected texts. For example, Dawn has shown more instances of abstractions while the Nation remained on the lower level of frequency distribution except in the case of metonymic expressions. This trend demonstrates its overall policy that it hardly obfuscates agency except under special circumstances.
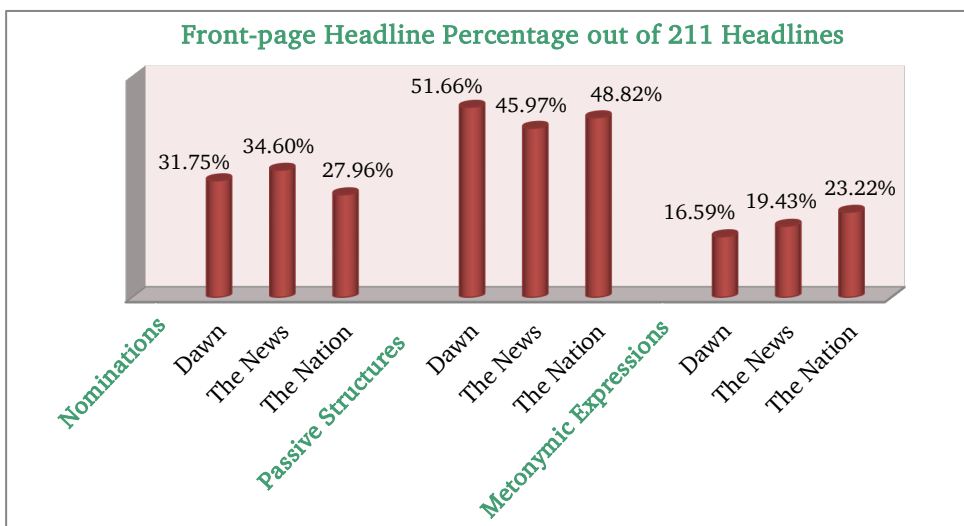

Figure 1: Frequency Types of the Agency Obfuscating Patterns in News Headlines

Figure: 1 shows the frequency profiles of the agency obfuscating patterns in Pakistani journalistic discourse. In terms of news headlines, a high frequency of nominalisations appear in The News. Those are partially due to the lack of space, style and brevity and partially because of portraying detached news reporting. Coming to editorials the high frequency of abstractions occurs in Dawn. So, we can report that a greater percentage of nominalisations occur in Dawn editorials. This is very rewarding from the CDA perspective because those patterns help in hiding agency from the ideological perspective.

Similarly, journalists use more passive structures in news headlines compared to the editorials- see Table 5.1. This is not a surprising figure because news headlines by default make news more catching and interesting for the readers but from the CDA perspective themes like violence and terrorism following the passive structures where agents are either deleted or hidden. Further, Figure 2, below shows that metonymic expressions are more frequent in newspaper editorials than the headlines. We can inform the readers that patterns that help to obfuscate agency portray news reporting as more detached, depersonalized, implicit and abstract.
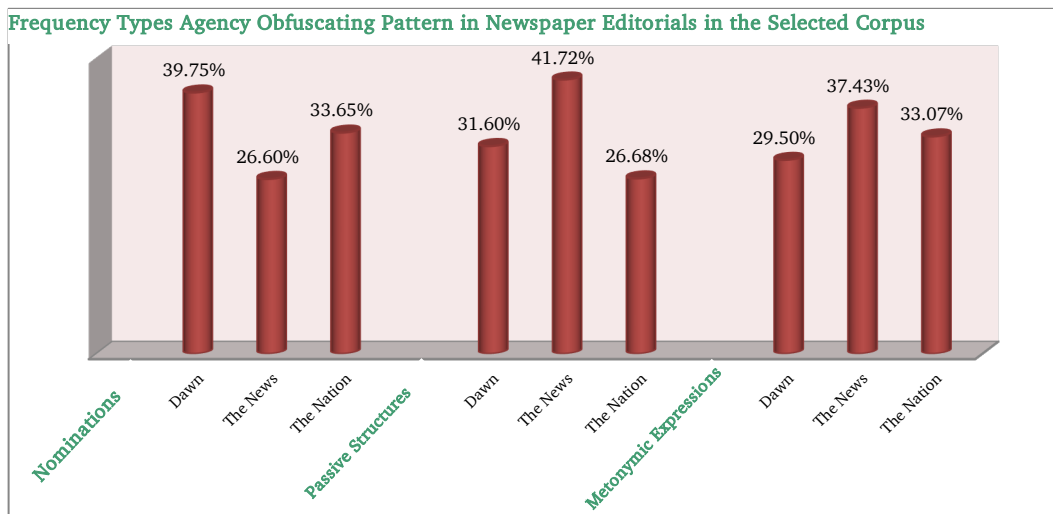
Figure 2: Frequency Types of the Agency Obfuscating Patterns in Editorials

As a careful examination of the frequency distribution in the two figures above shows a significant newspaper output both for the headlines and editorials. This appears somehow clumsy not to associate any ideological assumptions with such choices because those are influenced by particular preferences especially for reporting war against terrorism where we have greater frequency distribution. In the following sections, we will support our arguments with some examples for the readers.

Working-out Metonymic Expressions

It would be justified to claim that all the news reporting circled for my study reflect marked newspaper stance and ideology. Linguistically, ideology is incorporated through certain textual patterns and metonymy is one of the same. Theoretically, metonymy is slightly different from metaphor but by no means narrower than a metaphor, and metonymy is created when one entity relates to another so understood by that. So, metonymy is a useful tool commonly used for creating ambiguity in news stories. For instance, the presidency is used for the president itself. Generally, offices, institutions and responsibilities for the people concerned are the most frequent metonymic expressions in newspapers. For example, the

following news report uses a metonymic expression. *"Rupee comes under huge pressure"* |The News| January 08, 2012, |.

By deploying figurative language journalists involve the readers to make reasoned deductions of The News reporting and this is a very common notion in political linguistics. In the given example, instead of using a direct reference to Pakistan's economy journalist has employed a metonymic expression that the *rupee comes under pressure*. It means that due to certain fiscal policies Pakistan's economy is under pressure. Therefore, I can say that when metonymy is used in political discourse hidden or implicit meanings are always there and in political linguistics, we endeavour to explore those implicit realities. In the following, some examples from the data have been highlighted in order to support my findings.

"Firing Kills Three at Wedding" [The Nation April 24, 2012]

In the example mentioned above, the metonymic expression has been used and the agency of action (killing) has been obscured by replacing it with the noun (firing) used by the agency to perform the action which resulted in the death of people at the wedding. As it is observed from the above headline, the agent

responsible for the firing has not been mentioned. Moreover, the number of people who are killed is pushed behind and the main importance is given to 'firing' but nobody is held accountable for the action. So, in order to find out who is responsible for the act one will have to go into details. These kinds of strategies are a part of the propagandist program being exploited by journalists to manipulate the views of the public.

"Parachinar Suicide Blast Claims at Least 23 Lives" [Dawn February 18, 2012]

Also, yet again, in the example mentioned above the agency has been obscured and the people responsible for the blast have not been referred to so there is no information on who is responsible for the blast and we find a direct reference to the *'Parachinar suicide blast'*. Instead of reporting the criminal, it is observed that the event is given 'prime importance' and the number of people being killed is pushed to the 'periphery.' Thus the name of the person who is responsible for the 'killing' of twenty-three people is artistically hidden. Not only this but it can be seen that the use of the verb *'claims'* instead of '*kill*' '*murder*' *and* '*execute*' is a vigilant and guarded lexical selection that is useful in moulding the opinion of the general public.

"Presidency Denies Report on Army Chief's Remarks" [The News January 15, 2012]

The above-quoted clause is starting from a metaphoric entity i.e. *Presidency* (derived from the quality of being *President*) which in the present case is labelled as a metonymic expression. The basic agenda of employing the metaphoric expression here is to obfuscate the agency. Instead of directly mentioning the name of the President of that time i.e. Zardari the journalist employed a metonymic expression. The headline refers to the incident where President Zardari and General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani had a meeting and a section of the media had conjectured about what had happened in the meeting but afterwards, President denies any such report. By using the metaphoric expressions of both Zardari and Kayani their status is dignified.

"Govt. adds Fuel to Nation's Misery" [Dawn April 01, 2012]

The above-mentioned headline is quite rich in metaphors. When observed minutely, it can be seen that it takes starts from the lexical item 'government' and instead of holding only the then government accountable for the present condition of the state the journalist has said that the entire institution of government is responsible for inflicting miseries on the people of Pakistan. The word 'fuel' has been used as a metaphor which implies that not only government has raised the prices of petroleum products but day by day the government is inflicting new misery upon the Pakistani nation. The rhetoric is very beautifully structured. The news report is presented in a manner that the agency is also obfuscated and fuel is employed as a metaphor that not only the prices of fuel are raised but the actions of the government are adding fuel to the fire.

"Talks End Strike, Protests" [The News January 03, 2012]

The above-quoted headline is very beautiful in the manner that a metonymic expression is employed in the initial position of the headline. Though short but the structure is designed in a manner that draws the reader's attention at the first sight. The journalist says that *talks end the strike* but neither are we told between whom these talks took place nor do we come to know about the whereabouts of the talks. Again, this is a joined sentence which is actually a combination of two that first 'talks end strike' and second 'talks end protests'. So, both sentences are joined into one statement which has more emphasis than if they are stated separately.

"Extremist Ideology has Killed Thousands of Pakistanis" [Dawn May 03, 2011]

In the above clause from *Dawn* a metaphoric entity is employed in order to shield the 'agency'. The person is replaced by an abstract entity i.e. extremist ideology in place of Osama

Bin Laden to whom the journalist is, in reality, ascribing the event which in the current scenario has 'killed thousands of Pakistanis'. Another implication drawn from the metaphoric expression used is that Osama Bin Laden is not only the name of one person but the name that embodies a complete ideology and the ideology is not a simple one but is referred to as 'extremist ideology' by the journalist.

"Dead Bodies Generating Hatred in Balochistan: CJ" [The Nation April 04, 2012]

The above headline from *The Nation* is employing a metonymic expression in the prime position to unclear the agency. The journalist is giving no hint or makes no mention of the agent who is accountable for the action. The 'consequence' or the 'result' i.e. dead bodies of the activity (unknown) which is obfuscated is given the main position. In fact, referring to the Pakistan army's huge massacre in Balochistan which has turned people against it the journalist wants to voice that it's not the case where people are against the army as an institution rather those are their unlawful acts which are instigating people so those must be stopped. The use of dead bodies in the initial position of a headline is a kind of daunting activity which captures the attention of the readers and implies an element of ideological reference at the same time.

"The Alarming Escalations and Tensions between Islamabad and Pindi have Promoted a Frenzy of Speculation" [The News December 23, 2011]

The above-mentioned headline deals with the issue of alleged conflict that may arise in the future between 'Islamabad' (Parliament/Presidency) and 'Pindi' (GHQ/Army). The headline is obscure as the tensions have not been mentioned. Moreover, the socio-political circumstances that prevailed during that time are not referred to. In addition, the question arises about the 'frenzy of speculation' and what speculations were

made. The only thing that makes references towards the institutions are the names of the cities 'Islamabad' and 'Pindi' as these are used as symbols of the Democratic and Military institutions of the country, respectively. These symbols of city names are frequently used in journalistic discussions when the purpose is to indirectly refer to both institutions without naming a single person which may most probably be either Prime Minister (Islamabad) or Army Chief (Pindi).

Use of Passive Structures in News Reporting

Passive construction is one of the most important rhetoric used by journalists in news reporting with the main purpose to hide the agency. Not only the simple passive structures but agent-less passives are rather most frequently found in reporting, more specifically in The News where the agent responsible for the happening is one having power, for instance, US, government, army, etc. Moreover, there are media groups aligning with different political parties so they promote news accordingly and promote propaganda by making use of various rhetoric and linguistic techniques like back-grounding, parallelism, point of view, agent-less passives, etc. A careful examination of the data reveals that journalists have employed a significant percentage of passive structures in order to report implicit information - see Figures1 and 2 above for a fuller description. Also, the careful analysis of the content has revealed that most of the themes like terrorism and violence have been reported by using passive structures. For example, "*15 killed in US drone attack*" |The News| June 09, 2012|. Here, the use of the preposition 'in' is highly ideological; therefore, we can easily work out the agency by replacing the preposition 'in' with 'by' which has been employed implicitly. Linguistically, this is most unusual to present violence or terrorism by using transitive verbs. Therefore, journalists mostly employ passive structures in order to remain objective or make any foregrounded information for the readers. Evidently, the agentless passive structure is comparatively unmarked in relation to other choices like

nominalizations due to its frequent use. In the following some examples have been elaborated to support my findings.

"Policeman Shot Dead in Quetta" [Dawn February 07, 2012]

In the above headline, it can be observed that the statement is in passive construction and *agent-less passive* is employed in order to convey the information to the reading public. The journalist informs us that 'policeman shot dead' but the point of critical importance is that 'policeman' is 'shot dead' and when a policeman is shot dead then it is clear that there should be some agent who is responsible for the 'shooting dead' of the policeman. A policeman cannot be shot dead or killed by himself. So, the information provided by the journalist is ideologically hinted through the circumstantial element 'in Quetta' meaning under the sectarian killings and gives an abstracted view to the reader as to who is the agent responsible for the action who is obfuscated by the use of an agent-less passive.

"New York Mosque Firebombed in 'Hate Crime' Spree" [The News January 03, 2012]

The above-mentioned headline has been constructed passively which is done for the purpose of obscuring rather than hiding the agency. The headline reveals that a mosque in 'New York' has been 'firebombed' in the 'hate crime spree' where the agent who is responsible for the action (firebombing) of the mosque is unknown and hence interpretation is up to the reader. This sort of construction not only obscures the agency but also inflicts the reader with confusion about the identity of the agent(s). In this specific case, the action (firebombing of the mosque) has been done by some unknown agent in New York which has been labelled as a 'hate crime', this is mind-boggling as the readers will be under implicit reality about which ethnicity is to blame. Two purposes have been achieved by the use of passive structure. The first is obscuration of the agency of action whereas the second is to inflict a certain point of view upon the reader. It is to

be noted that the action was committed in the recent wave of Islamophobia hinted through the circumstance in the

"Rockets Fired from Khost Land in Border Village" [The News May 14, 2012]

The headline mentioned above is once again passively constructed with no reference to the agency. The only information it proved is that 'rockets' have been 'fired' (action) from Khost in a 'border village'. The agency has been obscured but information can be collected by the reader through background information and intuition because of the reference to the geographic area (Khost) but which may still also lead to confusion because Khost is in Afghanistan where several armed forces are present i.e. NATO, US Army, Afghan National Army and even Taliban. The implicit reality is created because there is no reference to who is responsible for the action (firing rockets) in the bordering Pakistani village. To a fair extent, this pattern reveals an emphasis on the event rather than the doers.

"7 Killed in Karachi Suicide Blast, Firing" [The Nation April 06, 2012]

The headline mentioned above informs of the causalities that were caused as a result of the action (blast and firing) which led to the 'killing' of seven people in Karachi. Karachi has been a target of terrorism for decades and the newest form of it was target killing (firing). It is to be noted that the agent(s) responsible for actions i.e. firing and blast have been obscured which creates confusion as it is not certain that either both of the actions have been performed by the same agency or by different agencies. Interestingly, the phrase *'in Karachi suicide blast'* can be replaced with *'by the suicide blast'* and now it provides some reference to Taliban people. Moreover, even if the same agency is responsible for both actions still identity is not clear whether the agents are target killers, Taliban or some foreign-funded mercenaries as claimed by several politicians in the mainstream media.

Use of Nominalizations for Abstractions in News Reporting

Since language is regarded as a dynamic tool capable of shaping our worldview and ideology as well as changing social reality. This study is carried out in aligning with CDA (critical discourse analysis) approach and the main concern of this study is to explore the choice of lexicogrammar through which there is a reflection of ideology present in the journalist's mind. Besides the CDA function of abstraction, ambiguity and obscurity nominalisations are also used to construct the argument, condense the information flow and bring cohesive ties in the journalistic texts, see the examples below. As suggested such nominalisation is self-explanatory on ideological grounds. Chibnall (2014, p.21) reports that the dominant ideological values which serve as a criterion for evaluating different forms of linguistic behaviour in the journalistic discourse are as the following:

Table 1.

Positive Legitimizing Values	Negative Legitimizing Values
Moderation	Extremism
Legality	Illegality
Compromise	Dogmatism
Cooperation	Confrontation
Impartiality	Bias
Order	Chaos
Realism	Ideology
Freedom of choice	Monopoly
Peacefulness	Chaos, etc.

On the ideological ground, negative connotations of nominalisations are self-explanatory and hardly need any explanation (Richardson, 2007). Having reported the working definition of nominalisation, now, I would elaborate on news discourse that within the media discourse news reporting is the most important and crucial language genre. Therefore, many questions have been raised in the last two decades on the (im)partiality of journalists while reporting any issue (Fairclough 2003; and Richardson 2007). Objective news reporting in new journalism was the main concern so in order to deconstruct the discursive constructions in news reporting news discourses were analyzed with respect to ideology, hegemony and power (Fairclough 2003).

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Nominalisations Through the Process Types

S. No	Incongruent Wording	Congruent Wording	Process Type	Frequency	
1.	Journalists misbehaviour	The journalists misbehaved	Material		
2.	The demonstration of power	People have demonstrated the power	Material	183	55%
3.	Desolution of power	Power was dissolved	Material		
4.	Dedication to the party	He is dedicated to party	Relational	91	27%
5.	The intense frustation	To be intensely frustrated	behavioural	05	01%
6.	Muree declaration	They declared more	Verbal	23	07%
7.	Chaos observance	They observed chaos	Mental: cog	32	10%
Total	------------------------	---------------------------	--------------	334	100%

At a glance Table 1 shows very interesting results for nominalisations in different process types. As discussed, *'Material'* clauses appear to dominate my corpus for about 55%. The second higher choice occurs for the *'Relational'* clauses at about 27% followed by *'Mental'* clauses at 10% and finally, *'Verbal'* at 07%. These findings are pertinent to my previous overall figures for the general construal of experiential meanings. Having stated this, we see that the writers have used nominalizations to boost, condense and pack the information and on the other hand, from the critical discourse perspective it has been used to obscure and abstract the agency and divert the readers' perspective onto the events. In fact, in political reporting the lexicogrammatical choices are highly influenced and contested by the implicit realities- see the examples below for fuller detail. Also, below is given congruent and incongruent language behaviour.

"Benazir's Assassination at a Campaign Rally has had Rippled Around the World" [Non-congruent expression] [Dawn Dec 30, 2007]

i. Benazir was assassinated when people.

had rallied and campaigned for her party and it has rippled around the world. [congruent expression]

On having a careful analysis, we see that Example (i) has only two clauses while the congruent expression in (ii) strings four clauses so with the help of this particular example I can rightly say that grammatical metaphor helps in lessening the clauses through packing the information. Also as stated earlier that nominalized forms change the processes into events as given below.

"His Sudden Departure has Created Suspicion" [Non-congruent] [The News April 27, 2012].

i. He departed suddenly and this led the people confused so they suspected anything wrong. [congruent]

With the help of the stated examples, I can say that the writers have employed grammatical metaphor (ideational) in order to create an objective, conceptualized and abstracted information flow which disseminates a particular ideology.

Table 3. Frequencies of Nominalizations in News Reporting (per 1000 words)

Nominalisation Type	The News	Daily Dawn	The Nation
The average number of tokens	76.2	81.6	61.7
The average number of types	31.9	37.1	29.3
Type: token ratio	0.47	0.52	0.31

As discussed earlier, Dawn has shown a high frequency of nominalisations used. In terms of tokens, Dawn has used almost 37% whereas The News has 32% and the Nation only 30%. This difference is partly because Dawn has more professionally and academically groomed journalists. Therefore, the major revealing fact Dawn has a greater frequency followed by The News as explored through the token type ratio which has been calculated by dividing the number of nominalisations by the total number of employed. So, I can assume that Dawn has a greater tendency to abstract the information flow to draw the perspective on the events

rather than the processes and its writers present information in a more distant way.

In the following, some examples are given for the readers to support my deductions that how journalists obfuscate agency in order to propagate any particular stance and agenda.

"At this point, any Deviation from the Constitution Will have Extremely Threatening Implications for the Future of the Democratic Process" [The News December 22, 2011].

The purpose of editorials is to mould and shape public opinion and this had not have been

possible without the expert linguistic capabilities of the journalist. When the journalist says 'at this point…' the reader is not able to know to what point he is actually directing his attention. On the other hand, if he had clearly stated the agency to which he has been referring it would have been much easier and clear for the reading public to interpret. Similarly, saying 'any deviation….' by any party will not be withstood is not understandable. So, the point of focus here is that the journalist is intentionally employing such tactics to obfuscate the agency. *Kress (1983) observed that nominalizations are used for ideological purposes.* Thus, the ideology can be traced in the rhetorical devices that are repeatedly employed by journalists in order to mould public opinion. Moreover, upon observing the last part of the reporting one notices that he is warning of '*extremely threatening implications.* Because people are unaware of the fact that the deviation is to be from where and when or at what point so it is not comprehendible to say that the implications will be extremely daunting unless and until one goes into detail and finds the thorough detail of the phenomenon. This is in fact referring towards a clash between the government and the army over the Memogate scandal. So, any unconstitutional move happens that would be horrible for the country.

"Huge Increase in Prices was Protested" [The Nation April 24, 2012]

Nominalizations are exploited by journalists to manipulate the views and opinions of the general public. For instance, in the above-given reference, it can be observed that the argument is being started by employing nominalization in the prime position. When observed with the attention it becomes clear that there is a hidden motive behind representing the structure in this particular way. Fowler (1991) rightly points out that *language is not neutral.* He (Ibid) says, *'anything that is said or written about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position'* (Fowler 1991, p.10). Therefore, by using the expression *'huge increase'* at the start of the sentence it becomes clear that the journalist has manipulated the opinion. The

perspective has been shifted on the event and apparently, the agency has been obfuscated and no person or institution is given responsibility for the '*increase in prices'*. Moreover, the usage of *'huge'* instead of a *numerical figure* is ideologically loaded.

"Procedure to Bring Musharraf Back Begins" [Dawn February 28, 2012]

Linguistic structure plays a vital role in the construction of ideas (Fowler, 1991). Keeping the argument in view, journalists employ different linguistic devices which are useful to persuade the people to the given ideologies. Seeing the above headline one observes that it is taking its departure with a nominalization '*procedure*' which puts the perspective on the event and hides the two main pillars that are responsible for the event i.e. government and judiciary. The main agenda of using nominalization here is that the journalist aimed at hiding the actor behind the event. Halliday (1985), and Halliday and Martin (1993) suggest that nominalizations are employed in order to integrate information into fewer words. In the present case, it is observed that by using the nominalization 'procedure' the journalist has very expertly made unclear who is the agent who is driving this action i.e. procedure. The reader only comes to know that the '*procedure to bring Musharraf back begins'*. So by making use of language the journalist has obfuscated the agency and presented the 'procedure' as if it is an event and not a process.

"The Decision of this Matter Finally has to be Reached" [The Nation December 28, 2011]

Biber (1990) says that complexity is one of the most prominent features of written language in contrast to spoken language. The given report informs the readers that a decision is being made but beyond the decision, every other piece of information is made unclear through linguistic structures. This is done by making use of a nominalization '*the decision'* which has presented the phenomenon as an event (given perspective) and obscured the actor who is to take the responsibility for the given event or action. It can be seen that the reader is

informed about the decision but the decision is kept obscure. Similarly, "*this matter*" is obscure and people are not told what the matter is about when the decision is made. The agency related to the decision and the matter is obfuscated and the prime focus is on the *decision*. The words "*has finally to be reached*" are implying that making the decision is not simple and easy and there is some influence and pressure from *unknown sources*. It can be seen how expertly the newspaper has portrayed ideology.

"Misbehavior with Journalists Protested" [The Nation April 28, 2012]

This headline informs of an event at which journalists were mistreated. No information can be found of the agent(s) who are responsible for the action i.e. 'misbehaving' with the journalist led to the unfolding of an event i.e. 'protest'. Upon further detailed reading, the reader will come to know that the agent(s) responsible for misbehaving with the journalists was none other than 'jiyalas' of PPP and PSF who tried to attack the senior members of the press club after the observation of a protest against the SC order against PM Gilani. The reporters who were present at the press club when this violence was attempted also reported that they were abused. The structure of the headline at a glance will lead the reader to think because of the obfuscation. Moreover, the reader structured the headline in a way which signifies '*misbehaviour*' to be of prime importance which has been done in order to gain public sympathy as journalist frequently accuses society of intolerant attitude towards 'freedom of expression.

"Pakistan Trashes Hafiz Arrest Idea" [The Nation April 05, 2012]

The headline mentioned above informs about one of the greatest issues in the history of Pakistan's foreign policy. The News headline is concerned with the issue of Hafiz Saeed (a religious figure known to be an extremist) and his much-demanded arrest. The only information that the headline provides is that the idea of Hafiz Saeed's arrest has been

'trashed' by 'Pakistan'. It is quite important to note here that the agency responsible for the 'trashing of ideas' is mentioned to be 'Pakistan' which is likely to have been mentioned because this agency is portrayed as more powerful. On the other hand, abstracted information structures the ways which allow journalists' perspectives on events (Halliday and Martin, 1993). Therefore, it will be right to say that the headline was structured so as to convey the perspective on the consequences to show Pakistan's stern and firm position.

"Despite Years of Fervent Denial, BIN Laden has been Found on Pakistani Soil" [The News May 03, 2011].

The above-mentioned news report refers to the US Operation in Abbottabad the nominalized expression 'years of fervent denial' ideologically signifies the act of denial. The action 'denial' is known but the agency is obfuscated. Since 9/11 US forces were after Bin Laden and suspected Pakistan shielding him but every time Pakistan spokesmen denied his presence on Pakistani land by abstracting information journalists obscured the agency involved in the act of denial. Also, it was difficult to mention whether it was the government or the army that kept on denying it. Ideologically, the newspaper supports Western thoughts that Pakistan knew his presence and has sheltered him and this was denied continuously. On the other hand, Pakistan put her perspective that it was unaware of his presence. So, this abstraction and the choice of lexis reveal the newspaper's affiliation. From our perspective, Osama's recovery from Pakistani soil was labelled as an 'intelligence failure'.

"The Failure to bring Mukhtara Mai`s Attackers to Justice, Even if Doing so Would Require Further Investigation, is a Bitter Pill to Swallow" [Dawn December 31, 2012].

A careful examination of The News report reveals that it is structured in a manner employing propagandist techniques. Clearly, the nominalized group is putting the reader's focus on the event rather than the participants.

When an agency is being hidden during reporting most of the time the hidden agents belong to the powerful sector of the country like the government, or some higher officials belonging to the army, etc. This is a powerful strategic technique employed by journalists through which they not only abstract the information but allow the reader's perspective on the event as well. The victimized person mentioned above is Mukhatara Mai who was brutally raped. A close reference can be made to the government agencies that failed or intentionally did not manage to arrest the perpetrators. Therefore, nominalized form is also covering the police from shame. Hence, the nominalized form has not only obfuscated the agency but also shielded them from being exposed.

"No amount of Condemnation Will Compensate for the Sense of Loss that Fills Millions of Hearts across the Land Today" [Dawn December 28, 2007].

The above news is similarly very rich ideologically as well in the propagandist program. When examined carefully it becomes apparent that no agent is specified for either of the action. Again, by using nominalized form the journalist has diverted the reader's perspective on the event. In fact, Ms Bhutto was killed by the extremist element of our society and apparently, leaders around the world are condemning this brutal act of killing but that cannot compensate for their sorrows. The whole information is presented in an abstract manner that conceals the participants. The main event is hinted through the circumstance *'for the sense of loss' as* was the symbol of Pakistani feminine strength and a beacon of hope for women struggling in Pakistan.

"As the Tension Dissipates and the Barricades are Removed, the Nation has a Sense of Drawing Back from the Brink" [The News March 18, 2009].

This particular instance is very interesting. The use of nominalized form obscures the participants and foregrounds the event which had created tension. The word tension suggests that there was some political crisis and barricades point out a deadlock situation that previously occurred but now has been resolved. The obscurity is due to missing information about the political scenario and that:

- *"What was the tension?*
- *What were the barricades?*
- *Who removed the barricades?*
- *How were the barricades removed"?*

The tension refers to the 'long-march' of 2009 led by Nawaz Sharif of PML-N for the cause of reinstating judges as the PPP government, even after many promises, did not reinstate Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhary. It was expected that there would be a clash between the government and the masses involved in the PML-N-led long march and that the country will once again be on the brink of falling into to clutches of un-democratic elements of the society. Eventually, the government resolved the issue and with that clouds of disappointment get away. In the given example the condensed and packed information not only obscures the participants but also highlights the consequences of the anticipated clash.

"As Long as the Lack of Official Disclosure Persists, Conspiracy Theories Will Continue to Spread Fear and Suspicion here at Home" [Dawn May 03, 2011].

Again, the above example is structured in a very ideological manner. The nominalized form *'official disclosure'* has been used in the circumstantial phrase which actually hints at the real story and the second clause narrates the horrible consequences of this act. The sole reason for this is the fact that few events have very crucial details. A careful examination of the news reflects that the story leads us toward a political crisis which occurred as the result of the Memogate scandal and with that the sudden departure of the president to Dubai created many suspicions. The sudden departure led us to consipration that the army was going to take over the government. So, the presidency was required to issue an official statement to

end up this suspicion about the possible army takeover.

Ideologically, both the nominalized forms *'official disclosure'* and *'suspicion'* are heavily loaded. The former refers to the delay in any official clarification and the latter refers to the dire consequences of this delay and sudden departure in terms of the political takeover.

"Extremism Holds us in a Vice" [The News January 05, 2011].

The above example is self-explanatory because of the negative nominalization being used. It can be seen that the opposite of extremism is moderation but this extremist attitude is pointed towards a particular event though in an obscure manner. The assassination of Mr Salman Taseer ex-governor of Punjab by his own bodyguard was the result of religious extremism in the country. Therefore, instead of referring to factors that are leading us to extremism, the journalist has used a nominalized form to foreground the consequences. So, the writer has disseminated this perspective that being religious is not an issue unless one's extremist attitudes impact horrible consequences so these evil inflictions are holding us in a vice.

Finally, to sum up, in this section I can report the purpose and function of the abstractions in the Pakistani journalistic discourse as in the following.

Table 4.

Abstraction in Front-page News Headlines	Abstractions in Newspaper Editorials
Abstractions give new information.	Abstractions mostly serve the anaphoric function.
Abstractions shield the powerful ruling class from being exposed.	Journalists try to keep away from the given biases.
Abstractions serve the ornamental and functional layout.	Journalists abstract social identities and inequalities in order to propagate a stance.
Unmarked stylistic quality	Serve the purpose of argumentation.
Ideologically, abstractions help journalists shape consumers' perceptions and build ideological positions, maintain political power relations and inculcate particular socio-political morals.	

Concluding Remarks

Agent-obfuscation analysis has explored the deletion of agents' initiating processes in journalistic texts. The obscuring of certain agents associated with actions and exerting power created an ideological stance that influences news consumers' perceptions. As per the probe of the first question what patterns for abstractions do the Pakistani journalist use? The study has also found that agent deletion often occurs through the ideological use of nominalizations, passive structures and metonymic expressions and those patterns have allowed the journalists to present events without deploying roles to any particular individuals. Therefore, newspapers incline to include or exclude the social actors in order to serve their various ideological purposes which show their affiliations. The analysis has also confirmed our foregrounded assumption that

nominalizations are useful in abstracting and classifying actions and events in order to build and organize media discourses.

Now coming to the second question what effects are nominalizations employed in Pakistani journalistic discourse? Truly, that was a sensibly broad question to start from, and it was plausible that we could come up with interesting results. From the example, the data we have reported in the previous section, some examples do not look as though nominalisation is being used for obfuscation, to hide agents; so the most obvious area for discussion from a CDA angle looks fairly unrewarding, at least at first sight. But there are patterns in the way that nominalisations are used which only emerge from the full corpus that the journalist deploys nominalisations in order to pack and condense the information for the readers. However, much of the data comprises where

nominalisations have been used for the abstraction where the agency has been obfuscated. Also, I have found that the themes mostly occur when journalists obfuscate agencies are war and violence, political agendas and terrorist activities etc.

Throughout this study, it has been established through the analysis of news headlines and the editorials, that the language itself and the language of newspaper specifically is never neutral and carries an ideology or tends to manipulate and confuse the targeted individuals (general public) by means of the use of rhetoric style in such a way so as to convince and confuse the reader in line with the vested interests of newspaper agencies or other socio-political affiliations which they

support. Moreover, it remains a fact that media is never neutral in matters of the polity as it serves as a point of constant pressure from agents of both the socio-political wings of a society who try to use media for achieving their own purposes. Analysis of the data has unrevealed the method through which media confuses the reader and imparts the ideology that is in favour of a strong and influential political institution of the society. The agencies responsible for certain actions or for the development of certain circumstances are intentionally shielded, obfuscated, obscured and abstracted by the writers The reader, due to confusion, is compelled to go into the detailed reading of the news which is loaded with ideology to even a much greater level.

References

Bell, A. (1991). *The Language of News Media*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Biber, D. (1990). Methodological issues regarding corpus-based analyses of linguistic variation. *Literary and Linguistic Computing*, *5*(4), 257–269. https://doi.org/10.1093/llc/5.4.257

Billig, M. (2008). *The Hidden Roots of Critical Psychology*. London: SAGE.

Chen, Y. P., & Foley, J. A. (2004). *'Problems with metaphorical reconstrual of meaning in Chinese EFL learners' expositions', in L.J. Ravelli and R.A. Ellis (eds)*.

Chibnall, S. (2014). *Law-and-Order News: An analysis of crime reporting in the British press*. Routledge: Taylor and Frances group. London.

Fairclough, N. (1988). *Discourse Representation in Media Discourse. Sociolinguistics*, *17*, 125-39. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1r2cp1

Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. London & New York: Routledge.

Fairclough, N. (2010). *Critical Discourse Analysis: the critical study of language*, 2nd edn. Harlow: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. Malaysia: Longman Group UK Ltd.

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Media Discourse*. London: Edward Arnold.

Fowler, R. (1991). *Language in The News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*. London: Routledge.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1998). *Things and Relations: regrammaticising experience as technical knowledge.* In J. Martin & R. Veel (Eds.), Reading Science: Critical and Functional Perspectives on Discourses of Science (185-235). London: Routledge.

Halliday, M. A. K., & Martin, J. R. (1993). *Writing Science: Literacy and Discursive Power*. London and Washington: Falmer.

Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (1999). *Construing Experience through Language: a language-based approach to cognition*. London: Cassell.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1985/94). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, London: Edward Arnold.

Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2004). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar,* (3rd edn.) London: Arnold.

Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, M. I. M. C. (2014). *Hallidays Introduction to Functional Grammar. (4th Ed)*. London/New York: Routledge.

Hanretty, C., & Hermanin, C. (2010). Nominalization as racialization in the Italian press. *Bulletin of Italian politics, 2*(2), 75-94. http://hdl.handle.net/1814/16817

Kress, G. (1983). Linguistic Processes and the Mediation of Reality: The Politics of Newspaper Language. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 40*, 43–57. https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl.1983.40.43

Kress, G. (1983). *Linguistic and ideological transformations in newspaper language*. In H. Davis and P. Walton, eds., Language, Image and the Media. Oxford: Blackwell, 120-138.

Simon-Vandenbergen, A. M., Taverniers, M., & Ravelli, L. J. (eds) (2003). *Grammatical Metaphor: views from Systemic Functional Linguistics*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Thompson, G. (2009). *Grammatical metaphor and success in academic writing*. In Susan Hunston & David Oakey (eds). *Introducing Applied Linguistics*. London: Routledge, 37-43.

Tehseem, T. (2013). Transitivity in Pakistani Journalistic Discourse: A linguistic analysis of ideology. *English Language Forum (ELF): Annual Research Journal, 15*, 19-38. https://doi.org/10.26710/jbsee.v6i1.1040

Ravelli, L. J. (1988). *Grammatical metaphor: an initial analysis', in E.H. Steiner and R. Veltman (eds) Pragmatics, Discourse and Text: some systemically-inspired approaches*. London and New York: Pinter.

Ravelli, L. J., & Ellis, R. A. (eds). (2004). *Analysing Academic Writing: contextualized frameworks*. London and New York: Continuum.

Richardson, J. E. (2007). *Analysing Newspapers: An approach from critical discourse analysis*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.