

REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN: A CORPUS BASED CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF NEWS COLUMNS OF THE DAILY DAWN

Abstract

In this paper, the differences in the representation of women in male and female writers' news columns written in the Pakistani daily newspaper Dawn are studied through corpus based critical discourse analysis. For this purpose, two corpora i.e. male journalists' corpus (MJC) and female journalists' corpus (FJC) are built, each having a word length of 24774 word tokens. The freeware, Ant Conc 3.4.1, is used to analyze the data, the keyness technique is used for keywords in their contexts, and critical discourse analysis of the occurrences is done. The results show the differences that exist in male and female journalists' discourses. The male writers' representation is significantly different from that of female writers. In the male journalists' writings, women are usually shown more passive either receiving some benefits from the others or receiving some sort of violence or torture. In the male writers' discussion, active roles of women in Pakistani society are rarely found. In the female journalists' discourse, on the other hand, active roles of women are more frequent as compared to passive roles. The study focuses on only one aspect of the issue. More researches are required to establish the differences in the male and female journalists' discourses about women.

INTRODUCTION

The paper discusses the issue of differences in women's representation in male and female columnists' discourses found in a Pakistan's daily newspaper 'Dawn' by using corpus based critical discourse analysis. The paper explores the difference in the ways women are represented in news columns by female and male journalists.

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The purpose of the study is to find out the differences in representation of female and male newspaper columnists in the discourses associated with women. For this purpose two corpora⁰⁰, from a very popular English Pakistani newspaper *Dawn*, are gathered and analyzed by using the freeware AntConc3.4.1 to bring out the differences in women representation in male and female newspaper columns, where the keyness technique¹ for corpora exploration is used. Critical discourse analysis is a strong device to detect the invisible ideologies and agendas of discourses. It relates text to social practices and focuses on social power abuse, reproduction of inequalities and resistance by texts (Gee & Handford, 2012). Use of corpus linguistics techniques adds objectivity (Mahmood, 2009) to critical discourse analysis. The result shows the gender inequalities prevailing in Pakistani society. After rigorous analysis of the data it is revealed that the discourse patterns in male and female writings reflect a significant difference in the representation of the same object i.e. women.

The first and second parts of the paper briefly discuss corpus linguistics techniques for critical discourse analysis and background of the representation of women, the third and fourth parts explain methodology, results and data presentation and interpretation. Where, the final part gives the conclusion.

Corpus Linguistics Techniques for Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis focuses on text in relation to society and the working of political and cultural powers. Texts reflect, as Van Dijk asserts “the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted” (2001). Fusion of corpus linguistics’ techniques to critical discourse analysis allows quantitative analysis in addition to the qualitative analysis. In Mautner’s view, by using corpus linguistics techniques a researcher can handle a very large data easily with a minimum subjectivity level (2009).

Lukac (2011) analyzed websites contents by using corpus based critical discourse analysis in which he collected the corpus from 19 blogs, and by using keyness technique carried out a micro and macro levels of critical discourse analysis. Jabeen et al (2011) carried out a comparative study of the use of discourse markers in Pakistani and British English in which they built the corpus of Pakistani spoken English and compared its findings with ICLE-GB, Corpus based discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis is very common in linguistic researches but has not yet

¹ Keywords are studied by placing them in the context in which they occur: keywords are defined somewhere below.

been applied to Pakistani newspaper columns to investigate the differences in male and female journalists' linguistic presentation of women.

Background of the Representation of Women

An object may have more than one different linguistic depiction which is based on the social and cultural schemata of the reference creator. Frege (as explained by Morris, 2007) is of the view that a referent can have different senses which are reflected in the ways of referring to an object. Smith also argues “[t]he same object can be presented in different ways through different structures of sense” (Smith, 2007). Does the gender of the columnist influence the portrayal of women? If yes, what are the differences in the representation of women? Many researches (some of them are summarized in the next paragraph) focus on the issue of representation of women from different perspectives but none does a comparative study of male and female written discourses, to point out the differences.

Dragas (2012), Downing (2011), Lazar (2010), and Darcy (1994) have conducted researches on the representation of women but none of them compared and contrasted males' and females' description of women. All these researchers focused on women's representation in mass media and their findings are similar to one another. All the three researchers claim that women's representation in media is passive, and confined to some stereotypical roles only. In European media, women are shown engaged in domestic chores, dependent on their relative males, and busy with their children and least concerned with politics and social welfare. The results of this research might agree or disagree with the claims made by the researchers mentioned above. Are conditions of women in Pakistan different from those in Europe? Is their representation in *Dawn's* news columns different from that in European media?

METHODOLOGY

In the present research, news columns of a Pakistani English daily newspaper, *Dawn*, are collected and interpreted by using corpus linguistics and critical discourse analytical techniques. The methodology includes the fusion of two methods which is usual in linguistics. Many linguists apply combined corpus linguistics techniques to discourse analysis, some of which have been discussed above. The main purpose of adding corpus linguistics to critical discourse analysis is to increase the objectivity of the research (Mahmood. 2004: Mautner 2009). Corpus linguistics technique is very popular because it interprets the data against quantificational facts. It is not confined to critical discourse analysis only but is extensively used in other linguistic researches like the study of emotional words (Nordmark & Glynn, 2013: Oster*, 2010), study and teaching of literature (Wahid, 2011), analysis of writing (Romer & Wulff*,

2010), and comparative study of spoken English (Jabeen, Rai & Arif, 2011). They reason why we have combined corpus linguistics technique with critical discourse analysis is first that, since the study aims to establish the differences in representation of women in male and female media discourse by applying critical discourse analysis, this tool alone can be applied to a few texts of some hundred words each and the results of such researches cannot be generalized (Bednarek, 2008). This means that by carrying out CDA (critical discourse analysis) without using CL (corpus linguistics), recurrent patterns in discourses cannot be quantified and explored. To find out usually associated discursive patterns used for women and the differences in their representation in male and female discourses, in journalists' writings in the *Dawn*, the addition of corpus linguistics techniques to CDA seems very appropriate. Secondly, to generalize the findings, a comparatively large data is required which is, unlike CDA alone, easily handled in CL based CDA (Bednarek, 2008). So, corpus linguistics adds not only objectivity to CDA techniques but also provides the possibility to deal successfully with the large available data and to investigate the usual recurrent discursive structures as well.

Two corpora are built to study the issue from the columns published in the *Dawn*. All the columns which appeared from September 2014 to February 2015 were selected. It was found that the corpus which consisted of female journalists' columns (FJC) was quite smaller than that of male journalists' columns (MJC). To equalize both the corpora, a selected number of words were removed from MJC. These chunks were removed randomly without studying the contents of columns to ensure maximum objectivity. Each corpus has 24774 word tokens. As far as the appropriate length of each corpus is concerned, the small length of 24774 word tokens each is sufficient because the research is about the difference in representation of women through CDA. The focus of CDA is on social and cultural patterns which are studied from the linguistic patterns and both the patterns i.e. linguistic and social are repeated in their contexts. Social patterns are repeated in the form of conventions, traditions or habits, whereas linguistic patterns are repeated in form of sentences, and paragraphs. As the repetitions are the essence of social and cultural patterns, so the findings of this research can be generalized to the writings of all Pakistani journalists, but for the sake of accuracy the findings are generalized to the *Dawn* columns as the corpora are limited to this newspaper only.

The corpora are explored by using AntConc 3.4.1 and keyness technique², through which it is used to interpret the data. Three keywords³ are studied in their contexts i.e.

² Key words are focused in their context to interpret the data

³ Words which are more frequent in a corpus or important for a study

woman and *women*, *girl* and *girls*, and the pronoun *she*. The keywords are studied in two steps:

1. Semantic roles of the key terms are studied;
2. Associated social roles to the key words are focused on

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Three sets of words related to women i.e. *woman* and *women*, *girl* and *girls*, and *she*, are explored in both the corpora by studying these words in their natural occurrence, i.e. key words in contexts (KWIC). They are studied and explained in two steps. At first level of interpretation, the focus of the researchers is on the semantic roles associated with key terms. It is noted whether women are in subject position of the sentence or in object position. If they are found in subject position, they are taken as active, and if found in the object position, they are taken as passive. Moreover, role is focused at phrase level too and phrases in which some sort of activity is present are taken as either active or passive. This division is further explored in the next session. At the second level, the semantic roles are further explained by explaining the social in/equalities related to women's representation issue.

First Level of Interpretation

At the first level of the analysis, keywords in their contexts and associated semantic roles are focused on. The semantic roles are divided into two parts i.e. active roles and passive roles. Passive roles are further divided into two categories, i.e. beneficiary and patient roles. In active roles the women are shown as the subjects or doers of an action, whereas in passive roles they are located as the object of the sentence or at the receiving end of an activity. If women receive something which is in their benefit/s, the role is named as beneficiary. If they receive something negative, or anything against their eager will, the patient role is given to such linguistic representation. For example, in the passages given below extracted from MJC:

1. They have spent most of their time and energy over the past decade or so urging government action against `terrorists` and championing the cause of *women* and religious minorities that are on the receiving end of much *organized violence* in contemporary Pakistan.
2. Three Muslim winners were females.

In the first instance, plural pronoun 'they' is on subject or active position who is fighting for women. And women are on receiving end, in this instance it is a *beneficiary* role, but later in this sentence, women are the object of organized

violence which means they are in the *patient* role of an undesired action. In second extract, Muslim females are on subject position and are winners of a contest. In this instance they are shown as involved in some active role and having a capacity to change the world. Result shows the difference in the portrayal of women in MJC and FJC in the allotment of semantic roles.

The keywords *woman* and *women*

The first two keywords *woman* and *women* are searched in both the corpora and are studied to bring out the differences. At first level, keywords are labeled either as active, beneficiary or patient role, focusing on the associated event, or action.

After labeling, each role is quantified and mentioned in percentage in the table given below:

Semantic character		FJC	MJC
1	Beneficiary	34.5%	21%
2	Patient	34.5%	55%
3	Active role	31%	08%
Women/woman in MJC and FJC			

The table shows that in MJC the most prominent role ascribed to women is ‘patient’ which is 55% of the total. Male journalists are more concerned with the problems women faced. Extracts given below give a glimpse of some associated patient roles with woman/women:

1. Women and religious minorities that are on the receiving end of much organized violence in contemporary Pakistan.
2. The absence of a marriage law also makes it difficult for women from these communities to change their names after marriage in their CNICs and passports.
3. One in three women throughout the world will experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime.
4. Attacks against women who stand up to demand their human rights and individuals who advocate for gender equality are often designed to keep women in their ‘place’. In some areas of the world, women who participate in public demonstrations are told to go home to take care of their children. Consider the recent example of a newspaper who is publishing naked photos

of a woman claimed that she was a well-known activist, an attack designed by them to shame this defender into silence.

In their most part of discussion about women, male journalists create a picture of women in which they are facing some unwanted actions like violence, gender inequality, social, physical and medical situations. The second more frequent role in MJC is beneficiary, which is 21%, in which women are shown as a receiver of painless or pleasing action. In the extracts given below some beneficiary role in MJC are shown:

1. ...and increased the number of reserved seats for women in parliament
2. They have spent most of their time and energy over the past decade or so urging government action against `terrorists` and championing the cause of women

In both the extracts, women are passive, and receiving some support either in form of increment of reserved seats in parliament or fighting of a group for women rights to defend their rights. The least frequent role ascribed to women is the active role in which women's active effort for society has been shown. For example

1. Three Muslim winners were females
2. Stand up to demand their rights

In both the instances women are on subject position and doing some actions. For example, in first extract women are shown taking part in some contests and winning the race while in second sentence they are shown fighting for their rights. In MJC, mostly active roles of women are associated with some patient role. For example

1. when women claim their right to affordable modern methods of contraception , they are labeled as prostitutes
2. Girls and women who pursue their own life choices are still murdered

In first sentence, women's active claim for their rights is attached with its negative effect, where women are more passive than active and due to their weakness they are labeled as prostitutes, which they have to bear with. The same is the case with second sentence where independent decision making of women is described with their murder.

In FJC, on the other hand, active roles assigned to women are 31% which is almost one third of the total. Some extracts about the active roles are given below:

1. Indian viewers know now that Pakistani women step out of their homes, working offices, a Karachi road looks pretty much the same in rush hour
2. Thus she was a founder member of Shirkat Gah (1975) and the women`s Action Forum (1981).

In first instance, women step out their home and work in offices, discussion is about women`s active role in which they are shown doing official works while in the second instance noun phrase women`s action forum contains a reference to the active role. Moreover in FJC active role is not associated with patient role. The second and third keyword is she and girl/s. In MJC, semantic roles associated with she and girl are quantified in the table given below:

	Role	She	Girl/s
1	Patient	29%	50%
2	Active	57%	17%
3	Beneficiary	14%	33%
MJC			

In MJC, the most frequent semantic role associated with girl/s, like women/woman, is patient role, second more frequent is beneficiary whereas the least frequent role is active role but in she the most frequent role is active, and the second more common role is patient while the least frequent is beneficiary. From these statistical information, it can be said that when male writers write about the female human group, their focus is on the unfavorable situations the female group face that`s why in women/woman, and girl/s patient role is the most frequent semantic role whereas when they discuss a single female human they concentrate the achievements or heroic doings of the female personality that`s why active role is most frequent in keyword she.

In FJC active role found with *women/woman* is 31%, with girl/s 50%, and with *she*, 82% (table is given below). In case of girl/s beneficiary role is absent which can be interpreted that when female writers write about the *girl/s* active role and unfavorable situations which they face in society, they ascribe 50% patient and 50% active roles to the object, but the beneficiary role is not found. This can be interpreted that they don`t like to be blessed but they like to do some active jobs or face unfavorable conditions or challenges themselves, without taking help from men. In case of *she*,

the active role is 82% from which it can be assumed that in female writings discussion about a single female human the model of active role is used. However these are assumptions which are based on valid statistical information and are explored on the second level by focusing on KWIC.

	Role	She	Girl/s
1	Active	82%	50%
2	Beneficiary	9%	---
3	Patient	9%	50%
	FJC		

Second Level of Interpretation

At the second level, differences in association of social roles to women in MJC and FJC are discussed by focusing on the recurrent linguistic expressions which refer to the social patterns. The social roles associated with the key words in MJC are discussed. In MJC, the key word *woman/women* are found more passive and less active. In 76% of the discussion about *women/woman*, the passive roles of the object are discussed while only 8% instances active roles are discussed. The more frequent area of discussion is about the social problems the women/women have in the society.

1. Attacks against women who stand up for their human rights and individuals who advocate for gender equality are often designed to keep women in their 'place'. In some areas of the world, women who participate in public demonstrations are told to go home to take care of their children. Consider the recent example of a newspaper publishing naked photos of a woman, claiming she was a well-known activist an attack designed to shame this defender into silence.
2. In other places, when women claim their right to affordable modern methods of contraception, they are labeled as prostitutes in smear campaigns seeking to undermine their credibility. Online attacks against those who speak for women's human rights and gender equality by so-called trolls who threaten heinous crimes are increasingly reported.

In the extracts given above, the focus is on the dire situations which women have to face as a result of carrying out a positive role. Instead of mentioning the women's

role actively, the reader's attention is drawn toward the threats posed as a result of those roles. In the first passage, it can be observed that women are depicted as standing up for their rights and gender equality and taking part in some sort of public demonstration, which shows the women's active participation in political and social affairs. But the effects of these roles are minimized by changing the focus from this role to their dangerous results that are: physical attacks, online attacks, or sexual scandals etc. The same linguistic technique is used in many other utterances in which women are portrayed as socially and political weak, their socially active roles are either simply not discussed or minimized. One such linguistic technique found in extracts is the use of sub-ordinate clause, as for example in second extract:

When women claim...

When the reader studies this sort of sentence, his or her attention goes towards the consequences of the action rather than the action itself. The syntactic position of certain phrases also adds to the emphasis of presentation. For example in the first extract;

Attack against women who...

The position of the *attack* phrase before the first action clause that is related to the women's demand or participation in some politically active role diverts the attention towards the consequence of the action before the active role itself is narrated. In some instances *women/woman* are positioned as an object on which different sort of unpleasant actions happened:

1. One in three women throughout the world will experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime
2. There is no legal protection for women against domestic violence
3. Three married women aged 20 to 24 were child brides.
4. Women and girls cannot make decisions on their most private matters sexuality, marriage, and children.

In the extracts given above, the keyword *women* is surrounded by words like *child brides, powerlessness in making decisions on their private issue, domestic violence, absence of legal protection, and physical and sexual violence* which point to the prevailing social conditions of women in Pakistani society in the male writers' viewpoints. Extract no. 2 depicts the insecure position of women in Pakistan in the absence of any legal protection, and that they are powerless to take decisions about their private matters, as extract no.4 shows. It means, they are dependent totally on

their men who mistreat them. Though in all the four extracts the actual doers of the actions are absent yet the word women shows that doers are the related men. It can be inferred that women are very passive, even about their private issues they are dependent of men, and due to this dependency women are either the patients or beneficiary.

1. They have spent most of their time and energy over the past decade or so urging government action against `terrorists` and championing the cause of women
2. But to be fair, virtually unfettered political power does give the incumbent the authority to carry out reforms an elected government would lack the will to implement. In Musharraf's case, he did away with a discriminatory system of separate electorates, and increased the number of reserved seats for women in parliament

In both the extracts, women are shown receiving something from the other gender. In the first extract, a group is fighting for the cause of girl/s women, and in second instance the government is increasing the number of reserved seats for women which show the passivity of women. They are represented as passive to fight for their own rights. The male columnists' discussion about the keyword is not different from that of woman/women. In 86% of discussion, *girl/s* is presented as passive member of society.

1. There is little doubt about the significance of her cause girls' education. Millions of girls globally are deprived of education by terrorists, cultural bias and government apathy.
2. Thus, it has been observed that in recognizing that girls face far greater hurdles in gaining education, Islam encourages parents to educate their daughters.
3. Furthermore, in advocating against the unjust societal structures that create hurdles for girls' education

In all the three extracts, *girl/s* as patient of actions is shown. In all the three instances, the associated problems with girls are related to education. It can be seen that in Pakistan even getting education is very difficult for girls. Social structures are too imbalanced to spread knowledge equally in male and female members of the society. The keyword *she* has a different description than that of

the other two. *She* refers to a single female human who is shown as a very active member of the society. It is seen that in the case of the keyword *she*, the MJC assign more active roles, i.e. 50%, which can be interpreted that male writers usually highlight the active role of a lone woman. In the extracts given below, *she* is shown as fighting against the social and political obstacles.

1. She refuses to surrender
2. She sent to her superior. . .
3. She braved the threats

In FJC, *women/woman* has a different description. MJC, 31% active roles and 69% passive roles are attached to women. Most of these active roles of women are described with focus on the dangerous corollaries of the actions as has been discussed above. In FJC, women's actions, their development and their positive role is seen, as is clear in the extracts given below:

1. Pakistani women step out of their homes, work in offices
2. women who work are as respectable as their female relatives
3. the big discovery was that not a single woman was swathed in a burqa
4. To remind men that being Muslim is not merely about asking a woman to cover up but also as much about asking men to lower their gaze
5. Many women had faced far more difficult situations and had either compromised simply to retain their jobs

These four extracts point out that Pakistani women are not confined to their homes, that they are working in offices and they can choose whether to be swathed in veils or to cover their faces or not, because Islam not only asks women to cover their faces but asks men to lower their gaze as well. Female journalists' depiction, describes women as respectable, positive and active members of the society.

1. Parliament may have done its duty by enacting a sexual harassment law but the government needs to do more to enforce it meaningfully.
2. In 2010, when the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act was enacted, I was curious to see what difference it would make to the situation women faced.

Female journalists' discussion about women passivity (in beneficiary, patient positions) is different from that of males' where women are shown passive and weak. In FJC, the focus is on the responsibility of state and its institutions. For example in extract no.1 given above, government is asked to do its responsibility more effectively. Though women are beneficiary here as they are receiving some legal support, the readers' attention is shifted towards the government's responsibility about the enforcement of the law. The language shows that whatever the parliament and government have done is not their gift for women rather it is the women's right and that women are not satisfied from government as it is not fulfilling its duties related to women issues. In the second instance, the government's action is focused on by drawing attention on the results of the policy. Though in FJC, 69% associated roles are passive, the description makes the reader think about the responsible institutions/persons' failure rather than anything negative on women's own part. *Girl/s* in FJC is shown as more active, as a girl is shown tending the house, taking interests in writing letters, or having a high IQ level. The patient roles are related to school education as shown in the extract given below:

1. It is the story of a little girl who was pulled out of school by her mother on the advice of friends.
2. Tahira, a school dropout from a village in Chal 82% active semantic roles are associated with the keyword *she* in FJC. In FJC, a woman's interest and expertise are shown in the use of technology, as is given in the extract given below:

She mailed me a YouTube link

Sending of a You Tube link to other people shows the participation of women in modern technology and the social and educational background of women in the country in general as the girl's recipient of the link is also a woman.

1. She was assigned the task of teaching 'backward' children and keeping them off the streets when their parents were at work. She developed her unique method of educating the young child and her students did better than the 'normal' children of the rich.
2. In *The Absorbent Mind*, she describes what she terms the 'language mechanism' comprising nerve centers in the brain
3. Montessori terms the child's acquisition of language as a natural miracle complete by the time she is two years.

4. She steps into the workspace.
5. She received a letter from a girl
6. She had received this book from her brother

From the extracts given above in which the focus is on the application of a teaching methodology, women's role in teaching is seen. So women are not only getting education, using technology but they are teaching and preparing the generation as well. Moreover, somewhere in the corpus of FJC, they are found doing work in TV dramas, doing researches, facing unfavorable conditions, and supporting other women and children along with a very minute discussion about the patient roles. In the related discussion to the keyword *she*, 'brave girls' are shown as useful and active citizens doing work in every walk of life.

Women in general have two kinds of representation in news columns of Dawn. In MJC, women are shown weak, objects of every sort of societal violence and dependent on men even for their private matters. What is the role of women in country politics? Are Pakistani women getting knowledge, or engaged in any active role in society? In MJC, the questions raised are not addressed. It seems as if male journalists are only concerned with the problems women face. They are not concerned with their social or political roles. Even depiction of women in active roles is accompanied by a stress on the harmful consequences which the women suffer after doing some creative, social and political work. In FJC, women are shown as comparatively more active, taking part in politics, social affairs, education, research, acting and supporting their families. Female writers try to show women as the useful members of the society. In discussion of patient roles, the attention is focused on the responsible persons of the state and in the discussion of beneficiary roles, things which women receive are shown as the rights of women.

CONCLUSION

There is a difference in the presentation of women in news columns written in the daily *Dawn* by male and female columnists. The present research finds that the representation of women in news columns of *Dawn* is affected, besides other things, by the gender of the writer. The male writers usually show the women as passive, dependent on men in all matters, having no interest in the use of technology, having a weak positive role in politics and objects of much societal and domestic violence. Their discourse depicts conditions in Pakistan for women as unfavorable to do any positive work, outside the domestic domain. The women, who try to work, have to suffer dire consequences. In female writers' columns, on the other hand, women are more active and less passive. They are depicted as working in every field of life.

They are working in offices, doing researches, working as actors, teaching in schools and as nurses, and fighting for their and others' rights.

The research is confined to the columns written from September 2014 to February 2015 and only semantic roles and social associated roles are concentrated on by the researchers, which is not enough to give a holistic picture of the differences in the representation of women in journalistic writing. To understand and explain the differences in the representation of women in national life, more research is required through investigation of multiple Pakistani newspapers. A comparative study with newspapers of other countries could also give insights into the issue of representation of women in journalistic writing.

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