

“Exploring Minority Representation in Pakistani Newspaper Editorials through Corpus Approaches”

BS ENGLISH LINGUISTICS



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## ABSTRACT

The underrepresentation of minorities remains a pressing concern, particularly in light of its social, economic, and political implications, warranting scholarly examination. Minorities face discrimination despite the constitutional rights in Pakistan. As a significant source of information, print media has been shaping narratives and influencing societal mindset in this regard. This study aims to explore the representation of minorities in the editorials of two esteemed English newspapers in Pakistan, Daily Dawn and The News. The data was collected through the LexisNexis database. Critical Discourse Analysis Theory, called Bourdieu's Theory of Language and Power, has been used as a theoretical framework, and a corpus-based approach has been used as an analytical framework. A targeted corpus containing 78 editorials – 33 from The News and 45 from Daily Dawn was selected. High dispersion keywords like minorities from The News and minority from Daily Dawn, along with their frequent collocations, were centralised for analysis. Five persistent themes were used for analysis, including power and hegemonic discourse, marginalisation of minority women, religious discrimination and forced conversions, lack of political and civic representation, and delayed justice and institutional silence. The research finds that minorities are framed within the discourse of vulnerability and crisis through their recurrent connection with systematic marginalisation, cases of blasphemy and persecution. Both newspapers strengthen dominant discourses through a critical or sympathetic tone, highlighting the social stratification. Nonetheless, heterogeneity was observed in Daily Dawn and The News' discourses. Daily Dawn inclined towards more gendered marginalisation and legal reform; contrarily, The News drew attention to broader problems like institutional neglect and civic marginalisation. The distinctions highlight how narratives are constructed, considering public readership and institutional dominance. The research concludes that mainstream English newspaper editorials reveal and reproduce the inherent inequalities. Implications suggest the need for reformation in editorials through minority inclusivity, training for journalists and reporters, and policy implementation at the state level. Researchers can widen the scope of the study by analysing minority representation in Urdu newspapers.

Keywords: Minorities, Editorials, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), AntConc, Corpus approaches.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Minorities constitute a vital part of Pakistan and are symbolised by the white colour in the national flag. As of the 2023 census, they constitute 3.73 per cent of the total population in Pakistan, with the Hindu population at 1.60 per cent, the Christian population at 1.59, the Ahmadis population at 0.22, the scheduled castes at 0.25, and others at 0.07 (*"Pakistan Bureau of Statistics."*). Minorities in Pakistan have faced challenges historically to get their due share in the socio-economic and political affairs of the country.

Print media is an important source of information which is responsible for constructing narratives and shaping public opinion. The media's framing of an issue has deep impacts on the outcome. Through propaganda (positive or negative), the media shapes the narratives which are generally accepted by society and, in extreme cases, also by the state. Before the boom of digital media, these narratives and public opinion had been dependent on the print media. Most of the print media groups remained biased towards different perspectives. Few represented the leftist tendencies, while most of them supported the rightists' point of view.

Recently, scholars have started to focus on the representation of minorities in print media because of the media's active role in shaping the structures of society through its narrative. The discourses which stem from editorials are the manifestation of ideology and power. These editorials do not exist in isolation and have a powerful impact on public perception. As documented by Bourdieu, language works like a symbolic power where hierarchies and power ideologies are reproduced by the apparent neutral discourse (Bourdieu). In the Pakistani context, this assertion underscores the function of the media in strengthening or disputing the inequalities faced by minorities in Pakistan.

The News and Daily Dawn are among the most-read English Newspapers in Pakistan. (*“Top English News Papers of Pakistan”*). The editorials of these newspapers carry an equal weight for establishing discourses about minorities and their representation.

Editorials' discourse in these prominent newspapers has a significant influence on the public because of their reputation and larger audiences. If these newspapers set out to investigate the issues of minorities deeply, they can challenge conventional norms, lead to nationwide acknowledgement and encourage policy reformation. Contrarily, biased reporting or silence can lead to further marginalisation of minorities. Thus, editorials work as active agents of the construction of the image of minorities in society

Additionally, the media in Pakistan has a notable positioning when it comes to framing the narratives. The dual role of the media makes it extremely crucial. Since its creation, Pakistan has been nurtured by religion, due to which the religious minorities face a myriad of problems. There exists a gap between constitutional promises of inclusion and the lived realities of them (Ghouri et al.). Thus, editorials are important for analysis as they are read by a huge number of people and carry significant narratives which are open to debate among people. Therefore, editorial representation of minorities has the power of societal justice, inclusion of minorities and democracy.

It is difficult for minorities to get their fundamental rights, like access to education, healthcare, and employment. They are socially, politically and economically marginalised as they are relegated to positions not deemed as “respectable” in society. Minorities face challenges in getting their due rights. Even if they demand their rights, they are treated ruthlessly- instances of mob violence, misuse of blasphemy laws, forced conversions, and marriages are worth mentioning in this regard (Javaid-ur-Rahman). The pleas of minorities are also underrepresented in the mainstream media of Pakistan. Both electronic and print media also streamline majoritarian agendas.

It is expected that the media (in this case, print media) perform their core responsibility of highlighting and protecting the fundamental rights of the citizens. Since minorities' issues have not been well represented in the editorials of print media, the state, as well as society, could not be properly sensitised in this regard. Thus, it created a social environment where minorities felt alienated and isolated. The Islamisation process under different regimes also forced the newspapers to forget the pleas of minorities.

Consequently, minorities were socially and economically isolated and did not have strong representation in policymaking as well. Such realities, particularly economic challenges, forced the minorities to choose work over education, which further pushed them towards the wall.

Editorials carry the status of robust agenda-setting tools in the media because of their significant influence. While exercising this tool, the media guides the audience on what exactly to think about (Kuryшева et al.). Constant coverage of the problem by the media leads it to become a central problem for the public. Similarly, in the Pakistani context, whatever editorials dominate the narratives become completely embedded in the minds of the public.

Pierre Bourdieu's theory, called "Language and Symbolic Power (1991), focuses on the use of language in exercising power, which leads to social stratification and inequality. The power imbalance and its subsequent effects are the primary focus of this theory. The social and political facets of the language are explored in this theoretical framework. Additionally, the theory asserts that the dominant groups of society hold the power to develop ideology and social hierarchies via language. A proper language, called the legitimate language concept, was introduced by Bourdieu. Legitimate language is socially accepted and is institutionalised.

Bourdieu termed language as partial and discriminatory. Naturalisation of events through speech is carried out by language. Grammar, vocabulary and accents that are deemed prestigious are called legitimate language. Their standardisation is ensured by the dominant groups of the country. Building on this, Bourdieu also provided the concept of linguistic Market in which distinct languages compete based on power, and speakers inadvertently make use of the dominant language. The dominant language is considered respectable and more rational. Another key concept proposed by Bourdieu is that of symbolic violence. Symbolic violence is the type of violence that is exercised through the misuse of linguistic dominance. The reproduction and internalisation of the dominant language reinforces the social hierarchies, which causes the acceptance of marginalised status among minorities as natural and acceptable.

Bourdieu's theory provides a critical engagement of language as a combination of both power and a carrier of the reproduction of societal inequities. Institutional endorsement and cultural acceptance lead to linguistic capital (Bourdieu).

The corpus-based approach is an approach that blends theoretical frameworks with analytical evidence. This practical approach uses authentic data to validate the theoretical framework, preventing errors and biases. This approach constitutes an integration of authentic data and ideas by making use of original text to validate the theoretical framework. A real language is used to test the hypothesis in corpus-based research. Researchers are given access to verify, represent and occasionally amend models and theories used before using corpora (McEnery and Hardie). This allows a certain degree of flexibility as researchers start with a theory and adapt their comprehension based on what the data shows.

Extending this, the corpus-based approach starts with a theory while moulding in the direction of actual data insights. It provides a perfect equilibrium between theoretical framework and empirical evidence. This optimal balance reduces potential biases and validates that results are underpinned by actual language data rather than rooted in assumptions (Gries 335).

Furthermore, corpus linguistics ensures a structured avenue from data to interpretation. Researchers can do quantitative analysis through annotation, abstraction and analysis to unveil reliable patterns. The validity of findings is strengthened by this multi-layered process (Wallis and Nelson).

This study delves into the representation of minorities in editorials of the two most-read English newspapers of Pakistan, Daily Dawn and The News. The major consideration will be the representation and problems faced by minorities in the Print Media. Since the media plays a fundamental role in the propagation of narratives and the construction of social realities, there lies a great responsibility on the media for the representation of minorities. The media can play a detrimental role in educating society about the protection of minority rights in Pakistan. Media builds narratives and discourses through propaganda, and the right campaign for the protection of minority rights may bring a change in society.

Existing scholarship underscores the incessant gaps in the representation of minorities. Joshua and Zia maintain that minority representation in newspapers is centred around problems like attacks on places of worship, religious violence and forced conversions while overlooking their contributions in different aspects of state affairs (Joshua and Zia). The selective framing represents minorities as marginalised and unfavoured rather than as participants equally contributing to the welfare of the country.

Following the same pattern, Rehmat comments on the absence of minorities in reporting and slight coverage in victim-related narratives. The portrayal of minorities in such a manner generates a narrow realisation. This leads to failure in acknowledging the civic, cultural, and intellectual roles of Minorities in country affairs (Rehmat). The press underuses its potential in providing a balanced perception of minorities.

Resultantly, this strengthens symbolic power. The media's act of filtration of the content leads to reinforcement of already existing power dynamics and social hierarchies of the country. According to Eide and others, the press has the power to construct society through filtered, in addition to just representing it (Eide et al.). This is also observed in the context of Pakistan, where religious minorities and their representation are often politicised. Conversely, the narratives which promote inclusion in terms of minorities' contributions to the country and their achievements assist in breaking the stereotypical notions regarding them.

Therefore, it is fundamental to comprehend how Daily Dawn and The News contribute to such dynamics. The amalgamation of analysis with advocacy makes editorials stand out as the most influential part of print media. Editorial discourse either naturalises viewpoints or challenges the narratives. In the case of minorities, editorials can also play the same role. This research intends to investigate these possibilities by utilising a corpus as a lens.

The research is helpful to spread awareness among the masses, to recognise minorities as a part of the country and to help them get the rights for which they have been waiting for decades. The government, media and people of Pakistan need to discern their contributions and existence with a receptive attitude. Precisely in this regard, the role of the media is extremely important.

Furthering the same discourse, as per many studies, the Pakistani media has the power to bring to attention the issues related to minorities. Noshina Saleem and others advanced that the media can raise awareness of children, women and minority rights, which can strongly advocate for Pakistan's ability to empower the underprivileged groups (Saleem et al.). However, other researchers present the significant role of media in underscoring the rights of minorities and strengthening harmony in society (Mubeen and Qusien). This proves the crucial positioning of media in providing inclusion to the minorities.

Altogether, this strongly asserts the critical role of media in moving beyond conventional reporting to an objective and inclusive one. By providing minorities' voices and agency, the media can assist in the integration of minorities. Public acknowledgement can also compel the government to play its role in providing equity.

Thereby, this research delves into Daily Dawn and The News' portrayal of minorities and their problems through editorial discourse.

### **1.1. Research Objectives:**

1. To analyse the representation of religious minorities in the selected newspaper editorials.
2. To identify recurring themes emerging in the selected newspaper editorials.

### **1.2. Research Questions:**

1. How are religious minorities represented in the newspaper editorials of Daily Dawn and The News?
2. How do recurring themes about minorities in the selected editorials construct or perpetuate narratives about minorities, revealing underlying power dynamics and biases?

### **1.3. Significance of Study:**

This research seeks to uncover the underlying ideological frameworks in the representation of minorities in Pakistani newspaper editorials, along with their overall representation. The main purpose of the research is to familiarise the masses with the rights of minorities and their acceptance of them, while subtly reminding the media of its role in generating positive narratives

and discourse regarding minorities. The state is also responsible for safeguarding the rights of minorities and providing them with all the necessities of life, like the majority.

The language of editorials possesses influence to uphold power dynamics. This is enlightened by Critical Discourse Analysis. Prominent research unveils the binaries produced by the newspapers, which gives an image of problematic beings to the minorities (Shahzad). This deliberate framing strengthens stereotypes and makes exclusion acceptable and natural to them and the public.

Additionally, minority's social invisibility is reinforced by the filtered representation of the media. According to studies, the representation of minorities is followed by frequent portrayal as victims. There is a dearth of their representation in terms of active contributors to the state. Ideological biases are maintained by this selective framing, which further reduces their equity (Saleem et al.).

In the Pakistani context, this deliberate framing actively constructs the builds the narrative rather than just reporting. The media's role is undeniable in shaping societal perceptions and influencing policy towards inclusion.

Thereby, this research extensively investigates whether The News and Daily Dawn reinforce or challenge such dynamics. The study pursues the identification of framing dynamics and omissions that unveil how editorial discourse constructs the face of minorities in the social hierarchy of Pakistan.

#### **1.4 Delimitation of the Study:**

This study is delimited to five chapters, which together build a coherent framework for comprehending the minority representation in Pakistani English Editorials.

- Daily Dawn and The News, the most influential and circulated English newspapers, were taken for the collection of data.
- The focus remains on editorials instead of newspapers. The editorials were extracted from the official websites of both newspapers and through Lexis Nexis, ensuring credibility and authenticity.
- The core dataset includes the editorials from both newspapers over the timespan of 2021-2025, a total of five years. This time frame ensures political shifts, multiple debates and involvement of recent events and trends affecting minorities in Pakistan.
- The study retains its focus by limiting the scope to The News and Daily Dawn and a years time span while still providing sufficient data for analysis.
- Bourdieu's theory of language and symbolic power was used among many other theories because it aligns with the topic.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The representation of minorities in print media has received a significant strand of attention among researchers. Throughout the earlier years, this domain has caught the attention of many scholars, and it has become one of the most researched areas. This chapter critically analyses the existing research on the representation of minorities in Pakistani print media. The first section explores the literature on critical discourse analysis, followed by a section that examines the representation of minorities in newspapers and a section that inquires into the corpus-based approaches to social issues with a particular emphasis on minorities and issues faced by them in Pakistan.

#### **2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA):**

The existing literature on minorities' representation in Pakistani newspaper editorials concerning the discrimination and injustices they face underscores the severity of the problem. The escalating problems of minorities in Pakistan have become a significant concern for many. (Dilawri et al.). This literature review section scrutinises the existing literature on minorities' representation in Pakistani well-known editorials with a great readership. According to Richardson, journalism can influence public opinion (Richardson). CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis) may be used to provide a foundation for the analysis of the editorials' discourse on minorities. CDA carries multiple definitions. A prominent name, i.e., Fairclough, pioneered the concept of CDA and set forth its concept as the analysis that delves into the connection between perseverance and causal mechanisms between discourse environment and socio-cultural frameworks.

This investigates how such events are conditioned by underlying ideology influenced by power and how the particular event is, in fact, a component of hegemony and power reinforcement. (1995: 132-3). Van Dijk affirmed that CDA intends to apprehend, uncover and challenge class disparity. (Van Dijk 249). He also added that CDA underpins the association among dominance, discourse, power, social disparity and the role of the interpreter in that social association (ibid 252). CDA deals primarily with the interpretation of discourse in terms of inequality, dominance, power abuse, etc. Further widening the definition of CDA, Dijk stated that it is an “analytical research.” By analytical research, it means that it not only interprets the deep level of discourse but also identifies the hidden power imbalances in multiple contexts. According to Dijk, the central agenda of CDA is to unmask, expose or announce. The narratives that carry the hidden meanings incomprehensible to the local targeted audience are unveiled through CDA. People in power tend to naturalise discourse for the local people with hidden incentives (Bjaiya Al-Mas’ udi and Allwan Al-A’ mery 3-5).

This section provides a succinct account of basic concepts related to CDA. Key theorists, including Van Dijk and Fairclough’s contributions, are mentioned. The theoretical relevance is well-documented by highlighting how CDA associates language with ideology and power. A detailed explanation of CDA’s aims and agendas (unveiling hidden biases and power) is the strength. This is fundamental to the thesis because of its congruence with the wider aim of identifying media-oriented representatives of minorities. Challenging inequality, along with the interpretation of discourse, provides research rigour to the concerned study. This emphasis by Van Dijk involves the critical critique of media.

The sources discussed highlight the influence of discourse in strengthening and propagating systematic oppression and hegemony.

Nevertheless, the literature primarily examines traditional theorists of CDA without considering the recent trends in CDA in particularly related to the Pakistani context. Bjaiya Al-mas' udi and Allwan Al-A' mery synthesis of Fairclough and Dijk's model makes the concept of CDA more accessible to the people. However, it provides a generalised overview rather than empirical authentication.

## **2.2 Representation of Minorities in Newspapers:**

Diverse existing studies have investigated the relationship of editorials' hidden ideologies with multiple factors, including culture, political pressures and newspapers' biases. Firmstone, in her study, advanced the idea that editorials are shaped by the complex interplay of external political pressures, journal biases, and organisational power dynamics. Editorials are designed in a way to persuade the general audience, as discourse, whether written or spoken, holds the power to bring positive or negative outcomes. Firmstone argues that in the age of digitalisation, the media's role lies in maintaining objectivity and transparency, avoiding biases (Firmstone). Firmstone's investigation of foreign political influence shapes editorial stances, underscoring how organisational power dynamics work in news, which marks the strength of his study. Nevertheless, a lack of emphasis on Western dynamics undermines the concept of minorities. Marques and Mont' Alverne also hold similar views that culture, biases and external political factors mutually influence each other for the narrative building in the editorials (Marques and Mont' Alverne). The strength of this study lies in well integration of audience-focused frameworks. Over and beyond that, the authors argue that the myriad of internal factors like current entities' problems, agendas of newspapers and overarching cultural ideologies also hold a deep-seated impact on the content and writing style of editorials. The ideology put forward by both authors is true as narratives' hidden ideologies are dependent on multiple factors that are both intrinsic and extrinsic, which is

why it is almost impossible to mitigate such factors to the full extent. While content does play a significant role in persuading the audience, style is indispensable as well. Stylistic features chosen by the authors to influence the target audience may sometimes overplay the content (El Baff et al.) The use of corpus data to present persuasive stylistic features is the strength of this study. Conservative readers show a degree of resistance, while the liberal ones endorse style over content. (El Baff et al.) According to (Siddique et al.), meta-discourse markers assist the researchers in structuring their discourse and thus impact the readers' attitude. The authors analysed four major English newspapers with the most readership in Pakistan, including Dawn News, The Frontier and The News. Results suggested that The Frontier employed a more comprehensive and well-structured approach, incorporating hedges, transitional markers and so on. The study was done via a corpus. The study proved to be beneficial in strengthening the audience readership by focusing on the audience-centred approach. With the use of a corpus as a tool, the bulk data was easily managed and analysed. While the application of metadiscourse analysis to Pakistani newspapers, along with the integration of a corpus, serves as a strength of this study, the lack of focus on broader ideological outcomes is worth mentioning as well. Wornyo explored the use of rhetoric in editorials in his paper. Rhetorical devices employed by the writers in the editorials wield power over public opinion, shaping their opinions. Contextual and cultural factors come into play in framing the opinions. The study underpins Aristotle's concept of ethos, pathos and logos to compare The Daily Graphic(Ghanaian) and The New York Times(American). The results conclude that The New York Times employs the Logos (Evidence-based approach), contrary to The Daily Graphic employing the Ethos and Pathos (emotional and culture-based approach) (Wornyo 7). The study is more Western-centric and does not consider South Asian contexts. The comparison between the two newspapers' editorials, as presented by the author, validates the effects of high-context and low-

context cultures on the literature and content of newspapers. Culture significantly impacts the literature. Headlines are the other major element that sparks the curiosity of the readers. They determine audience progression or setbacks. Headlines mirror the subjectivity of authors toward a particular agenda. The embedded ideology behind the headlines also constructs a rhetoric to influence readers (Bonyadi and Samuel). The study does not suffice as it only examines headlines without focusing on the content. Furthermore, editorial language also plays a fundamental role in constructing people's perception. With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, new phrases and terms like Lockdown, Pandemic, etc., were coined to instil horror among the audience, which harmed the audience (Zahra and Abbas 4-15). The use of corpus further validated the study. This particular study outlines how language and lexical choices establish the ideology and the emotions of terror/fear.

English Newspapers like Daily Dawn and The News have maximum readership in Pakistan. The research paper by (Memon et al.) demonstrates Daily Dawn's portrayal of minorities in the editorials. The research paper advances how the media plays a central role in either constructing or deconstructing stereotypes about minorities, their religion and practices. While minorities are depicted in negative terms historically, the results of the study concluded that Daily Dawn opted for a rather neutral tone towards the representation of minorities in the editorials. One of the notable aspects of the representation is the 'call to action' narrative, rather than just providing a space for the representation of minorities and their problems, including discrimination and injustices. The study also identified a gap in journalism, suggesting a more comprehensive approach with ground evidence and facts highlighting the significance of active and authentic journalism. Contrarily, in the research paper by (Fazal et al.), the representation of minorities in newspaper editors was investigated. Using an approach of content analysis, the results indicated

the lack of media representation of minorities in the editorials of the famous English newspapers, Daily Dawn and The Nation. Their representation was unfavourable, which leads to the questioning of our print media in terms of their role in promoting peace among majorities and minorities and inculcating acceptance among the majorities for minorities. This negative representation potentially strengthens the adverse stereotypical notions regarding minorities in society. The paper calls on the media authoritarians to think beyond biases and cultural and external factors, fostering an environment of objective journalism.

Similarly, according to (Dogar and Rizvi), the prominent newspapers of Pakistan also presented minorities and their rights in the editorial advocating for an inclusive and just society. Nevertheless, issues like forced conversions, forced marriages, human rights violations and attacks on the holy places are brought more to the limelight. The paper itself identified a shortcoming of the editorials questioning the legal, economic and political representation and empowerment of the minorities in Pakistan, which received little or no attention in the editorials. The research also found a lack of appreciation for the contribution of minorities in state affairs and a dearth of states' addressing of minority rights and growing injustices. The paper underscores the pivotal role of media in incorporating broader problems through different lenses associated with minorities. In a similar vein, Shahzad used CDA and content analysis, identifying that Minorities' representation in newspapers' editorials is very biased, as negative as they are depicted as out-groups, being problematic. Headlines are filled with rhetorical devices on subjects related to minorities. The marginalisation of minorities is further amplified by these newspapers. Shahzad proposes that a workshop should be organised for writers to use a more objective and solution-oriented approach in their literature (Shahzad 19).

Idris also projects the same thoughts, asserting that false accusations and derogatory remarks are conferred to Christians, Hindus and Ahmadis in Pakistan. These verbal remarks sometimes lead to violence (Idris). In another paper, Ghouri, David and Hussain demonstrate how Christian minorities are portrayed in social, in addition to electronic media. The media in Pakistan is governed by political hegemony and the elite class, which makes it obscure the problems faced by minorities. Minorities are not represented fairly (Habes et al.) The authors argue that Christian young girls are compelled to convert and marry muslim men. The media's role in the portrayal of minorities, their issues, along the involvement of stakeholders is evaluated in this paper. The research concludes that the media is state-owned and works accordingly. The minority laws are restricted to paper only, with zero implementation. Misleading representation, along with discriminatory enforcement of blasphemy laws, results in wrongdoing and oppression against minorities. Paradoxically, social media offers humans and activists a platform to continue fighting against the rights of minorities, cultivating the seed of hope for their rights and protection (Ghouri et al). Farhana Shahzad, in her paper, examines the ethnic and religious minorities' manifestation in Pakistani English newspapers. An "us" vs "them" dichotomous narrative is projected by the newspapers when it comes to their representations. The elite roles are not bestowed upon them, viewing them as insignificant or less prestigious in status. Using CDA, Pakistan Today, Dawn, and The Nation were examined. Upon the results, minorities are framed as problematic, while Muslims are declared as unproblematic. Moreover, their underrepresentation also highlights discrimination in journalism. Nominalisation and Passivisation, along with disturbing visuals, illustrate them as victims (Shahzad 20). Another significant study digs into the newspaper editorial representation of minorities. Three major newspapers are analysed to depict their portrayal of minorities regarding discriminatory practices, forced conversions and access to equal opportunities and rights.

The exploration of how media present dominant ideological narratives is evident in this research. In another paper, scholars have discussed how the media represent minorities as insignificant to others. Upon findings, the study concludes that among the three newspapers, Dawn's editorials focus more on legal injustices, laws of blasphemy and forced conversions. Express Tribune primarily focuses on workplace discrimination against minorities, while The News International focuses on the inaction of the police and the lack of law enforcement. The newspapers of Pakistan provide less minorities' coverage of minorities (Haq et al. 128-141).

Comparably media's role in strengthening narratives with either inclusivity or exclusivity is scrutinised in another paper using a content analysis approach. Three dominant Urdu newspapers are examined. According to (Habes et al.) Christians are given most of the representation in the newspapers, followed by Ahmadis and Sikhs. By and large, the coverage was observed to be positive. Nevertheless, Ahmadi's were largely portrayed in a negative framework. The authors highlight the significance of policy intervention and journalistic interventions. Besides, a distinct study investigates the role of minorities' representation in Urdu newspapers. The misrepresentation and scantily documented problems of minorities are also observed in the paper. The findings reveal that Urdu newspapers provide less coverage of minorities' problems and portray them as either victims or in an unconstructive impression. The authors theorise that the media should play an instrumental role in dismantling the false agendas and frameworks against minorities (Khalid et al.) Expanding on this, according to (Saleem et al.), the media presents minorities in a rather negative spotlight. The media must take its effective part in changing the dynamics and bringing actual change in its narratives.

Another prominent study also suggests that two Urdu newspapers in Pakistan have a negative or marginalised representation of minorities, reinforcing stereotypes.

Contributions to the state are completely ignored, whilst their suffering is mainly targeted. Majoritarian narratives surpass the positive narratives, which illustrate a lack of balance and just reporting at the media's edge (Syed 344).

Blasphemy laws are quite violent and extremist in Pakistan. After the assassination of then-Governor Salman Taseer in 2011, the media and other humanitarians started digging less into the in-depth, open discussion related to minorities. According to (Sadiq 18), discussions and talks on blasphemy laws by the media are highly vulnerable and sensitive as they often lead to self-censorship. Journalists navigate numerous obstacles as their reporting must be guided by the public and legal repercussions. Upon findings, the research indicates that Pakistani media presents pro-minority content in a large proportion, followed by anti-minority and then neutral. The difference between the Urdu and English press is that the Urdu press presents minorities in a negative light, whereas the English press either adopts a neutral or positive tone. Lack of front-page coverage is also another pressing concern for further *othering* of minorities.

A related exploration advances how minorities have consistently been ill-treated by Pakistan. This investigation is done through the lens of a novel called "The Golden Legend." Extremism in terms of religion, racial radicalism and politics has led to unfavourable outcomes for religious minorities, especially Christians. Gayatri Spivak's essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" is utilised in the analysis of this research, which underscores the lack of agency and voice of Christian minorities in Pakistan. The outcome indicates that Christians lack access to basic facilities and are faced with blasphemy laws. The characters of the novel illustrate the struggles of Christian people in integrating it with the real-life scenario. International pressure and a stronger judiciary system can help ensure their rights. Thus, Pakistan is not a haven for minorities (Shah et al.).

The 9/11 event brought into the air the concept of Islamophobia. Islamophobia and terrorism ideas spread like wildfire in the woods. Pakistan took a few steps to counter the misrepresentation of religious and ethnic minorities, improving its global outlook. Many minorities also assisted in improving their status. Along similar lines, the media's representation of minorities also improved in the country. Holistically, the dehumanisation of Christians and other minorities decreased post-9/11, while in comparison, they were viewed as Western agents by some extremists. Zahid Shahab Ahmad, in his paper, utilised CDA to examine the variation in minorities, especially Christians' representation in Pakistani media post 9/11. *Nawa-i-waqt* and *The News* articles were taken into consideration. The study found notable differences. Christian representation completely changed. Previously, they were termed as “manipulative”, “dangerous” and “impure”, “conspirators” and were linked to crimes. Nevertheless, as of post 9/11, they were portrayed as the victims of terror, infusing a humanitarian approach. The then Prime Minister General Pervez Musharraf promoted interfaith dialogue to tactfully deal with the situation. Both newspapers eventually showed a somewhat improved image of Christian minorities (Ahmad 18).

The studies reviewed above provide a multi-layered and diverse image of media accounts. The cohesive emphasis on both micro-level lexical choices and macro-level ideological undercurrents is the strength of the cited studies. Nonetheless, a substantial body of this part of the literature offers convergent conclusions, underscoring passive or negative representation without considerable attention to methodological critique and opposing the findings. Additionally, multiple studies cited above examine the content, and a few explore the perceptions of the audience, which could further enrich the critical engagement.

### **2.3 Previous Studies on Minorities and Their Representation:**

Cases of minorities' injustices and discrimination also come to light almost daily via newspapers. Minorities are suppressed, opposed and ill-treated. Rabia Ashfaq analysed the reporting style of Pakistani English newspapers' editorials on a specific incident of a Christian couple lynching in 2014. Ashfaq presented a binary approach in the newspapers. Few newspapers' editorials talked explicitly about the event, highlighting the discrimination and mob attacks in the name of blasphemy laws, calling for legal reforms and the misuse of blasphemy laws. While others presented a somewhat controlled take on this incident. The study also stresses the lack of meta-investigation of the incident, emphasising the poor focus of the media and government towards religious minorities (Ashfaq). Similarly, (Aslam et al.) scrutinise the aftermath of the incident that happened in Lahore in 2015. In this way, the authors of this research paper adopt a somewhat meta-incident analysis approach, empathising with the victims' family and demanding justice. Amna Bibi, widow of the victim, talked about the emotional toll the incident came with. The families of the victims underwent a lot of difficulties, including psychological trauma and financial adversity. The study also pointed out a gap regarding the lack of execution of the laws, further multiplying their agony. The paper also holds a problem-solving approach by urging the policy and lawmakers for the reforms and stronger law enforcement with international pressures. In another case study (Khan et al.) critically analysed the 2023 Jaranwala incident by applying CDA. Daily Dawn and The News' representation of the incident in the editorials was scrutinised. The findings advanced that Daily Dawn opted for the legal reform approach, having a state-centred verdict. Whereas, The News projected the power imbalances, partiality and discrimination firmly. Forced conversions and marriages are another prevalent problem. (Bari et al.) presents this issue in his paper. Regional newspapers targeting Sindh's forced conversions and marriages outdo the

mainstream newspapers, who rarely talks about the problem of “forced conversion and marriages”. Another forced conversion in the Gujranwala case was analysed using CDA by (Ghouri et al.) from the Daily Dawn editorial. The study concluded that Daily Dawn opted for a discriminatory approach by reinforcing the hegemonic narrative. The action of putting the state’s stance before the injustice strengthens Dawn's strategic take on minority representation in print media. Use of numerical data, bold headlines and selective quotations – rhetorical devices were incorporated. Another horrific 2009 Gojran incident presents discrimination in the name of blasphemy, where 7 Christians were burnt alive (Zaigham). In the research paper by (Rafiq et al.), the authors investigated how the Asia Bibi blasphemy case was reported through headlines in Pakistani newspapers. Headlines from four prominent newspapers were analysed to unveil the ideological biases. The results concluded that Daily Jhang and Dawn had a neutral approach towards the incident. Albeit, The Nation and Daily Ummat largely portrayed the incident negatively with Daily Ummat using more emotional language, calling Asia Bibi as *Gushtakh* (blasphemer) and *maloona* (accused). The 2013 Joseph colony attack and the Hindu temple burning of 2020 are other pivotal cases of religious extremism.

Educational institutions also play a huge role in propagating an ideology via the courses and narratives. Children in school are nourished and trained as ideologies are embedded in their minds. The government enforces the implementation of the course policies to completely train them and refrain from asking the contrary narrative. Pakistani educational curriculum injects Islamic ideologies to the extreme, generating feelings of intolerance for the out-groups among the students. This confirmed that Foucault's (1980) examination of the fact that power is always disseminated and never in one’s hands, and is adopted and exerted through collaborative organisations. Polarisation is propagated in the schools as they are taught with Islamic principles, and the non-

muslim community in Pakistan is neglected in a way that they are forced to study Islamic studies and their contributions are not well-acknowledged or completely ignored (Qazi 181-198). Similarly, Historical Textbooks in Pakistan also construct the narrative for minorities' presentation, which further fuels the sentiments of hatred and intolerance towards them. Religious domination, along with nationalist agendas, consumes the thinking of youth in a negative light against them. Oxford and Punjab history textbooks were analysed by the authors using content analysis techniques, which yielded the result of Oxford history textbooks being more rational, objective and less nationalist. Whereas the Punjab history textbooks contained the elements of national sentiments, religious chauvinism and biases far apart from objectivity. This historical misrepresentation leads to ingratitude towards minorities contributing to Pakistan (Badshah et al.).

In another research paper, the role of media in the formation of identities and creating a “us” versus “them” dichotomy is explored. Thereby, bolstering the idea of nationalism. The study brings this issue to the forefront and urges to combat of the ideological rift (Fatima et al.).

While there has been a significant dearth in print media regarding the legal, social, economic and political rights of minorities, Neha M. Zaigham in her report brought this matter to the forefront. She highlights the political marginalisation of minorities in Pakistan, including religious minorities, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and women. Ahmadis do not have the right to cast a vote, which leads to significant systemic inequality. The research report emphasises security reforms, electoral inclusion for all citizens regardless of their faith, gender and creed. The omission of the word “Freely” from objective resolution is criticised and stressed for its inclusion again by the author (Zaigham 8-11).

Another pressing concern is the biased representation of religious minorities in the media. Christians are relatively given more representation, and their problems are brought into the

limelight as compared to Ahmadis and Hindus. Ahmadis receive a severe backlash on account of their religion, and they are labelled as “outsiders”. Besides this, the minority problems are given less space and are represented rarely at the front page of newspapers, further creating disparity between the majority and the minority (Elareshi et al.).

There exist multiple legal guidelines for the rights and minorities in Pakistan. Nonetheless, the real question is whether the frameworks are really in process or implementation. Hundreds of thousands of minorities face bigotry in Pakistan. Is the state interested in providing them with protection? In the research paper by (Joshua and Zia), an analysis of the workings of the state and media is done about minorities' problems, specifically in Punjab. There exist definite written policies for media (print and electronic). The written policies are not considered or practised when it comes to minorities' representation in media, though. There exists no link or convergence between the frameworks and the actual representation. The policies suggest no use of such lexical items that may provoke fear among people.

Case-specific incidents offer real-world illustrations of the representation of minorities in Pakistani English print media. Khan et al and Ashfaq's exploration of editorial handling of forced conversions, blasphemy laws, and mob violence unveils the minorities' marginalisation, strengthening the literature of the research. Similarly, Rafiq et al and Ghorui et al studies scrutinise the headlines of newspapers to uncover ideological biases. The studies showcase how specific instances are presented through rhetorical strategies, often mirroring overarching discriminatory patterns. The integration of educational discourse by Qazi and Badshah et al, additionally, illustrates how minority representation goes beyond the newsroom into organisational structures.

The discussed case studies are notable for providing a microscopic view of the interplay between sociopolitical tensions and editorial narratives. They validate how literal and symbolic violence against minorities is either brought into focus or understated, depending on learned ideological perspectives. However, a significant portion of studies cited centres on descriptive rather than comparative frameworks, often concentrating on isolated incidents without connecting them to theoretical frameworks or broader patterns. In general, the studies cited reinforce the study's emphasis on minority representation in print media but also provide a strong indication of underrepresented dimensions in legal frameworks and editorial coherence.

#### **2.4 Issues Faced by Minorities in Pakistan:**

Minorities in Pakistan have been under attack for quite a long period. They are not allowed to live freely in Pakistan, practising their fundamental rights. Minorities, like others, are humans whose rights need to be addressed. According to (Saeed et al.) minorities in Pakistan face multiple disparate challenges, including discrimination in educational institutions, attacks, mob violence, alienation, and lack of adequate representation in the legal, social and political frameworks of Pakistan. The study concludes with the idea that a significant portion of progress has been made in the light of minorities' rights and inclusivity, but still, there is a need for reforms on the state's edge.

A complementary investigation has been made by Fabia Fatema Sharif. She put forth that all the dominant structures of Pakistan marginalise minorities. The relentless discrimination endured by minorities is not at all hidden from the state. Fabia also presents Quaid's vision of an all-inclusive Pakistan, which contrasts starkly with today's dark time for minorities in Pakistan. According to (Sharif 9), religious and ethnic minorities in Pakistan undergo severe discrimination in all phases

of life. Mob violence and extra-judicial killings are prevalent nowadays due to religious intolerance and misuse of blasphemy laws. The portrayal of minorities as foreign threats further sets their position in a negative light. The authors call for interfaith tolerance and legal, social and political reforms for minorities living in Pakistan.

Minority issues are fairly widespread in Pakistan. A study investigating the rights of minorities in both Pakistan and India concludes that while India does possess a governmental framework to protect the rights of minorities, the growing nationalist sentiments lead to intolerance towards minorities. On the other hand, Pakistan's dual force of political agendas and religion has led to the subjugation of minorities. Both countries are repeatedly grappling with the idea of overcoming the adversities of minorities and granting them the rights they deserve. Social cohesion can also be ensured if the nation-state plays its role in the implementation of laws to safeguard minorities (Khan and Rahman 10).

In the context of Pakistan, a comparative study examines how minorities are treated in Punjab, Pakistan. The problems of lack of access to basic facilities, less or no representation in social, political and economic spheres of life and blasphemy cases are explored. The results indicate an increased number of socio-political discriminations against minorities at the hands of the majority. Minorities are reduced to the roles of sanitary workers. Most of them do not raise their voices due to apprehension towards blasphemy cases (Zainab et al.).

Similarly, a related exploration by (Alam 298) examines the socio-political and fundamental rights along with the hurdles faced by minorities in Pakistan. The research advances that Pakistan, whose initial promise was to give equal rights to minorities, failed to stick by that. The findings reveal a discriminatory attitude towards minorities who are socially marginalised, undergo targeted attacks,

and are mistreated or even killed in the name of blasphemy laws. The promotion of exclusionary narratives by educational discourse further pushes their status down.

Expanding on this notion are two more studies that critically assess the representation of minorities along with their rights. According to (Alam) and (Mehfooz), the laws remain stuck to the paper only with zero implementation, as there is a striking difference between the laws on paper and the lived realities of the minorities. Systemic biases and political elitism multiply the agonies of the minorities, which result in unemployment, economic disparities, and educational limitations. Minorities face a lack of justice and disenfranchisement as the major concerns. Societal prejudices exacerbate the situation, and the lack of policy implementation worsens their conditions. The author argues that there is a growing need for immediate policy intervention in this regard.

A closely similar point is also raised in two relevant studies that focus on the constitutional rights of minorities. Despite the presence of constitutional laws, minorities in Pakistan are not granted their rights. Workplace harassment and hate speech in the media are other add-ons to their violation (Wilson et al.) and (Alam et al.).

A paper related to the management of diversity in Pakistan talks about Jinnah's vision of an all-inclusive Pakistan. Syed declared this vision as a foundation for the equity models and principles embracing multiplicity and diversity. Syed's viewpoint stems from the critique of Western ideology in Pakistan. Frameworks based on local values and Jinnah's all-inclusive vision need to be implemented in Pakistan. Jinnah's emphasis on democratisation, law and order, protection of minorities, and all-encompassing Islamic ideology. By adopting these principles, Pakistan can become a global nation in a true manner (Syed 6-14).

The systematic challenges endured by minorities in Pakistan are detailed in this section, extending from political disenfranchisement to economic disparities in multiple forums of education, media and law. Alam and Mehfooz stress the divergence between constitutional guarantees and operational environments. Contrastive perspectives from Rahman and Khan add a cross-boundary dimension by setting Pakistan's minority framework in comparison with India's.

These sources collectively maintain a robust sociopolitical context for research. They substantiate the need to scrutinise media representation as a part of the broader structure of exclusion. The holistic approach of including legal, economic and social dimensions is the strength of the cited literature. Alternatively, most of the recent studies focus on descriptive accounts instead of being solution-oriented or exploring the avenues of reformation of policies. Besides, a persistent shortcoming of linking minority representation to media reporting and representation or misrepresentation is worth mentioning in this regard. The frequent disconnect between such issues and their media representation and their reasons is underexplored.

## **2.5 Corpus Approaches to Social Issues:**

The Transgenders community have a hostile media framing in Pakistan. The stereotypical roles of dancers, sex workers, and beggars are associated with them. Zahra and Abbas, in their paper, conducted a corpus-based study on the representation of transgender individuals in media blogs in Express Tribune via a corpus. The study also analysed the construction of transgender identities through the media, as the media plays a groundbreaking role in shaping public opinion through discourse. Recurring linguistic patterns (themes related to identity) were identified in the blogs employing corpus approaches. The results showed a dualistic nature with negative as well as somewhat positive views. The transgender community are marginalised religiously as well, which

restricts them to pursuing their faith openly. Society does not accept them as humans, and they face maltreatment. Furthermore, their demotion to the roles of dancers in marriages, beggars and the entertainment sectors humiliates them. Although positive results of the introduction of CNICs for them, propagation for employment is also seen in the blogs (Zahra and Abbas).

COVID-19 had a significant impact on the whole world. Media played a significant role in spreading either positive or negative narratives at that time. The way the pandemic was projected varied in different newspapers due to political biases and cultural impact. Yu, Lu and Hu, in their paper, analysed the media representation of the pandemic in two newspapers, The Guardian (UK) and China Daily (China) (Yu et al.). The use of Fairclough's and Dijk's CDA model, along with the Corpus approach, was used to analyse the data. The findings uncovered major differences in the representation of the pandemic in both newspapers. China's newspaper opted for a more formal, neutral and objective tone, incorporating terms like "sharing experience", "cooperation," etc. Contrarily, the UK newspaper opted for a more critical tone using terms like "uncertainty", "crisis" and "failure". UK media associated COVID-19 with China prior to the lockdown, using terms like secrecy and conspiracy. Nonetheless, the tone changed afterwards to more positive. The study proposed that the media's role in strengthening or weakening international ties is inevitable.

Educational discourse plays an essential role in promoting or demoting a narrative. Pakistani educational discourse promotes the English language over Urdu, leading to the marginalisation of the regional languages. According to (Khan and Zaki 2), English serves as a dominant language in educational policy discourse. Urdu plays a secondary role in being our national language, while regional languages are entirely unseen in the educational discourse, furthering their low status. The study was conducted using corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis.

The authors assert that policymakers treat local languages as non-essentials when it comes to the educational curriculum. The study demonstrates that English is favoured due to educational success and economic progression. Regional languages are sidelined in academic discourse. The concept of elitism is attached to the English language.

Building upon the earlier argument, (Ali and Mukherjee) subsequently affirm that religious minorities in Pakistan are othered or marginalised in terms of the educational sector. The national curriculum further creates a dichotomy, marginalising the minorities due to long-term historical roots and biases. Courses like Pakistan Studies build the historical knowledge of the students, which accentuates and venerates the majoritarian narratives, overlooking the contributions of minorities or altering the historical narrative to favour the majoritarian agenda. The results also highlight that minority students face divergent handling from Muslim students by the teachers, as well not just the peer attacks. The villainisation of minorities at the cost of the heroism of Pakistani leaders is quite prominent.

Corpus is positioned as a quantitative tool that analyses linguistic patterns within large-scale data. The studies cited in this portion establish corpus linguistics as a withdrawal from subjective reasoning techniques. It instead offers a data-informed structure for the analysis of text. While this foundational view is significant in terms of methodology, the limitation of sources in the Pakistani media context terms it an underresearched area.

The application of corpus to various social domains of language policy, gender and public health has been highlighted in the cited studies, which highlights the adaptability of corpus tools in examining both classical and digital discourses. Identification of lexical choices, collocations and

discursive patterns unveils societal ideologies and also validates the empirical strength of the corpus methods.

These sources reinforce the methodological rigour of the corpus. Nonetheless, their explicit relevance to minority representation in Pakistani newspaper editorials is relatively narrow. The thematic breadth reflects flexibility in methodology but also noticeably presents a gap in using the corpus for the identification of minority representation, particularly in Pakistani contexts in English newspaper editorials. Resultantly, the literature points to the need for more focused studies.

### **2.5.1 Corpus Approaches to CDA:**

The consolidated methodological approach of Corpus and CDA has been well-established for quite some time. The amalgamation of qualitative and quantitative techniques is considered the best methodology. Nartey and Mwinlaaru, in their paper, analyse the combined impact of both approaches. A total of 121 Corpus-based CDA studies have been examined from the three indexes, ie Social Science Citation, Arts and Humanities and Scopus Citation Index. Both methodologies and fields are scrutinised by the authors, highlighting their limitations alone and their strengths when combined. The nascent discourse domains like education, communication, health, and environment face limited research. Spatial diversity is particularly mentioned by the authors for corpus-based research, along with a great interdisciplinary approach (Nartey and Mwinlaaru). This paper strongly supports the idea that the theories, when infused together, result in more robust research.

Similarly, (Egbert and Baker) in their book section examine the integration of both approaches in the formation of social realities by language. Underlying hidden ideologies are unveiled in this research. CDA, when coupled with corpus, strengthens the study as empirical evidence combined with content analysis, solidifies the research. The findings of the book highlight that disproportionate power is created through certain linguistic patterns. The implicit biases are revealed through collocations and keywords, providing empirical evidence. This assists the hypothesis that social inequalities are constructed through language. The use of dominant lexical phrases bolsters this framework.

Another pivotal research in the same domain is that of Taylor and Marchi. According to (Taylor and Marchi) integration of Corpus to CDA is advantageous as it assists with the explanation of linguistic patterns via empirical evidence. The findings of the study confirm that the hidden biases are unveiled by the use of a corpus that otherwise may be overlooked by using CDA only due to its subjective nature.

In a similar vein, a study investigating the manifestation of stance-taking in interpreted political discourse in the context of Chinese-to-English political interpretation was conducted. An approach called, corpus-based approach is used to determine the ideologies embedded in terms of the choice of lexical phrases. Contextualization of political discourse is extremely crucial, and the role of the interpreter is worth mentioning in this regard. The translation is affected by the political influences. Ideological control is asserted by translation based on a political agenda (Wang and Feng).

The scholarship reviewed advocates for the intermethod convergence of CDA and corpus. Nartey and Mwinlaaru, Egbert and Baker, and Taylor and Marchi all hold a similar view. The depth and reliability increase in discourse studies by using a dual methodological approach (mainly

qualitative but complemented by quantitative corpus methods), according to them. The qualitative analysis alone does not suffice for interpretation, as it overlooks the linguistic markers of power and ideology that are otherwise taken into consideration in corpus-based analysis of the studies. The literature aligns conceptually and methodologically with the analytical framework of the thesis. The study of media narratives is validated by the dual strengths of both methods.

While the reviewed literature advances valuable evaluations into critical discourse analysis, media framing, and minority issues in Pakistan, diverse crucial gaps remain. Much of the scholarship on minority representation in newspapers is either descriptive or limited to context-specific occurrences, lacking comparative analysis across multiple publications or periods. Moreover, while CDA has been widely applied in Western contexts, there is an observable dearth of empirical studies that combine corpus-based approaches with CDA to analyse Pakistani editorials. Although some scholars have examined the portrayal of minorities, these studies often overlook the intersection of language, ideology, and power as mirrored in editorial discourse.

Furthermore, the reviewed corpus-based studies tend to focus on topics such as gender, health, or education, with limited application to religious or ethnic minority issues. Most relevant studies either rely on subjective discourse analysis or examine media genres other than editorials. There is also negligible emphasis on the role of the English press in shaping elite discourse about minorities. This thesis aims to address these gaps by employing a corpus-assisted CDA approach to analyse Pakistani newspaper editorials (Daily Dawn and The News), thereby offering a more systematic and data-driven exploration of how minorities are ideologically constructed in mainstream discourse.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This research employs a Corpus-based approach to analyse the representation of minorities in editorials of the two esteemed English Newspapers of Pakistan, i.e. Daily Dawn and The News. This chapter provides insight into the broader methodological techniques, both the theoretical and analytical frameworks used in the study.

#### **3.1 Research Design:**

The study incorporates a majorly qualitative approach complemented by quantitative corpus approaches to provide an all-inclusive framework. A theory of Critical Discourse Analysis will be used, which is called Bourdieu's theory of Language and Power. The theory talks about how language shapes social hierarchies apart from being a tool of communication. The theory is pertinent to the study as it highlights how the elite discourse/dominant narratives construct unequal social, economic and political power structures in society, marginalising the minorities.

#### **3.2 Theoretical Framework and Analytical Framework:**

In this study, Critical Discourse Analysis theory, labelled Bourdieu's theory of Language and Power (1991), will be utilised as a qualitative approach. On the other hand, Corpus will be used to

provide more objective results, using a wordlist to identify collocations. Thus, corpus-assisted research will be undertaken for the current study.

### **3.2.1 Bourdieu's Theory of Language and Power:**

According to Pierre Bourdieu's *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991), Language is termed as a means of social stratification, control and power apart from being a mere tool of communication. Reiteration of social hierarchies through language is the major consideration of this theory.

#### **1. Symbolic Power of Language:**

Structuralist linguists, Noam Chomsky and Ferdinand De Saussure, are disputed by Bourdieu. Bourdieu maintains that they do not consider the social and political facets of language use. Here, symbolic power means that the dominant and elite groups possess the ability to construct meanings and stratification through language.

#### **2. Legitimate Language:**

Bourdieu pioneers the concept of legitimate language, asserting that it is the socially recognised, institutionalised and hegemonic narrative prevalent in a society. It is the language of media, government and educational institutions. The state is deemed responsible for claiming it as an 'educated' or 'proper' language.

### **3. Market of language and Linguistic Capital:**

According to Bourdieu, the concept of Linguistic Capital refers to using language in a socially sanctioned and endorsed method. Like economic capital, distinct linguistic styles have a distinct degree of status or prestige. Particular approaches are better regarded and widely accepted than others in this linguistic market. For instance, standard accents, dialects and academic discourses over the speech of the working class and regional languages or dialects.

This particular concept is further elucidated in the example given by him. The mayor in France, speaking the local dialect called Béarnaise, gathered social recognition. Nevertheless, the same dialect, if spoken by a peasant, would be discredited. This project how language sparks imbalanced power.

### **4. Reiteration of Social Hierarchies via Language:**

A strong stance advanced by Bourdieu is that language cultivates social hierarchies by dichotomising the dominant and the recessive groups. Linguistic capital gatekeepers (Schools and educational institutions) play a critical role in disseminating the elite narratives and abandoning the deviant forms by discouraging their use. Advantaging the elites while downplaying the marginalised ones is what the schools usually do.

Summing up, Bourdieu acknowledges language as a battlefield where the contest continues for power; the game is all about power. Language is never static rather dynamic, which is influenced by control. This aids in comprehension of how language constructs social, economic and political strata.

### **3.2.2 Corpus-Based Approach as Analytical Framework:**

A corpus is a collection of words. It is used to analyse language in use using empirical methods. Corpus assists in the more efficient processing and analysis of texts. Corpus gained popularity with the advancements of technology to handle data in bulk accurately. Corpus makes use of both qualitative and quantitative analysis and techniques (Biber, Conrad, and Rippen). Natural and structured text is the identity of a corpus. It helps in monitoring patterns of language, usage and language evolution over a period of time. Additionally, it disregards intuition-based approaches, advancing more naturalistic and actual language use. The blend of computational tools with analysis paved the way for the corpus to gain prominence as an emerging field (Reppen and Simpson-Vlach).

Corpus-based approach engages with the blend of theoretical models with statistical evidence, reducing biases and subjectivity. It uses real-life, authentic data, making it a practical approach. In the corpus-based approach, authentic spoken/written data is used to validate the existing theory. This approach helps prevent errors and inconsistencies with verification (Subtirelu et al.).

#### **3.2.2.1 Corpus-Based Approach:**

Conventionally, intuitions were used to deduce conclusions based on subjectivity and relevance. Contrarily, with the emergence of Corpus, claims became more robust because of real-life data. This approach begins with a theoretical foundation followed by empirical computer-based evidence. The

Corpus tool assists in uncovering and rectifying biases, patterns of use and testing hypotheses (McEnery et al.).

### **3.3 Data Collection:**

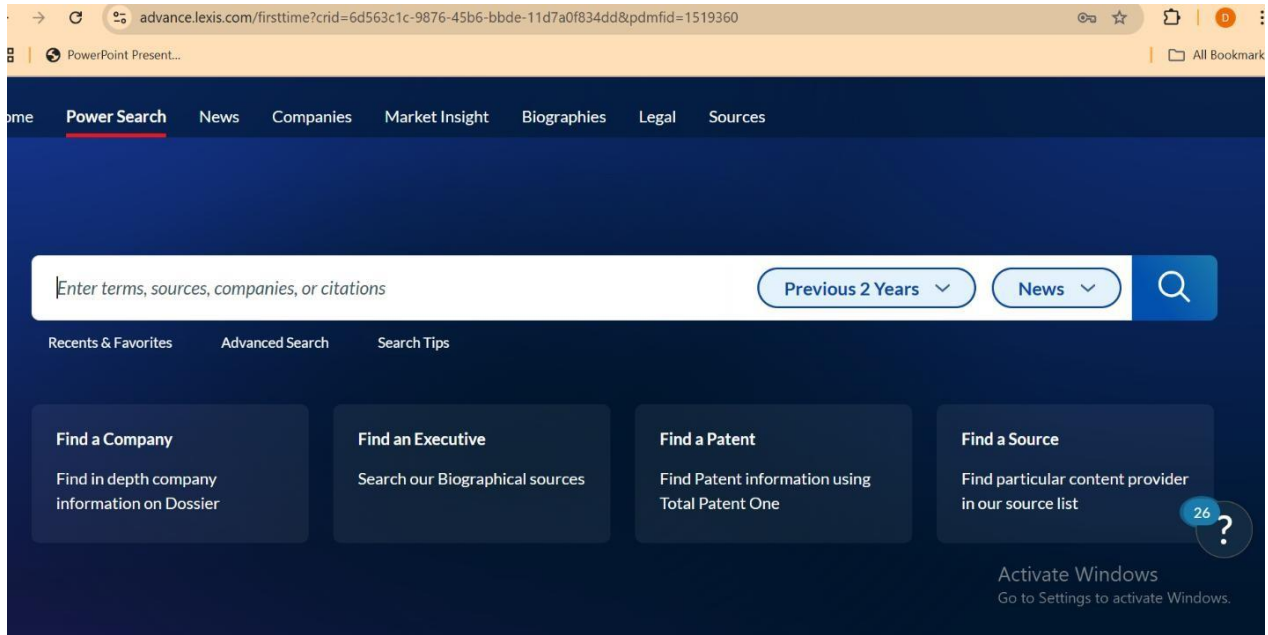
The data was collected from two prominent and reputable newspapers, i.e., *Daily Dawn* and *The News*. Dawn is the country's most circulated English newspaper. The selected newspapers have established reputations, national readerships, and socio-political problems of varying magnitudes ("Top English News Papers in Pakistan.").

The data collection period, ranging from 2021-2025, allows for an indicative sample of editorials. The shortlisted editorials include those that were explicitly or implicitly associated with minorities. 45 from Daily Dawn and 30 from The News, making to total of 78 editorials that were selected. The data mirrored an eclectic yet uniform thematic depiction of minorities' representation in editorials.

For the retrieval of editorials, a hybrid data collection framework was used. Along with manual browsing through websites, the use of Lexis Nexis was also made to ensure integrity in data collection. A representative of Dawn also provided the data that strengthened the verification of editorial selection with refinement.

At the outset, the editorials were collected from the websites of two newspapers. Nevertheless, the strategy was deemed narrow in focus, as not all of the editorials were found through keyword searches (minorities, editorials, etc). In order to tackle this, the second and more reliable source, called LexisNexis, was utilised for the collection of all

of the data in the concerned timeline. Moreover, a Dawn representative approached for data collection



- FIG. 1 LexisNexis Interface for data collection.

### 3.4 Corpus Building:

After the selection of editorial content, the next step was to compile it into a structured and clean corpus. The first step was copying editorials to the Word documents, giving way to the cleaning and formatting of the corpus. All the information other than the main content, including headings, subheadings, publishing dates, names of authors, hyperlinks, page numbers, images and quotes, was removed along with italic or bold formatting to ensure consistent formatting in the content. This was done via TextFixer software (<https://www.textfixer.com/tools/remove-line-breaks.php>).

Subsequently, the editorials were converted to *.txt file* format through UTF-8 format in order to ensure alignment with AntConc Software. The editorials from two newspapers were kept in separate files with a proper annotation for each file in a distinct Excel sheet for transparency and record-keeping. The corpus size noted was 33,730 words, providing a comprehensive linguistic record for analysis. The annotation of the data collected was also done in Excel sheets to maintain the record of each editorial. The sheet includes code, title, word count, name and gender of writer, year, and URL. The annotation also supported quick verification during analysis. The Corpus of both Newspapers' editorials was named as '*EdMinDD*' and '*EdMinTN*' respectively.

**Table 1. Corpus-Size**

NewsPaper Editorials	No. of Editorials	Words
Daily Dawn	45	18130
The News	33	15600
Total Corpus Size	=78	=33,730.

- *Source: EdMin – TN and DD (2021-2025)*

Code	Word Count	Gender	Writer	Date of Publication	Year	Topic	URL
MNRTS-DN-Ed-01	388		Anonymous	20.4.25	2025	Lesser Citizens	https://www.dawn.com/news/1905411
MNRTS-DN-Ed-02	311		Anonymous	19.2.25	2025	Migration Matters	https://www.dawn.com/news/1892946
MNRTS-DN-Ed-03	371		Anonymous	2.2.25	2025	Out of Tune	https://www.dawn.com/news/1889236
MNRTS-DN-Ed-04	453		Anonymous	12.10.24	2024	Ghastly Attack	https://www.dawn.com/news/1864688
MNRTS-DN-Ed-05	1021	F	Arifa Noor	11.8.24	2024	Minority Rights	https://www.dawn.com/news/1839168
MNRTS-DN-Ed-06	457		Anonymous	11.8.24	2024	Unfulfilled Vision	https://www.dawn.com/news/1851544
MNRTS-DN-Ed-07	384		Anonymous	15.6.24	2024	Sindh Lawlessness	https://www.dawn.com/news/1840055
MNRTS-DN-Ed-08	386		Anonymous	28.5.24	2024	Attacking Minorities	https://www.dawn.com/news/1836165
MNRTS-DN-Ed-09	312		Anonymous	10.2.24	2024	Jaranwala Apathy	https://www.dawn.com/news/1812966
MNRTS-DN-Ed-010	292		Anonymous	9.1.24	2024	Selective Outrage	https://www.dawn.com/news/1804081
MNRTS-DN-Ed-011	319		Anonymous	27.12.23	2023	Reaching out	https://www.dawn.com/news/1801055
MNRTS-DN-Ed-012	317		Anonymous	16.10.23	2023	Brutal People	https://www.dawn.com/news/1781296
MNRTS-DN-Ed-013	316		Anonymous	9.10.23	2023	Pulpit Concerns	https://www.dawn.com/news/1780122
MNRTS-DN-Ed-014	387		Anonymous	10.9.23	2023	Persecuted People	https://www.dawn.com/news/1774977
MNRTS-DN-Ed-015	386		Anonymous	30.8.23	2023	Foreign Hands	https://www.dawn.com/news/1772977
MNRTS-DN-Ed-016	386		Anonymous	23.8.23	2023	Show of Solidarity	https://www.dawn.com/news/1771666
MNRTS-DN-Ed-017	459		Anonymous	21.8.23	2023	Inner Demons	https://www.dawn.com/news/1771336

FIG. 2 Structural Annotation of “Daily Dawn” Editorials

Code	Word Count	Gender	Writer	Date of Publication	Year	Topic	URL
MNRTS-TN-Ed-01	459		Anonymous	28.2.25	2025	Nexus of Hate	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1287146-nexus-of-hat
MNRTS-TN-Ed-02	423		Anonymous	25.12.24	2024	A Tolerant Pakistan	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1285046-a-tolerant-pa
MNRTS-TN-Ed-03	487		Anonymous	26.10.24	2024	Reclaim the Media	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1243920-reclaim-the
MNRTS-TN-Ed-04	546		Anonymous	14.08.24	2024	Blueprint for Tolerance	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1219622-blueprint-for
MNRTS-TN-Ed-05	900		Anonymous	23.06.24	2024	Guest Editorial Ten years is a Long Time	https://www.thenews.com.pk/tss/detail/1202487-guest-e
MNRTS-TN-Ed-06	527		Anonymous	22.06.24	2024	Land of Mobs	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1202247-land-of-mob
MNRTS-TN-Ed-07	493		Anonymous	29.05.24	2024	Hostage to the Mob	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1194317-hostage-to-t
MNRTS-TN-Ed-08	606		Anonymous	13.04.24	2024	Abuse with Impunity	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1177701-abuse-with-i
MNRTS-TN-Ed-09	467		Anonymous	17.02.24	2024	Descent into Chaos	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1158373-descent-intc
MNRTS-TN-Ed-010	528		Anonymous	29.01.24	2024	Modi's India	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1152272-modi-s-india
MNRTS-TN-Ed-011	138		Anonymous	13.09.23	2023	Fuelling Hate	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1109700-fuelling-hate
MNRTS-TN-Ed-012	467		Anonymous	12.09.23	2023	Protecting the Minority	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1109001-protecting-tf
MNRTS-TN-Ed-013	512		Anonymous	01.09.23	2023	Obfuscation 101	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1105585-obfuscation-
MNRTS-TN-Ed-014	631		Anonymous	20.08.23	2023	Stemming the Spiral	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1101835-stemming-tf
MNRTS-TN-Ed-015	439		Anonymous	11.08.23	2023	Minority Day	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1099019-minority-day
MNRTS-TN-Ed-016	445		Anonymous	16.07.23	2023	The Right Resolution	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1090934-the-right-res
MNRTS-TN-Ed-017	362		Anonymous	20.01.23	2023	Forced Marriage	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1032299-forced-marri

FIG. 3 Structural Annotation of “The News” Editorials

### 3.5 Sample:

The data was collected from 2021 to 2025 from both newspapers to ensure enough sample for data collection and analysis.

#### 3.5.1 Rationale for Sampling:

Editorials, for data collection and analysis, were selected because of their strong influence on people and the reflection of their stances on a myriad of issues,

including political, social and cultural. Editorials are the key domain of assessing ideological orientation relevant to challenging topics of minority problems and representation. The recent trends shaped by contemporary events and developments are highlighted through a five-year data collection.

The exclusive focus on concerned editorials was maintained through purposive sampling.

### **3.5.2 Sample Size:**

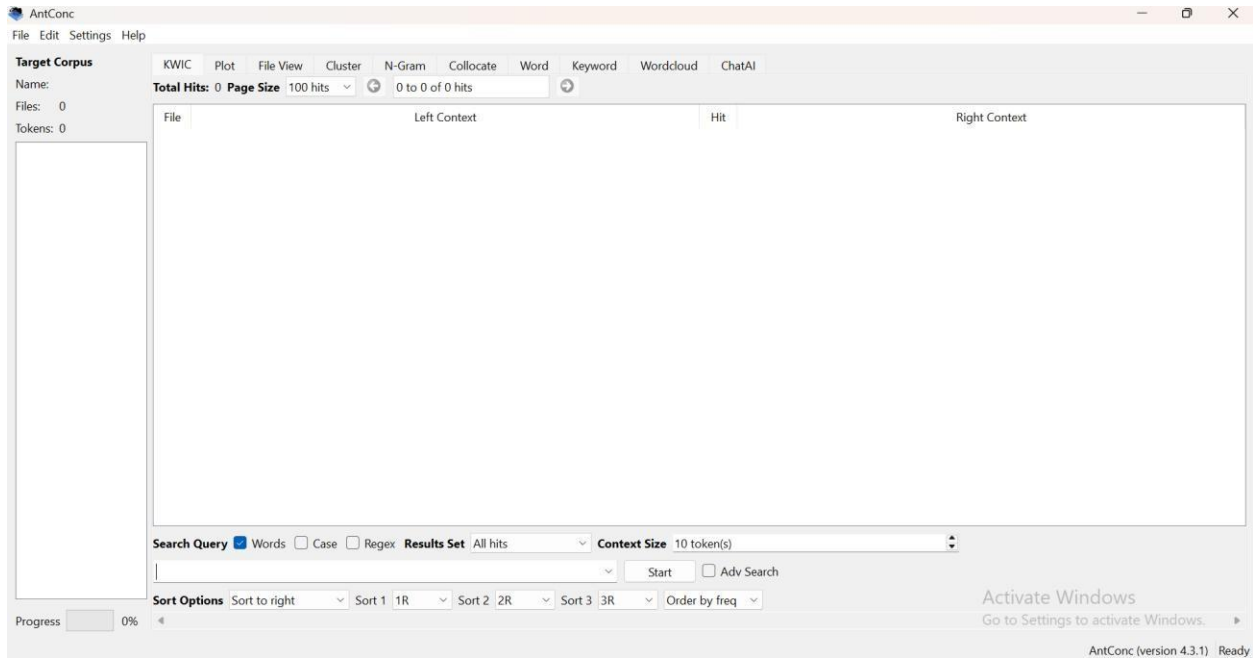
A total of 78 editorials from Daily Dawn and The News were used for data collection and analysis.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations:**

All the data was available through the websites of the two leading English newspapers and through access to LexisNexis. The integrity of original texts was maintained during data collection.

### **3.7 Tool:**

AntConc was used as a tool for investigating collocations, word-lists and concordance lines (“AI and Text Mining”).



- *FIG. 4* Layout of Antconc.

### 3.8 Corpus Linguistics and CDA:

Research robustness is enhanced by incorporating Bourdieu's theory of language and power with a corpus-based approach, assisted by quantitative methods.

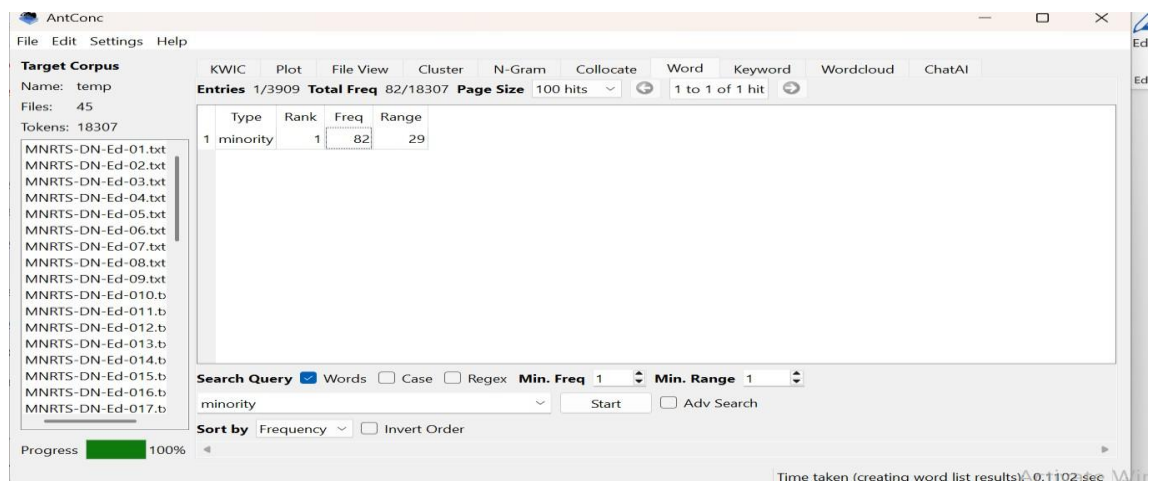
This hybrid approach attributes positivity to understudied social issues while recognising some interdisciplinary gaps (Nartey and Mwinlaaru). According to (Egbert and Baker), this compelling combination unveils social stratification and hidden agendas and narratives via linguistic sequences and patterns.

## CHAPTER 4

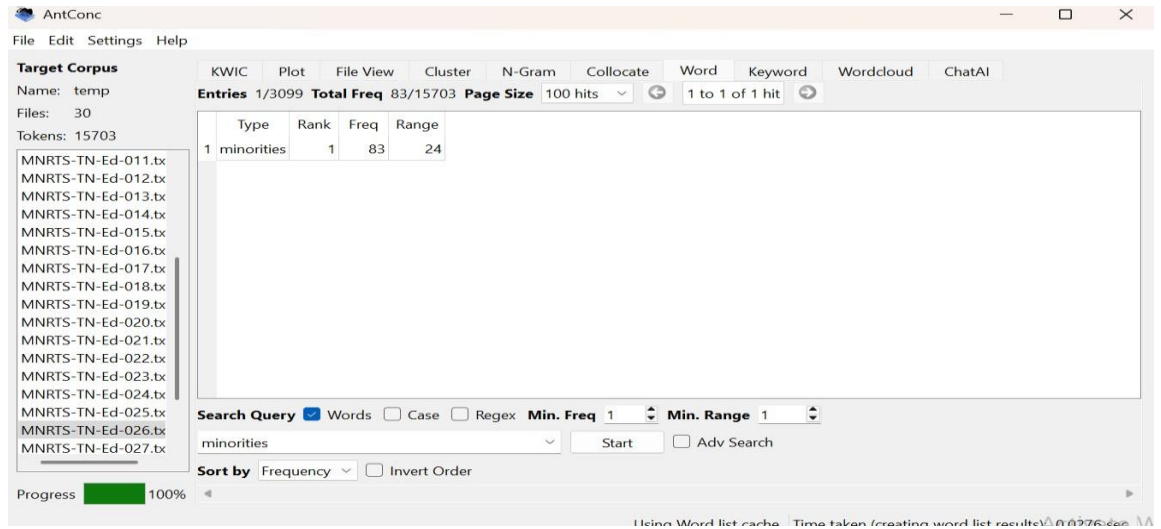
### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Chapter Introduction:

This chapter focuses on the thematic analysis of editorials from both newspapers grounded in Bourdieu’s theory of language and symbolic power. This chapter scrutinises the role of language in establishing a domineering influence and power, structuring power hierarchies and ideological narratives. The analysis of editorials was done via AntConc, allowing for the determination of content-based keywords (Nouns) that have high dispersion and signal systematic occurrences in the depiction of issues related to minorities. The selected keywords are: *Minority* from Daily Dawn and *Minorities* from The News.



▪ FIG. 5 Frequency, Rank and Dispersion of “Minority” in Daily Dawn.



▪ FIG. 6 Frequency, Rank and Dispersion of “Minorities” in The News.

The thematic construction was drawn from both contextual significance and frequency of keywords, built upon the in-depth examination of concordance lines. The analysis treats Daily Dawn and The News as complementary sources rather than juxtaposing them. Additionally, the analysis also identifies the nuanced, distinctive discursual features. The exploration of each theme follows the analysis of concordance lines from both the newspapers' editorials. The emphasis is laid on the reproduction of hegemonic frameworks or resistance to them through language.

The chapter follows a thematic organisation, with each theme consisting of analysis and discussion, facilitating in-depth comprehension of how editorials contribute to the extensive dynamics of power in Pakistan's socio-political frameworks.

## **4.2 Themes of Analysis:**

### **4.2.1 Role of Power and Hegemonic Discourse in Print Media:**

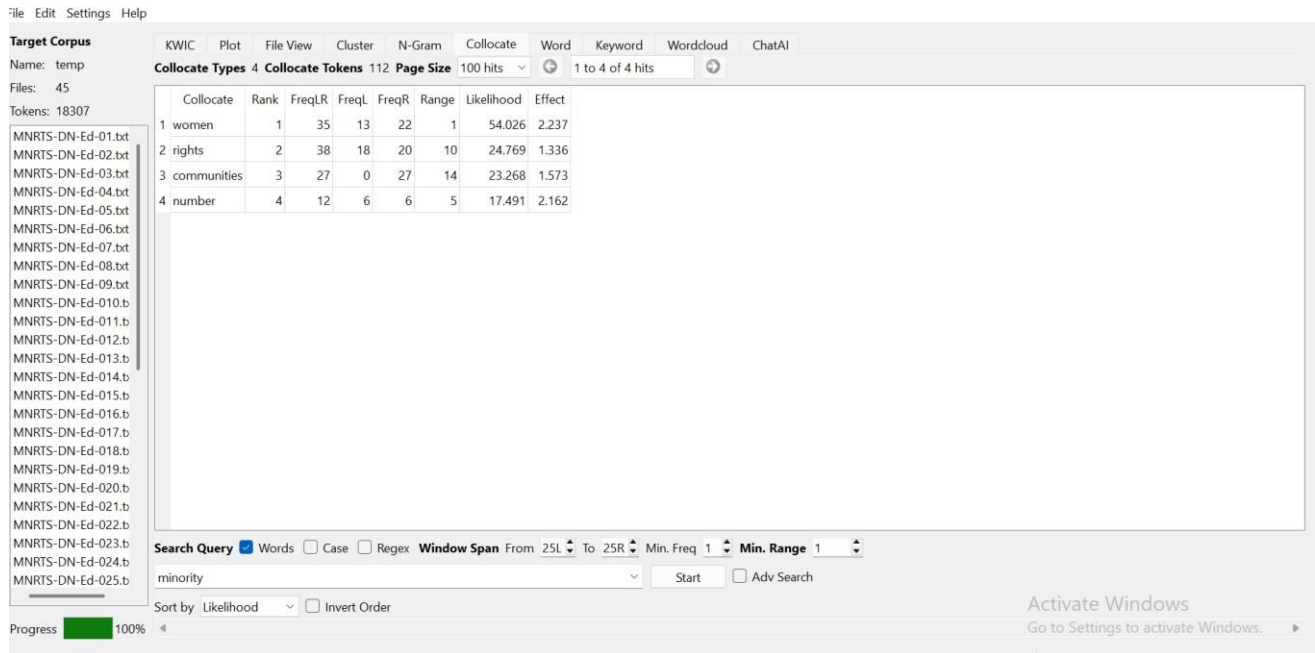
#### **Analysis:**

The representation of minorities in media narratives is based on the role of power (Firmstone). Public opinions are shaped by editorials. The intersection of opinion with ideology makes language a nuanced yet compelling mechanism of perceptions among the masses. The power relations can either be strengthened or challenged by the media in editorials (Firmstone). This theme explores the linguistic practices embedded in the Daily Dawn and The News editorials and how they maintain or deviate from the ideological domination concerning minority representation.

Pierre Bourdieu's concept of hegemonic discourse brings into focus the influence of language in terms of exercising power. Bourdieu terms language as a carrier of symbolic power, upholding unequal authority and legitimacy distribution. Assumptions and values are deeply embedded in editorial discourses, which are often shown as impartial and rational. These propensities or 'habitus' (Bourdieu 38), as termed by Bourdieu, are tailored by the social identity of the individuals. These narratives implicate everything. Collocations, lexical patterns and agency and voice distribution present this symbolic power (Bourdieu).

The construction of power hierarchies through linguistic choices can be gauged through passive structures, filtration of nouns and passivisation in the newspapers' editorials (Wornyo 7). The collocations also present the power distribution about minorities rather than being merely lexical entries. The collocations of communities, rights, women, persecution and number are found in the editorials. The language of editorials reflects either emotional resonance towards minorities or strengthens the deprivation of minorities.

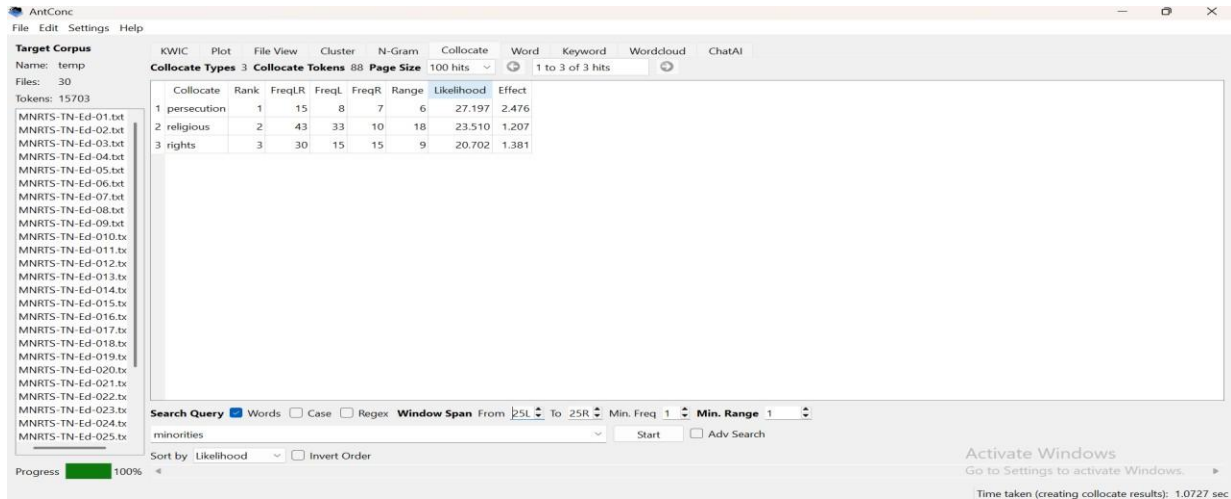
In Daily Dawn, minority representation echoes a pluralistic and democratic orientation within parameters. The collocation of minority with rights, women, numbers and communities reflects the gender and religion intersection identity markers. Nevertheless, these marks also strengthen the symbolic inequality and domination. For instance, the recurrent minority 'collocation' with 'communities' positions itself beyond the inclusion and citizenship, implying a disjointed national identity. The word 'communities' also sparks communal disenfranchisement, which, though well-intentioned, tends to generalise multifaceted experiences under an oversimplified label of diversity.



- FIG. 7 Collocates of ‘minority’ in Daily Dawn Editorials.

Contrastively, editorials of The News often present ‘minorities’ (Noun) collocating with ‘rights’, ‘religion’ and ‘persecution’, signifying exclusion and systematic marginalisation.

This unintentional positioning of minorities portrays them as subjects of oppression with no discursive agency, highlighting their susceptibility. This reinforces minorities' framing in terms of crisis. The narrative might perpetuate their systematic deviant behaviour while being favourable in essence.



■ FIG. 8 Collocates of ‘minorities’ in The News Editorials

Here, the concept of ‘symbolic Power’ presented by Bourdieu will be used to interpret editorials. The naturalisation of meanings is at found core of this concept. Perception is developed through the recurring presence of certain words, phrases and patterns. The language of editorials decides ‘sayable’ and ‘unsayable’ in editorial discourses. The bounds of linguistic choices are observed in both newspapers in terms of their critique of social and political affairs with regard to minorities. Resultantly, this critique reinforces symbolic power by presenting minorities as ‘other’.

Power is also seen in terms of voice agency and primacy. The rare voice of minorities in editorials also reflects a power imbalance (Firmstone). The minorities' perspectives are framed within prevalent power structures. The misrecognition of symbolic power as legitimate further exacerbates the absence of voice and agency. The lens of external advocates or elites is used for their voice (Firmstone).

In one of the editorials of Daily Dawn, this theme can be seen through the concordance line stated below,

*“The public lynchings over accusations of blasphemy, misuse of the blasphemy law, and the marginalisation of **minority** communities are all stark realities in today’s Pakistan.”*

(EdMinDD)

This line underscores the manifestation of hegemony through phrases like *“misuse of blasphemy laws”* and *“public lynchings over accusations of blasphemy”*, ultimately strengthening the centralised power framework. Language, a tool of symbolic domination, is seen through the phrase *“the public lynchings over accusations of blasphemy”*. According to Bourdieu, language stems from power imbalance and is never neutral (Bourdieu). Here, the weaponisation of blasphemy law, which otherwise is considered sacrosanct, is used to legitimise physical assault. The development of linguistic boundaries between minorities and majorities via *“marginalisation of minority communities”* instigates societal divisions. This justification of violence through discursive legitimacy is termed ‘doxa’ by Bourdieu.

The marginalisation of minorities has been presented by charges of religious transgression and administrative failure in The Daily Dawn. However, The News reflects implicit but impactful ideology by revealing how institutionalised discourse frames the minorities’ experiences on psychological and interpersonal levels. This portrayal represents the great idea of the operation of symbolic power altogether.

*“Minorities in Pakistan already live their lives in isolation, being respectful of the majority religion and trying to blend in whatever way they can.” (EdMinTN)*

The stated line from The News presents the robust impact of hegemonic discourse. It underscores the unspoken coercion that minorities undergo, unlike deep-seated marginalisation. The alignment with Bourdieu’s idea of symbolic power can be seen through the enforcement and reproduction of dominant power structures by the combination of ideology and language. The revelation of social erasure through *“trying to blend in”* highlights how minorities compromise their identities to be accepted by the majority. Minorities must submit and, unwillingly, comply with religious power. This can be seen in the word *“respectful”*. This normalises the imbalance of power structure, reflecting submission as a social expectation rather than a tool of violence. The editorial demonstrated implicitly how majoritarian belief becomes strongly ingrained in cultures. This forces minorities to accept this as their only survival. This aligns with the invisible language violence concept as rooted by Bourdieu.

Another concordance line taken from the news presents hegemonic discourse.

*“With an already uphill life in terms of economic opportunities in society, religious minorities are hard-pressed against multiple odds.” (EdMinTN).*

This line encapsulates the social exclusion and economic discrimination, which exposes the structural inequality experienced by minorities. *“Uphill life”* figuratively denotes the persistent struggles of life. The phrase, *“hard-pressed against multiple odds”*, reflects the myriad of hardships endured by minorities. This nuanced disapproval complements symbolic power. This implicit assertion of power rather than explicit exertion of control is

central to symbolic power. This presents a sympathetic tone but still functions under dominant ideological narratives. This takes into account the marginalised status of minorities without confrontation with the existing structures.

*“minority women in a leadership role is virtually zero because of women’s low socio-economic and political status.” (EdMinDD)*

This line, extracted from one of the editorials of Daily Dawn, foregrounds the multilayered subjugation within hegemonic narratives. It represents how class, religious identity and gender converge to intensify the marginalisation of minority women. This results in their exclusion from all the affairs of life. Bourdieu’s concept of social stratification is verified through this. This editorial recognises women's socio-political suppression along with their identity as religious minorities. This further authenticates the power asymmetries of Pakistan.

This line aligns with the earlier presentation of the economic deprivation of religious minorities by The News. The News emphasises systematic disparity at large, while Dawn centres on gendered exclusion. The robust portrayal by both newspapers illustrates how power discourse works within multiple facets, covertly strengthening dominant discourses while subtly empathising towards minorities.

## 4.2.2 Marginalisation and Minority Women:

### **Analysis:**

Increased marginalisation stems from the interrelation of religious identity and gender (Finchilescu 89). Marginalised women are often the victims of it. This multilayered exclusion is apparent through filtered themes, structural positioning, and lexical patterns in the editorials of Daily Dawn and The News. This theme centres around minority women and their representation in socio-economic affairs of life in Pakistan, along with their symbolic marginalisation. Based on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of language and symbolic power, the theme delves into the intricate nature of language that covertly strengthens the ideologies it seeks to dismantle despite promoting reforms and rights.

The legitimisation and assertion of power are the centralities of language, as per Bourdieu. The silences, choices of words and focus of the institutions through editorial discourse signify the dominant 'habitus' of the nation. Minority women undergo dual oppression of religious identity and gender (Rafiq et al.). The News and Daily Dawn recurrently positions minority women as vulnerable beings rather than the change makers.

The News concordance line:

*“Instances of abduction, forced and/or underage marriages, and conversions often go hand-in-hand when it comes to women who belong to religious minorities in Pakistan.” (EdMinTN)*

The language used in this concordance line fosters emotional resonance while strengthening a victim-centric narrative. This harsh yet considerate tone embodies the suffering of minority women of Pakistan. Words like ‘*conversions*’, ‘*forced marriages*’ and ‘*abduction*’ present a discursive pattern of a crisis-oriented lens. These words elucidate the constant oppression that minority women undergo. The agent of voice is masked through passivisation in ‘*instances of abduction*’, thus solidifying the invisibility of accounts from both survivors and perpetrators. Grounded in Bourdieu’s theory, this rhetorical structure manifests the embedded symbolic power asserted by hegemonic discourses, wherein minority women's identities are developed through perpetual violation themes. Minority women's experiences are reduced to a traumatic core instead of highlighting their community leadership, agency and legal awareness. Under the guise of exposure, language naturalises suffering.

Another concordance line of The News:

*“Our justice system, religious authorities, and law enforcement all need to realize the seriousness of this issue and work together to protect minorities from forced conversion and forced marriages.” (EdMinTN)*

This advances passive discursion. This concordance line renders minority women as silent voices rather than active contributors to change, reflecting institutional accountability while having a progressive tone. *“Need to realize the seriousness”* phrase reflects a solid gap in institutional validation, and *“work together to protect”* phrase highlights the dependence and passivity of minority women. The normalisation of institutional interference in providing a safer environment for minority women asserts the dominant role of language, which aligns with Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic power. The subtle affirmation of granting recognition and protection in editorials further verifies the top-down hierarchy in social legitimacy.

Conversely, editorials of Daily Dawn provide a more nuanced insight.

*“Minority women face two key challenges: the dearth of statistical data on their socioeconomic situation and the invisibility of minority women in leadership.”* (EdMinDD)

This line also underscores the gap in representation, along with the deprivation of their rights. The epistemic erasure is noticed through the phrase, *“dearth of statistical data”*. Additionally, *“the invisibility in leadership”* underscores systemic exclusion. This shows deliberate overlooking of minority women in the leadership sector, not just underrepresentation. The concept of ‘misrecognition’ advanced by Pierre Bourdieu is reinforced through the above line. Discourse absence leads to the formation of social stratification. Lack of minority women's representation in leadership leads to their social position and

contributions as illegitimate. This symbolic power asserted by the media is criticised by Daily Dawn by drawing attention to this gap. The agency and voice of marginalised minority women is still not called upon.

Further stressing this disempowerment, Daily Dawn, another concordance line:

*“Thirdly, discriminatory laws against minority women should be repealed, their personal laws must be updated, new laws for their protection and development must be promulgated, and their implementation should be assured.”* (EdMinDD)

The top-down structure of shift is strengthened by this line, although it seems to be evolving. Moral urgency is underscored by the use of ‘*must*’, ‘*should*’ and ‘*must be assured*’ modal verbs. However, this also conceals the voice and agency of minority women. The use of these normative statements complements the symbolic power concept by Bourdieu. In such statements, the envisioning of social change is dreamt of without considering the agency and voices of marginalised people. ‘*Promulgated*, ‘*repealed*’ and ‘*updated*’ vocalises bureaucratic language, deliberately shifting the axis to institutional steps from ground realities. The challenges faced by minority women are acknowledged by The Daily Dawn. However, it implicitly aligns with policy over people strategy.

The dual oppression faced by minority women in Pakistan is highlighted by the editorials of both Daily Dawn and The News. Minority women are absent when it comes to voicing their agency. Nevertheless, their visibility as victims is quite high and noticeable. The framing of minority women within the domain of symbolic power asserts how language strengthens the reliance on legal paternalism, institutional involvement and statistical invisibility. Victimhood and crisis are foregrounded by The News; meanwhile, Daily Dawn draws its attention towards policy failure and the absence of voice and agency. However, both of the newspapers present minority women as dependent entities.

### **4.2.3 Religious Discrimination and Forced Conversions:**

#### **Analysis:**

In Pakistan, the religious framework demonstrates a persistent dissonance between lived realities and judicial guarantees of religious minorities, although it is anchored constitutionally in pluralism. The intricate intersection of symbolic domination, gender and power is seen through forced conversions of minority women and girls. The linguistic choices in Daily Dawn and The News expose the institutionalised hegemonic religious frameworks. Narrative constructions relevant to the topic of forced conversions in these newspapers operate as a space of contestation. The use of overt vocabulary results in the prevalence of such themes as per Bourdieu's theory of language and symbolic power.

Additionally, passivisation, institutional passivity, and discursive framing are also actors in contributing to the persistence of religious discrimination and conversions. This also complements the literature that views religious minorities as a subject of lacking self-representation (Elareshi et al.; Shah et al.)

In both newspaper editorials, the lexical choices manifest symbolic power in terms of religious narratives and identity. The use of nuanced yet alarming portrayals of institutional detachment has been highlighted by The Daily Dawn.

Such an instance is noted in one of the concordance lines stated below,

*“The issue of forced conversions of minority girl children has serious ramifications.”* (EdMinDD)

The constructed argument here focuses on the normalisation of forced conversions (a systematic violation) through lexical expression. Euphemism is seen in the phrase *“Serious ramifications”*. It abstracts the complexity of sociopolitical repercussions and distress into filtered rhetoric. This demonstrates the concept of *‘doxa’* advanced by Bourdieu, where such filterations are normalised and institutionalised. The asymmetrical power influences can also be seen through the use of the phrase *“minority girl children”*. Religious identity, along with age, is merged together to further intensify the site of susceptibility. As discussed in the literature, this framing strengthens the notion of religious female minorities as the subject of double discrimination (Ghoury et al.).

The subtle yet noticeable language shift from instigators to implications builds the narratives of hegemony without confrontation.

Another concordance line reinforces the same narrative:

*“It also violates Article 11 (outlawing slavery and forced labour) as many girls are trafficked and forced into sex work, as documented by the Peoples Commission for Minority Rights. Fourth, this fear compels minority communities to leave.”* (EdMinDD)

The intention of establishing subtle legal credibility, yet through passive systematic inflexibility using Article 11 reference, is evident. *“This fear compels minority communities to leave”*, indicates how minorities are completely consumed by the fear as outsiders who are maltreated in the country. This is an illustration of symbolic violence. As in the literature cited in the thesis, this aligns with the idea of the portrayal of minorities as deeply excluded from the majority (Fazal et al.; Siddique et al.). Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic power also reiterates that dominant narratives are accepted as unchangeable and as neutral outcomes of public apprehension.

The news also frames minorities as disempowered groups. The following concordance line from The News highlights violent imagery.

*“Forced conversions of minority women, attacks by hateful lynch mobs and targeted killings of minorities and terror attacks on their communities have become alarmingly common occurrences.”* (EdMinTN)

The convergence of multiple critical incidents into the above sentence advances a rhetorical overload which undermines empathetic inclusion. The acceptance of systemised oppression through the phrase, “*alarmingly common occurrences*”, is documented. This corresponds with Khalid’s study cited in the literature review that these narratives serve to reinforce the oppressed ideological framework of minorities rather than dismantling such narratives, and that these narratives should be dismantled (Khalid 19). This is grounded in Bourdieu’s concept of ‘*habitus*’, which asserts that prolonged exposure to systemic abuse leads to conditioned passivity among affected individuals, further amplifying the oppression of minorities.

The socio-political facet to this issue is made visible through another concordance line from The News:

*“The people of the country have been led to believe that minorities are not equal citizens.”* (EdMinTN)

Discursive manipulation – where collective beliefs are produced by the combined impact of power and language- is apparent through this statement. The masking of instigators (media, state and clergy) has been underscored through the phrase, “*have been led to believe,*” reflecting strong institutionalisation and power assertion. Blurring of sources is common in symbolic power, in the words of Pierre Bourdieu. The phrase construction that “*Minorities are not equal citizens*” resonates with the cited literature that the presentation of minorities is marked by

outgroups rather than ingroups, which leads to disamalgamation of them into the majority (Syed 344).

Thus, editorials work as the perpetrators of the already existing structures of society rather than combating them.

In both newspapers, the associated collocates with keywords (*minority and minorities*) advance a consistent theme of passivisation and deprivation. This confirms the hidden discriminatory narratives carried by the editorials in the guise of empathy. The absence of agency and voice in the representation of minorities and accountability by the state reflects the alignment of structural silence and symbolic power.

Additionally, the lack of institutional critique and a solution-oriented approach is prevalent in the editorial discourses. The use of neutral lexical words and phrases like “*have become alarmingly common*” and “*serious ramifications*” conceals the urgency of the matter and assists in passive acceptance and normalisation. This serves as the most powerful form of symbolic violence, as asserted by Bourdieu. The criticism of this neutral approach is also seen in the study of Ashfaq, in which he indicates the absence of the voice of minorities and deliberate invisibility of them to mask the seriousness of the concern (Ashfaq).

#### 4.2.4 Absence of Political and Civic Representation:

##### **Analysis:**

The absence of minorities' representation in the civic and political sector of Pakistan is a strong reflection of symbolic power. This also decides the silenced voices and active participants in decision-making. Such an exclusion is either challenged or reproduced in the editorials. According to Pierre Bourdieu, language serves as the means of legitimising dominant social structures through normalisation. The two-fold distinction between majorities and minorities is strengthened in the editorial discourse through peripheral representation of minorities in the political and civic sectors. Rights, representation and communities are the collocates which are frequently used, which indicate the struggles of integration into the mainstream society for equity and acknowledgement.

Among many editorials from Daily Dawn, a concordance line from one editorial highlights this exclusion. The concordance line is stated below:

*“Various political parties holding power have taken concrete steps to improve the status of minorities, such as the creation of a Ministry of National Harmony, enhancing minority representation in the Senate and the reservation of five percent job quota for religious minorities and two percent quota in higher education in Punjab to safeguard their rights.” (EdMinDD)*

“*Representation*” followed by “*Rights*” in this concordance line creates a sense of conscious policy reactivity. However, the listing of such efforts for minorities reflects their limitation to paper only, with no visible implementation. Misrecognition – a concept forwarded by Bourdieu is signified through this statement. The recurrent disempowerment and exclusion of religious minorities are marked through the use of such deliberate language that represents significant steps taken to protect the minorities. This also complements the study by Dogar and Rizvi, which concludes how policy implementation remains bound to paper with no significant concrete results. (Dogar and Rizvi; Joshua and Zia). In a similar vein, the concordance line analysed presents how minorities' political and civic representation has no actual implementation and remains imaginary.

The same observation is further reinforced through the second concordance line taken from one of the editorials of Daily Dawn,

*“To address these challenges, it is pertinent to recognise that the nexus of gender, class and religion plays a key role in nurturing religious minority leadership in Pakistan.”* (EdMinDD)

Several socio-economic constraints must be overcome for the minorities to regain their identity. The lack of minority representation in the leadership sectors is strongly demonstrated through the inclusion of leadership with representation in this concordance line. It has a direct resonance with the literature cited, which advances that structural barriers, especially for women,

are one of the major reasons for hindered minority representation in the civic sector of Pakistan (Memon et al.; Fazal et al.). Nevertheless, this concordance line projects the civic access as a dependent entity on class, religion and gender, thereby strengthening social hierarchies.

In case of civic and political representation, the editorials from The News project minorities' absence in justice-oriented expressions. One concordance line from The News holds the same narrative.

*“For example, without adequate representation of minorities in key institutions, it will be harder to establish adequate avenues for redressal and to bring those who persecute and torment minorities to justice.”* (EdMinTN)

This concordance line portrays the need for representation of minorities in key political and civic institutions to safeguard their rights. This line powerfully captures the significance of occupying key positions in the institutions of Pakistan for defining and providing justice. The same has been endorsed by some researchers in the literature that the absence of religious minorities from such sectors and institutions leads to the filtration of their lived realities through the lens of the majority, leading to further marginalisation (Khan et al.; Bari et al.). This editorial and, in particular, this line strongly root for inclusivity in terms of civic and political representation. Nonetheless, this does not explicitly challenge the hidden power dynamics and frameworks.

The development of the same stance has been projected by another concordance line from one of the editorials of The News,

*“If more minorities were able to move into these positions, it may be far more possible to fight discrimination and for victimised persons to approach them and seek a more just outcome to their problems.”* (EdMinTN)

The reflection of the ‘*doxa*’ concept by Bourdieu is seen through the conditional sentence, *“If minorities were able to move into these positions.* The use of such construction indicates how political inclusivity is often termed a privilege rather than the basic right of every citizen of Pakistan. One of the findings in the literature also asserts a similar viewpoint, that minority inclusion in decision-making bodies reinforces democracy (Saeed et al.; Zainab et al.). This also authorises the advocacy of minorities without considering the majoritarian lens.

The symbolic construction of political and civic sectors is represented through the use of linguistic markers (communities, representation, and rights) in both newspapers. The acknowledgement of the inevitable link between the protection of the rights of minorities and representation by both the newspaper editorials is worth praising. Nonetheless, the labelling of inclusion is often misrepresented as a bestowed gift rather than a basic democratic right. Thus, both the editorials manipulatively reinforce the dominant political structures without ever questioning them.

#### 4.2.5 Delayed Justice and Institutional Silence:

##### **Analysis:**

Delayed justice is often seen in the editorials about minorities in Daily Dawn and The News. Justice is not merely deferred but also made unattainable via constant institutional dormancy. The delay is not random or neutral, according to Bourdieu, but a manoeuvring of symbolic power. Symbolic power is the power exercised by the system to filter what should be addressed and what should not be addressed. Editorials are an excellent manifestation of highlighting the divide between legal narratives and their practical implementation, which ends up strengthening the marginalised and silenced behaviour of minorities. Daily Dawn and The News's collocations underscore the perpetual endeavours of minorities to be fairly recognised and acknowledged.

One of the concordance lines from Daily Dawn encapsulates the institutionalisation of political frameworks in religion-related laws.

*“Second, the state has been using religion, for the purposes of legitimacy, for so long that no mainstream political party can take a nuanced, let alone radically different, position on minority rights.” (EdMinDD)*

This concordance line reflects the belief that the majoritarian agenda holds. Political survival is shaped by the religious frameworks of majorities. This mirrors the concept of ‘doxa’ given by Bourdieu. *“No mainstream political*

*party*” underscores the systemic silence, eradicating the likelihood of intervention. Due to Political advantage, the state does not try to dismantle the already existing rigid discriminatory frameworks against minorities (Joshua and Zia). Minorities are significantly denied their fundamental rights. Here, the “*rights*” collocate is extremely significant. The association of “*religion*” and “*rights*” collocations signify the discrimination based on religious identity.

Another line pinned by Daily Dawn shifts the attention to the systematic structures of prison.

*“Vile discriminatory practices permeate every sphere of life, even unlikely spaces. For instance, the prejudiced prison policies that deprive minority inmates of their remission rights are rarely addressed.”* (EdMinDD)

Institutional silence is marked through the phrasal construction, “*rarely addressed,*” which indicates how silence treatment by the dominant structures can lead to negative outcomes. The policy related to prisons separates the minority communities from the majority, which reflects the implicit use of “*communities*” collocate in the above concordance line. This aligns with the cited study, which notes that several frameworks uphold marginalisation, including judicial and legal structures (Sadiq 18).

Institutional neglect is brought to attention by the use of phrases like “*vile*” and “*permeating every sphere*”

The concordance line taken from The News editorial juxtaposes ceremonial celebration with critical failure.

*“As such, National Minorities Day, marked this past Sunday (August 11), serves as an enduring reminder of the state’s failure to live up to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s promise to protect the rights and religious freedoms of minorities on August 11, 1947.”* (EdMinTN)

Symbolic Capital – a concept by Pierre Bourdieu is noted here. The celebration of minorities, while no practical implementation, seems absurd. This masking of solid change serves as an irony to the commemoration. *“religion”* and *“rights”* are the collocates on which the criticism is built. The exploitation of these collocates while advocating for them is visible. This equates with a study in literature that carries the agenda of criticism but maintains the hidden majoritarian ideology (Alam).

Another line from The News highlights delayed justice.

*“There is a need to implement the Supreme Court judgement that Justice Tassaduq Jilani delivered in 2014, ordering the government to lay down concrete measures to protect the rights of religious minorities.”* (EdMinTN)

The monopoly of the state is quite evident over justice through the decade-long non-implementation of the 2014 judgment. The imperative for action is

accentuated by the use of “*persecution*” and “*rights*” collocates. However, their reiteration without any policy reformation sparks the very gap between constitutional promises and practical implementation. The cited literature by Rashid also complements this by highlighting the fact that how delayed justice silently dismantles the institutional justice (Mehfooz).

The normalisation of silence by domain institutions has been observed across the editorials from both newspapers. Linguistic constructs like “no mainstream political party”, “enduring reminder”, and “vile” are examples. This recurrence of the collocates among the editorials of both newspapers highlights the struggle for shared awareness, but also reflects the shared gap of challenging the structural frameworks.

### **4.3 Discussion:**

The analysis section reflects a discourse with multiple dimensions. The implementation of symbolic power is portrayed through linguistic choices. All the themes analysed represent how editorials naturalise inequality and marginalisation. This goes well with Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic power.

The editorials of Daily Dawn and The News present a complex interaction of symbolic power, complementing Bourdieu's theory. The repetition of ‘*blasphemy*’, ‘*communities*’ and ‘*persecution*’ collocates highlights the systematic discrimination of minorities. They also covertly unveil the hegemonic frameworks embedded in societal structures. The news emphasises on representation of minorities through narratives of deprivation and crisis,

demonstrating implicit ideology. While Dawn leans towards gendered discrimination, reflecting the complex interplay of gender, class and religion. Both newspapers strengthen dominant discourses through a critical or sympathetic tone, highlighting the social stratification. Exclusion is normalised and naturalised through strategic language use. Phrases like “*virtually zero*” and “*trying to blend in*” are seen as discourse markers strengthening the above idea. These narratives maintain the hegemonic discourses through what is often silenced, subtly said or unsaid.

Additionally, the production of symbolic hierarchies with regard to minority women through multifarious ways has been highlighted in both of the newspaper editorials. How something is said holds equal significance along with what is said, and likely more, as per Bourdieu’s theory. Minority women’s challenges are highlighted in both newspapers, but they are presented through discursive framing, often reducing minority women to a type of silent victims and dependent beings.

Exclusion of minority women is marked through absence in the legal domain, forced conversions and a statistical gap. The lack of voice also signifies their submission to the already existing societal structures and hierarchies. Focus, rhetorical choices and tone covertly reflect symbolic domination in the editorials. Minority women are portrayed as peripheral subjects, bowing to societal expectations in both newspapers despite their distinct approaches.

Bourdieu’s stance of language as a non-neutral entity is reflected in the editorials in a way that power decides voice and agency for people. Inequality is addressed through an amalgamation of critical and empathetic tone. However, this subtle blend of approaches is

utilised within the boundaries of dominant language norms, which often suppress the perspectives of minority people.

Building upon this, Editorial narratives presented by Daily Dawn and The News both reinforce the symbolic power frameworks while aiming to uncover the hidden biases. This theme emerges as a multi-layered discursive construction. This reflects symbolic domination through filtered narratives. The inadvertent contribution to dominant hegemonic narratives by both newspapers is evident through legalistic, abstractive and passive representation. Phrasal constructions like “*alarmingly common occurrences*”, “*serious ramifications*”, and “*led to believe*” indicate the avoidance of strategic confrontation with the mechanisms of control.

The exclusion of minority voices in the discourse through a filtered approach is critical. According to Bourdieu, language reproduces hegemonic power. Thus, the editorial discourse serves as a powerful reminder of the deep intended conspiracy of the media to play a dual. This also confirms the media’s role in framing minorities as disadvantaged without offering any solutions and thus reinforcing the marginalised narratives (Ashfaq).

Stemming from an analysis of the editorials of both newspapers, it is evident that Daily Dawn and The News both examine the representation of minorities in civic and political frameworks, yet also reproduce the existing power hierarchies in both sectors. This comes following Bourdieu’s conception of symbolic power that is manoeuvred by limiting the discourse deemed acceptable in terms of sayable remarks about the representation of minorities, without explicitly challenging the inherent power structures.

The emphasis on targeted ministries and quotas by Daily Dawn coincides with the collocates of rights and representation for getting officially acknowledged. Nevertheless, as cautioned in the literature, this pertains solely to words and paper without any practical endeavours to alter the internal power structures (Joshua and Zia). A more intersectional view has been provided by Daily Dawn, signalling Memon's views on women being doubly marginalised (Memon et al.). However, the concept of '*doxa*' comes into play as minorities are often not entitled to the basic rights; instead, it is framed as esteemed and granted to them.

Conversely, The News underscores the significance of justice in parallel to representation for minority communities. This closely forms a connection with an argument presented in the literature that advocates for political and civic representation of minorities for legal redress and impartial policy development (Khan et al.). Nonetheless, the conditional structure further reinforces the existing power dynamics. Representation and rights recurrently occur in the sentence, which brings to the fore the need to work on these domains, yet it subtly frames the narrative to bolster the implicit authoritative networks.

Thus, Daily Dawn and The News both underscore the importance of minority representation in civic and political domains. However, they slightly diverge in their areas of focus. The findings also harmonise with the literature that seeks to frame inclusion of minorities beyond the surface level.

Symbolic power does not only work through explicit exclusion but also through controlled acknowledgement. This has been verified by the complex synergy of institutional silence and delayed justice. Language is a powerful tool in the editorials that not only explain

injustice but also normalise it without definite scrutiny. The absence of voice serves as a vehicle of partial acknowledgement and celebration rather than an overt call to reformation.

In the cited literature, Alam also reinforces the same stance by mentioning how editorial discourse represents minorities and their problems by navigating between visible discrimination that minorities face and the invisible government role in protecting minorities (Alam). The constant oscillation is marked through Daily Dawn's framing of unresolved prison bigotry and the juxtaposition of the celebration of minority day with non-implemented institutional fake promises by The News editorials. The discursive boundaries of editorial framing were adopted by both of the newspapers, which underscores Bourdieu's notion of what is sayable and what should not be said when it comes to dominant power structures.

Moreover, the analysis is further strengthened by the alignment of the collocations with the concordance lines. The recurrent presence of such collocations indicates the urgency of highlighting and solving the matter. Nonetheless, the solution-less oriented approach downplays their overall impact, reiterating symbolic domination.

Delayed justice gives rise to institutional silence. Institutional silence, in turn, causes a myriad of problems for many minorities, and one such incident is that of the unimplementation of the Supreme Court judgment of 2014. Scarcity of accountability from domain structures causes disarray and non-execution.

In a nutshell, a dual facet has been represented by Daily Dawn and The News in terms of projecting institutional silence. The acceptance and acknowledgement of disparities of minorities and the strengthening and reproduction of power-related norms by limiting the criticism within discursive boundaries. This analysis highlights the recurrent pattern of symbolic power assertion in shaping the lives of minorities.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

This study investigated the representation of minorities in the editorials of two of the well-read English newspapers of Pakistan – The News and Daily Dawn. The aim of this research was to highlight the dominant narratives, persistent themes, and discriminations deeply implanted in these editorials. The theoretical framework of the study was drawn upon '*Language and Symbolic Power*' theory by Pierre Bourdieu. For the authentication of analysis, a corpus-based approach was employed to provide real data for the validation of the theoretical analysis, which dismisses assumptive conclusions and grounds the conclusions in authenticity. A substantial body of editorial data was analysed from 2021-2025 to include new trends and investigate how issues related to minorities were represented in the editorials.

To scrutinise the representation of minorities in the editorials of Daily Dawn and The News was the first aim of the study. According to the results, minorities were often framed as victims and marginalised, who faced multiple challenges, including violence, lack of civic and political voice and forced conversions and marriages. These findings underscore the role of print media in disseminating crisis-based agendas through narratives while deliberately excluding their contributions to the welfare of the state.

Identification of recurring themes was the second objective of the research. The analysis unveiled the systematic patterns of selective framing, exclusionary language and symbolic discrimination

and marginalisation, which complemented Bourdieu's Symbolic Power concept. The normalisation of societal hierarchies through secondary positioning of minority voices was ensured by editorials. Simultaneously, editorials demanded justice and inclusivity, which indicates the role of media as either perpetrators of dominant narratives or critics of hegemonic structures.

## **5.1 Recommendations:**

The results show the responsibility of the media in highlighting the problems of minorities and also providing inclusivity in terms of their contributions to the country.

- The coverage of the newspapers should be broadened by including the voices of minorities in multiple contexts of social welfare, education, arts and politics.
- The deliberate or unconscious biases shown in reporting can be minimised through training programs for editors and journalists, which will ensure a just and equitable representation.
- Furthermore, the editorial policies should be aligned with the constitutional promises for minorities.

## **5.2 Research Implications:**

The research highlights the key role of media in structuring public opinions on minorities. Editorial contribution to minorities' representation is evident in terms of either reinforcement or critique of existing power dynamics and social hierarchies. The findings demonstrate that editorials, if used responsibly, have the power to champion inclusion in democracy, justice and cultural harmony.

- Research implications outstrip academia, and serve as a powerful reminder for journalism, civic society actors and policy makers about the direct influence of media on policy making and public thinking. The current study opens the routes of inquiry for future researchers.
- A significant implication is to examine the framing of minorities in Urdu Newspaper editorials because of Urdu being the national language of Pakistan and having a wider audience reach.

### **5.3 Limitations and Future Research:**

The study's scope was narrowed to Daily Dawn and The News (two English newspapers) with a specific time range, from 2021-2025. The limitation, though it provided depth into the research, constrained the breadth of findings. Future research can direct its attention to a larger time range, integrate vernacular or regional newspapers and compare the minority representation over digital and electronic media or social media. That research will offer a more holistic picture of minority representation in Pakistani media.

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