

Psychological Implications Of Linguistics Choices Used To Portray Crimes In Print Media: A Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis Of Crime Reports From Islamabad And Rawalpindi Published In The Dawn And The Express Tribune

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Abstract

Newspaper discourse has always been a crucial part of communication and has influenced the ideologies and perceptions of the people. Similarly, the current study in this regard is of utmost importance as it has been designed to understand the behavior and psychological implications of lexical choices used in crime reports published in two Pakistani English newspapers The Dawn and The Express Tribune. The study further aims to investigate these lexical choices' pragmatic and psychological effects on the readers of the crime reports. Lexical choices such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives are identified with the use of the computer software UAM corpus tool for the quantitative data. Furthermore, Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach (2014) has been used for analyzing the effects of these lexical choices on the minds of the readers to form certain beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. In addition, the Theory of Relevance by Sperber and Wilson (2002) is used to underpin the pragmatic effects of the use of lexical choices in crime reports. The analysis of the collected corpora reveals that the linguistic choices of crime reports create a sense of fear, danger, and insecurity among the masses. However, certain lexical choices give the readers a sense of the existence of law enforcement authorities and legal systems.

Keywords: Crime Reports, Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis, The Dawn, The Express Tribune, UAM Corpus Tool, Rawalpindi, Islamabad.

Introduction

Newspaper, though an old means of giving information, enjoys a potential role in communication. It can influence public opinion, construct certain ideologies, and form meanings. Cook (1998) believes that media is the root of a discourse that plays a part in the

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construction of meanings of the text. The audience constructs meanings out of the text by using their knowledge. Media, particularly print media, has the power to make exclusions or inclusions because of its lexical choices. Fairclough (1989) views that media can make a text liable to various interpretations with the help of its hidden power. As newspapers have become an essential part of our lives, a large number of people read newspapers every day. As seen by Cabrera (2020) newspapers have become very important in the lives of people about 52-87% of people read newspapers daily. Media: print and electronic, plays a crucial role in the formation of perception, ideology, opinion, and mentality of the general public through its lexical choices. The language of media not only constructs ideologies but also influences the psychology of the men on the street. Malkawi (2001, p. 22) states that “media can influence the readers’ perception of the reality.” In the same way, Kasho (2016) and Tsfati and Cohen (2013) believe that media functions as a window to see the world around us and construct realities.

It is hard to say that societies around the map are crime-free. There is a variety of crimes i.e. murders, robberies, street snatchings, kidnap for ransom, harassment, rapes, sexual harassment, bullying, and confessions of public figures that take place in the world every day. It is not an easy task to say what exactly is a crime (Becker, 1993). A dangerous human action/function that leads to harm to other people can be called a crime (Abbas, et al. 2018). It becomes very important which type of crime takes place and where it takes place holds huge significance. Islamabad is the capital of Pakistan and Rawalpindi is called the twin city because of the territorial proximity these two cities share. If a crime takes place in either of these two cities, it affects the people negatively and makes them feel a sense of insecurity, fear, and danger. Researchers of the current study aim to find out what kind of lexical choices of crime reports in Islamabad and Rawalpindi are selected by two selected English newspapers: The Dawn and The Express Tribune and how these choices affect the readers pragmatically and psychologically.

Research Objectives

1. To explicate the linguistic choices of the crime reports in Islamabad and Rawalpindi published in The Dawn and The Express Tribune.
2. To elucidate the psychological and pragmatic effects these choices create on the minds of the audience/ readers in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

Research Questions

1. What are the linguistic choices used by The Dawn and The Express Tribune to report the crimes in Islamabad and Rawalpindi?
2. How do the linguistic choices used in these reports affect the readers psychologically and pragmatically?

Literature Review

Lexical choices are deliberate actions performed by writers to create manipulating effects on the readers. For example, the study of Sajjad and Afsheen (2021) which is a qualitative study based on the lexical and syntactic structures of Editorials in The Dawn and The News has found that both the newspapers use different kinds of lexical choices where The News uses confusing structures, and the Dawn uses simple structures and lexical choices which make it easier for the reader(s) to understand the editorials. Similarly, Elyazale, (2014) conducted a qualitative

study in which the researcher argues that language performs the function of informing or influencing minds.

Qadeer and Shazad (2017) have also carried out a qualitative study on the lexical choices made by the newspapers to shape political representation in Pakistan. This study has kept connotative, metaphoric, and euphemistic expressions in focus. They have found out that Pakistani news media constructs the realities and influences the minds of the readers with the lexical choices it makes.

Furqan, et.al (2022) have conducted a qualitative study using Van Dijk's model of CDA. They have analyzed the street crime news reports published in Pakistani English newspapers. The study is delimited only to the metropolitan city of Karachi. They argue that the authors of the news story distort realities with the help of lexical choices either for personal or national interest. The study has revealed that newspapers manipulate the facts to construct certain ideologies and influence the consumers of the text.

The lexical choices made by any source of discourse, whether it be the political speeches of political leaders, newspapers, or media outlets, affect the psychology of the consumers of the texts. McCombs and Reynolds (2002) demonstrated the recent happenings of the public interest which are published in the newspapers are an essential source of information. Nazish et.al (2014) conducted a qualitative study using Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach to examine the effect of Benazir Bhutto's last speech of 2007 on the psyche of the people. The study aimed to look for the lexical choices made by Benazir Bhutto to construct an ideology and how is that ideology perceived by the people due to the choice of the lexeme.

The studies conducted mainly focused on the political or media discourse in terms of the construction or representation of ideology or identities. The current research diverges from the above-mentioned studies as it looks at the lexical choices of two selected English Newspapers i.e. The Dawn and The Express Tribune, their lexical choices in the reports on crimes committed in Islamabad and the adjacent city Rawalpindi by applying the corpus analyzing techniques as its quantitative research paradigm.

Methodology

Corpus Design

The corpora (news articles) for the current study have been collected from the official websites of The Dawn⁷ and The Express Tribune⁸.

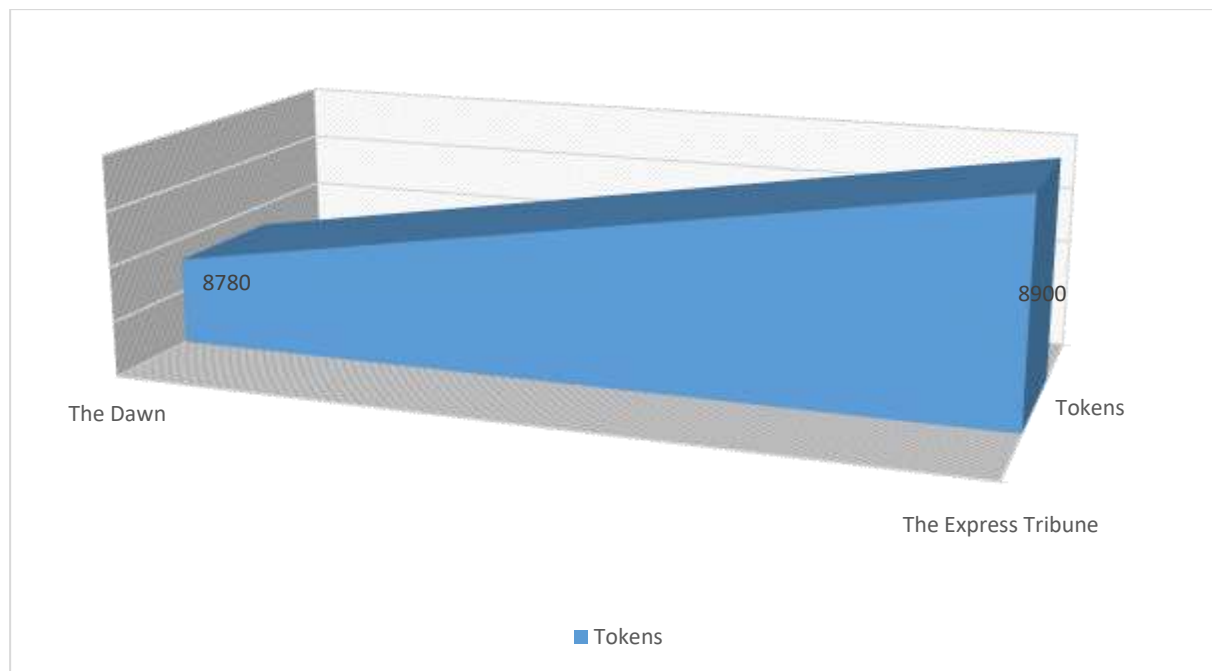
Sample Size

The corpus of the current study comprises five crime stories from each newspaper which have been selected randomly. The following figure shows the statistics of the corpora used for analysis:

⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/newspaper>

⁸ <https://tribune.com.pk/listing>

Figure 1: Tokens in the Dawn and The Express Tribune



The criterion for the Selection of Corpora

During the selection of data, accuracy, reliability, completeness, and consistency have been kept in view. Since The Dawn and The Express Tribune are the newspapers that have more credibility, accuracy, and readership at the national level. Therefore, these newspapers have been selected as the representative corpora.

Context of the Reports

Only the report stories of crimes within the territorial boundaries of Islamabad and the adjacent city Rawalpindi (also called the twin city of Islamabad) have been selected for analysis. The reports are from February 15th, 2025, to February 25th, 2024.

Conceptual Framework

The data have been analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively with the help of the Socio-cognitive Approach by Van Dijk (2014) and the Theory of Relevance popularized by Sperber and Wilson (2002).

The Rationale for the Conceptual Framework

The socio-cognitive approach was first developed by Van Dijk in 2014 and later updated in 2015 and 2018. As one of the objectives of the current study is to explicate the psychological and pragmatic effects of crime news reports and stories, the socio-cognitive approach is the most suitable one because it deals with the interface between knowledge, society, and discourse. Van Dijk (2014, p.12) argues that “discourse is thus defined as a form of social interaction in society and at the same time as the expression and reproduction of social cognition.” In the same vein, the Theory of Relevance (Sperber & Wilson, 2002) is taken as a framework because it is suitable for analyzing the pragmatics of a text.

Corpus Analysis

The current study adopts a mixed-method approach for data analysis and presentation. It consists of both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data. The statistical data is presented in the form of tables. Whereas the qualitative analysis of the corpora is carried out as well.

Linguistic choices

Linguistic choices such as nouns, adjectives, and verbs have been analyzed. The frequencies and KWICs for all these linguistic categories were calculated with the help of the UAM corpus tool.

Tools for data analysis

The quantitative analysis has been carried out with the help of the computer software UAM corpus tool 6.2 (O'Donnell, 2008) for finding the frequencies of adjectives, nouns, and verbs whereas the qualitative pragmatic and forensic analysis have utilized the Relevance Theory by Sperber and Wilson (2002). In the same vein, the Socio-cognitive Approach by Van Dijk (2014) has been used as a conceptual framework for the cognitive effect of the linguistic choices that appeared in these reports from the selected newspapers on the readers.

Results and Discussion

The data analysis section is comprised of two sections. The first section presents the statistical count of the parts of speech i.e. nouns, adjectives, and verbs, and their implication on the readers/ audience of these stories from The Dawn newspaper, and in the second section of the study, the analysis of the datasets of the Express Tribune has been carried out.

Analysis of The Dawn's Corpus

Table 1: Choice of nouns in crime stories of Dawn newspaper

Word	Count	Frequency
Police	42	0.025255562236921228
Robbers	8	0.004810583283223091
Case	8	0.004810583283223091
Officials	8	0.004810583283223091
incident	7	0.004209260372820205
court	6	0.0036079374624173183
murder	6	0.0036079374624173183
accomplices	5	0.003006614552014432
bodies	5	0.003006614552014432
prosecution	4	0.0024052916416115455

Table 1 shows the list of nouns given in the crime stories of The Dawn. These incidents have taken place within the vicinity of twin cities i.e. Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Rawalpindi and the capital of Pakistan are situated at a stone's distance. Forensic, socio-cognitive, and pragmatic analysis of the nouns used in the crime stories of The Dawn seem to be very significant. Because of the paucity of space and time, only a limited number of nouns occurring with high frequency have been selected for analysis. The use or mention of these nouns may indicate the effects at various levels. The levels and the aspects are given below:

Socio-cognitive Effect of Nouns

Socio-cognitive analysis of any text involves how certain texts (words written or spoken) may influence the perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes of individuals in social contexts. These nouns might contribute to the socio-cognitive effects in many ways. The noun “police” is a symbol of authority and protection as appeared in the corpus of The Dawn. The presence of police implies that the law enforcement department is present and has the responsibility to maintain the law. This may give individuals a sense of safety, security, and protection in their social contexts. However, the noun “robbers” implies fear and insecurity. The mention of “robbers” implies the need for great security, vigilance, and protection. This may give individuals a sense of insecurity in society. Moreover, this mention of “robbers” and “crime activities” within the capital of the country gives individuals a greater sense of insecurity. In the same vein, the mention of “murder” may stir shock and outrage as it is a grave crime that involves the loss of life of some individuals. This may give rise to emotions such as sadness, anger, fear, and insecurity among the individuals in society:

- (1) Meanwhile, police during a crackdown against anti-social elements arrested six outlaws. (The Dawn, 18th February 2024)
- (2) The robbers managed to escape. (The Dawn, 19th February 2024)
- (3) Four people were murdered in separate incidents in Rawalpindi on Sunday. (The Dawn, 19th February 2024)

The people in the social context may demand justice in response to such heinous crimes. This might have a depressing effect on the psychology of the people in society. However, the mention of court may affect the individuals positively as “court” implies legal proceedings and justice. This involvement of the “court” gives the expectations of justice, fairness, and objectivity in resolving the case. However, the mention of the “bodies” refers to the dead bodies which may evoke feelings of fear among the individuals as well as the feeling of empathy towards the family of the deceased. By and large, these nouns induce various socio-cognitive effects. These nouns shape behaviors, sentiments, and attitudes within a society. Society is affected by these incidents and ongoing legal proceedings.

Pragmatic Effect of Nouns

Pragmatic is defined as the speaker’s meaning of language. In pragmatic analysis, we consider and see how these nouns function in the real world and what implications these nouns may bring in different contexts. The first noun under consideration is “police”. The data shows that this noun has occurred most frequently which implies a dominant presence in the discourse. It seems to discuss the involvement or presence of police in a particular context related to crimes:(

- (4) CPO Syed Khalid Hamdani said criminals who attacked citizens and the police could not escape from the law. (The Dawn, 20th February 2024)

The next noun which has occurred most frequently is “robbers”. This shows the crime. Its presence alongside “police” is a clash or interface between law enforcement agencies and the criminal(s):

- (5) During the encounter, one of the robbers was killed, however, the police raiding party remained unhurt. (The Dawn 19th February 2024)

The occurrence of the noun “officials” suggests that apart from the involvement of the police, the government officials and the legal representatives are also keen to solve the matters:

- (6) The identity of court officials and the prosecution branch staffers was not revealed in the FIR. (The Dawn 16th February 2024)

The noun “murder” on the contrary implies a serious crime and requires a serious investigation leading to prosecution:

- (7) A businessman, along with his two friends, was kidnapped and murdered by four unidentified kidnapers in Morgah on April 16, 2023. (The Dawn 16th February 2024)

In the same vein, the noun “prosecution” seems to suggest that legal action has been taken against the suspects and evidence is being collected.

- (8) Staffers of the prosecution branch were booked in addition to the court officials. (The Dawn 16th February 2024)

In short, the list of nouns appears to indicate the whole forensic context including crime, suspects, investigation, and legal proceedings. Moreover, the nouns collectively highlight the involvement of objects and individuals that seem connected to the case in any form.

Socio-cognitive Effect of the Verbs

Table 2: List of verbs in crime stories of Dawn newspaper

Word	N (Text)	% (Text)	N (Ref.corp.)	% (Ref.corp.)	Propensity	ChiSqu	Log Lik.	sqrt(Prop*ChiSqr)
Kill	7	0.00421	0	0	100	99999999	NaN	99498.74
Shoot	5	0.00301	0	0	100	99999999	NaN	99498.74
Take	6	0.00361	0	0	100	99999999	NaN	99498.74
Arrest	8	0.00481	0	0	100	99999999	NaN	99498.74
escape	5	0.00301	0	0	100	99999999	NaN	99498.74

Table 2 above shows the use of verbs in the crime stories of The Dawn newspaper in the capital of Pakistan and its adjacent city of Rawalpindi. A selected list of verbs has been selected keeping in mind the space and time restraints. Only the verbs which have occurred frequently have been selected for analysis.

The verbs given in the list extracted from data have a serious socio-cognitive effect in the context of crime in society. The verbs “kill” and “shoot” have a severe connotation of death and crime. These verbs also imply violence in society. The frequent occurrence of these verbs (7 and times respectively) denotes the insight of fear, danger, and insecurity in society:

- (9) Two suspected robbers were killed. (The Dawn, 20th February 2024)

However, the verb “arrest” (8 times) is an indicator of authority, power, and control in the legal context. This verb is of the greatest significance to underscore the existence of justice, security, and safety and authority of the law enforcement authorities:

- (10) Meanwhile, Attock police during a crackdown against anti-social elements arrested six outlaws. (The Dawn 18th February 2024)

Finally, the verb “escape” (5 times) indicates freedom and invasion. These verbs collectively contribute greatly to forming societal norms and attitudes:

- (11) The alleged killer managed to escape from the scene (The Dawn, 19th February 2024)

The data has shown that these verbs contribute greatly to forming social attitudes of danger, insecurity, and fear. However, these attitudes are not merely from the help of the use of these verbs but also the social contexts in which these actions take place, which play a vital role in the formation of social perceptions and attitudes of the people.

Pragmatic Effect of the Verbs

To know what pragmatic effect these verbs, create in the context of crime, it is very pertinent to know the effect of these verbs on communication that takes place within the contexts where a crime takes place. To begin with, the verbs “kill”, and “shoot” carry great significance in the context of crime pragmatically. It can be inferred that this is an unlawful act of violence. It also indicates that the act is heinous and serious. This calls for an instant remedy indicating the severity of the situation. The verb “arrest” however indicates the presence of the law enforcing agencies and authorities. It can create a sense of security in the people. Again, the verb “escape” in the context of crime is associated with the failure of law-enforcing agencies which have failed to keep the criminal even after their arrest. The verb “escape” further aggravates the situation where crime has already taken place. By and large, these verbs help shape the public attitude regarding punishment and crime, establishing legal charges and building public narratives on these issues of crime.

Socio-cognitive Effect of the Adjectives

Table 3: List of Adjectives Appeared in The Dawn Newspaper

Word	Count	Frequency
Fake	4	0.0024052916416115455
Other	4	0.0024052916416115455
Dead	4	0.0024052916416115455
Separate	3	0.0018039687312086591
Former	3	0.0018039687312086591
Old	3	0.0018039687312086591
Injured	3	0.0018039687312086591

As discussed above, the socio-cognitive approach helps to build social attitudes and behaviors in response to the incidents/discourses prevalent in society. The choice of adjectives made by The Dawn newspaper in its crime stories affects the society and people living in it. These choices play a role in the formation of attitudes and behavior of people in general. The adjective “fake” implies something which is not true. This may promote the behavior of doubt and skepticism in the people:

- (12) FIR after inquiry implicates former Morgah SHO, prosecution, and court officials for submitting fake challan. (The Dawn 16th February 2024)

In the same vein, the adjective “other” is associated with something additional or exclusive. This might affect the readers psychologically and might bring an attitude of exclusion:

- (13) The preparation of a fake challan, and other malpractices committed during the investigation. (The Dawn 16th February 2024)

However, the adjective “dead” can create multiple feelings such as insecurity, fear, and danger in the minds of people in society:

- (14) Another man was shot dead at a wedding ceremony in the Shahpur area of Taxila police. (The Dawn 18th February 2024)

Similarly, the adjective “injured” is associated with harm, pain, or loss. The use of this adjective in the discourse of crime reports may raise sentiments of sympathy or concern:

- (15) The injured was taken to Tehsil Headquarters Hospital where he succumbed to the injuries (The Dawn 18th February 2024).

Pragmatic Effect of Adjectives

Unlike forensic relevance and socio-cognitive effects, these adjectives seem to have pragmatic effects also. The adjective “fake” (8 times) may question the true existence of something. This may suggest that something either, crime, legal proceedings, evidence, or even the incident of the crime itself may be unreal. The next adjective “other” may suggest something other than what is expected. In the context of crime, this may denote that either the legal proceedings or the evidence may be something unexpected. The adjective dead may lead people to believe that there is no hope of any type anymore. This implies that death and crimes have been on the rise in the capital of the country and its adjacent city. This can also make people in other parts of the country feel insecure. Similarly, the adjective “injured” may suggest that crime incidents have brought pain, harm, and destruction. People also seem to have suffered from pain and loss during these criminal incidents.

Analysis of The Express Tribune’s Corpus

Socio-cognitive Effect of the Nouns

Table 4: List of nouns in the Express Tribune

Word	Count	Frequency
Police	34	0.0274858528698464
Station	14	0.01131770412287793
Phone	9	0.007275666936135812
Cash	8	0.0064672594987873885
incident	8	0.0064672594987873885
crime	6	0.004850444624090542
theft	6	0.004850444624090542
street	6	0.004850444624090542
man	6	0.004850444624090542

Table 4 shows the occurrence of nouns in the crime stories of The Express Tribune. The most frequently occurring noun is “police” (34 times) and the lowest occurring noun from the selected list is “man” (6 times).

These nouns may have a significant socio-cognitive effect and can construct people's behavior, attitude, and psychology about certain happenings in society. Likewise, the noun “police” is of great importance to create an effect on the cognition of the people. On one hand, it seems to create a feeling of security, safety, and authority in the people. However, it can create a feeling of fear, anxiety, and unrest in those involved in illegal activities:

- (16) Police arrested Afzaal and charged him with attempted murder. (The Express Tribune 16th February 2024)

Similarly, the noun “station” implies the place of alleviation of concerns about the effects of a crime. As the station in crime contexts, it also brings safety and security to the people. With the presence of stations, people feel secure, and the criminals feel afraid and frightened:

- (17) Reports were filed at different police stations in the capital city. (The Express Tribune 16th February 2024)

The noun “phone” can greatly influence the behavior of the people in society. It may refer to many actions in the context of crime such as connection or communication, technology, and surveillance:

- (18) Upon the arrest, a mobile phone and incriminating materials were seized from the possession of the suspect. might evoke feelings of accessibility in the people (The Express Tribune 17th February 2024).

Nouns such as “stealing” and “crime” might bring a feeling of insecurity in the minds of the people:

- (19) Reports filed at different police stations in the capital city indicate that street crimes are on the rise with many citizens going about their day being targeted and deprived of their vehicles, cash, and other valuables. (The Express Tribune 21st February 2024)

Pragmatic Effect of the Nouns

The list of nouns implies multiple meanings from the pragmatic perspective. The noun police can be a symbol of security if not safety. However, it can be a sign of fear for those committing crimes. The noun crime implies illegalities, insecurities, lack of safety, and unlawfulness. The noun “street” seems to suggest that there is no street that is free of crimes. This implies that crime has now become a social practice and the criminals are not afraid of the law-enforcing authorities at all.

Verbs in the Express Tribune

Table 5: List of verbs in the Express Tribune

Word	Count	Frequency
reported	14	0.01131770412287793
stolen	9	0.007275666936135812
arrested	7	0.005658852061438965
Filed	4	0.0032336297493936943
snatched	4	0.0032336297493936943
recovered	3	0.002425222312045271

registered	3	0.002425222312045271
accused	3	0.002425222312045271

Socio-**cognitive Effect of the Verbs**

The most frequently occurring verb “reported” can stir many types of effects on the minds of the people. It can influence their minds positively as well as negatively. People might refer to the sense of duty and responsibility in the people but at the same time, it might show distrust in the justice system. This may give the impression of how well/not society is keen on the prevention of crimes:

- (20) Sajjad Masih, at the I/9 police station, reported the snatching of a motorcycle and Rs5,000. (The Express Tribune 23rd February 2024)

In the same vein, the verb “stolen” may create a sense of insecurity and may prepare people for self-security. The verb “arrest” has significance in the justice system. This might reinforce the belief of the people in the justice system and authority of the law enforcement authorities:

- (21) Junaid A and Ahsham S filed separate reports about their stolen mobile phones, while Sundus reported stolen jewelry and cash worth Rs300,000. (The Express Tribune 21st February 2024)

The verb “file” may refer to the availability of justice. The verb “snatched” might create a feeling in the people that people don’t have security even in the public space. This might create an attitude of unrest and agony:

- (22) Tariq Mehmood filed a report for his stolen mobile phone and motorcycle, AFC-5743, at the Shams Colony police station. (The Express Tribune 21st February 2024)
- (23) Amir Latif, at the same police station, reported a mobile phone snatching incident. (The Express Tribune 23rd February 2024)

The verb “recovered” can serve to establish the perception that justice is being done and the authorities are taking a keen interest. This verb, by and large, can create a sense of justice, and security but at the same time the perception of injustice, and mistrust in the justice system:

- (24) Police recovered a weapon and booty from his possession. (The Express Tribune 16th February 2024)

Pragmatic Effect of the Verbs

The first verb in the list “reported” (14 times) implies that relevant authorities have been informed of the crime. This also implies that the parties that have become the victims of crime have informed the authorities and expect that action will be taken against the outlaws in favor of the sufferers. In the same way, the verb “stolen” refers to the criminal activity that has occurred and someone’s belongings have been taken away unlawfully by some criminal. The act also implies that people have to be careful about the security of their things. In the same vein, the verb “arrested” implies that the legal action has begun. Further, this suggests that law enforcement authorities are vigilant enough to apprehend the accused and bring them behind bars. This also proposes that the people feel a sense of security. The verb “accused” refers to that the legal action has started against the accused and now they will have to prove themselves clear from the charges.

Socio-cognitive Effect of the Adjective

Table 6: List of adjectives in the Express Tribune

Word	Count	Frequency
mobile	11	0.00889248181083266
Other	7	0.005658852061438965
Same	2	0.0016168148746968471
separate	2	0.0016168148746968471
social	2	0.0016168148746968471
additional	2	0.0016168148746968471
concerned	2	0.0016168148746968471
Local	2	0.0016168148746968471
Unidentified	2	0.0016168148746968471

The adjectives such as “mobile” “other” social” and “unidentified” may affect society psychologically. The description of the accused or evidence as mobile may create a perception of elasticity or ephemerality. Further, this may create an idea in the minds of the people that the accused are very agile or very smart in their criminal behavior:

- (25) Despite the registration of cases against unidentified suspects, the police stations concerned have yet to trace the culprits. (The Express Tribune 23rd February 2024)

Likewise, the adjective “social” may lead to the perception that social factors such as socioeconomic conditions, adventure in the name of fashion, and peer pressure may also be responsible for the happening of crimes in society.

Correspondingly, the mention of the adjective “unidentified” holds great significance in the context of crime and may influence the masses psychologically a great deal. This adjective highlights that the individuals involved in the crime still are unknown/undiscovered. This evokes the perception of curiosity in the minds of the readers:

- (26) Despite the registration of cases against unidentified suspects, the police stations concerned have yet to trace the culprits (The Express Tribune 23rd February 2024).

Pragmatic Effect of the Adjective

The adjective “mobile” can suggest that the individuals involved in crimes are very agile and can adopt the tactics of committing crimes. The adjective can also refer to the agility of law enforcement agencies or authorities that are agile to respond to the changes in the behaviors of criminals. The adjective “social” is pragmatically very important. It underscores the importance of broader contextual factors such as culture, and social behaviors. This may also be thought that to underrate the reasons for the crime, a holistic and broader view of the social values that add to the crimes, is needed.

Discussion

During analysis and discussion, the data seem to show that the lexical choices of nouns, verbs, and adjectives opted by both the newspapers i.e. The Dawn and The Express Tribune significantly influence the minds of the readers. The choices of lexical items influence the general public both negatively and positively. The lexical choices seem to create the perception of insecurity, fear, social injustice, and danger. However, there are lexical choices that seem to

create a sense and perception of security in the minds of the people. The choices leave the reader feeling the presence of the justice system, law enforcement authorities, and legal proceedings. The data have shown that these lexical choices have prompted a wide variety of pragmatic interpretations. The data demonstrates that the choices of nouns such as “death”, “murder”, and “crime”, and verbs such as “snatch” and “file” all create insecurity and the presence of crime in the twin cities i.e. Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The data has also shown that adjectives such as “social” may explicate the social reasons behind the crimes to take place. Lastly, it can be easily inferred that lexical choices used to represent crimes have greatly impacted social perception and pragmatic interpretations of crimes.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to investigate the lexical choices in crime reports published by two national-level newspapers in Pakistan. Also, how do these lexical choices influence the readers psychologically and pragmatically? The data have shown that these newspapers make frequent use of nouns, adjectives, and verbs having a strong negative influence on the minds of the people (Furqan et al. 2022). However, the lexical choices give people a sense of positivity as well. By and large, the lexical choices create a sense of fear, danger, and insecurity in the minds of the people. These lexical choices pragmatically give the readers a message that the capital of the country has been having a lot of crimes. This further aggravates the concerns of the common public.

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