Power and Ideology in Figurative Language: A Critical Stylistic Study of Dawn
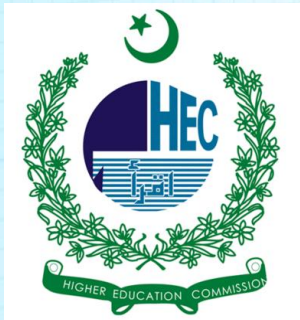
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Abstract

The figurative language used in selected articles from Dawn, a well-known English-language daily in Pakistan, is stylistically and critically analyzed in this study. The study investigates how Pakistani sociopolitical and economic concerns are addressed via the use of a variety of stylistic elements, including personification, metaphors, similes, and others. The study also explores power relations, ideologies, and social inequalities reflected by the text. The study uses a qualitative methodology and Peter Barry's stylistic framework and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Norman Fairclough and Teun A. van Dijk to investigate how meaning-making and linguistic inventiveness interact in the discourse of the newspaper. The results demonstrate how important figurative language is in influencing public opinion, encouraging critical thinking, and supporting media narratives. This approach advances the disciplines of stylistics, media studies, and critical discourse analysis by providing important insights into the connection between language, ideology, and media representation in modern journalism.

Keywords: Style, Stylistics, Figure of speech, Language and Ideology, Media Discourse, Critical Discourse Analysis, Ideology and Power

Introduction

Background of the Study

In the 21st century, the media plays a vital role in shaping people's perspectives and ideologies (Ma et al., 2024). The media has brought a revolution in changing people's minds and implementing a particular ideology, whether it's the printing media or digital media (Akram et al., 2022, 2021a, 2021b). Newspapers are one of the earliest sources of information that convey information through text and visual images. The language of newspapers includes a few unique characteristics and a synthesis of several stylistic traits and various sources. The impact of newspapers on society is significant, and it affects how readers think. The game of words may influence various ways of thinking, and in today's fast-paced world, where attitudes are always shifting, being knowledgeable is crucial. As the fourth pillar of a state in the twenty-first century, the media can influence any society (Thomas & Wareing,1999). As a

result of the media, the world has become a global village where anyone may learn about any issue by clicking on a link (Abdelrady, et al., 2025; Akram & Abdelrady, 2023, 2025). Disseminating information about diverse local, national, and international events is the responsibility of the media, especially the press.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah founded Dawn, a Pakistani English-language newspaper, in British India in 1941 (Long, 2017). It is regarded as the nation's official newspaper and is the biggest English-language publication in Pakistan. At that time, the Dawn became the voice of the Indo-Pak Muslims for a new free state. Its editorials, news sections, and invited articles served to promote, defend, and publicize the demand for Pakistan against opposition from the Indian National Congress, the British, and other Muslims. In today's Pakistan, Dawn is considered the authentic source of information and used as a standard of learning for the English language.

Every newspaper may present a different version of the same issue because they use different styles and structures of the language. This study analyzed the Pakistani English newspaper, the Dawn, figuratively through the method of stylistics and critically through critical discourse analysis.

Style

Style is a linguistic expression. Style means the use of words, speaking style, and sentence structure. It provides the foundation personality of a person and reflects thoughts of one's mind, whether it is spoken or written (Leech, 2014). Thus, it conveys verbal structure, speech pattern, and formality. This might be formal, informal, conversational, poetic, or incredibly private.

Research Question

- What literary devices are employed in The Dawn newspaper to depict the current crises in Pakistan?

- How do these figurative devices, when analyzed through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), reveal underlying ideologies, power relations, and social inequalities?

- In what ways does the combined use of stylistics and CDA uncover the role of figurative language in shaping public discourse and socio-political meaning in Pakistani media?

Research Objectives

- To explore literary devices that describe the current crises in the Pakistani newspaper, The Dawn.

- To put into practice Critical Discourse Analysis to assess how these figurative devices illustrate and construct ideologies, power relations, and social inequalities.

- To examine how the joint application of stylistics and CDA discloses the role of figurative language in influencing public discourse and socio-political meaning in Pakistani media.

Literature Review

The newspaper is the source and foundation of all speech, business, opinion, and judgment. The majority of us believe that newspapers offer a complete, adequate, and fulfilling package of up-to-date information. The language employed in newspapers is acknowledged as a specific type of style that is distinguished by a clear communication goal and its own set of linguistic conventions (Goumovskaya, 2007).

The name "newspaper" implies that a newspaper's content would be largely devoted to daily news, along with some analysis and commentary on this news (Reah, 2002). However, a newspaper includes a variety of content, including news, commentary and analysis, advertising, and entertainment. Thus, a newspaper may include not just factual information but also opinions and evaluative content from its authors (Ramzan & Khan, 2019, 2024a, 2024b). Language is essential to communication because it makes it easier to express thoughts. Language is the medium through which thoughts, feelings, and attitudes are communicated (Ahmad et al., 2022; Amjad et al., 2021; Li & Akram, 2023, 2024; Ramzan & Alahmadi, 2024). Stylistic is an example of a written or spoken piece of language with a recountable inner relationship between content and form that is linked to a specific communication function or purpose with a specific style (Ramzan et al., 2025, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c). The use of a style of language influences and convinces readers through a newspaper.

The media allegedly have the power to edit and market information (Congman et al., 2029). As the most potent force in a society, the media molds public opinion (Nawaz, et al., 2021; Richardson, 2007). It has also developed into a rapidly expanding sector of the economy with the ability to transform black into white and white into black. It serves as the primary catalyst for social, economic, and political

waves. In general, the purpose of all newspaper languages is to enlighten and amuse readers, although newspaper language differs from academic or commercial language. The language style of newspapers varies from newspaper to newspaper and sometimes from news story to news story (Ramzan et al., 2020). Writing for newspapers is never linguistically homogeneous since they are constantly stylistically diverse. The dilemma is how different styles of language use by journalists on the same topic have a different impact on people (Crystal and Davy, 1969).

Many academics believe it is challenging to define "stylistics" precisely. Because the term has so many diverse connotations, this is. Chapman (1973) offers the clearest description of stylistics, describing it as the study of various linguistic styles. Stylistic analysis uses a literary work as a text and identifies exactly where deviations happened and how they violated conventional grammar standards (Peer, 2021; Ramzan & Javaid, 2025). It demonstrates how a writer breaks the norms of grammar to produce the intended impact in his work.

Wales (2001) defined stylistics as "the study of style" in the lexicon of stylistics. It varies in terms of the method that exists since it is heavily influenced by vastness, linguistics, and literary criticism. The goal of stylistic criticism is to identify the style and the text, as well as the text's significance. He further explained that figurative language employs unique semantic or grammatical characteristics. Meanwhile, figures of speech are employed, as is the creation of imagination through the comparison of two or more distinct objects.

Research Methodology

There are two types of approaches towards research: qualitative and quantitative. The two have different features but can be used in parallel studies. The quantitative study consists of numerical and statistical data, which is largely used in scientific and mathematical studies where the hypothesis is developed and examined through statistical approaches. In the qualitative research, data is usually explained, interpreted, and described in a subjective way rather than an objective.

In the proposed research, the researcher has used a qualitative approach because the selected Dawn's text is the subject of this study, which includes a Stylistics analysis. Stylistics is a bridge between linguistics and literature. It is a method of analysis as well as a theory. Stylistics is a literary text presentation style in

which the writer wants to convey his or her ideas in a unique way. The stylistic analysis approach has been used to investigate figures of speech such as simile, metaphor, anaphora, satire, personification, juxtaposition, exaggeration, symbol, alliteration, and oxymoron.

Theoretical Framework

Stylistics aims to examine language, especially the role of creativity in word choice and its contribution to meaning construction. Stylistics increases our thinking processes, and language exploration enhances our understanding of literary texts. The interpretation and acknowledgement of various literary works identify different objectives of stylistics research. Critics of stylistics explain technical features of a text's language, such as grammatical structures, and then utilize this information to interpret it. The interpretation and acknowledgment of various literary works identify different objectives of stylistics research. Most literary conclusions are based on impressionism or subjectivity, with no evidence provided in the text to back up the claim. As a result of studying stylistics, it is possible to make conclusions about the text. The decision regarding the fact that whether a particular literary text is "Great" or not can be taken based on the objective realities of language present in the text itself. (Barry 133)

In this paper, the researcher adopted a qualitative method of research, in which Peter Berry's theory of stylistics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Norman Fairclough and Teun A. van Dijk are applied to the text of the Pakistani Newspaper Dawn. By using these lenses to find out literary devices that are used in the opinion page of the newspaper and extend these stylistic devices that carry ideological and discursive functions within media discourse. The applications of literary devices that are used in the text are further analyzed, and their exact meaning is extracted. According to Norman Fairclough (1995) and Teun A. van Dijk (1998) that language is not neutral but is associated with social structure, ideologies, and power. They further explore how the text of language challenges the injustices, inequalities, and misuse of power. This analysis investigated how the text of *Dawn* exposes the inequalities, ideological tensions, and injustices in the context of Pakistan.

This study incorporates the analysis of figures of speech, such as satire, personification, simile, juxtaposition, symbolism, and hyperbole, because these

rhetorical devices are central modes through which ideological ideas are generated and communicated subtly in Pakistan's politically sensitive media environment. These devices allow writers to criticize elites and economic policies implicitly, compelling readers emotionally and cognitively while navigating the risks bound up with direct criticism.

Literary Devices

A literary device is any specific aspect of literature, or a particular work, which we can recognize, identify, interpret, and or analyze. Both literary elements and literary techniques can rightly be called literary devices.

Data Collection

The researcher collected two types of data, primary and secondary data. Primary data is the kind of data that the researcher collects directly from the main source where the data is present in its original form and considered the most satisfactory type of data in research. Secondary data is in contrast with the primary data, in which the researchers used indirectly collected data from the main source in the research.

Sample and Demographics

The data is directly taken from the Pakistani English newspaper Dawn, which was published on December 9th, 2022. The piece of newspaper has been published in Islamabad, Pakistan, and the researcher has collected the data for analysis from the public library Bagh e Jinnah. Some of the concepts and technical terms have been collected as secondary data; the researcher collected some data from Google Scholar, Wikipedia, Research gate, Academia, Spark Notes, and Journals. The researcher collected data by finding the elements of stylistics.

Analysis and Discussion

In Dawn, used very ironic, satiric, symbolic, and anaphoric language. Figurative devices have been used in each article of Dawn's opinion page in a very distinctive way. The researcher has to find out the figure of speech in Pakistani Newspaper Dawn's opinion articles.

Simile

A simile is a figure of speech in which the comparison of two dissimilar things is involved. A simile uses terms like "like" or "as" to demonstrate similarity. In everyday speech, similes tend to represent basic comparisons taken from nature. Dawn used a

smile repeatedly in order to illustrate a clear picture of the different crises going on in the country. In an article titled "Racked with Guilt" used "In short as good as any in the world" the writer used smile in order to compare the elite's lifestyle in Pakistan. "Alternative businesses such as manufacturing", here the writer demonstrates a way to the ruling class that, as compared to spending money on plots and a precious lifestyle, they need to put it into the manufacturing business.

In the same article used "living beyond our means as individuals and as a nation".

The article "The Narrow Path" also uses smiles to draw comparisons between different things that are following.

"Especially as the global economic situation"

"Indicate the cost of insuring against sovereign default as CDS rates are not a probability of default itself".

"Tried to stir up a frenzy about impending default so as to force the political system".

"Collapse as people stop spending."

"This path is as narrow as a knife edge."

"Fiscal frameworks as the previous targets."

By using simile, the writer illustrates a transparent and more rational picture of Pakistan's complicated political issues. When the columnist says "as good as any in the world," he is pointing out a specific elite class consisting of a small group that lives a luxurious life in Pakistan, similar to the richest people elsewhere, while the majority struggles for basic needs such as education, health, and food. Another example is "living beyond our means as individuals and as a nation," which clearly describes a small group of people who spend more than the general population can afford and do not take the economy as a national responsibility. This irresponsibility leads to a dangerous path of destruction, as described in the phrase "this path is as narrow as a knife edge," turning the country's economic and political situation into something dangerously fragile, where even a small mistake could lead to serious trouble.

At the same time, the text reflects how the media dramatizes the situation to attract readers.

Anaphora

Anaphora is when a certain word or phrase is repeated at the beginning of a sentence

or clause that follows each other. This repetition stresses the sentence while adding rhythm to the passage, which makes it more memorable and enjoyable. While analyzing the Dawn stylistically the researcher notices uses of anaphora in article "Racked with Guilt", "I feel guilty, I pay, I know, I wonder, I see, I have, I wish and I would" through the repetition of "I" make the article more emotionally change and sounds good. Similarly, in the same article, another anaphora is used "my kitchen, my house, my children, my purana, my beat up car, my bathwater, my Japanese car, my stomach, my nuclear deterrence and my head" here the repetition of "my" gives rhythm to the phrase and beautifies it.

Satire

Satire is the use of sarcasm, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and condemn someone's ignorance or vices. Satire does two things: it pokes fun at things like ideas, people, or institutions. It's not only for fun; it's also meant to enlighten or provoke thought about the topic under consideration. In the article Racked with Guilt used satire to criticize the government, "I feel guilty under a hot shower in the morning." In these words, the columnist criticizes the government for high prices and loss to the company. In the same article, through the following words, the author criticized the government, the elite class, and the high lifestyle of the Pakistani army.

"I feel guilty sleeping in an air-conditioned room."

"I feel guilty driving 129 kilometers an hour."

"I feel guilty about buying imported cooking oil."

"I feel guilty when I drive into my house."

"I feel guilty driving my Japanese car."

"I feel disgusted when I see the opulent offices of senior civil and military officers of a poor country."

"Rather than constructing them on borrowed money."

The columnist repeatedly used "I feel guilty" very cleverly to highlight the huge gap between Pakistan's privileged classes and the struggling majority. The writer lists everything from the everyday comfort of Japanese cars and imported cooking oil to air-conditioned rooms to grand offices of the elite in a country where most people suffer from poverty, inflation, and debt. Luxurious everyday comfort is the priority of elites rather than bringing prosperity to Pakistan. They construct their wealth by

borrowing and letting the nation go into debt day by day.

In a country where speaking out for the right is risky and you cannot question the system, writing such humor and irony is a subtle yet powerful way to question the system.

Personification

Personification occurs when an inanimate object is given human characteristics in its description. In the article The Narrow Path, "health of economy", "brutal global economic conditions", and currents accounts are much healthier than before" has been personified.

The writer is taking the economy as a living thing that can be healthy or sick, for the sake of bringing this issue to the attention of readers to consider it serious and alerting. The county is in debt and faces global economic pressures, as personified by brutal factors that increase inflation, taxes, and bring hardship in daily life. This is a harsh reality that the elite class enjoys daily comfort and destroys the collective economy's health of the country, and the common people bear the consequences in the form of taxes and inflation.

Juxtaposition

 Juxtaposition is a figure of speech in which two or more things are presented side by side to point out their contrasts. In juxtaposition, two opposing ideas are put beside one another, as in the article "Racked with Guilt," which uses juxtaposition. I see the opulent offices of senior civil and military officers of a poor country. In this sentence, the "opulent offices" and "poor country" contrast with each other. In this, the writer not only describes the situation but also lets the readers know about the injustices, exploitation, misuse of their resources, and the reasons behind their suffering. In a country where a specific class is dominant, raising such issues in bold words can be risky.

Alliteration

It is considered alliteration when two or more words have the same first sound and are near to one another. While the repetition of letters is a common element of alliteration, the repetition of sounds is important.

In the article "Racked with Guilt" the use of alliteration in "the tolerance threshold" there is a repetition of sound /t/, "extensive and expensive roads" there is the

repetition of sound /e/, and "wrong location or the wrong choice" there is the repetition of sound /r/. In the article The Narrow Path, "year-on-year after the first five, there is the repetition of sounds /y/ and /f/.

In the article "The Narrow Path," the words "relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction" in which the sound /r/ repeated three times.

Symbol

The symbol is any image or thing that stands for something else. It is a representation of an object, function, or process. Symbolism is employed, like in the article "Racked with Guilt," used "rub our noses in the dirt" the dirt symbolizes poverty and inflation. In the same article used "is it a mafia," the mafia symbolizes a specific group of people in the Pakistani political context. A powerful circles that manipulate the system for its benefit. It is the symbol of evil in Pakistani politics. "Is it in the interest group that does not let it happen?" The word interest group also symbolizes a group of political parties that use national resources for their own interest in the Pakistani political context, blocking any real change from happening. "Tinted windows" symbolize the high lifestyle of the elite class. The writer uses symbols in a very artful way to criticize the political and powerful class of Pakistan and present an image of them in front of the readers. This shows how newspaper writing uncovers the black masks, especially in a country where pointing out such issues leads to consequences.

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a speech figure in which an author or speaker exaggerates to an extreme intentionally or obviously; it is employed for criticizing and humorously describing. In Dawn's article Racked with Guilt used "which became white elephants", "butterflies in my stomach", "sweating it out under a fan", and "hot sweaty room" in the sentence "I would be a happier man sleeping in a hot sweaty room" used as a hyperbole.

In the article The Narrow Path, the term "grave error" and the very title "The Narrow Path" itself are exaggerated. The writer very humorously and sharply criticizes the country's situation by using phrases like "which became white elephants," which exaggeratedly describes their uselessness and wastefulness in decision-making for the national interest. Saying "butterflies in my stomach" or "sweating it out under a fan" dramatically describes the feelings, showing how the

majority of people are frustrated and uncomfortable in this country. Then, the writer points out the elite again with "I would be a happier man sleeping in a hot, sweaty room," which means that people facing crises may sleep well, but how can the powerful class sleep peacefully while exploiting their subjects?

Conclusion

With the past events or better things by using similes, the elites or politicians sum up everything mentioned in these selected articles. The authors have made Dawn's writing vibrant and stylish by using numerous figures of speech across practically every paragraph. The authors compared Pakistan's various crucial situations that destabilize Pakistan's different institutions, which have been criticized in a very soft and elegant manner. The satire becomes more beautiful when the author uses himself as a subject and indirectly criticizes the government. The distinctiveness of Pakistan as a poor country and the military's luxurious lifestyle have been highlighted through juxtaposition. In hyperbolic phrases, the fundamental crises of Pakistan are emphasized, such as electric fluctuation, corruption cases, poverty, and false decisions of the government. The writers symbolized poverty, inflation, the elite's lifestyle, and a criminal group through different words. In addition, by using anaphora, the writers emphasized the very subject of the topic and made it more memorable and enjoyable. The Dawn's style is special, simple, and imaginable. A speaking figure is used in the text and is the newspaper's major feature.

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